

Dominika Byczkowska-Owczarek
University of Lodz, Poland

Editorial

Sociology of the Body—Research Practice in Poland

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I am delighted to introduce the special issue of *Qualitative Sociology Review*, devoted to research practice of sociology of the body in Poland. In the last years, we have observed a growing interest in sociological reflection on human body and influence of social processes on the body. The rising number of publications and thematic groups on conferences concerning this subject attracts interest of academics with sociological, as well as anthropological,

philosophical, and pedagogical background. It is satisfactory that we engage to challenge, a well-domesticated in Western culture, Cartesian concept of human body-soul dualism.

Evidently, sociological, anthropological reflection on the human body has not started with the appearance of the subdiscipline. Such contemporary philosophers, sociologists, and anthropologists as Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Marcel Mauss, Simone de Beauvoir, Norbert Elias, Erving Goffman, Anselm Strauss, Edward Hall, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Zygmunt Bauman, or Anthony Giddens, and others built foundations for contemporary sociological thought concerning human body. International sociology of the body had its milestones, such as Brian Turner's *The Body and Society* published in 1984, Drew Leder's *The Absent Body* (1990), Chris Schilling's (1993) *The Body and Social Theory* from the beginning of 1990's, or inception of *Body & Society* journal in 1995.

Similarly, as body studies in Poland have developed in the past twenty years, there is a number of publications devoted to the subdiscipline's identity. One of the widely known Polish sociologists was Zygmunt Bauman with a number of works on body in

Dominika Byczkowska-Owczarek, sociologist, assistant professor in Sociology of Organization and Management Department, Faculty of Economics and Sociology at the University of Lodz, Poland. Her book, *Body in Dance. Sociological Analysis*, presents outcomes of a study on ballroom dancing as a social activity. She has participated in research projects concerning communication on hospital wards, lobbying, revitalization of cities, and HR procedures. She is a book reviews editor in *Qualitative Sociology Review* and *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej*. Her main scientific interests are: symbolic interactionism, grounded theory methodology, qualitative methods, autoethnography, sociology of the body, sociology of medicine, ethnographic research.

email address: byczkowska.owczarek@uni.lodz.pl

postmodern culture (e.g., 1995), which have influenced body studies in social sciences among Polish academics. Other publications from this period include Zbyszko Melosik's (1996) *Tożsamość, ciało i władza* [*Identity, Body, and Power*] and edited by Dariusz Czaja (1999) *Metamorfozy ciała. Świadectwa i interpretacje* [*Metamorphoses of the Body*]. It was followed by a number of books on the subject, including Adam Buczkowski's *Spoleczne tworzenie ciała. Płeć kulturowa i płeć biologiczna* [*Social Construction of the Body. Gender and Sex*] published in 2005; the works of Ewa Banaszak and Paweł Czajkowski (e.g., 2010), a book *Praktyki cielesne* [*Bodily Practices*] edited by Jacek Kurczewski (2006) and *Ucieleśnienia. Ciało w zwierciadle współczesnej humanistyki* [*Embodiments. Body in the Reflection of Contemporary Humanities*] edited by Anna Wiczorkiewicz and Joanna Bator from 2007. There has also been published a review of the most significant anthropological body studies (Szpakowska 2008). Anna Kacperczyk and I (2012) have as well contributed to the advance of the subdiscipline, among others by editing a special issue of *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej* entitled *Body in Social Space*, where we presented articles concerning qualitative research on the human body. The milestone in the Polish development of the subdiscipline is a monograph of Honorata Jakubowska (2009) *Socjologia ciała* [*Sociology of the Body*], which introduced the subject profoundly to the Polish audience.

Since the appearance of the above mentioned publications, the body in Polish sociological studies has been increasingly present, giving examples of various research topics, ranging from disability to sport, transplantations to food and eating, dance, gender, yoga, climbing, prostitution, cosmetic surgeries, sex-

uality, body art, and many others. There are as well other researchers whose achievements are mentioned in this issue's articles, but who would rather identify with sociology of medicine, sport, culture, art, or gender. Please, forgive not mentioning of all their names, as the contributors of this issue have done it in an insightful manner, presenting the literature of their specific field of interest within the subdiscipline.

This special issue of *Qualitative Sociology Review* includes papers from participants of the *Sociology of the Body in Poland* conference, which took place at the Faculty of Economics and Sociology, University of Lodz in June 2016. The aim of the conference was to develop methodological standards, discuss research trends and possibilities of application of outcomes. The proceedings included as well reflections on such issues as teaching of sociology of the body and the specificity of the subdiscipline, its difficulties, challenges, and perspectives.

The effects of inquisitive discussions and workshops which took place during the conference are present in the texts. Each article in this special issue of *Qualitative Sociology Review* presents a different aspect of research practice in sociology of the body in Poland. All of them, however, have a qualitative character, and the majority is based on empirical studies. The contributors in this issue share their individual perspectives on human body, its practices, and manifestations in social reality.

In the first paper, **Girls in Football, Boys in Dance. Stereotypization Processes in Socialization of**

Young Sportsmen and Sportswomen, Honorata Jakubowska and I depict the issue of gender stereotypization strategies during the socialization process of children practicing atypical gender sports. We present outcomes of two qualitative studies: among girls playing football and boys practicing ballroom dancing. The text is focused on various types of social influence of the children's families (mainly parents), coaches, and peers. Moreover, we demonstrate the strategies which the children participating in atypical gender sports are subjected to, such as stereotypization, destereotypization, apparent destereotyping, and hidden stereotyping. The benefits of participating in atypical gender sports are also discussed, particularly in terms of social and psychological profits.

In the following article, Izabela Ślęzak reflects on **A Present and a Non-Present Body—Experiencing the Body by Female Sex Workers in Commercial Sexual Relations**. The article is based on qualitative data, mainly unstructured interviews, which were analyzed in accordance with the procedures of grounded theory methodology. The problem discussed in the text concerns making women's bodies accessible to men in the commercial context related to specific ways of experiencing it. The author's discussion focuses on category of a non-present, selectively present, and present body, which refers to ways in which female sex workers experience their bodies during commercial sex acts.

Issues of gender present in body experiences are continued by Mariola Bieńko. Her paper, **The Body as a Private and Social Space. The Margins of Research Regarding Old Age and Gender**, concentrates on

the body as a project in the context of late modernity. The author bases her outcomes on a two-year, qualitative research conducted in four Polish cities. The aim of the author was to review theories and empirical studies concerning socio-cultural issues and the subjective determinants of perceptions of physicality. The body has become the main instrument of experiencing the world and oneself, a significant area, a key element of an individual's identification strategy. The presentation and reception of body is dominated by an aesthetic perspective, organically bound with the tendency to aestheticize daily life in general. As we find out from the study, the emotional aspect of experiencing body, as well as the cognitive aspect within consciousness, the mental image of one's own body differ according to respondents' age and gender.

Incorporated gender issues, but not only, are also present in the fourth article, entitled **The Theater Plays the Body. Replication of the Canon of Beauty among Young Actresses in the Theater**. Anna Dwójnych and Katarzyna Kuczkowska-Golińska depict the results of a qualitative research conducted in Polish theater circles. The authors' aim is to answer the question whether the theater has currently become a place where bodily images are being standardized and beauty canons reproduced. The text presents conclusions concerning how studying at a theater school significantly impacts the perception of one's own body, a widespread belief among the students concerning the importance of the body (and the beauty thereof) in the profession of an actor, which results in subjecting the body to some regimes, often destructive ones, and last but not least, the pressure to have a perfect body strongly internalized in the theater circles.

The bodily image is as well featured in Tomasz Ferenc's **Nudity, Sexuality, Photography. Visual Redefinition of the Body**. The article presents changing relations of photography with a naked or semi-naked body and different forms and recording conventions. From the mid-19th century the naked body became a subject of scientifically grounded photographic explorations, an allegorical motif referring to painting traditions, an object of interest and excitement for the newly-developed "touristic" perspective. The author examines three main ways in which photographs depicting nudity were being taken at that time and shaped three visual modes. These include artistic-documentary, ethnographic-traveling, and scientific-medical. Tomasz Ferenc presents one more, probably prevalent in numbers, kind of photographic images: pornographic. He looks back to the middle of the 19th century and depicts the repertoire of pornographic pictures, which was already very wide, and soon became one of the photographic pillars of visual imagination of modern society. The author discovers the development of this genre to date. He tries to answer how all the processes connected with pornographic images affected our imagination and real practices, what does the staggering number of erotic photography denote? One of possible answers comes from Michel Foucault who suggests that our civilization does not have any *ars erotica*, but only *scientia sexualis*. As the author claims, creating sexual discourse became an obsession of our civilization, and its main pleasure is the pleasure of analysis and a constant production of truth about sex.

The issue of visual representation of the body and bodily practices is continued by Agnieszka Maj.

Her article, entitled **A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body—Recipes for a Healthy Living as Seen in Polish Vlogs**, focuses on one aspect of the fashion for leading a healthy lifestyle which has recently reached Polish society. One of the most popular sources of information concerning healthy lifestyles is, of course, the Internet. Some people have decided to introduce changes into the way they eat and exercise, primarily in order to become healthier and slimmer with the help of Internet. The article analyzes examples of Polish vlogs posted on the Youtube.pl platform that are principally devoted to improving fitness, as well as showing the most effective ways to lose weight. The author investigates four main areas: the vloggers' motivations for creating and publishing videos, the vloggers' reference to their own bodies, the reasons they offer for seeking a healthier way of living, the vloggers' bodies as their representation in the social space of the Internet, and the role of the Internet community in the many processes in helping people become slimmer.

Wojciech Goszczyński and Anna Wójtewicz introduce an inquisitive topic related to the previously mentioned article, namely, food and eating. Their paper on **Body on the Plate. On the Relation between the Carnality and Food (on the example of meat in advertising)** poses questions such as: do we own our bodies? Do we control them during the meal, or does the meal control us? The authors aim at examining the complex nexus of social and physical practices embedded in eating habits. The investigation of selected culinary advertisements gives an answer on the way food stabilizes, catalyzes, separates, and mediates social relations, as well as social and individual bodies.

The last paper, authored by Honorata Jakubowska and I, **Sociology of the Body—Teaching Embodied Approach through Autoethnography**, represents the subject of teaching sociology of the body and use of a qualitative research technique—autoethnography. Additionally, the article presents and discusses the way of teaching sociology of the body whose aim is to allow students to become familiar with embodied methodology and make them methodologically sensitive. We describe the research tasks given to the students in terms of the advantages they might bring in the educational process and difficulties that they may cause to both the student and the teacher and illustrate the subject with examples of the students' works. As the most valuable benefits deriving from this way of teaching we indicate raising methodological sensitivity, the ability to link embodied ex-

perience and knowledge with theoretical concepts, self-understanding in terms of social processes, but also putting into practice the perspective of embodiment in the social sciences. The article sets the issue of teaching in the specific cultural context, the courses of the sociology of the body in Poland and their status at Polish universities is proposed.

As the editor of this special issue of *Qualitative Sociology Review* I must express my deepest gratitude to the reviewers, who made the time to advise and improve the articles. I would as well like to thank the authors for their contribution and hard work during the long process of preparation of this special issue. A big thank you to the editors of *Qualitative Sociology Review*, for their time, excellence in publishing, and great support during the whole process.

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