

Agnieszka Kościńska

University of Warsaw

## Gender Panic – a Red Herring or a Dispute Around Cultural Citizenship?<sup>1</sup>

On 29 December 2013, i.e. on the day on which Catholics celebrate Sunday of the Holy Family, a letter prepared on the occasion by bishops was read out in Polish churches. The pastoral ministers of the Catholic Church in Poland, as the bishops refer to themselves, commenced their message by quoting the Polish pope:

Blessed John Paul II [...] recalls that the truth about the institution of marriage “is above the will of individuals, the whims of particular marriages, as well as decisions of social and government bodies” [...]. This truth comes from God, for “God himself is the author of marriage” [...]. God created the human being as a man and a woman and made the existence – in flesh and in spirit – of a man “for” a woman and a woman “for” a man a great and irreplaceable gift and task of married life. God based the family on the foundation of marriage joined for life by the unbreakable and exclusive bond of love. He decided that such a family will be a suitable environment for bringing up children that the family gives life to and ensures their material and spiritual development. (Episcopate 2013)

The bishops subsequently underlined that the Christian understanding of marriage originates from nature and that it should be protected. Hence a question arises: Is marriage, understood as a union between a man and a woman and enjoying special constitutional protection<sup>2</sup>, under threat in the country in which a vast

---

<sup>1</sup> The development of ideas presented in this article was influenced by: a panel discussion entitled *Revolucja seksualna – była, jest czy będzie?* [Sexual Revolution – a Thing of the Past, Present, or Future?], which took place as a part of the *Festiwal Równe Prawa do Miłości* [Festival of Equal Rights for Love] (Warsaw, 10.02.2014) – I wish to sincerely thank Agnieszka Weseli for an invitation and an inspiring conversation; my work on the lecture *Seksualność w PRL i dziś. Temat zastępczy czy spór o obywatelstwo kulturowe?* [Sexuality in the Polish People’s Republic and Today. A Red Herring or a Dispute Around Cultural Citizenship?] given during the National Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference *Seksualność, męskość, edukacja. Panika moralna 2013/2014 – rekonstrukcje* [Sexuality, Masculinity, Education. Moral Panic 2013/2014 – Reconstructions] (Social Sciences Faculty, University of Gdansk, 15–16.10.2014) – I am greatly indebted to Prof. Lucyna Kopciwicz for her invitation and encouragement; the article *Who Can Be a True Pole? On Gender Panic* was published in “V4 Revue” (<http://visegradrevue.eu/?p=2934>) – I am grateful to Partycja Bukalska from “V4 Revue” for triggering me to work and to Michał Petryk for his help with the translation of the thoughts presented therein into Polish. Last, but not least, I would not have written this paper if it was not for my long-term conversations with Prof. Hadley Renkin, a CEU homophobia researcher in Hungary.

<sup>2</sup> “Marriage, being a union of a man and a woman, as well as the family, motherhood and parenthood, shall be placed under the protection and care of the Republic of Poland”, Art. 18 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997.

majority of citizens identify themselves with Catholicism, and in which a marriage performed in church has the same importance as a civil marriage owing to the concordat? According to the pastoral ministers – yes, it is; this vision is being destroyed by “supporters of gender ideology”.

“Gender ideology” is a notion which emerged in the Polish media in summer 2013 and soon became widely discussed by, initially, Catholic priests and lay Catholic journalists, and, subsequently, by feminist researchers, who tried to explain that gender is not an ideology, but an analytical term largely facilitating the understanding of cultural and social sources of the discrimination against women, of domestic violence, of the social roles of men and women, and sexual identities. After several months, everyone discussed gender, and, unexpectedly, this academic notion became the main subject of Polish public debate. The pastoral letter was read out when the debate became very heated. The bishops decided to explain what it is all about and to defend Catholic values:

Confronted with increasing attacks against different aspects of family and social life coming from this ideology, we are compelled to speak out clearly in defence of the Christian family and the fundamental values that support it, on the one hand, and, on the other, to warn against threats stemming from propagating new forms of family life. (Episcopate 2013)

The pastoral ministers accordingly presented a definition of the “gender ideology”. According to them:

The gender ideology is the product of many decades of ideological and cultural changes that are deeply rooted in Marxism and neo-Marxism, endorsed by some feminist movements and the sexual revolution. This ideology promotes principles that are totally contrary to reality and an integral understanding of human nature. It maintains that biological sex is not socially significant and that cultural sex which humans can freely develop and determine irrespective of biological conditions is most important. According to this ideology, humans can freely determine whether they want to be men or women and freely choose their sexual orientation. This voluntary self-determination, not necessarily life-long, is to make the society accept the right to set up new types of families, for instance, families built on homosexual relations. (Episcopate 2013)

It is worth highlighting here that the bishops, just like other critics of gender, define the term in a very broad manner – to include not only the socially-developed sexual role, but also homo- and trans-sexuality, with all the categories treated as fluid and easily changeable at the individual level. One would look for such a broad and voluntary approach in feminist and queer literature in vain<sup>3</sup>.

However, let us go back to the letter. Its authors then proceed to the dangers related to gender ideology. According to the bishops, it is destructive both to individuals, and the entire society:

---

<sup>3</sup> A polemic with the bishops’ definition of the term “gender” goes beyond the scope of this paper. However, there are many critiques of the thus-understood notion, and it was already many years ago that Carole Vance dealt with it as well (2007, pp. 15–31).

Humans unsure of their sexual identity are not capable of discovering and fulfilling tasks that they face in their marital, family, social and professional lives. Attempts to form different types of relations *de facto* seriously weaken marriage as a community created by a man and a woman and the family built on marriage. (Episcopate 2013)

Finally, they indicate that the gender ideology can be found everywhere:

A decisive majority has no idea what this ideology is about and consequently does not feel threatened by it. A small group of people, particularly teachers and educators, as well as catechists and pastoral ministers, tries to find their own constructive ways to counter this ideology. Finally there are those who, seeing the absurdity of this ideology, believe that Poles will reject the utopian visions they are presented with. Meanwhile, without public knowledge or Poles' consent for many months now the gender ideology has been slowly introduced into different structures of social life: education, the health service, cultural and education centres and non-governmental organisations. Some media portray this ideology in a positive way: as a means to counteract violence and to aim for equality. (Episcopate 2013)

The bishops then go on to discuss the problem of discrimination and its sources. This applies to discrimination on the grounds of sex: "The Church unequivocally opposes discrimination on the grounds of sex, but at the same time recognises the danger of eliminating the differences existing in the sexes. The fact that there exist two sexes is not the source of discrimination; it is the lack of a spiritual reference, human selfishness and pride that need to be continually overcome" (Episcopate 2013) and on the grounds of sexuality: "The Church will never agree to debasing persons with a homosexual inclination, but at the same time it strongly underscores that homosexual activity is profoundly disorderly and that marriage as a community of a man and a woman as a social phenomenon cannot be put on a par with a homosexual relationship" (Episcopate 2013).

Finally, the pastoral ministers urge Catholics to actively join measures against the development of the "gender ideology". The call is addressed not only to individuals, but also institutions controlled by the state:

We also appeal to institutions responsible for Polish education not to yield under pressure from the few but very loud groups with not inconsiderable financial resources, which in the name of modern education carry out experiments on children and young people. We call on educational institutions to engage in the promotion of an integral vision of man. (Episcopate 2013)

These "experiments" include, according to the pastoral ministers, sexual education consistent with the standards of the World Health Organisation, and antidiscrimination classes carried out in some Polish schools by non-governmental organisations originating from feminist and LGBT communities.

Although the bishops' letter sounds very radical, it seems relatively moderate in comparison with some other Catholic statements on the topic. For example, father Dariusz Oko, Professor of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow, a philosopher, and the leading gender critic in Poland, compares the gender ideology to 20<sup>th</sup> century totalitarian regimes and is convinced that the "gender

ideology” and the “homolobby” (as he calls the LGBT movement) are products of evil origin. For instance, he turns attention to the fact that the basic problem of the “gender ideology” is its relation with atheism. In one of his interviews, he discussed “spiritual attitudes of the creators of the gender ideology”:

They are primarily leftist atheists. Atheism builds on fundamentally false assumption of the non-existence of God and therefore, by necessity, misunderstands the human being and the world. [...] Since it is a huge mistake, it also has hugely bad consequences. The greatest cultural and economic mistakes, and at the same time the greatest crimes in human history, were committed by atheists, simultaneously being (mortal) foes of Christianity, who never publicly expressed their regret or apologies for it. Nazism is responsible for about 50 million victims of the Second World War, while communism for at least 150 million victims of all its revolutions, cleansings, and other social “experiments”. [...] The people who are the most bitter foes of God, necessarily become the most devout servants of Satan. We need to remember that it is him who becomes the fundamental source of their thinking (Cichobłazińska 2013).

When reading bishops or other Catholic authors, it would be useful to reflect on why it is at this particular moment that Polish Catholics are so fervently fighting over gender. Feminists, LGBT activists, lay intellectuals, and leftist journalists usually offer two interpretations: under the first one, which is the most popular, Catholics started to discuss gender to divert the attention of the public opinion from paedophile scandals in the Polish church. To back up this interpretation, we may cite for instance a statement by Archbishop Józef Michalik, who openly said that “gender ideology” is the source of paedophilia (Stanisz 2013). According to the second interpretation, the interest in “gender ideology” is the Church’s reaction to the crisis of faith – Poles participate in Catholic rituals and follow Catholic ways less and less frequently. Social research shows for example that only a minority (less than 15%) of Poles are faithful to Catholic standards as far as contraception is concerned (Izdebski 2012, p. 253). There are no doubts that both interpretations contain a grain of truth, but, formulated in this way, fail to explain everything. I would like to offer here a systemic explanation taking into account both global and local/historical conditions.

First of all, we should not perceive the gender debate as limited solely to Poland. Similar discussions have been taking place in almost all the countries of the former Eastern bloc, also wherever the Catholic Church is not the main actor (see Shirinian 2014; Renkin 2009, pp. 20–37). Conservatives and nationalists in the entire region are increasingly interested in the gender issues and exchange thoughts, often stepping beyond the post-communist world. Similar debates have been conducted for some time now for example in the United States, Germany, and France and, as demonstrated by Elżbieta Korolczuk, they co-shape our national situation (Korolczuk 2014, p. 3; Herzog 2008). Translations of flagship anti-gender publications are available in Poland, including *Die Gender-Revolution: Relativismus in Aktion* [The Gender Revolution: Relativism in Action] by the German sociologist Gabriele Kuby, which was published as early as in 2007; a Catholic magazine for the youth entitled “Miłujcie Sie!” [Love Each Other] has for years been acquainting its readers with the Western, conservative approach to changes concerning gender

roles and sexuality<sup>4</sup>; in turn, Polish critics made sure they are heard all over the world – *Pastoral Letter to Be Used on the Sunday of the Holy Family 2013* is the only such document we can find on the Episcopate's official website in the English version.

However, a statement providing that the gender hysteria in Poland is only an element of a global panic does not answer the question about the reasons why this issue has become a hot potato in Poland today – after all, Kuby's book was available in Polish as far back as 2007, and in 2006 the LGBT movement was called "a new form of totalitarianism" in the „Miłujcie Sie!" magazine (Bilewicz 2006, pp. 45–48); similar comparisons are now made in relation to "gender ideology" (which contains, as pointed out, the issues of LGBT rights), as can be seen for example in the above-quoted interview with father Oko.

The local context is taken into account in an analysis of the gender panic by Magdalena Grabowska who indicates not only the global, but also the historical roots of today's situation referred to as a backlash (Grabowska 2014). The author, referring to works by Małgorzata Fidelis and Shana Penn, demonstrates that it was the Polish road to socialism started by Gomułka, and followed by the transformation of the political system, which contributed to the domination of the Catholic Church in the contemporary Polish public sphere (Grabowska 2014, pp. 8–9).

It is hard not to agree with Korolczuk and Grabowska. However, in my opinion, one other element is missing in this local/global jigsaw puzzle. I believe that the gender-centred debate is a part of a larger fight for what social researchers understand by cultural citizenship<sup>5</sup>. It is something more than just the possession of a passport of a given country, and something more than a set of citizen's rights and obligations. It is about the sense of belonging and identity. Hence, who is a real Pole? Can feminists, gays, transgender persons, or men and women who do not follow the model of traditional gender roles, fully belong to the Polish nation? Can gays, lesbians, and feminists identify themselves as real Poles? Can they call themselves Polish patriots? Can they be national heroes/heroines?

Today's debate on cultural citizenship began around 1989. The fall of communism started the fight around gender and sexuality. In Poland, just like in other countries of the region, the beginning of the 1990s was marked by a significant change, a transformation from an economy controlled by the state to one utilising the free market, from socialism to neoliberalism, from a totalitarian regime to democracy. After years of fighting, Poles could finally freely express their beliefs. What was the first great public debate in Poland? Did it concern the economy? Was it about the state? About the Church? No – about abortion. During communist times, in Poland, just like in other Central European countries, abortion was legal and easily available. The abortion debate that took place at the beginning of the 1990s largely concerned the role of women. Can they pursue a career outside their households or should they rather focus on having babies? The Church, an important actor in the debate, argued that Polish women should devote themselves to rebuilding the Polish nation

<sup>4</sup> Compare for example: (Oko 2009, pp. 40–43; Kościańska 2012a, pp. 145–146; 2013, pp. 427–439).

<sup>5</sup> Citizenship in the context of gender and sexuality is discussed in more detail in: Lister 2002, pp. 191–208; Renkin 2012, pp. 367–382; Rofel 2012, pp. 412–435.

after socialism; abortion was perceived as a threat to the nation (it decreased the number of Poles). The hot debate was finished with an almost total ban on abortion introduced in 1993<sup>6</sup>. The discussion was not the only one at the time, and the ban on abortion is not the only change in Polish law, which took place in the times of the transformation and concerned gender and sexuality. Sex reassignment surgeries and the accompanying psychological treatment used to be entirely financed by the state – but since the 1990s, patients themselves have to pay for them. The legal procedure accompanying the change of one's sex was bureaucratic and far from pleasant in the period of the Polish People's Republic, but since 1989 it has become even more complex and requires a court procedure against one of the parents (Dębińska 2013, pp. 221–224). Contraception and in vitro fertilisation used to be subsidised by the state<sup>7</sup>. This was also changed in the early 1990s. Apart from the abortion debate in 1993, the beginning of the 1990s was also the time of other public discussions on gender and sexuality, for instance masturbation, as a part of which Catholic intellectuals claimed that autoerotic sex constitutes a threat to the Polish nation, while the other side supported a greater sexual diversity (Kościańska 2012b). The 1990s were also the time of work on the constitution. As the political analyst Solongo Wandan (2004, pp. 171–181) recently reminded, it was the time of lively discussions on the introduction of a ban on discrimination on the grounds of sexuality to the constitution. Ultimately, the ban was not introduced, which was largely due to the activity of the Catholic Church. Subjects such as abortion and in vitro returned as topics of heated debates many times. Each time the Church used gender and sexuality to strengthen its role.

Simultaneously, the period from the onset of the 1990s until today is marked by the formation and the increasing visibility of dynamically developing feminist and LGBT movements. In recent years, activists of both sexes have been demanding not only their rights, but also citizenship in the cultural sense, i.e. the possibility to belong to the national community. *We are Poles too, We also co-create the national community* – one could read during marches and parades when Polish flags were seen next to the rainbow-coloured ones, and when they accompanied the *Manifa* feminist demonstrations. Agnieszka Graff, one of the most recognisable figures of the Polish feminism, said openly in the “Gazeta Wyborcza” newspaper that she is a patriot and that it is worth fighting for Polishness with conservatives. She wrote as follows in the Adersonian spirit:

The category of nationality remains one of the key elements of contemporary sensitivity, the main determinant of collective identity, a system organizing our orientation in the world. [...] Nationalities however can be “imagined” under different principles – as a community of blood, as a beleaguered castle, as a common mission to be fulfilled – and these principles are negotiable. Today, there is a dispute in Poland concerning whether to “imagine” our homeland in keeping with the dictates of the supporters of the national democracy or according to some other, more open and democratic rules. The stake is huge (Graff 2007).

<sup>6</sup> The abortion debate of that time has been subject to many analyses – see for example: Graff 2001; Szpakowska 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Since that time in vitro fertilisation became a topic of heated debates – see: Radkowska-Walkowicz 2012, pp. 30–37; 2013.

Her ideas are put into effect in many statements of feminist and queer historians and literary critics, providing that some figures who are significant for Polish literature and history stepped beyond traditional gender roles and sexual identities. For example, Krzysztof Tomasiak told stories of Polish writers of both sexes who crossed the borderlines of heteronormativity. Maria Konopnicka, the author of one of Poland's most important patriotic songs, *Rota* [The Oath], was described as a partner of Maria Dułębianka, one of the first Polish feminists (Tomasiak 2008; Renkin 2009). Both of them also became patrons of postgraduate *gender studies* in the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. In Elżbieta Janicka's work, the heroes of the myth-creating novel by Aleksander Kamiński *Kamienie na szaniec* [Stones for the Rampart] were pictured as non-heteronormative persons, which stirred a national debate and the indignation of conservative circles (Pazeda 2013). All these measures are aimed at constructing a new model of Poles of both sexes, one exceeding the cluster of Pole-Catholic, attachment to "traditional" family and "traditional" gender roles, as well as inscribing non-normativity into the history of Poland – in particular its most important, identity-creating moments, such as the 19<sup>th</sup>-century fight with the partitioners and the resistance movement during the Second World War. It is all about redefining the Polish cultural citizenship. If the debate concerning "gender ideology" is placed in this context, it becomes clear that it is an answer to the increasingly intense actions of feminists and LGBT activists, who want to tell the history of Poland anew and build a new Polish national identity. It is a continuation of the previous discussions concerning cultural citizenship (ones related to abortion, in vitro, sexual orientation in the constitution or masturbation), owing to which the Polish national identity is more and more frequently defined as diverse and not necessarily Catholic, and in which Poles do not necessarily follow a Catholic or a conservative lifestyle.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, many analysts have maintained that the 1993 abortion debate, as well as other discussions concerning sexuality and gender, are only red herrings meant to distract attention from important issues such as the economy. For example Marcin Król, a philosopher and an anti-communist opposition activist, in a very interesting interview given to "Gazeta Wyborcza", criticises Polish elites for their excessive focusing on gender, morality, and discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexuality; he maintains that this diverts attention from social and economic inequalities, and in consequence causes a development of right-wing politics. He was rather blunt about this:

All the debates that are currently firing us, are about – pardon me – the arse and its surroundings. They are related to issues concerning sexual morality. This is not the pivotal point of social life, including the very serious issue of abortion. The progressive elites concentrated on gender and sexual inequalities, entirely losing from sight simple economic inequalities that are a scandal. Why should we tackle some 19<sup>th</sup>-century social categories, when we have new ones, and they are much more interesting? We have thus left ordinary people with their ordinary problems to the mercy of the crackbrained right-wing politics that will promise everything to them. (Sroczyński 2014)

However, when we look at these debates bearing in mind the category of cultural citizenship, we will see that sexuality and gender are the essence of the national identity and nationalism (see Mosse 1985; Graff 2008). Belonging to the national community and the acquisition of cultural citizenship depend on the appropriate behaviours, and gender and sexual identities (which consequently translates into economic issues such as the Foucauldian biopolitics of population) (Foucault 1995). The Church and feminist/LGBT activists have different views on the Polish national identity. The fight continues. A brief look at today's Polish public debate, as a part of which feminists must explain that feminism does not cause paedophilia, as the Church maintains, may lead to a conclusion that it is the Church – using its historically-shaped strong position, strengthened with arguments developed by the anti-gender international – who wins. But a deeper analysis of Poles' lifestyle and beliefs shows that they are not so much Catholic (Borowik, Doktor 2001; Izdebski 2012), and that the equality-related ideals are increasingly closer to them – after all, Poland is now the only country in the world in which a trans woman was a member of Parliament; it is here that a leading feminist was the Vice-Speaker of the Polish Parliament, and a gay openly admitting his sexual orientation scored more votes during local government elections than the political establishment – and the Church and conservatives again use gender and sexuality for political fights, defence of their own interests, and shaping a specific vision of the nation.

#### Literature

- Bilewicz J., 2006, *O wolności, równości, tolerancji, Sodomie i Godomie* [On Freedom, Equality, Tolerance, Sodom, and Gomorrah], „Miłujcie Sie!”, nr 2.
- Borowik I., Doktor T., 2001, *Pluralizm religijny i moralny w Polsce. Raport z badań* [Religious and Moral Pluralism in Poland. Research Report], Zakład Wydawniczy „Nomos”, Kraków.
- Cichobłazińska A., 2013, *Gender – ideologia totalna* (wywiad z ojcem Dariuszem Oko) [Gender – A Totalitarian Ideology (an interview with Father Dariusz Oko)], <http://www.niedziela.pl/arttykul/106423/nd/>.
- Dębińska M., 2013, *Natura, kultura i hybrydy. Prawne konstrukcje transseksualizmu* [Nature, Culture, and Hybrids. Legal Constructions of Transsexualism], „Lud”, vol. 97.
- Grabowska M., 2014, *Cultural War or “Business as Usual”? Recent Instances, and the Historical Origins of a “Backlash” against Women’s and Sexual Rights in Poland*, [https://pl.boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2014/10/cultural\\_war\\_or\\_grabowska.pdf](https://pl.boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2014/10/cultural_war_or_grabowska.pdf) [accessed on 26.12.2014].
- Foucault M., 1978, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1: *The Will to Knowledge*, transl. R. Hurley, Pantheon Books, New York.
- Graff A., 2001, *Świat bez kobiet. Płeć w polskim życiu publicznym* [The World without Women. Gender in Polish Public Life], WAB, Warszawa.
- Graff A., 2007, *Polskość nie jest własnością endeków* [Polishness Does not Belong Solely to National Democrats], „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 23.08.2007, p. 16, also [http](http://www.gazeta.pl) [accessed on 28.12.2014].
- Graff A., 2008, *Rykoszetem. Rzecz o płci, seksualności i narodzie* [Ricochet. About Gender, Sexuality, and the Nation], WAB, Warszawa.
- Herzog D., 2008, *Sex in Crisis: The New Sexual Revolution and the Future of American Politics*, Basic Books, New York.
- Izdebski Z., 2012, *Seksualność Polaków na początku XXI wieku. Studium badawcze* [Sexuality of Poles at the Beginning of the 21st Century. A Study], Wydawnictwo UJ, Kraków.



- Korolczuk E., 2014, "The War on Gender" from a Transnational Perspective – Lessons for Feminist Strategising, p. 3, [http://pLboell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2014/10/war\\_on\\_genderkorolczuk.pdf](http://pLboell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2014/10/war_on_genderkorolczuk.pdf) [accessed on 24.12.2014].
- Kościańska A., 2012a, *Kościoty i związki wyznaniowe w Polsce wobec osób LGBT* [Churches and Religious Associations in Poland in Relation to LGBT Persons], [in:] *Sytuacja społeczna osób LGBT. Raport za lata 2010–2011* [Social Situation of LGBT Persons. A Report for 2010–2011], M. Makuchowska, M. Pawłęga (eds.), [http://www.kph.org.pl/publikacje/Raport\\_badania\\_LGBT\\_do\\_netu.pdf](http://www.kph.org.pl/publikacje/Raport_badania_LGBT_do_netu.pdf) [accessed on 28.12.2014].
- Kościańska A., 2012b, *Czy onanista to też Polak? Debata o masturbacji 1993–1994* [Is an Onanist a Pole, Too? The 1993–1994 Masturbation Debate], "InterAlia", No. 7, [http://www.interalia.org.pl/pl/artykuly/aktualny\\_numer\\_2012\\_7/12\\_czy\\_onanista\\_to\\_tez\\_polak\\_debata\\_o\\_masturbacji\\_19931994.htm](http://www.interalia.org.pl/pl/artykuly/aktualny_numer_2012_7/12_czy_onanista_to_tez_polak_debata_o_masturbacji_19931994.htm) [accessed on 26.12.2014].
- Kościańska A., 2013, *Jak uchronić polskie dzieci przed demoralizacją? Dyskurs medycyny i psychologii w pewnym młodzieżowym piśmie katolickim* [How to Protect Polish Children Against Demoralisation? Discourse of Medicine and Psychology in a Catholic Magazine for the Youth], [in:] *Etnograficzne wędrówki po obszarach antropologii. Tom w darze dla Profesora Lecha Mroza* [Ethnographic Wanderings Through Anthropology. A Volume Dedicated to Prof. Lech Mróz], Ł. Smyrski, K. Waszczyńska (eds.), Wydawnictwo DiG, Warszawa.
- Kuby G., 2006, *Die Gender–Revolution: Relativismus in Aktion* [The Gender Revolution: Relativism in Action], Fe-Medienverlags GmbH, Kißlegg.
- List pasterski na Niedzielę Świętej Rodziny 2013 roku [A Pastoral Letter to Be Used on the Sunday of the Holy Family 2013], <https://episkopat.pl/list-pasterski-na-niedziele-swietej-rodziny-2013-roku/> [accessed on 24.12.2014]
- Lister R., 2002, *Sexual Citizenship*, [in:] *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, E. F. Isin, B.S. Turner (eds.), SAGE Publications: London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi.
- Mosse G.L., 1985, *Nationalism and Sexuality. Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*, Fertig, New York.
- Oko D., 2009, *Kościół wobec homoideologii* [The Church in the Face of Homoideology], "Miłujcie Się!", nr 1.
- Pezda A., 2014, *Byli żołnierze Szarych Szeregów zszokowani wywiadem na temat „Kamieni na szaniec”* [Former "Grey Ranks" Soldiers Shocked by an Interview Concerning "Stones for the Rampart"], "Gazeta Wyborcza", [http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,13679057,Byli\\_zolnierze\\_Szarych\\_Szeregow\\_zszokowani\\_wywiadem.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,13679057,Byli_zolnierze_Szarych_Szeregow_zszokowani_wywiadem.html) [accessed on 28.12.2014].
- Radkowska-Walkowicz M., 2012, *The Creation of 'Monsters': the Discourse of Opposition to In Vitro Fertilization in Poland*, "Reproductive Health Matters", Vol. 20, No. 40.
- Radkowska-Walkowicz M., 2013, *Doświadczenie in vitro. Niepłodność i nowe technologie reprodukcyjne w perspektywie antropologicznej* [The Experience of In Vitro. Infertility and New Reproduction Technologies in the Anthropological Perspective], Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa.
- Renkin H., 2009, *Homophobia and Queer Belonging in Hungary*, "Focaal – European Journal of Anthropology", No. 53.
- Renkin H.Z., 2007, *Predecessors and Pilgrims: Lesbian History-making and Belonging in Post-socialist Hungary*, [in:] Takács J., Kuhar R. (eds.), *Beyond the Pink Curtain: the Everyday Life of LGBTs in Eastern and Central Europe*, pp. 269–286, Peace Institute, Ljubljana.
- Rofel L., 1999, *Qualities of Desire: Imagining Gay Identities in China*, "GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies", Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 451–474.
- Shirinian T., 2014, *Gender Hysteria: the Dangers of the Emigration of the Family and the Immigration of Homosexuality in Post-Soviet Armenia*, a lecture given as a part of the session Innovation and Continuity in the Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality during

- a congress of the European Association of Social Anthropologists, Tallinn, 31.07–3.08.2014.
- Sroczyński G., 2014, *Byliśmy głupi* [We Were Stupid], an interview with Marcin Król, [http://wyborcza.pl/magazyn/1,136528,15414610,Bylismy\\_glupi.html?piano\\_d=1](http://wyborcza.pl/magazyn/1,136528,15414610,Bylismy_glupi.html?piano_d=1) [accessed on 26.12.2014].
- Stanisz B., 2013, *Winni rodzice, feministki i... Abp Michalik znów o pedofilii* [The Blame Goes to Parents, Feminists, and... Archbishop Michalik Discusses Paedophilia Again], [http://wroclaw.gazeta.pl/wroclaw/1,35771,14788274,Winni\\_rodzicefeministki\\_i\\_Abp\\_Michalik\\_znow\\_o.html](http://wroclaw.gazeta.pl/wroclaw/1,35771,14788274,Winni_rodzicefeministki_i_Abp_Michalik_znow_o.html).
- Szpakowska M., 2003, *Chcieć i mieć. Samowiedza obyczajowa w Polsce czasu przemian* [To Want and to Have. Moral Self-knowledge in Poland in the Times of the Transformation], WAB, Warszawa.
- Tomasik K., 2008, *Homobiografie. Pisarki i pisarze polscy XIX i XX wieku* [Homobiographies. Polish Writers of Both Sexes in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries], Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, Warszawa.
- Vance C., 1989, *Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality*, [in:] Altman D. et al. (eds.), *Homosexuality, Which Homosexuality?*, pp. 13–33, Uitgeverij An Dekker/Schorer, Amsterdam.
- Wandan S., 2004, *Making New Rights: Constitutional Agenda-Setting in the Transitions of Poland (1989–1997) and South Africa (1990–1994 (1996))*, doctoral thesis, Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science of the New School.

### Summary

#### *Gender Panic: a red herring or a dispute around cultural citizenship?*

The article explores gender discourses that circulate in the media, popular culture and the Catholic Church in Poland, and how this relates to policy and practice, ultimately shaping sexual politics. It explores what cultural citizenship is, what sexual politics are, and why the idea of a moral panic provides a useful analytical lens for looking at current debates around gender, sexuality, education and the social role of the religion in Poland.

### Keywords

gender, Catholic church, ideology, culture, citizenship

*English translation: Anna Moroz-Darska*

Tłumaczenie sfinansowano ze środków Ministerstwa Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego na podstawie umowy nr 661/P-DUN/2018 z dnia 13 lipca 2018 roku w ramach realizacji zadania 1 – stworzenie anglojęzycznych wersji wydawanych publikacji w 2018 roku.

The translation was financed with funds made available by the Ministry of Finance and Higher Education under contract No. 661/P-DUN/2018 of 13 July 2018 as a part of the execution of task 1: the creation of English-language versions of the issued publications in 2018.