**“IT’S NOT ADEQUATE, BUT OTHERWISE THEY WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND IT”: TAKSONOMY OF GENDERS REVISITED**

**Summary**

The paper discusses the epistemic change in understanding “sex” / gender dichotomy and its deconstruction; the following conceptual upgradings are not adequately implemented in the basic categorical gender apparatus and its usage, promoted by the European Commission studies and the integrated linguistic tools. The basic terms sex / gender are used in syntagms interchangeably; even the definitions, where the new concepts are introduced, contradict each other. The mainstream gender policies are slow at integrating new knowledges, although there is the EU trend to introduce a new gender category in the states administration framework. The study aims at constituting the epistemic platform and a renewed gender related categorical apparatus to be used in the education sector. It transgress the inconsistencies of different gender focused studies by introducing the lowest common linguistic denominators, confirmed by the lived practices, the EU political trend, and the contemporary epistemology of knowledge.

**Key words**: “sex” / gender, epistemic turn, terminological inconsistencies, corporeality, linguistic democratization

**»NI USTREZNO, TODA DRUGAČE NE BI RAZUMELE«: PONOVEN VPOGLED V TAKSONOMIJO SPOLOV**

**POVZETEK**

Prispevek obravnava spoznavni obrat v razumevanju dihotomije "biološki" / družbeni spol in izvedbi njegove dekonstrukcije; konceptualne nadgradnje se v osnovnem kategoričnem aparatu, navezujočem se na spole in rabo terminov ne izvajajo ustrezno. Problematično je, da so nekonsistentnosti prisotne v študijah in jezikovnem orodju, ki jih podpira Evropska komisija. Predhodno navedena osnovna izraza se v sintagmih uporabljata izmenično in poljubno; ob uvajanju sodobnih konceptov si celo definicije v istem besednjaku nasprotujejo. Vladajoče politike spolov so počasne pri vključevanju novih znanj, čeprav je v EU prisoten trend uvajanja nove spolne kategorije v okviru upravljanja držav. Pričujoča študija je namenjena oblikovanju spoznavne platforme in prenovi kategoričnega aparata, ki bi se lahko uporabljal v izobraževalnem sektorju. Nedoslednosti različnih študij o spolih preči z uvedbo najmanjših skupnih jezikovnih imenovalcev. Te potrjujejo življenjske prakse, politični trend v EU in sodobna epistemologija vednosti.

**Ključne besede:** “biološki” / družbeni spol, epistemski preobrat, terminološka neskladja, telesnost, lingvistična demokratizacija

**EXPOSITION**

The basic hypothesis accompanying the here presented spectrum of the gender related categories is consistent with the ambivalence of Simone de Beauvoir towards the gendered corporeality and social gender roles and statuses. Are the bodies, actually their physiological and anatomic phenomena fundamental reason for discrimination of women? Or have the gender biased interpretations of bodily characteristics induced discriminations and exclusions? As it may be noticed, the very term gender (in Slovene language *ospoljeno*) , attached to corporeality (“gendered corporeality”) provide the answer. It rewrites the famous statement of Simone de Beauvoir (2000 [1949]), that a women is not born, that she is construed. “Sexe”, included in the original title of her transformative work *Le deuxième sexe* implies women, who are according to her arguments not biologically determined, but socially construed by discourses. Being alive and working on her book nowadays, Simone de Beauvoir would title the book *Le deuxième genre* – considering the conceptualization of the categorical pair sex / gender in the period from the early till the mid seventies of the previous century (Oakley, 1992; Rubin, 1995).

From the eighties of the previous century the concepts sex / gender were theoretically revisited during the major epistemological development of the feminist thought (Butler, 1990; Haraway, 1991). If “sex” is related to body, and gender to the realm of the social, there is always a possibility to make this relationship causal. In that case the born women’s bodies would already predestinate women’s lives: discursively the universalized woman’s body is many times truly used as an argument of justifying gender discrimination. When the two concepts are no more closely associated with the nature / culture divide, this deconstruction leads us to thinking further from *a* *discursive body*, i.e. embodied genders as the social construction. Gender norms, prescriptions, social myths, cultural idioms are revealed as agents on corporeal level; discourse is active in a body, according to our knowledge it is transformed to *bodily discourse*, to discourse of the body itself (Šribar, 2004).[[1]](#footnote-1)

After this major epistemic orientation in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary women and gender studies and feminist theory the proper question would be: Which discourses related to the gendered bodies are liberating, and which gender myths, phrases, and argumentations are oppressive? To conclude these introductory thoughts, the hypothesis is offered: what is invested in discriminatory and exclusion practices on the base of gender are interpretations. The core of interpretations are concepts, i.e. sex / gender (*biološki / družbeni spol*), women/ men, female, male, queer, transgender / transsexual – and their specific usages.

In the following discussion gender taxonomies of the European Union institutions are going to be presented and analyzed by the semiotic and critical discourse analysis tools, enlivened with auto-ethnographic inputs. Further on, some epistemic insights and practical linguistic suggestions are intended, with the aim to find the common platform for the possible consensual gender categorization at least in certain benevolent research and pedagogic environments. Besides, some accompanying education best practices will be suggested, having in mind the gender aware perspective in pedagogical and other information disseminating activities in adult education.

**TERMINOLOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL GENDER / SEX AMBIVALENCES IN OFFICIAL KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION IN EU**

In the EC supported research and innovation the 7th Framework Programme included gender calls. One of the successful projects of the so called Capacities programme was titled “Gender in research as a mark of excellence”, and it was carried out by the Belgian-French enterprise Yellow Window. Policy design is promoted as one of the services, and actually the project has been of the applicative character as regards gender knowledges, and awareness of gender dimensions in research and related sectors’ services, e.g. health. Among the EU-wide workshops, the Slovenian one was dedicated to the basic knowledge on gender perspective, and it was carried out at the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, and Technology (now Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport). Not knowing about the level of presentation, some members of the Commission for women in science took part, mostly the researchers and lecturers of the SSH (social sciences and humanities) field, with good or excellent expertise in gender studies and feminist theory. The other half of the participants was of STEM (-natural- science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) field, and interested in gender perspective in research as well. The lecturer and moderator of the workshop explained the difference between the two concepts, sex and gender, in the uncritical and outlived modus. She was asked if it had been adequate to ignore feminist criticism of the ideologically biased biological interpretations of gendered corporeality, mainstreamed as the concept “sex”. The Yellow Window representative claimed that the participants of the workshop, educated and employed in the STEM areas wouldn’t be able to understand the deconstruction of the sex / gender divide from the exposed contemporary perspective, critical of the biology and its biased gender interpretations. [[2]](#footnote-2) Her statement was impolite, probably out of embarrassment because she has been openly criticized. Some colleagues, among them probably also researchers in chemistry heard the humiliating answer to the provoking critical question, which had been put forward by my college of the Commission for Women in Science, and me. Thus the construction of the sex / gender divide was once again confirmed, and ready to be reproduced as the part of ignorance phenomena, classified as “we do not want them to know, because we won’t complicate our lives … .” (comp. Tuana, 2006). The interpretation of the discussed divide could be still found at the Yellow Window home page.

Sex refers to the biologically determined characteristics of men and women in terms of reproductive organs and functions based on chromosomal complement and physiology. As such, sex is globally understood as the classification of living things as male or female. Gender refers to the social construction of women and men, of femininity and masculinity, which varies in time and place, and between cultures.

The notion of gender appeared in the seventies and was put forward by feminist theorists who challenged the secondary position of women in society. It departs from the notion of sex to signal that biology or anatomy is not a destiny. It is important to distinguish clearly between gender and sex. These terms are often used interchangeably while they are conceptually distinctive. (source 1: *Gender in EU founded research*, 2012)

**The construction of knowledges on gender(s), and the productions of ignorance**

There is transparent and many times experienced incompatibility between the two fields of knowledge on the socio-cultural production of genders, feminist epistemology / theory, and sociological gender studies, which draw their reliability mostly from grand survey quantitative and mixed methods research. The lack of disciplinarily joint projects, at least in Slovenia, effect the way gendered discourses are marginalized, or mainstreamed. In depth epistemological reflections need decades to be implemented in the epistemic framework of the empirical research, or they are even never implemented. But when certain concepts are integrated, in our case this is the sex / gender categorical combination, the implications of application are not very clear. The confusion – proved by the existence of certain vague syntagms, waiting to be presented here – is actually suitable for us, who argue against the indicated conceptual divide. At the same time, one has to bear in mind that more than forty years ago it was useful to indicate the socio-cultural and political technologies of gender by inventing “gender”, promote sex / gender divide, and explain the recognizable ways we become women and men.

To discuss the vague use of the terms sex / gender four publications of the EC genders related personal collection (regularly sustained in the years from 2010 until today) have been selected and indicated here as sources (a tool-kit:; source 1, two studies implementing the policies: sources 1 and 2, the EC supported gender glossary: source 4). The aim of the analysis is to reveal the discursive matrix implied in the sex and gender dichotomy ambivalences, reveled in the usage. Both disciplinary fields, SSH and life sciences, produce gender related knowledge and ignorance primarily by way of (mis)understanding “sex”(*biološki spol*), sex- related corporeal categories, and their relation to gender.

Let us continue with the most strange syntagm (source 2: *Structural change in research institutions: Enhancing excellence, gender equality and efficiency in research and innovation*, 2012), *sex discrimination* (p. 8). Although it is known that the inquiry into discrimination prevailingly defines *gender* (not sex) as one of its bases, the notion of sex is used here. It is difficult to imagine how sex seems the proper categorical solution, as discrimination is one of the social acts, construing gender. Discrimination and gender are co-constitutive. Checking the Yellow Window definition of the term sex again, the use of “sex” in the syntagm *sex discrimination* has symbolic impact, which is itself discriminatory. Women and girls, indicated by the term sex are hereby presented as biologically destined corporeal identities. According to the Yellow Window definition of the word sex they are symbolically and in imagination enclosed in or are at least close to the common kingdom of living females regardless of the species (source 1: *Gender in EU founded research*, 2012). Because of popular mytheme that “males’ ruling over females is natural”, the gender based violence is or may be perceived as natural. The socio-cultural, political, and economics conditions of gender hierarchy, discrimination and exclusion are not sufficiently thematized in publics. The cultural fantasies of “alfa males” and weak, submissive females are perpetuated, and the only power acknowledged is physical and instinctive. Consequentially, discrimination could be regarded as an unreasonable intervention in the “true”, “essential” nature of the two “sexes”.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Considering Slovenian lexicon we are lucky to have the word *spol* used with both implications, that of corporeality, and that of social constructivism. The Slovenian term *samica* (indicating “female”, and clearly defining by the very term her / its role in reproductive mechanism) can be used only with animals. Critically studying the EC (European Commission) publication *Structural change in research institutions* (source 2) further, a typical vague and freely interchangeable usage of sex / gender words in syntagms could be found: sex variable / gender variable, sex-disaggregated data; women researchers, female scientists; gender disaggregated data, sex / gender results and methods (pp. 13, 27, 37, 38, 39 in the respective order). Gathered from these examples is a proof that there is no unambiguous epistemic tool available to distinguish the two categories as regards their integration in the phrases. As all the enumerated word groupings are contextualized by the inquiry into the statuses, roles, and opportunities of women in research, it is contradictory regarding the aim of the research to position and reduce the respondents to the females, because they are already construed as *the social other*, the ones who are dominated, and are of lesser societal importance.“Sex” in such context could be the proper term decades ago. “Sex”, like in *the second sex* of de Beauvoir was the only available term to refer to the social groups of women and men.

Another studied EC produced publication published recently (source 3 *Report on equality between women and men in the EU*, 2018) uses the word female already in the “Contents” section, in the function of an adjective: *female labour market*. The connotation is ascribing the gendered characteristics to the market of jobs, offered to women, occupied by women, declined to them – and, besides, the main reference is the perpetuation of the gender specific structuring of employment and work conditions. Again it is obvious that the implied generalization is based on the socio-cultural and political construction of the women and work relation. The inadequate choice of a term is accompanied by the misleading, yet seemingly self-evident interpreting. The dominant idea, accepted by the moral majority is naturalization and normalization of women’s employment conditions and career opportunities. It is related to the supposed universal corporeal characteristics, which at the lowest common denominator comprise visual impression of being a woman. It’s not only about employment and work practices related to women’s corporeality (sex-appeal, reproductive phenomena, claims regarding image at work). There is also the widely used and not problematized concept, which pejoratively naturalizes bad working conditions in the employment sectors, prevailingly occupied by women: *feminization*. The elements of the *female labour market* construction are known: unequal payment, women as the major social group of unemployed, unequal payment, gendered professional segmentation, women slavery, glass-ceiling, snowball effect as part of the hindrances to career development, discriminatory and even illegal claims regarding the image, ageism, expected “feminine” behavior and even women’s “culture”[[4]](#footnote-4), non-formal social duties, the sexual harassment from the superiors and co-workers, and so on. The word female here is not only a symptom of discriminatory conditioning of labour market, its part of the syndrome, composed of the humiliating and oppressing situations and discourses women are exposed to in the work domain, yet not on the general terms and not all of them by default, since gender may function also as the untypical positioning of a person, e.g. the traditional female positioning may be occupied by a men or vice versa. The previously ranged characteristics describe the work conditions and disadvantages, which are systemically, and structurally (institutionally) possible and likely to occur mostly to women, which means not only to women, and not to all of them. As in could be seen in the following lines, the comparable phrase to *female labour market* is the wording *employment opportunities for women*, where according to the same pattern of logic *female employment opportunities* could be also used, but it is not as there would be some hidden logic in relating the words female *labour / women’s employment*. Also the syntagm *female employment in transport* is found here. The inexact or vague, and inconsistent usage of gender / sex terms and the related categories (female, male, male, woman) has been proved. As regards the plausible meanings arising from conscious or unconscious androcentric intentions as regards domination some further analyzing has been done.

Further discussion on the ideological matrix of the terminological ambivalences is coming our way rather spontaneously. Selecting the indicative wordings obtained by checking more than the half of the *Report on equality between women and men in the EU* (source 3) publication pages (pp. 8, 35, 36, 37, 42, 44, 46, 47, 48), the phrases are arranged with the aim to test the hypothetical inscription of the biased gender structuring in the sex / gender usage. Two groups are formed, one (A) comprising phrases with the sex / female / male categories, and the other (B) with the term gender in the syntagms.

*Group A*: female labour market, female chair / female networks / female trafficking victims / female politicians / female victims of sexual violence / male offenders / female employment in transport: group

*Group B*: gender pay gap / women employment rate / cyber violenceagainst women and girls / women human rights defenders / gender based violence / women’s access to justice / gender perspective / physical and psychological integrity of women / refugee women / women’s political participation / employment opportunities for women / disadvantage of women / women in transport

The termfemale is as a rule used only as an adjective, never as a noun. It appears much less then the term women, posited as a single – or compound noun, wherein it has a function of gender marker. In the three cases out of eight it characterizes the domain or structure (labour market, employment in transport, networks). “Female” is used twice it in the traditionally atypical pairing with high career rank and seemingly a privileged men’s profession (a chair, politicians). The phrase *woman chair* and *women politicians* would render this rank and profession on the imaginative level more appropriate, as the word female associate the position and job with less serious occupational engagement. For two times it is linked to traditionally heavily subjected women’s roles (*trafficking victims*, *victims of sexual violence*). Those two examples are in textual and symbolic proximity with “male” dominance (*offenders*). Such discursive constellation in the universalized crime setting – women victims / men offenders – when the words female / male are used naturalizes and normalizes the relation; in case “gender” is used, the implication is different, indicating the gendered criminal realities, not automatically reproducing the ideology, inscribed in the adjectives female / male. Making inference, the whole picture reflects the traditional gender roles modeling: by the adjective female the structures and positions are implicitly characterized by traditionally biased gendering or, when the position or structure is traditionally associated to men, the link to “femaleness” renders it less attractive, not so serious as it should be, or unlikely to be adopted by women in numbers.

“Gender” and “women” are mostly integrated in the syntagms, which sound or are read in accordance with the contemporary gendered human condition: always when women are addressed as members of a certain societal group, or when they are participants / respondents in research. Other usages are related to technology, and human / women’s rights discourse.

Beside inexact and incoherent intertwining of sex and gender terms and the nouns in the syntagms, the socio-cultural contextualization proves for the obsolete character of the notion sex in the discussed strategic, research and education frameworks. In elaboration of the present study, “sex” is going to be analyzed in different social and epistemic contexts, with the aim to examine the possibility of its (direct) relation to the corporeality itself, uncontaminated by socio-cultural and strategic or ideological investments. Momentarily, in discussing the terminological side of the contemporary gender-knowledge relations, the “sexed” bodies are perceived discursively – they are considered social bodies, hologram entities in the realm of the symbolic.

***An auto-ethnographic starting point to the discussion on corporeality***

The only body that is substantive here is the author’s, but it is restricted as well by the images, habits, and convictions of itself. As such it cannot be freed from being imaginarily and symbolically embedded in various hologram like locations of intersected perspectives; it never appears in isolation as a “sexed” body alone.

‘*Ain’t I a women*’ is a part of the title[[5]](#footnote-5) of the famous book by bell hooks (1982). It is used as a rhetoric political question, where a body is the constructed platform of social relations. It is never devoid of them, there is no way for it to escape socialization, which begins in the uterus at the moment when ultrasound says *it’s a girl* or *it’s a boy*. There is no body which is not subjected to norms and hidden or transparent prescriptions. Although bell hooks thematizes and critically analyses “race” and ethnicity relations, the body and the embodied experiences are never that of the “females”, human beings with the “female” sex essence, which would make them embodied totalities. The critical thinking on that originates in women’s groups, which were socio-culturally, and politically complexly marginalized on the basis of REI – ideas and practices of “race”, ethnicity, imperialism, class, and gender. Because of the middle class white women supremacy in the globalized feminist moments and theories of that time “sex” (as the category still used in the seventies of the previous century) comes in as a challenged concept, challenged mostly and in the first place by “race” and class.

Theories, ideas, ideologies, and ordinary phrases discursively construct our realities, yet they are never out of the body; it cannot be said that words and other carriers of meaning are destined to have their dead end somewhere where the flesh, veins, neurons, molecules, genes, hormones come in. On the other hand, words have their final destination – just like the live bodies, i.e. bodies that we can touch and feel in a way we have been taught to. The fulfillment of the verbal – the symbolic, and the imaginary deeds is in their impact not only on the bodies, but in them. In the presented reflexive context I have found – as a feminist anthropologist of every day life – what was the ultimate message of the Yellow Window workshop lecturer received by the women of STEM disciplines. They took her explanation of the sex / gender schism word by word although it was declared obsolete by us, women humanists, and they could not do otherwise, because contemporary gender knowledge was denied to them. Instead of explanation, why such definitions, they experienced humiliation. The sentence “It’s not adequate [to base gender lecture on the conceptualization of sex / gender schism], but otherwise they would not understand it” was communicated to women intellectuals, and the message effected not only their mind; by accompanying emotional response also their bodies were hurt. In this mental, emotional and somatic intertwining if in their shoes I would read the sentence as “you are embodied impossibility of becoming a subject of the elaborated knowledge”. Let me connect the relation of words, meaning an a body on the broader socio-political level. Described ideas inherent in the indicated vague or false and misleading syntagms including the term female are not innocent agents of our realities. For example let us take education as one of the characteristically “female” employment sector. “Female” like “feminization” discursively in words and practices structures the sectoral jobs in a way that is less desirable for men with the exception of the high rank positions. “Female” and “feminized” means degraded via traditional gender myths of “natural” gender order. Not that we could do much by using terms gender / women in all the previously analyzed syntagms instead of sex / female, but there is denotative implication which associate the term gender with at least a bit of dignity, a possibility of change for better.

**Is it possible to avoid the vague gender terminology in the EC gender policies framework?[[6]](#footnote-6)**

Personally experiencing the governmentality in the EC domain, it would be fair not to blame Yellow Window lecturer, unintentionally humiliating the participants who work in STEM disciplines during the Ljubljana gender in research workshop. The project “Gender perspective in research” followed the EC guidelines on the sex / gender conceptualization (see adaptation of the European Commission source by Kozmik and Mrak Thorne, 1998). The ignorance of the more evolved gender knowledge, developing at the time when the guidelines were published, was produced on the higher level. To stick to the facts, Yellow Window went a step further from the EC official sex / gender concepts, wherein term sex was interpreted as biological characteristics, which divide human beings according to dimorphism, and gender was interpreted in the causal relation to sex (literary *social manifestation of sex*, glossary entry “gender”, ibid). At least the inherent connection between sex and gender has been abandoned (see the previously cited Yellow Window definitions). The new proposal of the Europe wide gender thesaurus and glossary were elaborated in 2015 (Neubauer and Šribar, 2015), and it have been revised and published by the end of the year 2016 or in the beginning of 2017 (source 4 *Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus*). Because the responsible person of our expert team has been integrated in the UN and EU structures, and the commissioner was the EC institution EIGE it was impossible to avoid the traditionalism and rigidity in defining the entry “sex” – and to introduce the contemporary explanations of sex / gender categories relation, which were implemented in the feminist epistemology and gender studies – first in the eighties, and then in the nineties of the previous century. Having no control of the final version of the glossary (and being responsible only for the proposal of the Europe wide gender thesaurus), I was not able to prevent the contradiction between definition of “sex”, and the introduction and defining of “intersex”. “Sex” is still understood in terms of corporeal dimorphism, but “intersex” introduces factual corporeal ambiguities as regards reproductive anatomy and physiology (entries “sex” and “intesex”).

*Sex*: Biological and physiological characteristics that define humans as female or male.

*Intersex*: Umbrella term to denote a number of different variations in a person’s bodily characteristics that do not match strict medical definitions of male and female.

Similarily the definition under entry “gender” does not correspond to other entries with the related definitions which transgress gender dichotomy: “queer”, “third gender”, “transgender”, “transsexual”.

*Gender*: Social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and to the relationship between women and men and girls and boys, as well as o the relations between women and those betwen men.

*Queer*:All individuals who fall outside the gender and sexuality ‘norms’.

*Third gender (no definition but additional notes and information)*: Queer theory and civil movements – focused on alternative gender or transgender/transsexual identity, traditional praxes and knowledge of the ‘third’ gender – together initiated a new administrative and statistical category, beyond the binary opposition of woman/man (or female/male). It has been introduced in New Zealand and Germany (as ‘indeterminate/unspecified’ gender), and in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan either as the gender category of ‘other’, or ‘third gender’.

*Transgender*: Person who has a gender identity different to the gender assigned at birth and who wishes to portray identity in a different way to the gender assigned at birth.

*Transsexual:* Person who prefersanother gender than the birth gender and feels the need to undergo physical alterations to the body to express this feeling, such as hormone treatment and /or surgery.

Contemplating inconsistencies inherent in the very definitions, and in comparing them, they cannot be treated as coincidences: the “sex” and “gender” definitions are in accordance with the UN ones, which could be checked under the entries “sources”. The implied mental rigidity is related to duality ideologies, which renders the world in comfortable interpretative framework, characteristic for the so-called West religious and intellectual tradition. “Sex” is framed in dimorphism male / female, “gender” in dichotomy man / women.[[7]](#footnote-7) In the EIGE glossary the close relation between sex and gender is sustained, although it is not so strong, directly causal as in the definition of gender in the previous glossary formally confirmed at the EU highest administrative level (adapted for Slovenia by Kozmik and Mrak Thorne, 1998). According to the definition under entry “gender” the bodies are not gendered by biology and medicine as we claim they are; gender is supposed to be something secondary to the “sexed” corporeality; it is described like it was a kind of a socio-cultural dress for women and men. All research of the bodies being “sexed” in a gender biased way by biology and medicine is ignored. To adopt the relatively novel sex and gender dichotomy interpretation, multi-leveled argumentation against the gender biased science have to be recognized as the thorough feminist epistemological input (see also Maksimović, Ostrouch Kamińska, Popović in Bulajić, 2016, pp. 9 –10). Specific features of the wished for acknowledgment of the gender blind or biased life sciences should be, - first, the lack of any sex indicator, which is not exposed to corruption in the course of the development of human being – or which is not falsely presented in dominant scientific and popularized discourses on the two “sexes”: gonads, hormones, chromosomes, physiology, anatomy are flexible and not unambiguously sex specific; - second, the absence of interdependency between morphology and function; - third, the impact of discourse on corporealities; - the false or misleading animal sex metaphors; - large cross-sections of the features of women’s and men’s bodies. This is actually the shortest possible basic summary of the referential book on “sex and gender in the society”, written by a biologist and feminist Ann Fausto Sterling (2012).

Another ideological connotation beside the obsolete character of the definition under entries “sex” and “gender” which is hard to ignore is the lax attitude towards gender based discriminations – as though these were not inscribed in the traditional gender construing. “Attributes” and “opportunities” are the only mentioned societal (and cultural, political) dimensions of the two genders in the cited definition. The cited EIGE definitions of queer, third gender, and even transgender and transsexual persons are all related to gender identity categories, which oppose the EIGE gender definition. Although different sources define transgender and transsexuality in diversified ways, the stress here is not on these discrepancies. But there is another inconsistency of interest for us to be considered once more: the already well known

vagueness and inconsistency in the usage of terms sex / gender are detected also in the selection of sex- and gender- phrases. With the aim to compare sex- and gender- syntagms most of the EIGE glossary phrases with these two terms were gathered.

*sex and gender based discrimination*, *sex bias in data collection*, *sex-disaggregated data*, *sex-disaggregated statistics*, *sex-role stereotypes*, *sex stereotypes*, *sex trafficking*, *sexual division of labour*; *gender analysis*, *gender balanced participation*, *gender based bullying*, *gender based discrimination*, *gender based division of labour*, *gender based violence*, *gender discrimination*, *gender division of labour*, *gender identity*, *gender pay gap*, *gender quota*, *gender reassignment*, *gender roles*, *gender segregation*, *gender statistics*, *gender violence* … .

Some phrases interchange terms sex and gender without exact and conclusive logic: *sex-role stereotypes, gender roles; sex bias in data collection, sex-disaggregated data, sex-disaggregated statistics, gender statistics; sexual division of labour, gender division of labour*.

Other phrases are difficult to understand from various reasons: *sex and gender based discrimination, gender discrimination* – they lack persuasiveness, first, of distinguishing between *sex- and gender discrimination*, and second, of using both combinations once in a pair of phrases, and once in a separate phrase. Another ambiguity arises for uncertain meanings of terms sex and sexual in English: why the need for *sexual division of labour* if there is more adequate gender- phrase? In case of medical transformation *sex reassignment* may be appropriate, but *gender identity* might be misleading because it refers to gender self-identification; anyway, in state administrative practices we are used to identifications as regards sex and gender markers, assigned at birth. In administrative language both terms are interchangeable.

*Auto-ethnographic note* The critical analysis of EIGE glossary is meant to be constructive, aimed at the future improvements, the possibility of which is suggested on the web page as well. I was as the co- of the proposal of the glossary in question, and as such responsible, too. I tried hard to introduce the notions of queer, transgender and intersex, which was not easy but anyway successful at the end of the day. After that, I had no real structural power to promote the novel and help implement novel definitions of sex and gender in accordance to contemporary feminist epistemology and gender studies theory. Only later on it became clear to me that huge conceptual inconsistencies were awoken by the strategy “something old and something new”. Besides, I share responsibility for the vague sex- and gender- phrases. In co-work of the first glossary proposal I probably overlooked some inexact solutions, being individually responsible only for thesaurus (Šribar, 2015). The second proposal of glossary, which was approved by EIGE, was mostly finalized without my participation. The point of this summary of auto-ethnographic remembering, notes, and personal archive of e-mails is the exposure of the power hierarchies. In spite of quite adequate participation of EIGE stuff the processing of the task has been characteristic for the contemporary structuring of work: acceleration of time – time pressure, poor resources management in general, not enough cooperation with the stakeholders, no true monitoring of the process, not enough expert supervision, and probably also the lack of some specific knowledge.

What is interesting is the technology of reproducing the described circumstances on the individual level. In spite of efforts there are hindrances to best work practices which according to personal experiences could be defined as: strong institutional hierarchies, lacks in stuff either by numbers or by competences or by work ethics norms, ambitions which do not correspond to the expected competences, competences which often cannot be obtained because of the time pressure, close dead-lines which cannot be reasonably argued, the need or greed for public and institutional success, professional status and references, and financial resources.

**THE OPTIMIZATION OF GENDER TAXONOMY, AND THE RELATED TERMINOLOGY: SLOVENIAN EPISTEMIC AND LEXICAL EXAMPLE**

**On democratic linguistic solutions**

Although Slovene language is much more flexible and at least partially more democratic as regards grammatical and lexical expressions of genders, the insensible impact of English grammatical and lexical solutions may be detected in numerous cases of scientific, expert and public discourses. The most strange Slovene langue “innovation” is the usage of the noun with the feminine suffix together with the noun women (*ženske*) placed in front of it. The word women is in the position of the adjective. No such usage as *ženske profesorice* is correct when indicating “women professors” or the like. The combination of two nouns becomes even more linguistically autistic when the noun *ženske* is used with another noun in the masculine grammatical form: *ženske profesorji*. The other example of nearly unbelievable exploitation of the natural language was found in the Slovene translation of one of the EC gender publications (Razlike med spoloma pri izobraževalnih dosežkih: Študija o položaju v Evropi in sprejetih ukrepih, 2010): *profesorji ženskega spola* , “professors of female (grammatical) gender” (p. 98).

If the linguistic copying would have the opposite direction, from Slovene to globalized English language, only *gender*, *gendered* (in Slovene basic categories “spol”, “spola”, “spoli”, “ospoljen/-a/-o”) would be used nearly in all here exposed occasions and syntagms. That would be the most welcome solution. The argumentation is complex.

- Corporeality cannot be directly addressed. Not only the verbal but also every other discourse, praxes included, has symbolic meaning by which we mentally and emotionally grasp the material world. In another words, corporeality is always mediated, meaning that from the theoretical viewpoint it is never sexed, it is always gendered.

- A body is transformed according to cultural practices and environmental conditions, which are in themselves substantial, and influential regarding corporeality. More than that, it is transformed by discourses, which are unsubstantial, but anyway echo in corporeality. The meanings get embodied, what is societal and cultural is inscribed on the body surface and bellow it. The bodies are therefore characterized by “plasticity”.

- Biological and medical knowledges are time-place conditioned; these domains are preys of different interests, which are nowadays mostly focused on social status and benefits, and financial capital. The interpretations of the bodies are thus gendered in the ways which are not at all transparent. There is no innocently sexed body, all we can get in the domains we work in are the scientifically, expertly gendered bodies.

- The category and contemporary conceptualization of genders deconstruct corporeal / “sex” dimorphism, and societal gender dichotomy. There is observable number of persons, who identify themselves as transgender. This is the umbrella category under which all people who are born out of bodily dimorphism or are not willing to identify as women or men are gathered. The new categorical apparatus of genders has been already suggested by A. Finn Enke (2012): women, men, transgender (persons) (p. 244). These categories are suitable for epistemic, educational, state administrative, and public / (new) media use.

In the Slovenian language medical and other disciplinary references to corporeality are gendered by the nouns and adjectives *ženske*, *moški*, *žensko, moško* (“man / man’s, women / women’s, men / men’s, woman / woman’s). In English expressions womanlike, womanly / manlike, manly are be used in the same textual contexts. By privileging plural forms the inadequate generalization of the gendered bodies is not possible; in education and health sector this is most important.

In literal translation from Slovene English “sex” could exist only when denoting sexualities related matters (*spolnost*, *seksualnost*, *seksualno*, *spolno*). By the presented conceptualizations of terms gender and sex the ambiguities in meanings of sex / sexual when translating English in Slovene would be avoided.

**Some future research oriented thoughts on genders and bodies**

*Hypothesis* After decades of gender constructivism in opposition to historical (sex) essentialism and biologism the bodies are again in focus from different perspective. Corporeality is legitimate in strategic gendering of women when some ultimate gender based discrimination is in question.

A worldly known feminist scholar Judith Butler asserts that feminism is passé as the only left common denominator of the political subject of the social group of women is the body in pain; suffering women’s bodies are the new constitutive base for feminism (2004), if it is bound to politically and theoretically survive. In recent years the Slovenian school of feminism & psychoanalyses opened the discussion on a kind of new essentialism, which denies to be identified like that. Eva D. Bahovec (2011) relates the “lacking” corporeality (i.e. weak and not recognized women’s presence) to women’s impossibility of being (acknowledged) philosophers, subjects of philosophy: “If I am a woman, I cannot be a philosopher.” (p. 208) The condition of this negative professional existence is legitimate as long as women are not able to transform the philosophic cannon. In accordance with psychoanalyses the implicitly relates to the masochistic positioning of women, and deconstructivism of Catherine Malabou (2011).

Malabou, who was a prosperous student of Derrida, later diverged into philosophic autonomy, problematizing the status of women philosophers. What is important to our discussion is her elaboration of the “return to the body”, which is in argumentation evidently not essentialist. Women’s bodies in philosophy (let’s add: and elsewhere in the privileged androcentric domains and situations) are marked by impossibility of achievement, and that emotionally and also somatically hurts. To make the conclusion – in the new epistemic confirmations of the corporeality its mediated nature is not, and cannot be wholly deconstructed. The painful women’s bodies of Judith Butler, the women’s bodies reflecting impossibility of Eva Bahovec and Catherine Malabou are made substantial by that very pain. At the same time the women’s bodies are construed by the society, and its differentiated ways to produce hurtful obstacles to realization of the women’s wishes, intentions, talents ... and last but not least important, life lust and love. Yet according to Malabou (2011) it is possible to start anew from the women’s “essence”, compounded of aching corporeality, and symbolic societal violence, represented in her work by disciplinary rigidity and androcentrism of philosophy. With the aim to transgress the symbolic violence inscribed in the women’s bodies there is “no need to decline concepts” (p. 167), she writes. But we may, as already well known, re-conceptualize them. Hopefully we have accomplished some work here by trying to improve the gender related categorical apparatus in English and Slovene.

**CONCLUSION**

**The applicative value of the suggested improvement of the basic gender glossary in formal and informal education**

According to the Joanna Ostrouch-Kamińska and Cristina C. Vieira (2015) there is still the lack of gender perspective and the gender related research in adult education. According to the s this is a “worrisome omission considering the fact that one of the principles of the field is to raise awareness of people, foster critical thinking and help combat discrimination.« (p. 6) Although genders are still considered here in gender dichotomy (“women and men” / “men and women”) the s hope for the more just, genders reflected world of: “open, plural, multicultural, personalized and egalitarian community” (p. 188). The development starts with education on gender equality (p. 188). This meta-aim of their study invites us a bit further, concretely to think, feel and act in the novel framework as tertiary education teachers, researchers, educators and active citizens, who have impact on children and younger people. The platform is exposed:

- first, by deconstruing the sex / gender divide and implementing the corresponding gender related categorical apparatus, inclusive of “transgender”;

- second, by trying to coop with the gendered obstacles to human wellbeing without investing hurtful activities and internalization of discriminatory environment; instead of that the option is mutual support, especially when the wellbeing and self-realizations of women and transwomen are in question.

There are many trends and currents in gender studies and feminist theory, and often they are opposing each other, or are inconsistent in mutual juxta-positioning. The decision which epistemic – conceptual framework is to be placed in dominant position has to be grounded on the solid facts and the new epistemology of knowledge. From that angle the present study refers to the realities check (intersex and trans-persons phenomena), the EU socio-political trend of introducing a new gender category beside man / woman, and the epistemic framework deconstructing the androcentric paradigm of knowledge and its production which has been confirmed also by the so-called hard science (neuroscience, physics of elementary particles).

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1. *On Menstruation: Body in Discourse, Discourse in the Body* [original title of the book in Slovene *O menstruaciji: telo v diskurzu, diskurz v telesu*] is the study of anthropology and sociology of menstruation. Among several results, revealing gendered biased (negative) interpretations of reproductive women’s bodies the most important one was the thesis that discourses on menstruation effected menstrual health. Prostaglandins, physiologically produced chemicals cause contracts of the uterus. The excessive production of prostaglandines has often no physiological cause, and the anthropological and sociological research relate menstrual taboos, prohibitions, and stigmatization of menstruation (even subtle as it occurs in ads) as a discursive issue of menstrual malfunctioning of the body. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Personal archive (notes on communication, taking place during the workshop pause, March 16, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It's been twenty-two years since I was invited to give lecture on gender at the regular meeting of the Ljubljana AA – the alcoholics anonymous group, lead by a known medical doctor. While talking about sexual harassment and gendered socio cultural relations, supporting victimization of a victim, one of the men commented that it was normal for men to do sexual offence acts, or even to rape if it happened to be the Spring time. The argument was that this is what animals do. Indeed his attitude was at the far end of the continuum of the sexual violence ideology, but the matrix is the naturalization and normalization of the violent and offensive acts against women's integrity – the other end of continuum being the seemingly flattering side of sexual harassment. (Personal communication during the workshop at the AA, Ljubljana Clinical Centre, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The claim for sustaining »women's culture« was articulated by one of the men members of the Slovenian Commission for Women in Science in the mandate 2010 – 2014. (Personal Archive, Communication at one of the commission meetings in 2011)

   [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As it is stated by Momin Rahman and Stevi Jackson (2010) this is a citation, a refrain from the famous speech of the ex-slave Sojourner Truth, given in 1852 in Ohio. She made the category of sex unstable by presenting her body as able as a man's body, and socially receiving no comforts as the white middle class women did. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The answer to the question put in the subtitle is: no in the time being. The denial is logical having in mind the categorical and conceptual inconsistencies which are on and on reproduced by slight changes because of the introduction of the new concepts. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The philological insight itself without any feminist epistemological, sociological, anthropological and gender studies knowledge reveals imbalance inscribed in the words pairing: *fe*male is “the other” of male, *wo*man “the other” of man. There is no symbolic topos explicating equality, because the prefixes to the word-roots male and man make the “female” nouns function symbolically as a Biblical rib of Adam. A little something attached or belonging to males / men designs females / women. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)