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Gender Perspective and the Temporal Aspect in Managerial Careers: Male and Female Views of Time

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to describe the perception of time by men and women in managerial positions in business organizations (and the specific actions resulting from that perception). The differences and similarities in perceiving time by representatives of the two sexes were reconstructed on the basis of nearly fifty narrative interviews conducted within the framework of two projects: 'The Temporal Aspect of Managerial Careers' (concluded in 2005) and the ongoing 'Spatial Aspect of Managerial Careers'. In the context of the titular gender perspective, what is noteworthy is the vision of their careers that organizational actors' declare and realize, in that they perceive them, despite the contradictions resulting from the gender difference, as being planned and realized through persistence. Key categories describing this type of attitude are those of the 'self-made man' and 'self-made woman'. Differences in ways of realizing the ideal of the inner-directed manager, which are the effect of a culturally conditioned perception of the role that men and women 'should' fill, are also important.

Analysis of the data collected was conducted on the basis of grounded theory methodology.

Keywords: gender, career, temporality, narratives, grounded theory.

Introduction

The temporality of the world and the temporality of 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger 1962) are continual subjects for the study of sociologists, particularly symbolic interactionists. According to the interactionist perspective, individuals occupy successive positions during their lives and fulfil various roles pertaining to those positions. Through the prism of their positions and roles (for instance, stereotypically perceived male and female roles) they are appraised by others; they receive approbation for their activities, or, conversely, a lack of acceptance for their behaviour. The scale and extent of social expectations in regard to the individual depends on many objective factors, such as: age, gender, occupation or function, social class, and many others. At the same time, being the object of reflection and reaction from the environment, individuals place themselves in the role of appraisers whose objects of evaluation are themselves (Mead 1934). There is thus a continual dialogue: the process consists of a continual adaptation to the objective world and the subjective world of the individual. In order to describe and simultaneously to emphasize the importance of this process, symbolic interactionists speak of 'careers' (Hughes 1958; Goffman 1961; Glaser, Strauss 1967).

In its ordinary meaning, the term 'career' is associated, almost exclusively, with work in a person's profession, while from the interactionist perspective it is possible,

for example, to speak of the career of a deviant, a parent, a marijuana smoker, or a manager. Of course, in this case as well, attention is paid to the structural factors, but what makes the idea of careers particularly attractive for the sociologist is the emphasis on its subjective dimension: a career is 'the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meanings of his various attitudes, actions, and the things which happen to him.' (E. Hughes 1958: 63; see also Dymarczyk 2012).

The concept of 'career' should find, and for a certain time has found, a wide application in analyzing work and vocational roles, including within Poland (Konecki 1988; Domecka, Mrozowicki 2008; Dymarczyk 2008; Wagner 2011). A sort of novelty in the local context is the *temporal analysis of careers from the perspective of men and women engaged in managerial (and/or business) activities* (Dymarczyk 2005).¹

Theoretical Inspirations

A special example of the cultural conditioning of the perception of time—even if rooted in biology—is the different treatment of this phenomenon by men and women. And this rule is observed, it would seem, in all known civilisational groups and areas. In indicating the most important temporal differences having their source in a cultural definition of gender, the author limits himself here to the Western world.

In making, even if limitedly, a review of the Anglo-Saxon scientific literature, we find numerous examples of research and reflections on the different male and female perspectives on time, particularly in the context of work, family life, and education. In the present article, the author will only mention those that have afforded him significant inspiration. Thus: Arlie Hochschild (1971) compares a man's perception of his own career to the mechanical principles of a clock ('the male career of lockstep stages as a form of "clockwork"'). This means that in succeeding ticks of the timepiece's hands it is hard to discover any discontinuity, and thus by implication any space for a field of activity outside the vocation, particularly family life. Thomas J. Cottle and Stephen L. Klineberg (1974) show that masculine orientation toward achievement can be characterized as an *expectation*, bordering sometimes on a certainty, of significant events. On the other hand, the female viewpoint is closer to a *wish*, and such a perspective is expressed, for instance, in the sentence: 'it would be good or even great if it were to happen.' Thomas J. Cottle puts it as follows: 'For a man, the present is a time of preparation, for women it is a time of having' (1976: 79). For men, time is a zone of potential, while for women it is a zone of being (1976: 78–79). David R. Maines and Monica J. Hardesty (1987), in analyzing the life plans of young people on the threshold of their careers, claim that men live in a linear temporal world, while women's temporal world is a world characterized by fragility and uncertainty, susceptible to situational variables: that is, contingent time (cf Mead 1938: 313–320). In practice, this means that from the viewpoint of men, both successive educational levels and

¹ Among the not very numerous Polish publications touching, even tangentially, upon the question of the temporal aspect of the careers of Polish managers and entrepreneurs the books of Hanna Palska (2002) and Joanna Ostrouch-Kamińska (2011) are worthy of note.

stages in their professional careers appear to them as planned, successive, obvious, and mutually conditioning status passages. Moreover, future family life should not disturb the harmonious development of career advance. The female vision of the future is quite different. A career, although desirable, does not seem either obvious or unproblematic, particularly in the context of squaring it with other spheres of activity (education, a pursuit or hobby, but above all with a family). Various scenarios are thus possible and considered: dedication to one's career *perhaps*, or relinquishing career plans for the sake of family life *perhaps*. Various compromises are *possible*. None of the above, however, is predetermined and much depends on the situation. Maines and Hardesty suggest thus original labels for naming the visions of the future revealed in the temporal perspectives: the label *what* and the label *how*.

Data and Method of Analysis

In the further part of the article, theses on the perception and realization of managerial careers by men and women will be presented. The empirical material under analysis is the record of 25 interviews conducted by the author and his colleagues in the years 2001–2005 on the broadly defined subject of 'The Temporal Aspect of Managerial Careers' (Dymarczyk: 2005, 2008) and 23 interviews conducted between 2006 and the present. The project bears the working name 'The Spatial Aspect of the Managerial World'. In the case of both research projects, the narrators were persons holding positions at various levels of management (from the operational to the strategic), employed in medium or large profit-oriented business organizations. The majority of the interviewees were living and working in Łódź and Warsaw, or in the vicinity of these cities; a few, however, were living and working in other regions of Poland.

Research into the temporal aspects of the work and life of Polish managers was primarily exploratory in nature. Thus resource techniques and qualitative methods were mainly used. The bases for analysis were the narrative interviews and, in a few cases, in-depth interviews. It would seem that this method of gathering data, where the subject of study is the actors' life histories, in the form of spontaneous narrations about their lives or parts of their lives, creates the best chance of reaching to the deeply hidden mechanisms responsible for, among other matters, creating and maintaining the temporal order and also the behaviours that are simultaneously an answer and an indication of one and not another attitude toward time. The biographical materials were analyzed on the basis of the procedures developed by A. L. Strauss and B. G. Glaser (1967, 1978) along with their colleagues and students (Strauss, Corbin: 1990, 1997; Konecki: 2000; see also Gorzko 2008), and defined as grounded theory methodology. The procedure recommended by the above authors for completing and analyzing data keeps the serendipity context which is one of the essential advantages of exploratory research. Thanks to unusual flexibility in approaching the research problem, the successive stages of research, and the collected material, the researcher has the opportunity to discover phenomena that earlier went unnoticed or to which insufficient importance was attached. Considering that the manner in which time is

perceived is often unconscious and taken for granted, as is its affect on specific actions, a qualitative method based on analyzing the individual experiences of social actors would seem to be entirely justified.

Self-made Men—Self-made Women

In the course of analyzing the interviews, a broad category was generated that was called 'significant others'. Within this category, subcategories were distinguished: 'family' (parents, siblings, spouses, children, and other relatives), 'friends and acquaintances', and 'business associates' (subordinates, colleagues, superiors, institutional associates). Obviously, these social worlds have become permanently intertwined. For example, family members and friends are often simultaneously the narrators' co-workers.

The relations of the interviewees in connection with the above worlds will constitute, in the further part of this article, an important axis for comparing the temporal aspects of the life and work of managers of both sexes. Basically, in all the stories about 'the world of business associates' and activities in this world, they constitute the fundamental context for illustrating a developing managerial career. In the case of both men and women we find broad portions of the narratives testify to an authentic engagement in work, including in team work. However, neither team work (although it is important) nor significant others are the chief source of success for the interviewees. It could be said of many of the narratives that they are self-ravishing presentations, serving to exhibit the interviewee's own services and the successes that have allowed him or her to achieve, maintain, or strengthen an important position in the organizational hierarchy. In listening to these narratives, one often has the impression that the application of the labels of—depending on gender—'self-made men' or 'self-made women' to the collectives under observation is appropriate. The position held is seen as the result of one's *own* hard work, sometimes over the course of many years. It is the result of consistent, persistent activity (including frequently extra expenditure of time) aimed at achieving successive tasks and goals that one has set for oneself. For example, according to Catherine Hakim (2006), the aims that men and women set for themselves (including holding managerial positions) does not differ as much as might be assumed on the basis of stereotypical opinions. The quotes below testify to the truth of the above:

(M)—[on a proposed promotion]...and at that moment, at that moment it was as if I'd got the wind in my sails and I realized that in getting such an opportunity to work in such a position I would be able (...) it was an opportunity I couldn't waste and now everything would depend on me. And that was very, very motivating.

(M)—... already, when I was in secondary school (...) I decided to go forward and above all to try not to depend on anyone else, but to work out my own future.

(F)—... I have my own activities, my plans to complete. And nobody asks me if I have problems, I just have to carry out the plan, maintain the structure. I have to deal with it all myself. That's what I decided.

(F)—Well, of course I passed that [managerial—*author's note*] exam [laughs]. Of course, I fulfilled the conditions. But what was more satisfying to me was that it was as if I'd won a match against all those who had experience, education, titles: everything. I had nothing!

(F)—Adversity comes, but you have to take life by the horns, even though it can be painful. I had to manage those adversities somehow. I decided I had to be tough.

In general, it can be stated that the narrators express the following attitude in their stories: 'I am the main actor' and 'I am a manager'. Only later comes 'I am a colleague', 'I am a woman,' or 'I am a man' (cf Beck 2002: 164).

However, certain important differences, arising from traditions, from cultural definitions of gender, do occur. In the case of women, this can be the determination to reach a self-set goal, and sometimes also the necessity of opposing the conviction expressed by friends or family that managerial roles aren't proper for women:

(F)—Everyone considered that, um...in short...something was going wrong with my mind [laughs]. In short, I had everyone against me: my mom, my husband...my nearest and dearest, my siblings. They thought something was wrong with me, because I was somehow set on that schooling. (...) *It was a very manly decision in my woman's life* [researcher's emphasis]. [After the narrator had worked for a certain time in an independent position...] My family began then to change their minds [laughs]. They began to change their minds. There weren't any more negative, you know, opinions. They saw what kind of money I was starting to bring home. (...) I wouldn't want to say here anything unnecessary again, mmm, on the subject of rivalry at home. My husband also had ambitions (...). My husband also was in a managerial position. And until that time, he had been the breadwinner, right? And from that moment, things became different.

(F)—Although, when I said to my husband what I wanted to do, he said 'with your short-lived enthusiasm, I give you three months, half a year tops.' After a time, when I really felt like giving it all up, I remembered his words and said to myself 'no, I can't do that', because then he would have been right. (...) I know that it is often the case that if a woman is successful, men can't accept the fact. On the one hand, it's not hard to understand that a guy might get upset when a woman goes out in the evening, elegantly dressed. (...) On the other hand, a woman should make up for it somehow and give her husband the feeling that he's important, so he won't feel threatened. I've been through it myself. At the beginning, *I sometimes felt worried* [researcher's emphasis]; my husband didn't say anything when I went out, or when I came back—as if it were nothing, but I knew that he wasn't entirely convinced it was a good thing. (...) Well, but in the end, my husband was sensible.

(F)—At the beginning it was hard. My husband wasn't working then in fact and he was glad that I had a satisfying occupation, but somewhere inside I suppose he felt bad and some kind, some kind of anxiety that things would be different. I was also not comfortable with it. That lasted for some time. Outwardly it was okay, but...Later he found work and we had to somehow make our relationship work and divide responsibilities. Our son was small and that was a complication, because we were both working. And again, that lasted a certain while, and with time we reached a certain understanding, a sort of consensus, we got used to the fact, although it wasn't, as I said, easy. But now I can do something for myself, not just for the family.'

The above fragments clearly show the vitality of the traditionally, historically, and culturally created perception of men's and women's roles: *'It was a very manly decision in my woman's life'... 'a woman should make up for it somehow and give her husband the feeling that he's important...'* At the same time, we note the narrator's determination in striving to develop her career according to her own plan.² The above fragments

² According to the research of Catherine Hakim (chiefly in Great Britain and America), for around 20% of women, the ideal is a work-centered lifestyle; around 60% try to harmonize their professional lives with their private lives (an adaptive work-lifestyle); while for around 20%, the ideal is a life concentrated around the home (home-centered) (Hakim 2006).

also show that the vocational emancipation of women is, in the context of family relations, a *process*, whose stages we can distinguish: (1) the stage of pressure and resistance from family and friends; (2) next, the breaking-in stage, or proceedings aimed at harmonizing the role of woman-manager with woman-family member (wife, mother); and (3) finally, the stage of the household's acceptance of the woman's new role and her new position in the family. This process is difficult enough to require the engagement of all the actors in redefining the traditional perception of a woman through the prism of the roles she fulfils, of which the most important are the role of mother and the role of wife: in effect, the recognition that she has the same rights to be 'what she does and how she acts' and not only to be 'who she is for others and how she is for others' (Nowak-Dziemianowicz 2002: 164). As the authors of a now classical study on women's career limitations in Poland (*Szklany sufit. Bariery i ograniczenia karier kobiet* [The Glass Ceiling: Barriers and Limitations on Women's Careers]) observe, 'the key moment in a career is becoming aware of one's own goals and needs' (Budrowska, Duch-Krzystoszek, Titkow 2003: 147).³ This is connected, however, with many dilemmas and feelings of uncertainty, sometimes with fear and risk. It is thus *identity work*. In the course of this work the 'subjective I', the (social) *me* of an actor, develops a dialogue with an ever clearer accentuation and assertive recognition of the (personal) *I* (Mead 1934). This aspect of the *I*, in the opinion of Antonina Kłoskowska, is a 'creative factor, an element of change, breaking down the absolute regularity of general mechanisms, and is thus an *active* [*author's emphasis*] adaptation to the variety of individual and variable life situations' (Kłoskowska 1975: XXVIII). It could be said that the subjective identity of a man is somehow 'given', while the subjective identity of a female manager is free to 'become' and that is not an easy process.

We also observe other differences: in the case of a female manager we are usually dealing with stronger (broader and more emotional) emphasis on family ramifications.⁴ Those portions of the stories focusing on relations with persons who are close usually take place in the 'here and now'; they are 'real' events occurring usually in the *present time* and concerning 'real' problems (Cottle 1976). The basic question expressed explicitly and implicitly is *how* to harmonize professional work with home life (cf Maines, Hardesty 1987).

The result of surveys carried out among Polish managers in 2010 could also be used as an illustration of the above.⁵ The decided majority of respondents (68%) described themselves as successful women, while 31% were on their way to attaining success.

³ In qualitative research conducted by the author of the present article, the ratio of male managers to female managers in the highest positions was around 2:1.

⁴ Stephanie Taylor (2010), in an analysis of the narratives of British women students, emphasized that her respondents were for the most part young, educated, usually independent persons, functioning in a metropolitan environment. Nevertheless, in their histories, mentions of the period of their childhood and early youth were very often a leading point of reference in answers concerning their own fates and choices. The researcher placed these motifs in a general category called 'born and bred'.

⁵ Research entitled 'The Woman Manager 2011: Career Opportunities and Limitations of Women in Poland' was conducted on the initiative of companies and non-governmental organizations interested in propagating a management model encompassing a gender equality policy. The project's partners were the Polish Professional Women Network, the firm of Deininger Consulting, PwC, Publink, and White & Case.

However, as many as 55% of the female managers defined that success as achieving a satisfactory balance between their professional and family lives. At the same time, 77% declared that the professional sphere gave them the greatest satisfaction (60% indicated the family sphere)⁶ (Bilińska, Rawłuszko 2011).

The stories of the men are usually briefer, particularly on subjects related to their private lives. For example, in several instances, family motifs were touched on only when the researcher, in the final phase of the interview, made such a request, even though at the outset, he had expressed precisely what kind of narrative he was expecting.

On the other hand, men more often than women mentioned the school stage of their lives (particularly their time in higher education). Sometimes this subject was dwelt on at length. The years spent on education appear then most often as a period of *preparation* for the later *adult* career. It is a time for acquiring knowledge, qualifications, and abilities, and for making useful contacts. The career develops in a linear and prepared manner (Hochschild 1971). In their (male) world, there is indeed a lack of discontinuity. The future (school, higher education, and previous employment) are presented as natural and necessary stages of the developing career. Furthermore, that career should still continue to unfold in a relatively undisturbed manner:

(M)—Work occupies a fairly large part of my life; I'd say around 80% of the time that I'm not sleeping. Sometimes I go to work on the weekends too (...) My parents live 300 kilometres from here. I'm not married; I don't have children yet. (...) I don't know at all if I could harmonize [my professional role and the role of husband and father]. I don't know at all if I will manage to have a family. (...) *My wife would have to be an understanding woman [researcher's emphasis]*.

(M)—Fortunately, I don't yet have a family; that is, I don't have a wife or children. I think that such persons would be harmed by my professional life, because whether *I like it or not, I couldn't [researcher's emphasis]* devote as much time to them as I should.

The above quotes are a fairly clear example of the pattern of a career in which there is no room for any other engagements outside of work. The researcher often encountered narratives in which male managers indicated their engagement in family life. However, it was characteristic that these were not significant topics of their narratives or topics where any issues could be found that related to making the professional role accord with the role of husband and father. Basically, in only one interview did the narrator clearly indicate that his professional choices and manner of organizing work were in large measure conditioned by the needs—including the time requirements—of his family. This interviewee intends to create an internet discussion forum for working fathers (the *'daddy-net'*) but at the same time, he asks rhetorically: *'The question is only to what degree this is a subject; that's the question mark—to what degree would guys be able to get involved?'*

It's worth observing here that many systematically conducted surveys in Poland show that in spite of the spread of the partnership model of the family (particularly in

193 female managers, with several years of experience in management positions in business organizations, took part in the study.

⁶ The respondents could choose up to 2 options. The total percentage is higher than 100.

urban environments, among persons of higher education, who are pleased with their material and professional situation), the traditional model of the family, or something close to it, remains popular.⁷

For the purpose of verifying and consolidating the thesis relating to the linearity of men's temporal world and the presentist temporal orientation of women, a triangulation procedure was used (methodological triangulation and data triangulation). At the same time, the researcher conducted the circle test invented by T. J. Cottle (1968), whose aim was precisely to determine the temporal orientation that is characteristic of a given group of people. The study, which was quantitative this time, was nationwide and the group tested numbered 361 respondents of both sexes.⁸ The respondents were managers at varying levels of management (from operational to strategic). The task given to the respondents was as follows: 'Think of the past, present, and future as being the shape of circles. Please draw three circles on a sheet of paper representing the past, the present, and the future. Arrange these three circles in any way that best shows how you feel about the relationship of the past, present, and future. You may use different size circles. When you have finished, label each circle to show which is the past, which one the present, and which one the future' (Cottle 1968; cf Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner 1994).

An analysis of the collected material confirmed that in the group tested, the *linear manner* of viewing time was decidedly preponderant. Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents, *both men and women*, expressed such a model with the aid of the drawings.⁹ The respondents were also characterized by a *prospective* orientation: the circle symbolizing the future was usually larger than the others. (Generally, such an image of time is characteristic of the representatives of developed Western societies). There exists, however, a certain difference in the manner of visualizing time in regard to the gender of the respondents: it concerns the present. In the pictures drawn by women, the circle symbolizing the *ekstasis*—to use Heidegger's language—was relatively larger than that most often drawn by men. Thus the thesis that interests us here on the separateness of temporal worlds was at least partially confirmed. In spite of both

⁷ In the research of the Center for Public Opinion Research [CBOS] conducted in April 2012 on a representative sample of adult Poles, it was determined that 27% of respondents were for a family model in which 'both the husband (partner) and the wife (partner) work outside the home, with the husband (partner) devoting more time to the vocational work while the wife (partner), in addition to the vocational work, is engaged with the housework, raising the children, etc.' On the other hand, 22% of respondents preferred a model in which 'solely the husband (partner) works, earning enough to supply the needs of the family, while the wife (partner) is occupied with the housework, raising the children, etc.' Nearly half the respondents (48%) were for a model in which the distribution of duties and engagement in work were equal (the partnership model) (Center for Public Opinion Research 2012).

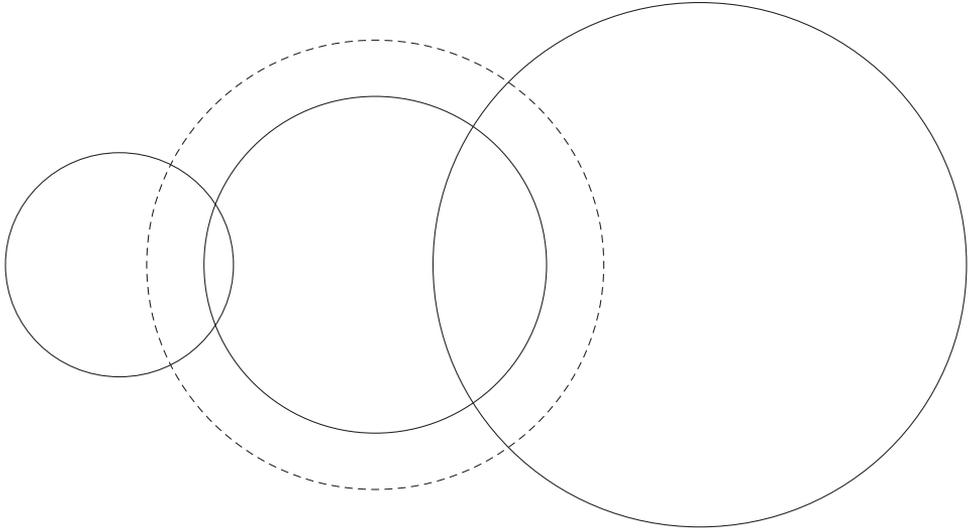
⁸ The KBN Project (2HOE 016 23) realized by the Department of the Sociology of Organization and Management of the University of Łódź, entitled 'Kulturowe uwarunkowania zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi'—Cultural Conditioning of Human Resource Management' (Dymarczyk 2007, 2008).

⁹ It should be noticed that in spite of the clear, sequential treatment of time as occurring in succession—past, present, and future—the majority of persons tested linked the circles to create a common 'field' between the past and present and the present and future. The above model reflects a middle way of perceiving time, between the 'West' and the 'East' (pointing toward the first). The past, present, and future are *relatively* independent entities, although in certain areas they co-exist and are mutually conditioning.

genders' prospective and linear vision of time,¹⁰ women's time meant, to a slightly larger degree, 'being-in-the-present' (the interrupted line):

Drawing 1

The dominant model of time for men and women¹¹



Let's turn our attention to one more temporal difference. Based on grounded theory procedures, a category was generated which could most accurately be labelled 'feelings of guilt and shame'. In the men's narrations, no elements were found that would indicate the existence of this type of emotional state. This is a 'typically female' category, and appears solely in the context of family relations:

(F)—As to cooking, well, on the weekend and on Friday I cook. Since I often travel on Saturday, I try to cook everything on Friday. (...) That means that I still have a *sense of guilt* [*researcher's emphasis*], that

¹⁰ See Anex no 1.

¹¹ In the quantitative study, there weren't any direct questions about having children, although the researcher had information about the number of persons living in the household of the respondent, from which it could be deduced on average (with a margin of error) that a household of three persons or more would be one in which there were children (or other persons, should as an elderly individual, requiring care). An analysis of the model of time based on such an assumption shows an even greater difference between men's and women's perceptions. Namely, the circle symbolizing the present was significantly larger in the drawings of female managers, which indicates a strong presentist attitude (cf [Tarkowska 1992](#)). A suitable commentary on the above are the words of Bogusława Budrowska on the subject of the temporal perspective of contemporary Polish women who take care of children: 'The attitude toward time of persons in varying situations of coercion and dependency is characterized primarily by a concentration on the present and a significant reduction of the planning perspective. (...) In the 'extended present' it is easier to maintain control of numerous elements and various factors; we have to remember, after all, about the 'numerous public and private chess moves by which a woman's life history is played out' ([Budrowska 2001: 106](#)).

I should—I don't know. I see—I have a friend, who is my neighbour—the way she comes home from work and scrubs the toilet, cleans, cooks for herself and...*My conscience hurts me [researcher's emphasis]*. Because I've still got the feeling that a woman should do that.

(F)—The significant persons, the events, the significant events that guided my moves were—ordinarily my moves were (...) subordinate to family affairs. Yes, and that was a priority. I couldn't go beyond certain boundaries, I couldn't fly too far away, etc., because usually *I had to be [researcher's emphasis]* connected to home.

(F)—My private life begins, in sum, around eight o'clock. Then I devote all my time to my daughter. I don't have too much time for her [with regret] and during the school year I only see her in the morning, as she is hurriedly getting ready to go to school. (...) It's too bad.

(F)—I'm running about from early morning. Aside from getting ready to go out, I usually prepare breakfast for my son to take to school. If the previous day I was too tired or *lazy [researcher's emphasis]* sometimes in the morning I still have some washing or ironing to do or I have to finish preparing dinner. (...) My day ends around ten or eleven. If *I allow myself [researcher's emphasis]* to go to bed, then later it has a definite effect on my mood.

The daily life of some female managers appears then as one of unavoidable conflict and struggle between the time requirements of the work place and the culturally defined role of a woman as 'keeper of the hearth fire'. In this context, many 'temporal pressures' arise and the resolution is not always satisfactory, which results in feelings of guilt and shame (see [Wicker et al: 1983](#); [Elvin-Nowak 1999: 78–83](#)). Women often spoke frankly about these feelings, but in some cases we could note a sense of shame that wasn't entirely conscious. Thomas J. Sheff (1984, 1990; cf also [Scheff, Ratzinger 1991](#); [Konecki 2008](#)) devoted considerable attention to this type of situation. He considers that chronic overt shame may be so present in the life of an individual that it is not noticed. The non-perception of shame is possible thanks to two phenomena: '*bypassed shame* and *overt, undifferentiated shame*'. In the first case, the individual displays unnatural verbal behaviour and gestures (for example, obsessive behaviour, hurry and emphasis in thinking, acting, and speaking) by which she prevents herself from feeling shame.

(F)—[a spontaneous and highly emotional reaction to the question 'How many children do you have?'] No, my children are already grown up, *I have no problems with them; anyway, I never had!* [said very quickly]. They're very quiet; they haven't got problems at school. What's more, they had to learn to cook really early. My son was 7 when he started making pork chops because he liked them.

In the second example, it's a matter of overt, undifferentiated shame connected with a negative self-image. The individual's reaction could consist, for instance, in appearing troubled, or in hesitant speech or euphemisms:

(K)—If the day before I was too tired or *lazy [researcher's emphasis]* (...) *If I allowed myself [researcher's emphasis]* to go to sleep (...).

In spite of feeling guilt and shame, the show must go on, because such a decision had been made by the script-writer and main character in one person. In spite of all, the most accurate labels to characterize managers of both sexes remain those of 'self-made man' and 'self-made woman'.

Conclusion

One of the main theses presented in this article is that of the validity and simultaneously the equivalency of the labels ‘self-made man’ and ‘self-made woman’. Is that how it really is? Let us make use of the Goffman theatre metaphor:

In the case of male managers the answer seems not to pose any great problems: the ‘actors’ are also the directors of the ‘piece’, whose main subject is the undisturbed development of a career (at least, in the explicit narration). Sometimes, however, we may have the impression that the ‘play’ is not very exciting. It has little room for ‘drama’ or authorial dilemmas, there are few ‘twists and turns’, and it can happen that other actors only fulfil ‘the roles of extras’.

Usually, the ‘theatre pieces’ written by female managers have more interesting dramaturgy. The fore and middle ground of the ‘stage’ is filled with ‘actors’, and tension is built by drawing distinct lines of conflict between significant participants in the ‘show’ and the main character. In this regard, the main character has doubts about the career path she has chosen. She has to deal with negative feelings such as shame, guilt, and sometimes anger. Nevertheless, ‘the show must go on’, because the ‘writer’ and ‘main character of the show’, in one person, made such a decision.

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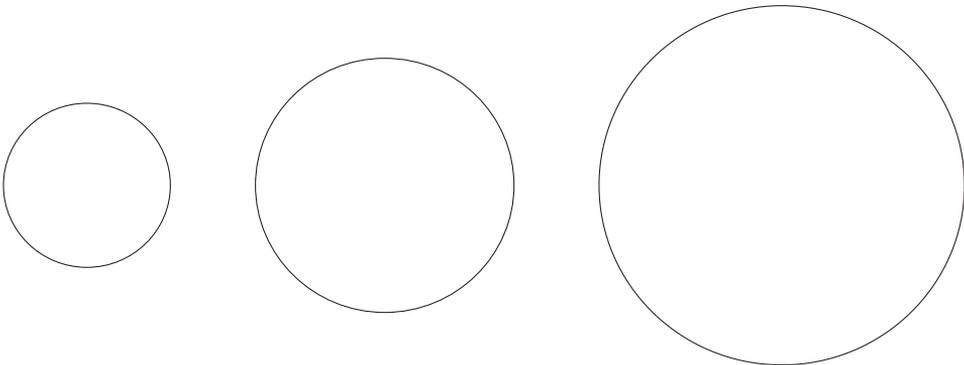
E-mail: dymarczyk.waldemar@gmail.com

Anex no. 1

The linear-cyclical continuum

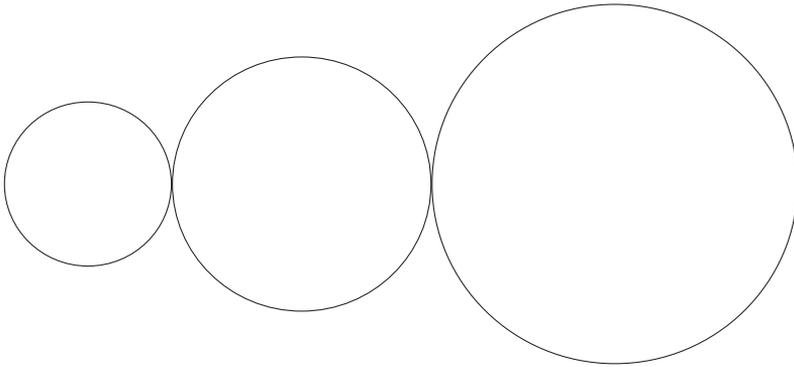
(on the basis of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997)

a. extreme linearism



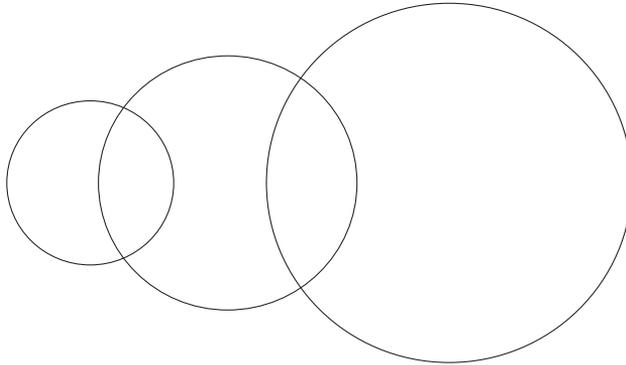
and similar drawings

b. moderate linearism



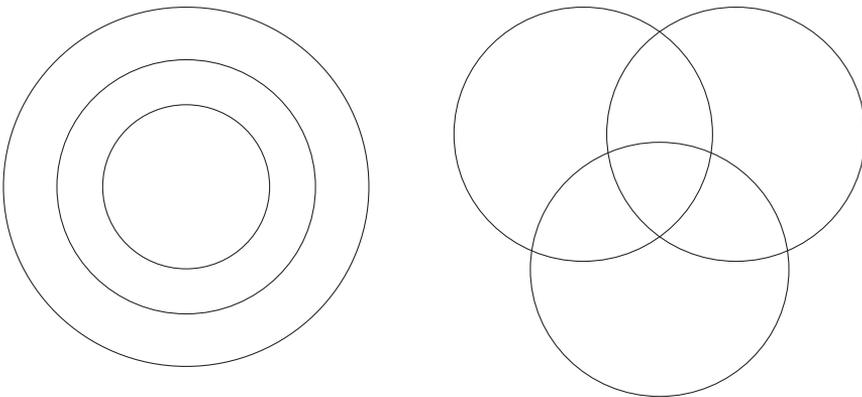
and similar drawings

c. moderate cyclicity



and similar drawings

d. extreme cyclicity



and similar drawings