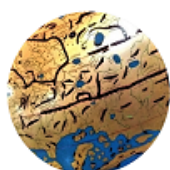


Research - Analysis: Towards Inclusive LGBTIQ+ Education

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Contents

Introduction	4
General Framework: Italy	5
General Framework: Czech Republic	9
General Framework: Cyprus	18
From Emotions to Feminism: History and Inspiration	21
Feminist "nerve-wracking"	21
Verbal Expression of Pain	22
Experience transformed into a Slogan	22
Truths spoken from the Vagina	22
Love and Solidarity	23
Seeking and liberating women's space	24
Personal space	24
Safe Space	25
Space for work	26
Tactics of Revolutionary Feminism	27
Radically Raised Objections	28
The Outcry of the Equality Protests	29
Breasts of power: The Voice of the Body in Protest	30
Conflicts Within the Feminist Movement	31
Racism in the Feminist Movement	31
Veiling in the Feminist Movement	31
Class Differences in the Feminist Movement	33
Homophobia in the Feminist Movement	34
Transphobia in the Feminist Movement	35
Conflicts Outside the Feminist Movement	37
Anti-gender movement	37
Gender studies and men's studies	37
Queer Theory: genesis and early developments	39
The genesis of Queer Theory: Gayle Rubin and her Thinking Sex	42
The Genesis of Queer Theory: Adrienne Rich and Compulsory Heterosexuality	43
The identity drifts. What can queer theory be used for today in the humanities?	47
Conclusion	49

Introduction

This booklet discusses the major historical milestones of the feminist movement, LGBTQI+¹ history, and the development of gender and queer studies, with a preliminary, conceptual framework on the major EU countries involved in *Streets Aligned*. The main aim is to bring these evolutions to the readers in an easy-to-read way. The booklet is primarily targeted at educators in the field of adult education, but can of course serve the public and all persons hungry for knowledge, teachers, youth and social workers.

The booklet is based partly on a book written by the British historian Lucy Delap, who in her book *Feminisms: A Global History* focuses on the various feminist movements around the world that have been central to shaping societies as we know them today. As you will see from the text below, feminism has never been (and probably never will be) a unified movement. Nor has the LGBTQI+ movement, which is the subject of the second half of the booklet. This part of the text also describes the development of gender, queer and men's studies in academic settings.

¹ This acronym is an umbrella term for people of non-mainstream sexual orientation or gender identity. Specifically, it refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex persons. The + sign then represents other gender identities and sexual orientations not explicitly mentioned in the acronym.

General Framework: Italy

Educational settings & SOGIESC in Italy

Many documents, specifically for the Italian schooling system (and, in a broad sense, education and training) "protect and support students in the development of their identity". However, no document so far explicitly mentions themes, keywords or anything else related to the SOGIGESC framework. On the contrary, an educational protocol promulgated by the Ministry of Education (2015) emphasizes the fact that "schools should not promote any specific ideology".

Another protocol (national guidelines, 2017) suggests the introduction of elements and themes such as sexual orientation at school, but it is absolutely not binding.

On the other hand, over the years and up to 2022, Italy has, if anything, been at the centre of numerous criticisms: for example, having promoted a national strategy on LGBT anti-discrimination (2013-2015), the UN UPR has underlined the shortcomings of Italy and the fact that many points of the 2013-2015 strategy had not been followed up or implemented.

The Italian Ministry of Equal Opportunities has underlined its willingness to adhere to the well-known "Strategy for LGBTIQ + 2020-2025 equality" of the European Commission, starting from 2022. In any case, to date, Italy does not integrate SOGIGESC issues in a compulsory manner either at school or in other educational and/or training settings. There is therefore no obligation in the curriculum to integrate topics such as sexuality education for students. The reforms relating to "Civic Education" teaching, which have focused heavily for example on promoting education in environmental sustainability, do not integrate or mention SOGIGESC issues.

During the training course of future teachers, educators and trainers, there is no training in LGBTIQ+ matters. Although there are numerous guidelines to combat the discriminatory phenomenon, the specific LGBTIQ+ issues have never been included or included in the curriculum to date. Indeed, there are numerous cases, in the news, which testify to a contrary trend: Arcigay often denounces the impossibility of proposing questionnaires or other in the SOGIGESC area precisely because of bans imposed by school and/or educational realities.

In general, schools have psychologists or social workers within them who provide students with listening services, but their training - as noted above - hardly includes LGBTIQ+ related topics.

Sometimes this service and this educational offer is promoted through protocols, projects and collaborations with non-profit organizations.

In the end, it all depends on the availability of the individual school and/or educational institution.

Even from the point of view of bullying, schools are not obliged to specifically address the one centered on homobitranphobia.

From a social and political point of view, hate speech and homobitransphobic crimes are on the rise in Italy. Some virtuous cases: several schools and universities today guarantee the transgender student body the autonomous indication of their name.

When we talk about LGBTIQ+ and SOGIGESC issues in Italy and at school, we must refer to the controversial Zan Bill, a bill proposed by Alessandro Zan, deputy of the Democratic Party and LGBTIQ+ activist for decades. Starting from 2018, it was therefore a law that would make it a crime, in Italy, to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

In fact, on November 4, 2020 – in a period dominated by the Covid19 emergency – the design was approved in the Chamber of Deputies.

Here, however, the process is interrupted: having reached the second and definitive discussion in the Senate much later, the Zan Law was "sunk": as underlined by many politicians, it was not really understood what they were voting for, imagining in fact, that the Bill was simply related to hate crimes against LGBTIQ+ people and not also related to gender identities, a topic felt as much more problematic.

Hence, and the consequent confusion, the rejection of the law in the Senate. To date, therefore, Italy does not have (receiving formal queries from EU institutions too) a real LGBTIQ+ anti-discrimination law.

But, in detail, what did the Zan Law consist of?

The bill had the "purpose, in implementation of Article 3 of the Constitution, to offer the greatest protection against all forms of discrimination based on sex, gender and sexual orientation, as expressions of the inviolable rights of each individual, as well as against any individual form of discrimination based on disability".

The art. 2 (in detail: changes to article 604-bis of the criminal code) introduced some changes to pre-existing laws (Article 604-bis of the criminal code): for example, in the first paragraph, letter A, "or based on sex, gender, sexual orientation or disability". Or again: to the letter D, the addition: "propaganda of ideas (...) and discriminatory and violent acts for racial, ethnic, religious ideas or based on sex, gender, sexual orientation or disability".

To simplify: Zan Bill envisaged and wished to strengthen pre-existing laws on anti-discrimination, already in force in Italy, with specific references to sexual orientation, gender identities and disabilities.

Several aspects were found difficult to approve by the Senate. For instance:

1. The establishment of the national day against discrimination

The art. 7 of the Zan Bill introduced the national day against discrimination in order to promote the culture of respect and inclusion. The chosen date was May 17, already world day against homobitransphobia.

2. Gender identities

What did it mean? In some interpretations of the bill, the reference to gender identities was too strong and too oriented to the possibility of "self-determination".

In absolute terms, the (negative) emphasis on the very notion of gender identity has been placed by both moderate, conservative and feminist forces, who have ultimately asked for the rejection of any "propagandist" and / or "transactivist" proposal, invoking a rather generic "freedom of speech and expression".

But was it really the case?

Not really. In reality, the Zan Bill dealt with gender identities in a similar way to the European and Western context, distinguishing between "sex" (biological, registered at birth) and "gender" (understood, simplifying, as a culturally determined element, different from "sex" and not "coincident" or "consequent" to "sex"). As already mentioned, these definitions are now largely and already present in Italian and European law.

The doubts related to "propaganda" were mostly referable to the establishment of the National anti-discrimination day in order to promote the culture of respect and inclusion.

In any case, the Zan Bill expressly protected freedom of expression and the pluralism of ideas.

And self-affirmation?

Actually, the law did not foresee to include any changes in the matter of self-determination whatsoever. Even today, in Italy, law 164/82 – very similar to the English Gender Recognition Act – which regulates the path towards sex change is still in force in this regard. Many improvements have been approved (today it is no longer necessary to undertake a surgical transition path to obtain a sex change on one's documents). In any case, the Zan Bill did not explicitly address these issues.

The bill itself was composed of a set of changes to already existing anti-discrimination laws, strengthening them and introducing key words such as sexual orientation, gender identities and disability.

And the schooling system or other ADU-settings?

This has been a hotly debated topic. Protecting minors, not ideologizing educational settings, not introducing sensitive topics such as gender and sexuality have always been cornerstones of conservative wings. But, in detail, what did the law foresee?

Nothing particularly burdensome.

Precisely on the occasion of the National anti-discrimination day in order to promote the culture of respect and inclusion, schools, in compliance with the three-year plan of the educational offer referred to in paragraph 16 of article 1 of law 13 July 2015, n. 107, and to the educational pact of co-responsibility, as well as the other public administrations, provide activities referred to in the previous article (ed. On the occasion of the day, ceremonies or events can be organized to promote respect, inclusion, enhancement of diversity, the contrast of stereotypes and prejudices, etc.).

This element, among other things, had already been amended, using the formula “they can be undertaken”, essentially allowing, for example, schools or other public realities and institutions to act freely on the matter.

Consequently, there was no mention possibly related to the need to reshape curricula whatsoever. Nor the obligation of ad hoc preparation in LGBTIQ+ topics for teachers, educators, nor students. Nonetheless, the text was rejected and there are currently no anti-discrimination bills under discussion in Italy.

This overview of the Zan Bill is not only aimed at promoting its content in a correct way, but also to describe the state of the art, in Italian education, of SOGIGESC and more in detail in reference to inclusive LGBTIQ+ or referable to sexual education.

As anticipated, albeit not in a particularly decisive way, for example, the Zan Bill encouraged schools or other public institutions to spread the LGBTIQ+ - more generally, the culture of inclusion and diversity – on the occasion of the world day against homobitranphobia (on May the 17th).

In Italy, to date, there is in no way not only the introduction of LGBTIQ+ inclusion topics for example in the school environment, but an even more generic sexuality education is lacking. A compulsory “subject” – and for a long time already – in many EU countries: Germany, Denmark, Austria, France and, as we know, Sweden.

In reality, the opposite is rarer: Italy shares the absence only with Bulgaria, Cyprus, Lithuania, Poland and Romania.

The result, as evidenced in numerous sources, is that young Italians know not only about sexual orientation, gender identity or other, but also about sexually transmitted diseases, prevention tools, etc.

If therefore some countries, such as Italy, have recently made the teaching of LGBTIQ+ issues and themes compulsory (since sexuality education has already been present for some time), also including overviews on the movement of demands, on the stigmatizing phenomenon of AIDS and more, Italy tends not to take any step forward.

A small is an attempt represented by Ddl Fedeli (2015), which initially introduced the themes of sexuality education in schools. The bill, of course, has never seen the light and has been severely

hampered by pro-life movements, Catholic associations and the Catholic Church, parents' associations with a profound conservative inclination and more.

But what really hurts this regulatory and curriculum void?

In fact, only LGBTIQ+ people (and not only): although there are not many studies or data on homobitransphobic bullying available (the latest, by Arcigay, is from 2010), it is highly probable that the numbers at a distance of 12 years are themselves the same, precisely because nothing – on several occasions – has been done on the matter. Already in 2010, 81% of LGBTIQ+ people at school reported verbal bullying, 38%, threats and violence. 16%, physical assaults.

General Framework: the Czech Republic

Educational settings & SOGIESC in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic two documents regulate equal treatment:

- The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms No. 1/1993 Coll.
- Anti-Discrimination Act

The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms was approved in 1991 by the Federal Assembly of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. In 1992, the Charter was declared a part of the constitutional order of the Czech Republic. In the preamble, the previous political order (communist totalitarianism from 1948 to 1989) when fundamental human rights had been suppressed is pointed out and the importance of democratic tradition is mentioned.

In Article 3 the Charter states: “Fundamental human rights and freedoms are guaranteed to everybody irrespective of sex, race, colour of skin, language, faith, religion, political or other conviction, ethnic or social origin, membership in a national or ethnic minority, property, birth, or other status.” The charter does not explicitly list sexual orientation, gender identity or gender (it uses the word sex). However, in contrast to the Anti-discrimination Act, the list of grounds in the Charter is open.

The Anti-Discrimination Act entered into effect in 2009. The act reflects the relevant regulations of the European Union as well as the Charter of the Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms and international agreements. It defines the right to equal treatment and prohibition of discrimination with respect to ten areas of public life, including “access to and provision of education, including training” (§ 1/1/i). The act lists discriminatory conduct and distinguishes direct and indirect discrimination. Sexual harassment is explicitly mentioned as behaviour that shall be considered to be discrimination (§ 2/2). The Act lists eleven discriminatory grounds including sex and sexual orientation with the specification: “Discrimination on grounds of pregnancy, maternity and paternity

and on grounds of sexual identification shall also be considered to be discrimination on grounds of sex” (§ 2/4).²

“Czech criminal law does not recognize sexual orientation and gender identity (unlike race or religion) as a motive for hatred that should be punished. In practice, this means that racist or religious attacks should be marked as serious crimes, but homophobic and transphobic attacks are treated as mere misdemeanours. The Public Defender of Rights acknowledged these shortcomings and recommended that the Criminal Code be changed so that victims of LGBTIQ+ hate crime have the same protection as victims of other hate-motivated crimes. However, such an amendment has not yet been adopted.”³

Transgender and Czech law

The Czech Republic is one of the last European countries to require surgery before allowing a trans person to officially change gender. It is the most serious problem related to transgender identities, because it exposes people who cannot undergo surgery in particular to long-term discrimination and loss of privacy. That is also criticised by international organisations such as Transgender Europe and the Council of Europe. Despite the decision of the European Economic and Social Committee, this situation has still not been rectified.⁴

An official change of gender is possible in the Czech Republic. “However, it is only possible on the basis of an operative sex change, including the inability of the reproductive function (i.e., after sterilisation).” The Czech Republic is one of the last countries in Europe with this requirement. The Council of Europe found this practice contrary to the obligations of member states to protect health. The Public Defender of Rights recommended the government to submit changes to the relevant laws.⁵

In May 2019, the Supreme Administrative Court ruled, contrary to the European Court of Human Rights, that the sterilisation requirement was legitimate. The decision was challenged, but the repeal

² Hodická, K., D. Krišová, L. Lukács, G. Mészáros, L. Polánková, D. Rédei, R. Sáfrány, C. Schneider, L. Slavík, R. Tanzberger. 2019. *Gender in national education documents and teaching resources, and in teachers' pedagogical approaches and everyday teaching practices in Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary*. Comparative report. Available from: https://6d77a323ea.clvw-cdnwnd.com/50d2286a49b6846c801b72a1cf7189d4/200000749-497bb497bd/Comparative%20report_gender_Nora.pdf?ph=6d77a323ea

³ LGBTI+ in the Czech Republic (LGBTI+ v České republice). *Amnesty International*. [online]. Available from: <https://www.amnesty.cz/lgbti/v-cr>

⁴ LGBTI+ in the Czech Republic (LGBTI+ v České republice). *Amnesty International*. [online]. Available from: <https://www.amnesty.cz/lgbti/v-cr>

⁵ LGBTI+ in the Czech Republic (LGBTI+ v České republice). *Amnesty International*. [online]. Available from: <https://www.amnesty.cz/lgbti/v-cr>

of the problematic paragraph in the Civil Code has not happened. The Constitutional Court was inclined to the opinion that the wording of the law itself is not unconstitutional.

In March 2023, a press conference was held on the subject of changes to the Act on Gender Change, at which representatives of the Ministry of Justice and the Government Commissioner for Human Rights presented a draft amendment to §29 of the Civil Code. If the presented proposal were to succeed in its current form, the aforementioned sterilisation obligation would be abolished.

Intersectionality in the Czech law

“In the Czech Republic, there is also low awareness of the special position of LGBTIQ+ Roma and their needs. There is no institutional support aimed at addressing the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ Roma. There is also a lack of systematic and targeted support for the non-profit sector in solving hate crimes, breaking down stereotypes and solving anti-Roma expressions and hatred. There is almost no effort to solve the problems that affect LGBTIQ+ Roma. They are a particularly vulnerable group, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to many disadvantages and discrimination bordering on racism, homophobia and transphobia. National health systems and most civil society organisations do not take into account the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ Roma. Provisions regarding multiple discrimination are completely absent in Czech legal regulations. This type of discrimination is not expressly prohibited by law, nor is there any case law dealing with it. There is a very weak monitoring mechanism. Social policy and legal provisions need to be expanded to include an intersectional approach, as well as to incorporate intersectionality into national law.”⁶

The Roma LGBTIQ+ Minority and Its Status in Selected EU Countries (CZ, SK, and HU) is one of the first research studies of its kind within the EU, providing not only theoretical but also practical information on multiple intersectional discrimination as a social-legal phenomenon concerning the situation of LGBTIQ+ Roma individuals from the perspective of public administration and civil society organisations active in this field.⁷

The Czech organisation ARA ART conducted research in three countries, revealing a lack of conceptual and legal framework in the area of multiple intersectional discrimination. This deficiency affects the protection of human rights for ethnic/racial and sexual/gender minorities in the context of an overall trend of weakening equality oversight bodies. ARA ART emphasises that it is crucial to

⁶ LGBTIQ+ in the Czech Republic (LGBTIQ+ v České republice). *Amnesty International* [online]. Available from: <https://www.amnesty.cz/lgbti/v-cr>

⁷ Bučková, A., L. Fremlová. 2021. *The Roma LGBTIQ Minority and Its Status in Selected EU Countries (CZ, SK, AND HU)*. Available from: <https://www.araart.cz/getmedia/ef0f673d-2134-49c8-b56c-46db9a7416eb/ARA-ART-analyticka-zprava-A4-V2-korektura-CR.pdf>

note that despite this situation, there are actors capable of finding constructive solutions. Fortunately, there is at least some manoeuvring space for cases of multiple intersectional discrimination, including queer Roma individuals.⁸

Educative Settings & SOGIGESC in Czech Republic

The specific provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act relating to men and women refers to the field of work and employment, the provision of services and the social security system for workers. There are no gender-related specific provisions in the area of education.⁹

In 2019, the Office of Public Defender of Rights carried out research on *Being LGBT+ in the Czech Republic* and also dealt with the field of education. They found that “(t)he rate of hiding or concealment in school was slightly lower compared to work and employment. 43% of respondents often or always hide their gender identity, in the case of sexual orientation, 34%. Compared to the results of a study by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) from 2012, this is a shift towards greater openness - at that time, up to 71% of respondents often or always hid their belonging to the LGBT+ group. Up to a fifth of the respondents said that during their studies they often or always experienced negative comments or actions related to their own or some of their classmates' sexual orientation or gender identity. On the contrary, only less than a quarter of the respondents have never encountered such behaviour. This suggests that schools and other educational institutions are often places where LGBT+ people are exposed to negative experiences and that this area therefore deserves more attention from teachers, principals and other actors who can influence the atmosphere in schools.”¹⁰

“In April 2021, the *Government Strategy for Equality and the Removal of Barriers to a Dignified Life of LGBT+ People in the Czech Republic 2021–2026* was presented and is now subject to a broad discussion within the framework of the interdepartmental comment procedure. The strategy is the first government document that comprehensively deals with the rights, lives and problems of LGBT+

⁸ Bučková, A., L. Fremlová. 2021. *The Roma LGBTIQ Minority and Its Status in Selected EU Countries (CZ, SK, AND HU)*. Available from: <https://www.araart.cz/getmedia/ef0f673d-2134-49c8-b56c-46db9a7416eb/ARA-ART-analyticka-zprava-A4-V2-korektura-CR.pdf>

⁹ Hodická, K., D. Krišová, L. Lukács, G. Mészáros, L. Polánková, D. Rédei, R. Sáfrány, C. Schneider, L. Slavík, R. Tanzberger. 2019. *Gender in national education documents and teaching resources, and in teachers' pedagogical approaches and everyday teaching practices in Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Comparative report*. Available from: https://6d77a323ea.clvaw-cdnwnd.com/50d2286a49b6846c801b72a1cf7189d4/200000749-497bb497bd/Comparative%20report_gender_Nora.pdf?ph=6d77a323ea

¹⁰ *Being LGBT+ in the Czech Republic. Experiences of LGBT+ people with prejudice, discrimination, harassment and hate violence*. Research of the Public Defender of Rights 2019. (Být LGBT+ v Česku. Zkušenosti LGBT+ lidí s předsudky, diskriminací, obtěžováním a násilím z nenávisti) [online]. Available from: <https://www.ochrance.cz/uploads-import/DISKRIMINACE/Vyzkum/Vyzkum-LGBT.pdf>

people in the Czech Republic. It deals with six strategic areas and one of them is education. It brings proposals for measures aimed at better protection of rights, removal of barriers and equal status of LGBT+ people in the Czech Republic. The measures are based on the constitutional order of the Czech Republic, its international obligations and standards for the protection of the rights of LGBT+ people, and are based on relevant data and scientific knowledge.”¹¹

In the Czech Republic three state-published resources are available, which deal with SOGIESC:

1) A tool for assessing the gender correctness of textbooks¹²

The one-page material was one of the outputs of the project called Assessment of the gender stereotyping in textbooks, implemented in 2004 by the Ministry of Education, Youth And Sports of the Czech Republic. The document itself is not dated, the authors are J. Valdrová, I. Smetáčková, B. Knotková. The document consists of a series of questions that reviewers should ask while reviewing a textbook from a gender perspective. Questions are divided into six themes: curriculum selection; depiction of women and men; illustrations; examples for interpretation and practising of the subject; how students are addressed; and the language of description. The tool is intended to guide reviewers of school books to recognise whether a book is gender stereotypical or not.

The guideline presents a binary concept of gender: women and men, girls and boys etc. The wording used concerning gender is ‘non-traditional/alternative/non-stereotypical depiction of women and men’. It does not work with gender identity, sexual orientation or other types of inequalities.

The tool is a recommendation published on the MEYS website. Nevertheless, the study on the status of gender equality at MEYS points out the fact the tool is not systematically used in the book reviewing process (MEYS, 2013).

2) Homophobia in pupils' collectives: Homophobic harassment and bullying at elementary and secondary schools - how it is manifested and how to prevent it; Additional teaching material for primary and secondary schools including the didactic application of the topic¹³

¹¹ LGBTI+ in the Czech Republic (LGBTI+ v České republice). *Amnesty International* [online]. Available from: <https://www.amnesty.cz/lgbti/v-cr>

¹² Valdrová, J., I. Smetáčková, B. Knotková. *A tool for assessing the gender correctness of textbooks (Pomůcka při posuzování genderové korektnosti učebnic)*. Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports [online]. Available from: <https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/zakladni-vzdelavani/pomucka-pri-posuzovani-genderove-korektnosti-ucebnic?lang=1>

¹³ Smetáčková, I., R. Braun. 2009. Homophobia in pupils' collectives: Homophobic harassment and bullying at elementary and secondary schools - how it is manifested and how to prevent it; Additional teaching material for primary and secondary schools including the didactic application of the topic. [online]. Available from: https://www.vlada.cz/assets/udalosti/homofobie_web.pdf

This Handbook was issued by the Governmental Council for Human Rights in cooperation with the MEYS in 2009, as supplementary material for primary and secondary schooling prepared by Irena Smetáčková, including the didactic application of the theme prepared by Richard Braun. It is a recommendation intended for teachers at primary and secondary schools, school counsellors, school methodologists and prevention methodologists. It aims to provide lecturers guidelines on "how to identify homophobic harassment and bullying, and which preventive measures to take to deal with it as well as to solve it" (p. 14). It brings examples of homophobic harassment among pupils/students. In the introduction, the handbook defines the basic terms (homophobia, heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, transsexuality, LGBT, gender, prejudice), explains the issue of homophobic harassment and bullying, how it can be recognized, how to prevent it and how to solve homophobic bullying. The second part of the handbook presents selected techniques and possible ways of working in the classroom. It points out that according to the Anti-discrimination Act, the Education Act, the Constitution and the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, schools are responsible for ensuring equal treatment. To pay attention to homophobic harassment is one of the ways to fulfil this commitment. The handbook emphasises the need for understanding the gender order (its heteronormativity, dichotomy and complementarity), to understand the nature of homophobic bullying.

3) Sexual Education - Selected Topics¹⁴

The handbook published in 2009 is a work of fourteen authors. The handbook aims to complete already published publications on health education. Another intention is to help with the implementation of sexual education in schools, to respond to the urgent need to tackle the issue of sexual education in a comprehensive way.

The publication refers to three government documents: Health 21 – a long-term program for the improvement of the health of the population of the Czech Republic (Government Resolution No. 1046); National Program on HIV / AIDS in the Czech Republic in the Period 2008-2012 (Government Resolution No. 130); Strategy for the prevention of risky behaviour of children and the youth in the frame of Ministry of Education 2009-2012 activity (MEYS 2009). It is in accordance with the UNAIDS World Anti-AIDS Program. It focuses on the health aspects of sexual life, the protection of reproductive health, the prevention of sexual diseases and the prevention of risky behaviour on the internet. Sexual education is linked to ethics, the framework educational program for basic education, and legislation. The table of contents includes chapters on sexual orientation, "sexual dysfunctions", "sexual deviations" and deviant behaviour, gender aspects of sexual education.

¹⁴ Sexual Education - Selected Topics. 2009. pedagogicke.info [online]. Available from: <http://www.pedagogicke.info/2011/09/e-kniha-pro-vas-sexualni-vychova.html>

When it comes to sexual orientation and gender identity, the terminology used by the manual is confusing and reflects an essentialist and medicalised approach to sexual minorities.”¹⁵

Educative Settings & SOGIESC in Czech Republic – Framework Education Programme

The regulation for the creation of the curriculum of Czech basic education is called the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education (FEP BE) and its valid version is set from 2021 and was actualised during 2023. In this document, the LGBTQI+ theme is inserted only latently and in the following way: "The framework educational program for basic education encourages, in the section 'Citizenship education', to tolerance: 'clarifies the need for tolerance in society, respects cultural peculiarities as well as different opinions, interests, ways of behaving and thinking of people, adopts tolerant attitudes towards minorities'."¹⁶ At this point, we could find room for the teachers themselves to define to the students what minorities are. "Minorities" is a very broad term and it is not explicitly stated which minorities should be mentioned. The level of tolerance is also very relative, again it depends on the teachers, in what way and if at all they will include the topic in the teaching.¹⁷

Furthermore, the FEP BE mentions the fight against intolerance: "recognizes intolerant, racist, xenophobic and extremist manifestations in people's behaviour and takes an active stance against all manifestations of human intolerance."¹⁸ FEP BE directly mentions the problems of racism, extremism and xenophobic behaviour. From the point of view of intolerance, it would be appropriate to include the category of homophobia as it is already mentioned in methodological materials for the prevention of socially pathological phenomena.¹⁹

¹⁵ Hodická, K., D. Krišová, L. Lukács, G. Mészáros, L. Polánková, D. Rédei, R. Sáfrány, C. Schneider, L. Slavík, R. Tanzberger. 2019. *Gender in national education documents and teaching resources, and in teachers' pedagogical approaches and everyday teaching practices in Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Comparative report*. Available from:

https://6d77a323ea.clvaw-cdnwnd.com/50d2286a49b6846c801b72a1cf7189d4/200000749-497bb497bd/Comparative%20report_gender_Nora.pdf?ph=6d77a323ea

¹⁶ Framework educational program for basic education. 2021. (Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání) Available from:

<https://www.edu.cz/rvp-ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy/ramcovy-vzdelavacici-program-pro-zakladni-vzdelavani-rvp-zv/>

¹⁷ Jírová. D. 2016. *LGBT topics in Czech and international curricular materials*. Diploma thesis. Available from: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiixZPE7bPAhWTgv0HHa0-Bj8QFnoECA0QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdspace.cuni.cz%2Fhandle%2F20.500.11956%2F73910%3Fshow%3Dfull&usg=AOvVaw3kmbAfldoY6aTd0_QxdaE5

¹⁸ Framework educational program for basic education. 2021. (Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání) Available from:

<https://www.edu.cz/rvp-ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy/ramcovy-vzdelavacici-program-pro-zakladni-vzdelavani-rvp-zv/>

¹⁹ Jírová. D. 2016. *LGBT topics in Czech and international curricular materials*. Diploma thesis. Available from: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiixZPE7bPAhWTgv0HHa0-Bj8QFnoECA0QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdspace.cuni.cz%2Fhandle%2F20.500.11956%2F73910%3Fshow%3Dfull&usg=AOvVaw3kmbAfldoY6aTd0_QxdaE5

Furthermore, the chapter Health Education briefly touches on the area of sexual behaviour: "respects the importance of sexuality in connection with health, ethics, morals and positive life goals; understands the importance of restraint in adolescence and responsible sexual behaviour".²⁰

The same chapter states that "sexual adolescence and reproductive health – health of reproductive systems, sexuality as part of personality formation, abstinence, early sexual experience, promiscuity; problems of teenage pregnancy and parenting; gender identity disorders" should be a part of Health Education.²¹ Even here, the Framework Education Program does not provide teachers with sufficient support on how to deal with the topic of different sexual orientation. And that's not even in connection with the issue of coming out and the identity of young people. However, the positive thing is that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports makes it possible to accredit courses that offer this helping hand. For example, the Czech non-profit organisation Transparent offers an accredited one-day online course on the topic of inclusion of trans and non-binary youth in the school environment with regard to mental well-being and collective cohesion.²²

The word 'homosexuality' or the term LGBT does not appear at all in the Framework Educational Program for Basic Education. The word 'sexual identity' occurs only once in the Framework Educational Program for Basic Education as a teaching topic 'sexual health – responsible relationship to sexuality, youth – preparation for love, sexual identity, immature parenting'. This mention appears in the section "Additional educational fields", which are not a mandatory part of basic education, they only supplement and expand its educational content.²³

The framework educational program for basic education does not explicitly criticize homosexuality, lesbians, gays, homosexuals, transgender, intersexual and members of the queer group. But he does not even give a helping hand to the teacher to take on these challenging topics. FEP BE is basically "tactfully" silent about them.

[7bP_AhWTgv0HHa0-Bj8QFnoECA00AQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fspace.cuni.cz%2Fhandle%2F20.500.11956%2F73910%3Fshow%3Dfull&usg=AOvVaw3kmbAfldoY6aTd0_QxdaE5](https://www.mpsv.cz/7bP_AhWTgv0HHa0-Bj8QFnoECA00AQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fspace.cuni.cz%2Fhandle%2F20.500.11956%2F73910%3Fshow%3Dfull&usg=AOvVaw3kmbAfldoY6aTd0_QxdaE5)

²⁰ Framework educational program for basic education. 2021. (Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání) Available from:

<https://www.edu.cz/rvp-ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy/ramcovy-vzdelavacici-program-pro-zakladni-vzdelavani-rvp-zv/>

²¹ Framework educational program for basic education. 2021. (Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání) Available from:

<https://www.edu.cz/rvp-ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy/ramcovy-vzdelavacici-program-pro-zakladni-vzdelavani-rvp-zv/>

²² Transparent z. s. Available from: <https://jsmettransparent.cz/pro-odbornou-verejnost/>

²³ Framework educational program for basic education. 2021. Available from:

<https://www.edu.cz/rvp-ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy/ramcovy-vzdelavacici-program-pro-zakladni-vzdelavani-rvp-zv/>

SOGIESC & Physical education and sports

The purpose of this summary was to map empirical knowledge about LGBT issues in the field of sports. In this way, we want to provide material for orientation on the topic. We believe that an insight into the current state of LGBT understanding in sports activities will help sensitize educators to this topic and offer recommendations for the successful integration and participation of LGBT students in physical education and sports in general.

Researches shows that "...gender stereotypes and rigid perceptions of masculinity and femininity are precursors to homophobia and transphobia in sport." This perception is also linked to LGBT marginalization in sport. (Kavoura & Kokkonen 2020)

1. The 2018 research "My Voice Is My Identity: The Role of Voice for Trans Women's Participation in Sport" found that trans women perceived their voice as a major barrier to their participation in sport. The reason for this is a situation when they have to communicate in sports environments, where they struggle with echo, or when they have to shout over a greater distance. At such times it is more difficult for them to maintain the female voice, which is essential for their identity. (Stewart, Oates, O'halloran)

- Practical tip: Research has confirmed that maintaining a female tone of voice and the way one uses one's voice in a sports environment is influenced by how strong female athletes have relationships with their teammates and coaches. In other words, an intimate and friendly environment helps them overcome the mentioned barriers. In addition, the participants suggested that voice training would help them, which would include, for example, work with voice fatigue and maintaining adequate breath support. (Stewart, Oates, O'Halloran)

2. The 2019 research "Associations Between Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment by a Coach and Psychological Ill-Being Amongst Gender and Sexual Minority Sport Participants in Finland" found that the more often LGBT male sports participants were verbally and non-verbally harassed by their coaches in sports contexts, the more often they experienced stress, psychosomatic symptoms, and depressive symptoms. This causality was not confirmed in LGBT female athletes (Kokkonen, 2019). These gender differences can be explained by somewhat different requirements for heteronormativity in men and women. Heteronormativity is more pronounced in male sports culture, where homophobic jokes and expressions serve as a way to strengthen one's own masculinity (Mazzie, 2014).

The findings of this study reaffirm the results of previous studies linking harassment and other forms of discrimination to mental illness in men (Björkenstam et al., 2017; Lucassen et al., 2017).

3. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has established criteria by which a transgender woman may be eligible to compete in the women's category. They require total serum testosterone levels to be depressed below 10 nmol/l for at least 12 months before and during competition. Research into whether this regulation removes the male performance advantage is still in its infancy. The research "Transgender Women in the Female Category of Sport: Perspectives on Testosterone Suppression and Performance Advantage" (2021) examines how differences in biological characteristics between biological males and females affect athletic performance and assesses whether there is evidence to support the proposition that testosterone suppression in transgender women removes the advantage of male performance and thus provides a fair and safe competition. They concluded that the muscular advantage enjoyed by transgender women is therefore only minimally reduced when testosterone is suppressed (Hilton EN, Lundberg). The research "Transwomen in elite sport: scientific and ethical considerations" (2019) also came to the same conclusion, stressing that existing categories of men/women in sport should be abandoned in favor of a more differentiated approach that satisfies both inclusion and equity (Knox T, Anderson LC, Heather A).

4. The book *Sport, Identity and Inclusion in Europe* (2022) presents research showing that men who participate in sport are attributed heterosexuality, while female athletes are more likely to be attributed homosexuality. The reason for this is the femininity of female athletes, which is questioned because of their muscles and more aggressive sporting expressions, which are otherwise associated with masculinity. In this way, for many, they step out of the heterosexual idea of women and attribute to them a homosexual orientation. However, when it comes to the participation of lesbians in sport, the data suggest that their experiences differ with respect to different environments and contexts. There are also many situations where sports can function as a reliable space in which they can be

"out", socialize with other lesbian women and cross traditional gender boundaries. Sports can be a sort of refuge or safe zone where lesbian women feel free to express themselves. On the other hand, research shows that lesbian athletes keep silent and hide their sexual orientation for reasons of fear of discrimination (SOLER-PRAT, Susanna, Anna VILANOVA, Judith SOLANAS, Daniel MARTOS-GARCIA and Wenceslao GARCÍA-PUCHADES)

5. The infographic *Gender in physical education and sports* (2022) clarifies the question "Why is physical education divided into girls and boys in the 2nd grade of elementary school?" Physical education accompanies students almost throughout their studies. Not only in the Czech Republic, physical education is common for girls and boys up to the 5th grade, after which it is divided into groups for girls and boys. Whereas in the US, physical education is often combined. When

researching these two approaches, it became clear that girls in most cases felt more comfortable and safer in separate groups. On the other hand, with the right guidance, combined physical education can also have a positive effect, such as the gradual breaking down of stereotypes and awareness of the similarities between girls and boys. It does not necessarily lead to the disadvantage or dissatisfaction of one or another group. Both approaches have their justifications and can work, the essential thing is the correct grasp and teaching.

General Framework: Cyprus

Educational settings & SOGIESC in Cyprus

Anti-discrimination legislation in education

In Cyprus, there has been no legislative framework in relation to education and SOGIESC issues. Moreover, there is no anti-discrimination law that is applied in educational institutions. However, “Article 28 of the Constitution of Cyprus contains a general anti-discrimination provision”. This provision protects against all forms of discrimination but does not explicitly cover sexual orientation and gender identity. The Cypriot Courts have never used Article 28 for cases related to SOGIESC issues. In legal terms, Article 28 could be used for sexual orientation discrimination.

Policies & Action Plans

The Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus published in 2016 a Code of Conduct against Racism and a Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents. This document is addressed to school authorities, teachers, pupils and their families. The Code contains the theoretical framework of all forms of discrimination, including homophobia and transphobia, guidelines for the combat of discrimination at schools and suggestions to teachers for the appropriate way of addressing discriminating attitudes in the school environment (racist and discriminating comments, bullying). According to the Code, “zero tolerance should be shown regarding incidents of racism or any form of discrimination due to nationality, appearance, community, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability”. Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Culture has established the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Violence in Schools (2018 – 2022). The National Strategy sets a series of legal and administrative measures for the prevention and management of violence in schools. It provides guidelines to ensure that pupils have better access to rehabilitation and support services while promoting values like respect, diversity and equality.

In an attempt to reduce the phenomenon of homophobia and transphobia, the Ministry introduced in 2011 a series of topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity in the pre-primary,

primary and lower secondary education. The following year, an anti-bullying plan was introduced in the schools in order to promote a supportive learning environment for LGBTIQ+ individuals. In addition, a specialised campaign for the combat against homophobia was launched under the title Shield against Homophobia in Education. The campaign aimed to support professionals within the field of education and to give them the tools to prevent and handle homophobic incidents in schools. Within the framework of the campaign, a training course for teachers on gender and sexuality and a nationwide conference were organised. "Overall, 80 educators of different school levels were trained on the topic of homophobia in education and importantly, a handbook with guidelines for LGBT-inclusive education was produced and distributed to schools". This campaign is part of a series of actions that the Ministry of Education has implemented to promote LGBTIQ awareness and handle the problem of school bullying.

Educational curricula

LGBTIQ+ issues or issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity are not part of curricula. Some school books include anti-LGBTIQ content, but there is no comprehensive curriculum on teaching LGBTIQ+ issues. Moreover, sex education does not include information on LGBTIQ+ issues. Teacher training on sex education is available to all teachers, but it is not mandatory. The general civic education curriculum of the Ministry does not include content on SOGIGESC issues.

Teacher Training

Teacher training on sex education and LGBTIQ awareness is available to all teachers, but it is not mandatory. The Ministry of Education published in 2019 the Teachers' Guide to Responding to Homophobia and Transphobia. So far, 250 teachers have received training on how to address LGBTIQ bullying. Specialised training on sexual and reproductive health and rights has been provided to home economics and biology teachers.

Cypriot legislative context on LGBTIQ rights

The Republic of Cyprus implemented in 2004 an anti-discrimination law and particularly the Equal Treatment in Occupation and Employment Law 2004, which protects people against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment. This law was designed to comply with the European Union's Employment Framework Directive of 2000.

On the same note, in 2004 Cyprus also implemented the "Law on Combating Racial and Other Forms of Discrimination through which the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman) was appointed as the National Equality Body for combating direct and indirect

discrimination on the grounds of community, race, language, colour, religion, and national or ethnic origin and sexual orientation”.

Regarding legal gender recognition, there is no law in place but only administrative procedures. The Ministry of Interior issued a series of guidelines in 2018, according to which legal gender recognition should be provided on the basis of self-determination, but the implementation of these guidelines is flawed. Although there is no gender recognition law, same-sex marriage is now legal under a law that was passed in 2015 by the Cyprus House of Parliament. Same-sex couples can conclude a written agreement known as the civil partnership agreement. The legal recognition of same-sex couples was an important step towards gender equality in Cyprus, but there is still a long way to go. A draft bill is under discussion in the Cyprus Parliament. The draft bill would allow an individual to access legal gender recognition on the basis of self-determination without medical intervention or evaluation. In fact, trans people would be allowed to change their gender identity without having to undergo any sex reassignment surgery first. It should be noted that sex reassignment surgeries are not performed in Cyprus and trans people are required to go abroad, undergo surgery and then request a change of their gender identity.

Civil society and NGOs contribution

The most active NGO advocating and lobbying for LGBTIQ rights in Cyprus is Accept Cyprus. Accept is a dynamic youth-led organisation that promotes and supports respect for human rights and fights for acceptance, equality, and equity while harmonising Cyprus society with issues concerning the LGBTIQ community. An important part of the organisation’s mission is the provision of education and training on LGBTIQ issues to teachers, trainers, and professors working in various professional disciplines, including higher education institutes. It also organises speeches, workshops and seminars that serve to inform the public on various LGBTQ-related issues. Accept runs various EU-funded projects that aim to develop useful educational material for teaching LGBTIQ inclusive education in schools and educational institutions.

From Emotions to Feminism: History and Inspiration

Norms of expressing emotions over time

- Late 18th century: Both women and men were allowed to express a range of emotions in public life.
- In the 19th century: Both women and men were allowed to express only a limited range of emotions in public life.
- Late 19th century: Efforts to broaden the limited range of emotions that women were allowed to express.
- In the 20th: The demand for happiness and fulfilled life for women has become the basis of emancipation around the world.

Feminist "nerve-wracking"

In Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* (1879), the main character Nora describes her home as a place where she is supposed to be mainly a "cheerful" wife and mother; in this environment and in this era, her real feelings were irrelevant. The important thing was to portray an impression of cheerfulness. This pretence and failure to acknowledge the women's real emotions led, understandably, to their frustration and other negative – formerly suppressed – emotions. As women started to explore their emotions and take them seriously, they began to allow themselves to feel angry and to express this feeling. Eventually, the heroine Nora ran out of her patience and she stood up against this convention and ultimately became a global symbol of women's emancipation.²⁴ This "feminist snap"²⁵ thus laid the foundation for feminist action.²⁶

²⁴ Since the heroine Nora symbolised courage in the fight against conventions that restrict women, we decided in 2004 to name our organisation 'Gender Information Center NORA o.p.s.' as a tribute to this global symbol of women's emancipation, which inspires us to strengthen equality and change gender stereotypes.

²⁵ This expression originated from british-australian writer and researcher, Sarah Ahmed.

²⁶ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

Verbal Expression of Pain

For a long time, women have been socialised not to express their anger therefore some found it difficult to use it as a tool. It was this attempt to normalise anger that led to the formation of The Furies²⁷, a group named after the Roman goddesses of vengeance, in Washington, D.C. in 1971.²⁸

Chinese and Vietnamese women have also been an inspiration for many parts of the world²⁹ in advocating for the right to express their emotions. They lived in a culture in which women's status and importance were reflected in Mao Zedong's³⁰ well-known statement: "*women hold up half the sky*".³¹ This fact combined with the cultural practice of relieving pain through its utterance became a good basis for feminist activities.³²

Experience transformed into a Slogan

By combining the above-mentioned Maoist cultural practice of relieving pain on the one hand with the habit of Back Power of "telling it like it is" on the other hand, an extraordinary synergy was sparked. Thanks to this connection, the well-known feminist slogan "the personal is political" came to light.³³ Behind this slogan is the idea that issues such as women's relationships, their roles in marriage and their feelings about motherhood, need to be discussed as politics of emotions that are somehow guided, are heading somewhere and need to be changed.³⁴

Truths spoken from the Vagina

Women in Japan were positioned in subordinate roles as daughters, wives and concubines, and Toshiko Kishida³⁵ was critical of this fact in her public lectures. This was during a period when the government was beginning to move away from rigid social hierarchies (1868-1912). Kishida advocated for women's rights and in her speeches, she expressed the anger stemming from the restrictions placed on women, which took the form of demands for absolute obedience to parents and seclusion in the home. Despite the initial hopes for change, the government cracked down on

²⁷ The Furies: A Lesbian-Feminist Political Group

²⁸ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

²⁹ They were inspired by Australian, Cuban, French and West German feminists in the years 1960-1980.

³⁰ Mao Zedong was a Chinese communist revolutionary.

³¹ Lovell, J. 2019. *Maoism: A Global History*. London: The Bodley Head. ISBN 978-1847922502.

³² In addition to Communist China and Vietnam, the inspiration also came from the above discussed Norwegian play "A Doll's House", as well as from the Italian and American movements.

³³ These two ideas were brought into connection by Carol Hanisch in 1970.

³⁴ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

³⁵ Toshiko Kishida is a writer and political activist for women's rights, who is known as Japan's first woman orator.

her and other critics and excluded women from any political participation by banning them till the year 1922 and even after that public appearances by women were accompanied by violent acts of government disapproval. However, Mitsu Tanaka³⁶ carried on Kishida's ideas and used specific rhetoric to express her anger. As women were seen as objects of men's desire, they were more than anything else like vessels for satisfying their needs and therefore could be compared to toilet bowls. She formulated this idea into a manifesto named *Liberation from the Toilet* (Benjo Kara no Kaiho) and presented it at the Conference of *Asian Women Fighting against Discrimination (1970)*. Tanaka purposely used this peculiar rhetoric to ensure that acts such as sexual abuse were not described in peaceful terms, and therefore described these crimes in terms such as "I mark my revenge with the blood of my own child". As she herself claimed, these are 'the truths spoken from the vagina'.³⁷ In the 1970s, the radical feminist Barbara Mehrhof³⁸ believed that raising awareness about emotional issues in connection to emancipation wouldn't change patriarchal practices in any way. She was calling for women's tactics of terror that would effectively combat rape culture.³⁹ A similar approach and combative rhetoric brought to feminism an important question of whether the use of violence is an acceptable means of combating oppression or not.⁴⁰

Love and Solidarity

Feminism, which fought for women's right to emotions and their expression, used anger as a reasonable form of expression. But alongside anger, feminism also promoted love and solidarity. This love was understood by some in association with motherhood as a specifically female experience and by others as warmth, friendship, trust and solidarity between women. This emotion of love and care thus acted as a unifying element for a wide range of women.⁴¹

³⁶ Mitsu Tanaka is a Japanese feminist and writer, who became well known as a radical activist during the early 1970s.

³⁷ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

³⁸ Barbara Mehrhof is an American writer. In 1976, together with Florence Rush, a social worker and feminist who pioneered research on sexual violence against children, published under the title *Sexual Abuse of Children: A Feminist Perspective*.

³⁹ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Seeking and liberating women's space

Personal space

Mary Wollstonecraft was a British writer, philosopher, and one of the most famous advocates of women's rights. Wollstonecraft is best known for her work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), in which she argues that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education.⁴² She suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason. Today Wollstonecraft is regarded as one of the founding feminist philosophers, and feminists often cite both her life and her works as important influences.⁴³

The sad truth is, until the late 20th century, Wollstonecraft's life, which encompassed several unconventional personal relationships at the time, received more attention than her writing. What was so shocking about her life? It has a connection only to her personal space. During her marriage, even though she was pregnant, it was really important to her to have her own place to stay. "Marriage under two roofs", which was an everyday reality for Mary Wollstonecraft and her husband William Godwin, was really controversial for the society of that time. However, for Wollstonecraft, the negative interest of their acquaintances was much less important than one of her biggest priorities in life: the possibility of receiving political and intellectual guests in her own apartment.⁴⁴

French-Peruvian socialist writer and activist Flora Tristan had this unique demand for being independent in her own place. She also wanted to own her own apartment where she could meet her guests and develop her ideas and thoughts. She made important contributions to early feminist theory and argued that the progress of women's rights was directly related to the progress of the working class. However, unlike Wollstonecraft, Tristan had much bigger problems with owning her own apartment than the misunderstanding of society. Her husband, André Chazal, pursued her constantly. Tristan had to rent the tiny apartment under an assumed name. However, her husband still tracked her down and shot her in her own apartment in 1838.⁴⁵

Both of these stories remind us that for feminist thinkers, establishing their own spaces was crucial, but very difficult. Different people approached the creation of their own space for the realisation of feminist activism in their own way. For example, the tactic was to occupy male-dominated places

⁴² Defense of women's rights (K. Hilská, Trans.). In L. Oates-Indruchová (Ed.), *The Girl's War with Ideology : Classic Texts of Anglo-American Feminist Thought* (Dívčí válka s ideologií : klasické texty angloamerického feministického myšlení). pp. 19-26. Prague: Sociology Press. ISBN: 80-8580-67-2.

⁴³ Mary Wollstonecraft. *Brooklyn Museum*. Available from: https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/place_settings/mary_wollstonecraft

⁴⁴ Abrams, L. *The making of modern woman: Europe 1789-1918*. Longman history of European women. London: Longman, an imprint of Pearson Education, 2002. ISBN 0582414105.

⁴⁵ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

(e.g. political gatherings) and draw attention to the absence of women⁴⁶ or to politicise their homes while husbands left to work in the public sphere.⁴⁷

For example, teahouses, where women could meet and debate with impunity, became a key part of feminist campaigns. However, the biggest obstacle has always been the lack of funds. For feminists, space has always been influenced by ethnicity, religion or class. These intersections have determined what spaces can be used by whom and how.⁴⁸

Safe Space

In the 1970s and 1980s, a large number of feminist shelters, refuges and safe places were established. Most of them centred around the problem that was increasingly called "domestic violence" (until then "wife beating") and also around rape and sexual assault. The use of the new terminology was intended to emphasise the seriousness of the violence, which did not only take place within the married couple but also against children and other relatives. At this time, the transformation of the perception of domestic violence is absolutely essential. Indeed, the feminist approach ceased to view violence as an individual experience with domestic partners (where women were the victims of the one accused of causing the violence) but began to view violence as a structural feature of patriarchy that helped maintain the structural status quo. The goal of the asylums that began to emerge at that time was to offer women a safe environment where they could re-evaluate their own lives and find out what it's like to be in control of the circumstances of their lives. Initially, these shelters were improvised (e.g. squats or private apartments of feminist activists), and volunteers and clients themselves took part in their operation. Nevertheless, it represented a key service at a time when the police and social services were indifferent to women experiencing domestic violence. Such shelters first received government support in Australia and have been receiving government money since 1975 – the problem, however, was that if the government was not receptive to the idea, access to the money would again be denied to the shelter operators.⁴⁹

However, it is a sad truth that asylums and shelters were only partially accessible to women who lacked class or racial privileges. Refuges led by white feminists have sometimes lacked the willingness to define themselves against racist assumptions. For example, among Australian feminists, "white" or "Anglo" values prevailed: ethnicity was automatically considered the cause of violence and not the more general structural factors of isolation and poverty that some groups faced and were therefore

⁴⁶ Suffragette Susan B. Anthony was arrested when, along with 16 other women, she infiltrated the US presidential election and attempted to vote.

⁴⁷ Abrams, L. 2002. *The making of modern woman: Europe 1789-1918*. Longman history of European women. London: Longman, an imprint of Pearson Education. ISBN 0582414105.

⁴⁸ Strickland, C. "The Top-Secret Feminist History of Tea Rooms". *Daily.jstor.or* [online]. Available on: <https://daily.jstor.org/the-top-secret-feminist-history-of-tea-rooms/>

⁴⁹ Our History. *Shelterwa* [online]. Available on: <https://www.shelterwa.org.au/about-us/our-history/>

more likely to suffer violence and less able to cope with it. The result was the establishment of specialised shelters for immigrant or indigenous women. However, these shelters drew much less money from the state budget than those for white women.⁵⁰

Space for work

The opening of paid work in the public space to women is also a big topic connected to the area of “women’s space”. By this, we do not only mean working-class professions which were often the only livelihood for working-class women. We mean a profession of intellectual activity that would be open to educated women. One of the first institutions that called for the advancement of women in the field of paid employment was the editorial office of the London magazine *The English Women's Journal*. In 1859, its editors founded the Society for the Promotion of the Employment of Women (SPEW). This company offered employment agency services and SPEW made it acceptable for women to be typists, hairdressers, printers, and bookkeepers. The Society also lends money to women for professional training.⁵¹

On the other hand, in the years that followed, this labour agency proved controversial and divisive. Women, who had long worked in poorly paid and demanding industries such as agriculture or domestic service, wanted better pay and more recognition. Sex workers wanted the police to stop harassing them. However, SPEW ignored all these problems and focused mostly on the workload.

The working-class British women were strongly frustrated by the naivety of the demand for free entry into the labour market, as poor workers lacked employment rights and often worked in extremely dangerous conditions. Therefore, they demanded protection from the state to ensure improved problematic working conditions.⁵²

However, the British women's movement was deeply divided by the workplace debate: There were both opponents and supporters of the protection of women in the public workplace. For example, the feminist Jessie Boucherett said that if women workers are protected by the state and cannot work at night, for example, she fears that this protective legislation will only lead to pushing women out of the labour market again. Similar disputes also occurred in the USA in the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment, which was promoted by the National Organization for Women. This act of enacting equality dominated feminist activism after suffrage and became its symbol in the United States.⁵³

⁵⁰ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁵¹ Colville, D. *Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (SPEW)*. *UCL BLOOMSBURY PROJECT*. 2012. Available from: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/institutions/society_promoting_employment_women.htm

⁵² Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Unions and strike sites became key feminist spaces. For example, activists Maida Springer Kemp, Pauline Newman or feminist trade unionist Frieda Miller became activists for the organisation of activism among textile workers working in New York in the second half of the 20th century. Historian Dorothy Cobble refers (not only) to these women as "feminists of social justice".⁵⁴ Trade union activism gradually began to focus on areas such as administration, light industry, teaching, retail, etc. The aforementioned Maida Springer Kemp headed the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Among other things, this organisation demanded that the needs of mothers and children should be part of the employer's responsibilities, which was an important requirement during the period of increased birth rates in the 1940s and 1950s. On the other hand, their approach did not challenge the overall gender order, which the activists from the women's liberation movement did not agree with. However, in addition to the issue of equal pay, various feminist associations have also raised issues of further marginalization of women in the workplace, such as sexual harassment in the workplace or insecurity during maternity.⁵⁵

Tactics of Revolutionary Feminism

Despite the fact that feminism is different all over the world, we can see networks of common inspiration and borrowing and sharing of techniques. All of this manifests itself in the ways that feminists fight exclusion, appropriate spaces and seek to make their voices heard.

In the context of the most significant acts in connection with feminist social development, we can talk in particular about acts of violence to gain the right to vote, strikes and demonstrations, or the subtle use of women's breasts.

"To improve the conditions of the nation, it is absolutely necessary to improve the conditions of women." Oásim Amín⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Cobble, D. S. 2014. "More than Sex Equality: Feminism After Suffrage". In: Cobble, D. S., L. Gordon, A. Henry. *Feminism Unfinished: A Short, Surprising History of American Women's Movements*. New York, London: Liveright Publishing Corporation

⁵⁵ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁵⁶ Qasim Amin was an Egyptian jurist, philosopher, reformer, judge and one of the founders of the Egyptian national movement and Cairo University. Qasim Amin has been historically viewed as one of the Arab world's "first feminists".

Radically Raised Objections

Feminist acts were essential to change the order of society. It was not enough to "passively wait" and think about change, but it was necessary to address the strategies of those who wanted to put feminist politics into practice.

Some of the most significant feminist acts took place during the campaigns for women's suffrage. Members of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU, founded 1903) or the Irish Women's Franchise League chose as their strategy to draw attention to the absence of women's suffrage, for example, disrupting meetings, destroying art, placing acid in letterboxes or smashing shop windows or government building's windows with stones. Although these methods may seem quite radical, according to WSPU founder Emmeline Pankhurst "breaking windows was the only means they believed the disenfranchised can use to cause a political situation, which can only be solved by giving women the right to vote". Such direct actions involved women of different classes, specifically from the working and middle class. But the working classes sought more than gender equality in these protests. They were concerned with the right to vote for all adults, regardless of wealth – indeed, the rule in Britain at the time, in the early 20th century, excluded those without certain assets from voting. Since the activists were being punished for destroying buildings, they adopted a new tactic, which was, for example, to chain themselves to the fence of the Prime Minister's building, where they were given space to make speeches while the police tried to drag them away. Unfortunately, the campaign also included sporadic arson, destruction of art and bombings in churches and ministerial residences. Some of the practices of the British activists have also spread to the United States and, to some extent, to some Asian countries. In China, the rhetoric of women's suffrage also used the idea of the "learned wife" (who could significantly support her husband in business and politics) based on Confucianism.⁵⁷

However, Chinese activists also adopted the strategy of attending National Assembly sessions, disregarding the session order, and sitting among the members. During speeches, they would audaciously interject, disrupting the smooth progress of the sessions. They also relied on signing petitions. Both the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China theoretically supported women's equality, but rivalry between these parties prevented them from granting women the right to vote until the national constitution of 1936.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Mann, S. 1997. *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth century*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. ISBN: 9780804727440.

⁵⁸ Edwards, L. 2000. "Women's Suffrage in China: Challenging Scholarly Conventions." *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 69, no. 4, pp. 617–38. Available on: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3641227>.

On the other hand, feminists or women's groups from other countries around the world (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, or Germany) often distanced themselves from the above violent tactics.⁵⁹

The Outcry of the Equality Protests

The poor working conditions that working-class women were forced to suffer were the most common cause of strikes. Working-class women often joined together to form unions. However the women of YH Trading in South Korea, for example, did not only protest against their own working conditions, their struggle led to the political revolution of 1979, in which the autocratic government of President Park Chonghi fell.⁶⁰ Strikes, including direct actions such as boycotts or sit-ins, were a powerful weapon for women workers. They often collaborated with other labour movements that included men. For example, there was a strike in support of Mexican-American miners, who were forbidden to strike in the workplace on pain of punishment – but this prohibition did not apply to their wives, who began to occupy the mines and to strike for greater social justice. In France, for example, thanks to the strikes, women won the right to contraception in 1967.⁶¹

Icelandic feminists took the strikes to a national and public level when they declared 24 October 1975 a national 'day off' for women, who deserved it for their hard work in the home and workplace and for their low pay compared to men. An estimated 90% of women joined the strike at the time, causing a near-total shutdown of Iceland's schools, industrial plants and shops. A year later, equality legislation was passed in the Icelandic parliament.⁶²

But women were not only humiliated in the workplace as a result the strikes spread to other institutions in the form of demonstrations. For example, in Ireland in 1971, women protested outside the parliament building for a law on women's access to contraception. This protest was subsequently taken up by the Irish Women's Liberation Movement. Women in Japan and Korea then used demonstrations to protest against the commercial ('tourist') sex industry. These protests took place mainly outside airports or inside arrival and departure halls.⁶³

⁵⁹ Edwards, L. 2000. "Women's Suffrage in China: Challenging Scholarly Conventions." *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 69, no. 4, pp. 617–38. Available on: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3641227>.

⁶⁰ Molony, Barbara. 2016. *Gender in Modern East Asia: An Integrated History*. Boulder: Westview Press. ISBN 9780813348759.

⁶¹ Watson, Cicely. 1952. "Birth Control and Abortion in France since 1939." *Population Studies* 5, no. 3: 261–86. Available on: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2172430>

⁶² Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁶³ Guichard-Anguis, S., Moon, Okpyo (eds.). 2011. *Japanese Tourism and Travel Culture*. London, New York: Routledge. Available on: https://www.academia.edu/70084752/Japanese_Tourism_and_Travel_Culture

Since 1977, protests under the slogan "Reclaim the Night" have also been held against male violence against women (from the pornography industry to street harassment, rape, gender-based murder). The march spread from Brussels to London, Rome, Berlin and West Germany. Protesters carried flaming torches and beat improvised drums – invading hostile spaces with sound and light. "Reclaim the Night" marches are still held today.⁶⁴

Breasts of power: The Voice of the Body in Protest

The feminist movement is also often associated with women's breasts, in a variety of contexts. The most famous example is "bra-burning", which has almost become synonymous with feminism, even though it is only a historical myth. But the truth is that feminists encouraged other women to not wear bras in the 1970s.

In 2008, a group of Ukrainian feminists known as FEMEN attracted worldwide publicity and thus attention to address serious social problems by stripping halfway down and writing slogans on their bare breasts. On the other hand, these feminists only used young and slender bodies that conformed to patriarchal standards of beauty, not, for example, fat, old or atypical bodies. Which undermined their efforts to highlight the exploitation of women's bodies by men.

Protests involving nudity have always taken place in environments in which the meaning of women's bodies was influenced by race, faith, and class. African and African American women, for example, also frequently exposed their bodies in protest, as early as the 19th century. In the United States, these protests using naked female body parts have been particularly challenging, due to the historical setting. Through slavery, Black women (and men, also) have historically been viewed as animalistic in nature, specifically regarding their sexuality. Black women were associated with uncontrollable sexual desires. Slavery itself functioned as a sex economy, where Black women were sexually abused at the hands of white men. Black women were raped continuously, and viewed at a higher value if they were younger and not pregnant because of their sexual availability. Black women's bodies have been commodified and monetized for the male gaze, and this view of 'lustful' behavior has led to the justification of rape and sexual assault of Black women in the United States. The sexual depictions of Black women in slavery informed the treatment and commodification of their bodies in modern society: The ideology that Black women are 'easy' and overtly sexual places them at a lower sexual value as compared to white women still exist (for example, Black strippers

⁶⁴ Reclaim the Night 2022. *Reclaim the Night* [online]. Available on: <http://www.reclaimthenight.co.uk/index.html>

and porn actors are paid less and treated worse than their white counterparts, as they are viewed to have a lower erotic capital, and want to be consumed by white audiences).⁶⁵

Conflicts Within the Feminist Movement

Racism in the Feminist Movement

Black women as well as Asian or Latin American women often encountered the arrogance of white feminists who articulated women's needs according to their own needs, yet they referred to all women in general. Because women of the Global South had different problems than white women, they also focused their feminist anger elsewhere, but these issues were downplayed and ignored by the white feminists.⁶⁶ Feminism in Latin America has placed a strong emphasis on child care and motherhood since the beginning of the twentieth century. Therefore, instead of the right to abortion that feminists in developed countries sought, the Latin American feminists wanted protection from the doctors and social workers who forcibly performed abortions and sterilisations on them and who also took away their children.⁶⁷

However, racism in feminism also manifested itself within individual countries of the Global South. This was evident at the 1974 congress where Peruvian feminists met and divided themselves into a group of Hispanic white women, who were often educated, and a group of indigenous Peruvians, who tended to be poor. For them, this racial conflict was more fundamental than addressing other forms of oppression. The aforementioned contradiction involved, for example, indigenous women's rejection of contraception in order to support population growth and thus fight against corporations and "first world" domination. It was also obvious that postcolonial nationalism was projected here.⁶⁸

Veiling in the Feminist Movement

Veiling of women is a practice that is historically well-established in different cultures and societies. Nevertheless, the veiling of specifically Muslim women is very controversial for many different social groups, especially in those feminist ones. There is a long-standing criticism of the veiling of Muslim

⁶⁵ Heller, Nicole E. 2020. "Black Female Artists Reclaiming Their Sexual Power". *The Cupola*. Available on: https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/student_scholarship/850

⁶⁶ Lewis, R., Mills, S. 2003. *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Routledge.

⁶⁷ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

women as well as criticising Islam as a religion that oppresses women and the veil as a tool of the patriarchy.⁶⁹

But according to historian Lucy Delap, the veiling bans that are becoming part of political debates in Western countries are presented as an effort to "liberate women", but instead of real liberation, she says, they are primarily an effort to provoke Islamophobic reactions. Behind this is the discourse of the West, which since the 1970s has increasingly portrayed Islam as inherently fundamentalist, anti-feminist⁷⁰ and something dangerous, threatening Western society⁷¹.

This is misleading because there are various reasons behind veiling as well as rejection of the veil by Muslim women, especially those feminist ones. That means that some groups of Muslim feminist women argue that their veiling doesn't enable "transforming women into sex objects that occurs when women are constantly judged on their appearance, but instead, it allows them and those around them, to concentrate on what is inside her head, her mind rather than what is on her head—her hair—and, by extension, her physical attractiveness."⁷² For some muslim women veiling is a cultural as well as religious practice that can be connected to public activism and in some cases it is the only tool that allows them to be publicly active in this way.⁷³ Many Muslim women base their feminist view of the world and their role in society from their interpretation of the Quran and from the social reforms established by the founder of Islam the Prophet Muhammed.⁷⁴ At the same time, the ban on the veiling of Muslim women is interpreted by Muslim feminists as an attempt to control women's bodies and women's ability to make decisions about their bodies.

Historically veiling was also a tool of politicians in Muslim as well as non-Muslim states. In 1956 president of Egypt Gamal Abd an-Násir gave women the right to vote, guaranteed them equal rights, and saw paid employment of women as something essential for building the state. Establishing "a state of feminism" was linked to the upliftment and modernisation of Egypt.⁷⁵ But in the 70s and 80s "the Islamic iconoclastic movement started to promote "authentic Islam" as opposition to the "western Islam" and a great number of young Muslim women at universities started to wear hijab."⁷⁶ Veiling of Muslim women was often linked to politics in a way of showing with whom they sympathise. That was apparent not only in Egypt, but also in the Iran Republic 1979, unfortunately,

⁶⁹ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. p. 197.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 203.

⁷¹ Bečka, J., Mendel, M. 1998. *Islám a České země*. Olomouc, Publishing house: Votobia. p. 176.

⁷² Muslim Sexual Ethics: Veiling and the Hijab. *Brandeis University* [online]. Available on: <https://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/muslim/veil.html>

⁷³ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. p. 203. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁷⁴ As he improved the position of women and gave them many rights that they did not have at that time. Women also played an important role in the establishment of islam and its expansion.

⁷⁵ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. p. 203. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

the chain of events led to the segregation of women from the public space.⁷⁷ The same conditions became true for women in Pakistan. Pakistani women fought against this regime by creating feminist groups that promoted women's rights and to show their disapproval of the "hostile legal and cultural environment for women, they burned their veils.

The practice of burning the veil can be seen even today in Iran where Muslim women are fighting against the oppressive state regime and actions of the so-called "morality police". Veiling as well as not-veiling can be then feminist as well as an activist way of expressing yourself in society. Muslim women in post-9/11 America, who often face discrimination and prejudice, are striving to redefine the meaning of veiling as "a call for equality."⁷⁸ Veiling as well as non-veiling can then be interpreted in every situation differently, and as such it should not be deemed only as non-feminist.

Class Differences in the Feminist Movement

The class nature of clothing has always been a source of tension and a reflection of power in the women's movement. Since fashionable clothing was demanded at the protests, working-class women were excluded from them, leading to the fact that many of the most prominent actions of the *Women's Social and Political Union*⁷⁹ were led by middle- and upper-class women.⁸⁰

Feminist protests for women's liberation usually disregarded race and class. This can be shown through an example of the struggle against events that were focused on the objectification of the female body and that were designed to please the male gaze. One of these actions took place in the British black community, which had a long tradition of beauty pageants. Although feminist activists in their advocacy focused on a necessary and beneficial goal (to criticise the objectification of women's bodies), they failed to consider that for many models who came from working-class backgrounds, success in beauty pageants was a means of gaining better social status and prize money. These protests, which treated the needs of working-class women very insensitively, thereby reinforced the reputation of feminists as exaggerated critics and rigid moralists. Moreover, they gave credibility to the idea that feminists opposed heterosexual eroticism and pleasure. This ultimately affected the perception of feminism and it also weakened its ability to appeal to mainstream society.⁸¹ Feminists

⁷⁷ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. p. 203. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁷⁸ Ahmed's analysis of increased 'veiling' wins religion prize. *Grawemeyer Awards* [online]. Available on: <http://grawemeyer.org/ahmeds-analysis-of-increased-veiling-wins-religion-prize/>

⁷⁹ WSPU was a British suffragette organisation that fought for women's right to vote. The organisation was founded in 1903 and dissolved in 1917. In 1918, women over the age of 30 were given the vote; and in 1928, under a Conservative government, they finally won it on equal terms with men.

⁸⁰ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. p. 203. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁸¹ Ibid.

could not agree whether fashion was a harmful invention of patriarchy or the means to express their personality and enjoyment.

In the 1980s, the fashion rules changed, and feminists of higher status began to wear pantsuits and jackets with shoulder pads. Jackets were often red and also heels made a comeback, this combination expressed a mixture of power and sexuality.⁸²

New Zealand Rational Association, requested that women would be allowed to stop wearing corsets that restricted their movement and breathing. Some saw this as purely a health reform, others as a right of women to freedom of movement in public places, freedom to ride bicycles and to play sports. Clothing reform for rational dress. These advocates of clothing reform, women in trousers were often portrayed as lacking fashion sense. For many feminists, the new clothing options seemed like a powerful means of expressing resistance in everyday life. Women have described how satisfying it was for them to be able to dress for themselves and for other women without the need to follow conventional or male-defined fashion.⁸³

In this period when feminists were defying fashion conventions, disposing of their bras and refusing to shave their body hair, however, women closer to power had to decide strategically how to deal with this new feminist tendency in politics. For example, the British politician Valerie Wise, who gave large financial donations to women's organisations, dressed conventionally (for example, she usually wore dresses and jackets). She believed that if she were to wear controversial trousers, people would not listen to what she was saying, but instead judge her clothing.⁸⁴

Homophobia in the Feminist Movement

American feminists in the 20th century soon realised the homophobic nature of the feminist movement. Lesbians faced marginalisation and the downplaying of their opinions and issues.⁸⁵ This contradiction needed to be resolved, and for this reason, the Congress to Unite Women was organised in 1969.⁸⁶ However, this objective failed to be fulfilled and Betty Friedan⁸⁷ and her followers continued to display strong homophobia. They identified lesbians as threats to the unity of feminism and its acceptance by the public. Betty Friedan and her followers continued to accentuate their stereotypical view of homosexual orientation, calling it a source of extremism, which in their opinion, seeks to marginalise men and reject pregnancy and motherhood. This only led to a stronger

⁸² Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. p. 203. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Looks, B. 1984. "Feminist theory: From margin to centre." *Boston: South End P.*

⁸⁶ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. p. 203. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁸⁷ Founder of the National Organisation for Women, an American feminist organisation.

wave of anger towards this homophobia, resulting in counter-campaigns aimed at feminist activism, with the goal of calling on heterosexual feminists to unite the feminist movement.⁸⁸ Radical lesbians⁸⁹ created a manifest called *The Woman - Identified Woman, describing a lesbian* as "a woman who often, from an extremely early age, acts according to her inner compulsion to be a more complete and independent human being than society wishes to allow. These needs and actions lead her into painful conflicts with people, situations, acceptable ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving over the years."⁹⁰

However, the issue of feminism marginalising lesbians had little resonance outside of Europe and North America. The issue of sexuality was not even considered a priority by many participants from the Global South at the World Conference on Women⁹¹ which took place in Mexico in 1975. Within the Global South, for example, in India, the issue was seen as a western import, prompting Indian women's disaffection and refusal to address it.⁹²

Transphobia in the Feminist Movement

One of the conflicts that resonates in contemporary feminism involves so-called radical feminists⁹³ and their exclusion of trans women⁹⁴ from the places and communities designated for women and lesbians. The opposing side pejoratively refers to them as: 'trans-exclusionary radical feminist' or simply 'TERFs'. On the other side stand trans women whose biological sex at birth was not female, but who nevertheless feel they are women, label themselves as such, and want to participate in events for women as well, or at least have the opportunity to do so.⁹⁵ Radical feminists argue that gender identity⁹⁶ is an "ideology" that damages the rights of women. In their opinion, feminism

⁸⁸ Delap, L. 2022. *Feminisms: A Global History*. p. 203. ISBN: 978-0226754093.

⁸⁹ Radical lesbians is a lesbian movement that arose in part because mainstream feminism did not actively include or fight for lesbian rights. The movement was started in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁹⁰ *The Woman - Identified Woman*. 1970. [online]. Available from:

<https://repository.duke.edu/dc/wlmpc/wlms01011>

⁹¹ It was the first international conference held by the United Nations to focus solely on women's issues and marked a turning point in policy directives. After this meeting, women were viewed as part of the process to develop and implement policy, rather than recipients of assistance.

⁹² Dave, Naisargi N. 2012. *Queer activism in India: A story in the anthropology of ethics*. Duke University Press.

⁹³ Trans-exclusionary radical feminist.

⁹⁴ Trans woman is a woman who was identified as male at birth as a result of being born with traditionally male genitalia.

⁹⁵ 'Pro-lesbian' or 'trans-exclusionary'? Old animosities boil into public view. *NBC News* [online]. Available on: <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/pro-lesbian-or-trans-exclusionary-old-animosities-boil-public-view-n958456>

⁹⁶ i.e. the ability to label oneself and self-identify as masculine, feminine, or various combinations of both genders, or as neither.

should only include women who were identified as women at birth, i.e., cisgender women⁹⁷. Transgender women, on the other hand, claim that their exclusion from events for women, feminist organisations, and from feminism in general, as well as the failure to respect their desires to identify themselves as women, are acts of transphobia.⁹⁸ One of the early moments that could be described as transphobia from lesbians was during the first National Lesbian Conference at University of California, Los Angeles, in 1973. This was the venue where transgender folk singer Beth Elliot performed and was booed off the stage to shouts of "He's a goddamn man!".⁹⁹ However, the most famous dispute between "radical feminists" and transgender women revolved around the Michigan Women's Music Festival. This was an annual women-only event that was popular among lesbians. In 1991, the organisers of the festival asked a transgender woman to leave this festival. The organisers of the Michigan Women's Music Festival never issued an official policy against transgender women attending the festival, according to American historian Lilian Faderman, but they openly stated that it was a "woman-born woman only" space.¹⁰⁰

This festival became a symbol of the exclusion of many trans women who experienced exclusion from women-only and lesbian-only spaces. According to Faderman, many festival attendees and other people advocating for transgender people did not share the festival's position.¹⁰¹

This ongoing concern about the trans-exclusive stance taken by some feminists or organisations gave rise to the "Not In Our Name" statement in 2018.¹⁰² This is a statement on trans inclusion from eight of the most prominent lesbian publishers in the US, Canada, Australia and the UK, which declares that neither trans-inclusion, trans women nor gender identity are a threat to lesbian women and women's rights. By publicly condemning this idea, they send a message of solidarity to the trans community with this statement: *"We are really concerned about the message these so-called lesbian publicists are sending to trans women and young lesbians - including trans lesbians - and we want to make it clear that this is not on our behalf."*¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Cisgender is the label given to people whose gender identity matches the sex they were designated at birth.

⁹⁸ 'Pro-lesbian' or 'trans-exclusionary'? Old animosities boil into public view. *NBC News* [online]. Available on: <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/pro-lesbian-or-trans-exclusionary-old-animosities-boil-public-view-n958456>

⁹⁹ Faderman, L. 2015. *The gay revolution: The story of the struggle*. Simon and Schuster.

¹⁰⁰ Compton, J. 2019. 'Pro-lesbian' or 'trans-exclusionary'? Old animosities boil into public view. *NBC News* [online]. Available on: <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/pro-lesbian-or-trans-exclusionary-old-animosities-boil-public-view-n958456>

¹⁰¹ Faderman, L. 2015. *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle*. Simon and Schuster.

¹⁰² Not in our name. *Diva* [online]. Available on: <https://diva-magazine.com/2018/12/19/not-in-our-name/>

¹⁰³ Not in our name. *Diva* [online]. Available on: <https://diva-magazine.com/2018/12/19/not-in-our-name/>

Conflicts Outside the Feminist Movement

Anti-gender movement

The anti-gender movement began in the 1990s. Scholars studying this movement link its beginning to the Catholic response to the UN International Conferences on Population and Development and the World Conference on Women, after which the UN began to recognize sexual and reproductive rights. The Holy See feared that this recognition would lead to abortion as a human right, the delegitimization of motherhood, and the normalisation of homosexuality.¹⁰⁴

Reproductive rights, the right to marriage for all, the right of men to show empathy, or the fight against domestic, sexual and gender-based violence are the themes that have become the central concept of what the Anti-Gender Movement is fighting against and what they call *gender ideology*¹⁰⁵. The promotion of the aforementioned rights or education in human rights issues is what is being attacked by conservative political parties or groups in society and satellite organisations of the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁰⁶

Gender studies and men's studies

During the 1970s, gender studies and feminist anthropology developed, critically responding to anthropological texts that dealt with women only as passive figures who were observed but did not speak, despite the fact that demographically they represented half of the studied population.¹⁰⁷ At this time, the distinction between **sex** as a biologically given attribute and of **gender** as culturally, socially and temporally conditioned attribute was established. But the meaning of both of these categories were still assigned to biologically determined differences between women and men.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Kuhar R., D. Paternotte (eds.). 2017. *Anti-gender campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against equality*. Rowman & Littlefield.

¹⁰⁵ as well as gender theory or genderism. However, a uniform definition of the term is lacking.

¹⁰⁶ Kováts, E. 2017. The Emergence of Powerful Anti-Gender Movements in Europe and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy. *Gender and far right politics in Europe*. pp. 175-189.

¹⁰⁷ Ardener, E. 1975. Belief and the Problem of Women. In S. Ardener (ed.), *Perceiving Women*. London, Toronto, Melbourne. pp. 1–17.

¹⁰⁸ Oakley, A. 1985. *Sex, gender and society*. Ashgate Publishing. ISBN 9781857421712.

Since then, social anthropologists have insisted on the social and cultural creation of the category of gender, because this fact is evidenced by the existence of different forms of gender roles in societies in different parts of the world¹⁰⁹ or by examples of "third genders".¹¹⁰

By the 1980s, the field of gender anthropology was firmly established, based on the assumption that it is necessary to study not only men or only women, but to focus on "gender relations as the structuring principle of all human societies and on the study of the interrelationships between men and women".¹¹¹

At this time, Men's Studies¹¹² and, subsequently, Masculinity Studies emerged. This was the logical outcome of the recognition that masculinity, like femininity, is a product of gender relations and, as such, it is also a construct dependent on social and historical factors.¹¹³

A further development in this field have taken place since the 1990s, especially under the influence of agency theory, according to which gender roles and categories are not rigid and must be constantly constructed and performed in practice¹¹⁴.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Oakley, A. 1985. *Sex, gender and society*. Ashgate Publishing. ISBN 9781857421712.

¹¹⁰ Whitehead, H. 1981. The bow and the burden strap: a new look at institutionalized homosexuality in native North America. In S. B. Ortner – H. Whitehead (eds.), *Sexual Meanings. The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*. Cambridge. pp. 80–111.

¹¹¹ Moore, H. 2001 [1999]. Whatever happened to women and men? (Co se stalo se ženami a muži?). *Cargo* 3/4, pp. 174–197; p. 175. In: Budilová, L. *A socio-anthropological study of kinship and gender with special attention to the Czech context* (Sociálně–antropologické studium příbuzenství a genderu se zvláštním zřetelem k českému kontextu). *Historická demografie* 39/2015: 271–291. p.288.

¹¹² Differentiation between men's studies (= studies concerning men) and masculinity studies (= set of social constructs carried by men) was substantial.

¹¹³ Filipowicz, M. 2010. *Opportunities for using masculinity studies for research into 19th century Czech literature* (Možnosti využití maskulinních studií pro výzkum české literatury 19. století). Available on: https://service.ucl.cas.cz/edicee/images/data/sborniky/kongres/%C4%8Cesk%C3%A1%20literatura%20v%20perspektiv%C3%A1ch%20genderu/005_marcin_filipowicz.pdf

¹¹⁴ The performative understanding of masculinity and femininity is the acting out gender in accordance with different social situations. This is based on an understanding of gender as a fluid category.

¹¹⁵ Budilová, L. 2015. *A socio-anthropological study of kinship and gender with special attention to the Czech context* (Sociálně–antropologické studium příbuzenství a genderu se zvláštním zřetelem k českému kontextu). *Historická demografie* 39: 271–291.

Queer Theory: genesis and early developments

Queer theory emerged within the realm of gay, lesbian, and gender studies as a response to the growing dissatisfaction with the representation of gay and lesbian identities. This dissatisfaction was evident in both political activism and the American academic world during the 1980s and early 1990s. At its core, queer theory aimed to give voice and representation to those individuals whose experiences and interests were not adequately represented within the dominant and established gay identity. These individuals criticised the quasi-ethnic structure that the homosexual liberation movement had adopted, as well as its failure to acknowledge its own inherent white bias and middle-class orientation. The term "queer," originally a pejorative label that encompassed gays, lesbians, and any other individuals perceived as sexually non-conforming, and not conforming to the heterosexual/homosexual binary, was reappropriated as a strategic tool to challenge homophobia and subvert the language used against sexual minorities. This linguistic choice exemplified one of the central tenets of queer theory: the desire for subversive reappropriation, in this case of language itself, to open up new forms of expression and challenge established norms. Drawing on the critical-theoretical model of social constructionism, queer theory promoted a new culture of activism and underscored the profoundly cultural and historical nature of sexuality and its categorization. It emphasised that societal conventions related to sexuality could be transformed through deliberate acts of social will.¹¹⁶ A central aspect of queer studies was its interpretation of cultural productions and representations as "institutions" that could potentially create oppressive social norms and identity models. This approach found common ground between queer studies, the gay and lesbian tradition, and feminism. Queer theory distanced itself from the impulses of American homosexual liberation political activism of the 1970s, emphasising that "gay constructionism" had become primarily an academic pursuit, as highlighted by Teresa de Lauretis in her influential article.¹¹⁷ However, queer theory found its place, consciously or not, within the context of emerging identity claims, primarily advanced by Black homosexuals and sexual rebels. These claims were made through non-fiction literature and active political advocacy. These differences underscored the significance of factors such as "race" and class, which were not viewed as mere additions to homosexual identity but as intersecting sets of identifications that were non-reciprocal.

Another key point of contention within queer theory was the presence of models and forms of sexuality that did not adhere to the binary and dominant hetero/homosexual model, which

¹¹⁶ Warner, M. 2007. *Fear of a Queer Planet*. University of Minnesota press. ISBN 9780816623341.

¹¹⁷ De Lauretis, T. 1991. *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities. An Introduction* (Differences). Indiana University Press 3: 3-18.

categorised individuals solely based on the gender of their sexual partners, neatly fitting them into one of the two binary representation categories. In parallel with the critical discourse brought forth by Black homosexual culture and the sexual rebellion, an approach highlighting the vast socio-historical diversity in the meanings and structures of homosexual desire challenged the dominant essentialist characteristics embraced by the American homosexual movements. This new perspective emerged in response to the lack of representation and discourse around lesbian women and gay men who were marginalised within the dominant homosexual culture. The queer approach to sexuality, while acknowledging the achievements of the 1970s gay and lesbian liberation movement, sought to move away from the rigid binary notions of hetero/homosexual and masculine/feminine. Instead, it proposed the idea of "fundamentally polymorphous and bisexual sexual needs of human beings" and aimed to explain the reasons behind the prevalence of sexual repression. Additionally, the queer approach aimed to transform the struggle for sexual liberation into a gender revolution, maintaining a connection between gender and sexuality. However, the more astute thinkers within queer theory recognized that they were not currently capable of invalidating the categories of gender or sexuality, despite their theoretical denaturalization. As a result, they sought to make the project of political emancipation less utopian, emphasising the lack in previous traditions of a "credible strategy to transform an entrenched gay/heterosexual identity regime into a liberated, post-identity order." Queer theory faced numerous challenges, both in its integration into the political consciousness of various gay and lesbian activist movements and in recognizing its foundational theoretical principles and its linear path of critical development. Judith Butler, who gained recognition as one of the most influential queer theorists, particularly for her work "Gender Trouble," expressed her reluctance to be associated with what was then called queer theory, even though she had significantly contributed to the theoretical discourse. The emergence of queer theory can be traced back to 1990, coinciding with the publication of the previously mentioned article by Teresa de Lauretis, in which she effectively challenged the established notions of gay and lesbian identity. Nevertheless, challenges arose as the term "queer" was increasingly appropriated in contexts and for purposes that were initially unforeseen. This appropriation initiated a theoretical reevaluation aimed at questioning the naturalisation of homosexuality that had occurred within the field of gay and lesbian studies. After some time, scholars began to reflect on these developments and problematize the implications of the term "queer" in various contexts.

"If at this point you are wondering, readers, what is the difference between lesbian and gay studies, gender studies and queer theory, I can only answer that I do not know. All these expressions are used

both in universities and in publishing with weak and imprecise references, mostly for propaganda purposes, to attract students or increase book sales”.

Regardless of the circumstances, de Lauretis recognized that a "common front or political alliance between gay and lesbian men (...) was made possible and, on the other hand, necessary (...) by the national emergency of AIDS and the pervasive and institutional repression against queers of all sexes." She used the term "queer" to address the dissatisfaction stemming from the limited and one-sided representations within gay and lesbian culture. Her intention was to challenge some of the discursive constructions and omissions in the emerging field of gay and lesbian studies, particularly by emphasizing that the differences between gays and lesbians were often implied, taken for granted, or concealed by the simple conjunction "and."

De Lauretis's use of the term "queer" also aimed to acknowledge the significant fractures in the historical relationship between lesbian groups and gay male groups in the United States. The former were aligned with the women's movement but sometimes clashed with certain feminist groups that held homophobic views, while the latter were already divided between essentialist and constructivist self-representations. Therefore, the early phase of queer theory emerged along the trajectory paved by gay and lesbian studies and did not present a completely new and rational interpretation of sexuality in opposition to this existing tradition.

However, a significant portion of the non-fiction literature labelled as "queer" did not extensively focus on the historical tensions in the relationship between the gay and lesbian components. Instead, it often overlooked the lineage of queer theory from the specific context of gay and lesbian culture. Consequently, the two disciplinary areas remained distinctly separate, leading to the possibility of discussing "significant differences in the assumptions of both LGBT studies and Queer Theory." From this perspective, Queer Theory, with its objective to "destabilise and deconstruct the notion of fixed sexual and gender identities," emerged as a primary challenge to the gay and lesbian canon, which emphasised the stability of homosexual identities.

The genesis of Queer Theory: Gayle Rubin and her Thinking Sex

Teresa de Lauretis was not the sole advocate for a reevaluation of the connection between sexual identities and the complexities within them. Indeed, warning signals of what would later be recognized as "queer" had already been articulated in various contexts. In comparison to Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities, Gayle Rubin's essay, "Thinking Sex," stands out as a significant call for recognition from marginalised and overlooked communities.¹¹⁸ Gayle Rubin, while explicitly acknowledging that "the realm of sexuality also possesses its own internal politics, inequalities, and systems of oppression," made a plea for emancipation. Her references, particularly to Michel Foucault's insights on sexuality, were pivotal. Rubin was one of the first to cite Foucault's work, "The History of Sexuality," which she considered "the most influential and emblematic piece of the new doctrine on sex." She noted that it critiqued the traditional view of sexuality as a natural impulse seeking liberation from social control while offering "a historical perspective on sex" and constructing "an alternative to sexual essentialism." Rubin underscored the oppressive nature of the "modern sexual system," which "categorises sexual populations, stratified by a social hierarchy," leading many to misconstrue their sexual preferences as a universal system that should work for everyone. She observed that the sexual culture of the 1980s bore striking similarities to the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, characterised by anxieties centred on the "homosexual threat" and the ambiguous spectre of the "sexual harasser." This call for recognition was not solely driven by a resurgence of repressive actions, particularly in the face of the AIDS epidemic. It was also motivated by the historical and social context that had paved the way for more organised struggles for homosexual emancipation, building upon the inspiration provided by the "Stonewall" movements. At the time "Thinking Sex" was developed, various other dissident sexual groups, including bisexuals, sadomasochists, individuals in intergenerational relationships, transsexuals, and transvestites, began to unite and seek to emulate the success of the homosexual community. This marked a period of community formation and identity acquisition.

The scholar's analysis doesn't solely focus on the forms of new activism or the examination of the sexual hierarchy's layers. It also endeavours to establish a suitable platform for discussing new theoretical perspectives. This aims to create "a radical theory of sex" with precise "conceptual tools to comprehend the subject and bring it to the forefront," ultimately forging a compelling critical language capable of combating the brutality of sexual persecution. Looking at neighbouring US

¹¹⁸ Rubin, G. 1993. *Thinking Sex, Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality*. (The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader). Routledge. pp. 3-4.

feminism, which some progressives have turned to for guidance due to the absence of a more comprehensive radical theory of sex, Rubin identifies a certain unease. While feminism has always had a strong interest in sex, a discomfort arises because certain feminist circles are found to demonise sexuality. Particularly, she views the American anti-pornography feminist culture that was widespread in the early 1980s as a major obstacle to the already marginalised discussions of sexuality. This is not only due to the way this current portrays "most sexual behaviour in the worst possible light, often using the most extreme examples as if they were representative," but also because "this anti-pornographic movement and its representatives have claimed to speak for all of feminism." In doing so, they recreate an extremely conservative notion of morality and sexual governance. Rubin, along with lesbians and heterosexual women who felt misrepresented by the anti-pornography discourse, desires a clear emancipation from feminist thought, which isn't always welcoming. Rubin's solutions and further suggestions are clearer. She proposes interpreting "Thinking Sex" as a precursor to the call of "queer" and, in a broader sense, as a plea for an innovative and independent sexual culture. By rejecting the exclusive representation of anti-pornography discourse, prevalent in US feminist circles, she challenges the notion that "feminism is or should be the primary domain for a theory of sexuality." Instead, she emphasises that "feminism is the theory of gender oppression" and stresses the need to distinguish between gender and erotic desire.

The Genesis of Queer Theory: Adrienne Rich and Compulsory Heterosexuality

When discussing the marginalised status of various sexualities, positioned at the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy or even not officially recognized as part of sexuality itself, "Thinking Sex" primarily aimed to discover new paths or invent novel spaces for discourse. It did so by drawing from the ideas within US feminist discussions on sexuality. Contrary to the immediate implications that might be gleaned from the essay, this goal didn't necessarily involve creating further divisions under the banner of sexuality. Instead, it embodied a desire to encourage feminist thought to reevaluate both sexuality and its hierarchies, specifically focusing on its legitimate areas of interest. Gayle Rubin subscribed to the need to allocate a separate arena of discourse for sexuality, one that hadn't been extensively explored and is relatively detached from feminism. This approach critiques but doesn't entirely dismiss feminist culture. It is an effort intertwined with the intent to give voice to those who have been silenced, making them more visible. Simultaneously, it wished to create new spaces for sex subcultures and feminism. This new perspective offered an innovative viewpoint, allowing

everyone to examine the complex issue of sexuality with a fresh sense of detachment. It facilitated the invention of new positions for individuals or communities, whether they have been officially recognized as desiring bodies or not. The complex positioning of bodies and the unquestioned acceptance of the prevailing norm are issues previously addressed by Adrienne Rich in her work "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence."¹¹⁹ Rich's primary contribution has been to offer a fresh analysis of heterosexuality, casting it in a new light that exposes it as a compulsory system. She asserts from a distinctly feminine viewpoint that "heterosexuality has been imposed on women, both overtly and covertly, by men who inscribe upon their bodies the sign of the inevitability of heterosexual intercourse, through a range of forces, from physical coercion to the control of consciousness." However, the intensity and compulsion associated with these actions suggest to the author that there is a substantial and potentially transformative counterforce that needs to be harnessed and channelled. The tone with which the author conveys her notion of the compulsory nature of heterosexual intercourse, particularly in the context of an erotic bond, explicitly draws attention to the previously mentioned issues related to pornography and sadomasochism. These topics have now become pivotal in the discourse on female sexuality, regardless of how certain feminist perspectives define and evaluate them. The tension surrounding these matters highlights a certain discomfort or fear when addressing sexuality in a broader sense. It acknowledges that "the depth of women's anger and fear regarding sexuality and its connection to power and suffering is genuine, even when the dialogue may seem simplistic, presumptuous, or even like a series of parallel monologues." While implicitly positioning herself within the anti-pornography discourse, albeit distancing herself from its heated rhetoric, Adrienne Rich effectively highlights the central crux of the issue, which later becomes a significant concern for Gayle Rubin. This concern stems from motivations that are partly opposing and partly convergent with those expressed in "Compulsory Heterosexuality." Rich argues that "the most harmful message conveyed by pornography is the idea that women are natural sexual prey for men and that they enjoy it; the merging of sexuality and violence; and the notion that, for women, sex is inherently masochistic, pleasantly humiliating, and physically abusive." However, the author's primary focus is not to delve into sexual matters from the standpoint of the most recent debates within US feminism. On the contrary, her goal is to emphasise the presence of unease with sexuality in its broader sense within the feminist movement. She draws an analogy between the criticism aimed at sex and the equally intense criticism directed towards alternative sexualities, which are often only briefly acknowledged or completely disregarded. This perspective is at odds with feminists who perceive heterosexuality as an erotic regime and model that has never truly been subject to scrutiny. They maintain the belief that, for women, "reinforced

¹¹⁹ Rich, Adrienne. 1993. *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence*. (The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader). Routledge. pp. 241.

submission and cruelty," often associated with men, is considered "sexually 'normal' within heterosexual relationships," while sexuality between women, even when characterised by mutual eroticism and respect, is deemed "strange" and "perverse."

The author does not seek to abandon or reject the possibility of heterosexual romantic and erotic relationships, as it's the absence of choice that remains the widely unrecognised reality. In the absence of choice, women will remain subject to the whims of specific relationships and will lack collective power to define the meaning and role of sexuality in their lives. This is the most crucial element that allows us to interpret "Compulsory Heterosexuality" as a precursor to queer thought. Beneath its surface, it represents an effort to develop alternative strategies or create new spaces to position or simply understand one's own and others' sexuality. This desire encourages heterosexual feminists to view heterosexuality as a political institution that oppresses women, so that women can be transformed, or at the very least, so that feminists themselves can find as few occasions as possible to engage in writing, teaching, or reading from an unproblematic heterosexual perspective, or better yet, problematized only in relation to the male counterpart. The lesbian body, due to its scientific marginality, serves as a space that allows the author to critique but simultaneously fosters a sense of suspicion within feminist thought toward the repositioning of heterosexuality. The widespread "virtual or total repudiation of lesbian existence in a wide range of writings," along with the tendency to erase or hide "women's choices as passionate partners, life companions, colleagues, and lovers," implicitly legitimises heterosexuality as the sole acceptable form of emotional and erotic relationships. The author reiterates that "feminist theory can no longer afford to merely express tolerance for 'lesbianism' as an 'alternative way of life' or make passing references to lesbians," without taking a closer look at their own heterosexual bias. However, Adrienne Rich acknowledges the challenges of implementing the reform and repositioning project, recognizing that "acknowledging that for women, heterosexuality may not be a 'preference' at all, but something that had to be imposed, managed, organised, propagated, and forcibly upheld, is a significant step, especially for those who consider themselves freely and 'innately' heterosexual." The author's appeal extends beyond seeking greater empowerment for the lesbian community. It's not merely about acceptance or integration as an autonomous minority but rather about forging a new space through a reevaluation of the heterosexual system. This reevaluation is marked by its innovative problematization and politicisation, aimed at benefiting not only lesbians but also heterosexual women. Lesbian desire is portrayed in a desexualized manner, offering a fresh metaphorical perspective for women at large to scrutinise their romantic and erotic relationships. This perspective serves to shift the focus away from merely "the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired a sexual experience with another woman," allowing for a more profound exploration of erotic desire

itself. It also seeks to disentangle lesbian existence from male homosexuality, recognizing the historical deprivation of a distinct political identity for lesbians by labelling them as female counterparts of male homosexuality. Such equating diminishes the unique feminine reality and experiences of lesbians. While there may be instances where lesbians have shared common social causes with homosexual men due to the absence of a coherent female community, distinctions exist. These include women's relative lack of economic and cultural privilege compared to men, qualitative differences in male and female relationships, and the specific challenges faced by lesbians. By eliminating eros from lesbianism and drawing a clear distinction between it and male homosexuality, there is a quest to carve out new spaces for women to explore innovative approaches and perspectives on sexuality. This involves stepping outside the existing spaces institutionalised and inadequately examined, whether in the realms of heterosexuality or homosexuality. The theoretical urgency lies in the desire to reposition heterosexuality within women's consciousness, recognizing a range of experiences rooted in women, creating a genuine continuum of relationships and experiences that are purely feminine, not exclusively sexual. Adrienne Rich's notion of eros is thus a starting point to reconfigure and relocate female subjects within a realm distinct from the obligatory confines of heterosexuality. The validated and cultivated sense of lesbian desire, in its broad sense, should facilitate the discovery of new spaces for women to critically evaluate the enforced regime of sexuality and establish alternative models of being that deviate from heterosexual compulsion. The exploration of new spaces and perspectives originating from the "lesbian continuum" will enable women, whether they identify as lesbians or heterosexuals, to uncover the erotic in feminine terms. This encompasses a more holistic concept that transcends mere bodily or physical aspects, as it embodies an energy that is not confined to one specific area of the body but is omnipresent. This shared joy encompasses physical, emotional, and psychic dimensions and extends to shared work. Such an appreciation of joy empowers individuals, reducing their inclination to accept powerlessness or prescribed states of being that do not align with their true selves, including resignation, despair, self-erasure, depression, and self-denial.

The identity drifts. What can queer theory be used for today in the humanities?

The new orientation taken by queer theory has been generated by a choice to transform the strategy of examining sexuality. This newfound perspective enables a broader and potentially more comprehensive understanding of topics related to the erotic, which are deeply intertwined with social reality. This new discursive position became necessary as it accompanied both a genuine desire for repositioning advanced by certain individuals and the evolution of erotic theory. However, as previously discussed, queer theory has introduced a set of risks and generated inconveniences that still render its status somewhat uncertain. Some of these risks can be particularly problematic, as they affect the established strategies for discussing and naming subjects. Shifting from an internal to an external perspective on erotic mapping involves relinquishing one's original position within the family without being entirely certain of gaining the ability to speak or think effectively in the new space. Nonetheless, it is generally assumed that adopting this new position is a necessary step, given that the original position became intolerable, leading to displacement. This process can result in challenging outcomes, as it essentially entails constructing a theoretical reevaluation of oneself and one's own bodies. On the other hand, many concerns and dangers associated with queer theory appear more groundless, particularly when rooted in a perceived parallelism between the new queer theory and specific lesbian and gay traditions primarily developed in the 1980s and 1990s. The parallelism itself isn't inherently problematic, but it's the way in which it has been established that creates confusion. This comparison is based solely on what gay and lesbian culture and queer theory contain within themselves, focusing exclusively on content. This choice represents a subversion of one of the core aspects of queer theory, which seeks to adopt a more instrumental and functional perspective, temporarily setting aside the element of content and asserting its absence, believing that the content is still embedded in the original and contested erotic mapping. This seemingly endless and unproductive debate has manufactured a non-existent theoretical opposition. The queer repositioning, restricted to its content, becomes a symbol of promoting individual self, an eccentric subject who autonomously navigates the path leading out of the mapping to reposition externally, severing the original connection that tied them to other subjects within the marked pole. This, in turn, makes it challenging to hypothesise an external repositioning that will enable subjects to occupy the same space. The criticism that centres on the deconstruction of identity or community categories, presumably intended by queer theory, underscores the fact that individual subjects will bear the responsibility of crossing into the new observation space and facing the potential challenges, without the support of peers. The term "queer" has also become synonymous with

generational conflict between lesbians and gay men, often associated with contexts labelled as such without a clear rationale, as the intended lack of content of queer has, in fact, become a source of weakness. The empty nature of queer, a concept more positional and oppositional than content-driven, has made the term overly "comfortable," turning it into a generic label for various forms of rejection or disavowal in the realms of identity or erotic politics. As a consequence, this utilisation of the term has emphasised its initial promise of inclusivity, as if it could definitively overcome the divisions between lesbians and gay men and resolve numerous conflicts in the political sphere of the erotic. Additionally, it has been assumed that queer aimed to replace the previous validity of the terms "lesbian" and "gay" as labels. Simultaneously, various uses of queer have even positioned it as a synonym for the original homosexual essentialism, making it available to individuals who may not even experience the stigma and social disqualification faced by lesbians and gay men due to their sexuality. Furthermore, a problematic issue arose from the use of the term "queer" to characterise certain forms of homosexual activism in the early 1990s in the United States, such as the "Queer Nation." Queer discourse was thus defined as mere support for this contemporary activism. However, no specific homosexual movement in the early 1990s genuinely embraced the theoretical demands of queer, and in fact, initiatives by the "Queer Nation" were subsequently criticized by queer theorists themselves. This criticism stemmed from the fact that the "Queer Nation" established a model of radical activism for young lesbians and gay men solely based on their sexual orientation. If anything, these same theorists cautiously acknowledged that "ACT UP" was the sole form of queer activism, utilising the AIDS crisis as a unifying element and connecting sexual politics to broader social mobilisation. This approach fostered debates on issues related to race, gender, poverty, prostitution, media representation of male homosexuality, and challenged dominant and governmental knowledge. These initiatives were not scrutinised. This set of issues, as previously described, either failed to recognize or chose not to acknowledge the true and often simpler scope of queer theory. That is, it's a way to develop innovative positional knowledge for the erotic, creating a new space for more effective problematization. It doesn't seek to establish a new identity eager to replace previous certainties of identity and community.

Conclusion

The first project outcome, the "Research-Analysis: Towards LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Education," has been deeply inspired by the contents and goals of the "Proposal for a Council recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching", published in 2018. This research wishes to contribute to the development of "inclusive and high-quality education" and has been aimed at educators, trainers, socio-cultural animators, and teachers, encouraging them to develop "knowledge, critical thinking, and greater awareness of community values" and the issues related to LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Education.

The first outcome supports the upskilling of education professionals while also creating inclusive learning and social environments. It addresses a specific need, as educators and trainers often express their uncertainty in addressing discriminatory acts or including "topics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression" in their work with learners. Most educational systems, to date, still lack clear policies and opportunities for professional development in LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Education (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Professionally speaking: challenges to achieve equality for LGBT people, 2016).

The aim of the present publication, also in terms of impact, is to "upskill" the educator, the researcher, the social worker, promoting the inclusion of individuals who identify themselves as part of the LGBTIQ+ communities, thus encouraging the formation of Gay-Straight alliances in educational settings. It represents a "problematization" of the concepts of norm and otherness, the keywords and the basic, theoretical concepts of the so-called Gender, Queer, Gay and Lesbian Studies, which have a common enemy: homophobic and transphobic exclusion and discrimination.

During the elaboration of this First Project Results, the following articles have been spread in various newspapers, reflecting what, in everyday reality, is the context of LGBTIQ+ inclusion and how the themes specific to the Streets Aligned project are perceived by the general public.

"Famed Iranian Rights Lawyer Reportedly Jailed and Beaten"

October 30, 2023, The New York Times

"UN experts call on the Taliban to free 2 women rights defenders from custody in Afghanistan"

October 31, 2023, ABC News

"African, Asian Parliamentarians Debate How People-Centred Policies Aid Development of Women, Youth"

October 31, 2023, Global issues

Hidden women: Madrid show puts forgotten artists in the picture

October 31, 2023, The Guardian

"The state prosecutor has proposed a prison sentence of around three years for former Member of Parliament Dominik Feri, who is accused of two counts of rape and attempted rape."

October 31, 2023, ČT24

"The violent conflict in Sudan has impacted nearly every aspect of women's lives."

October 30, 2023, Global issues

"The number of Ukrainian female soldiers is increasing, but they still face discrimination: 'A woman cannot make mistakes.'"

August 11, 2023, Woxpot

“Husband of Makayla Meave-Byers accused of shooting her, wrapping body in carpet so he could date other women”

October 30, 2023, New York Post

“Jasmin Bhasin’s Confession About Rape Threats Post ‘Bigg Boss’ Shows The Dark Side Of Fandom”

September 05, 2023, IDIVA

“Women recruitment in govt jobs doubled since 2014 according to Union Minister Jitendra Singh”

January 11, 2023, East Asian Forum

“Pakistan's former PM Nawaz Sharif under fire for using sexist remarks against PTI women supporters”

October 27, 2023, The times of INDIA

“Empowering women’s rights in Indonesia”

January 11, 2023, East Asian Forum

“‘Tampon tax’: Italy to raise VAT on sanitary and baby products”

October 25, 2023, The Local IT

“Johannesburg Pride marches for LGBTQ+ Ugandans after anti-gay law passed”

October 28, 2023, News24

“Malaysian LGBTQ community slam Matty Healy for concert kiss”

July 27, 2023, Euronews

“Trans soldier's attack highlights challenges faced by LGBT Ukrainians”

August 18, 2023, Euronews

“Elon Musk Mocked for Calling Cisgender a 'Heterosexual Slur’”

October 31, 2023, Advocate

“Pope Francis hints at acceptance to blessings of same-sex couples”

October 3, 2023, Global news