

Univerzita Karlova v Praze  
Fakulta sociálních věd

Disertační práce

2014

Blanka Nyklová



Univerzita Karlova v Praze  
Fakulta sociálních věd  
Institut sociologických studií

Czech Feminist Scene: Theoretical Inclinations, Stances, and Controversies  
Česká feministická scéna: teoretické inklinace, postoje a kontroverze

Vypracovala:  
Blanka Nyklová  
2014

Školitelka:  
PhDr. Marie Čermáková



Čestné prohlášení: Tímto čestně prohlašuji, že jsem tuto disertační práci vypracovala samostatně a pouze za použití citovaných pramenů.

I hereby proclaim that I wrote this dissertation independently using only the referenced sources and literature.

V Praze dne 1. 7. 2014

Blanka Nyklová



## Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank to all who have taken part in the research in the interviews, as without their willingness to share their opinions, beliefs and stances this dissertation could never have been written. I also need to thank my supervisor, PhDr. Marie Čermáková, for her continuous support, inspiration and valuable comments on the progress of this thesis. Both the reviewers of the first draft of this thesis helped me enormously to improve it. Last but not least, I wish to thank my partner, family and friends for their on-going support and patience.



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## INTRODUCTION

*“Those who chose to research women’s movements seem to me to be the optimists in the feminist academy – and their writings offer critical resources for thinking about how social relations can be transformed.” [Roseneil 2004: 349].*

After the events of November 1989, the landscape of activities, organisations and individuals devoted to feminist and gender issues started to form and reform.<sup>1</sup> This re/forming has not come without opposition. Some of the most vocal and influential authors opposing the process, at least in terms of how often their opposition has been repeated, were, e.g., émigrés Josef Škvorecký [1992a, 1992b, 1992c] and Ota Ulč [1994]. The opposition has continued throughout the past twenty-five years and still thrives – see, e.g., Zrno [2013] and Joch [2014] for recent additions. Besides media discourse, it is also present areas such as the academia – e.g., historian František Šmahel [1993 as mentioned in Nečasová 2008]. The effects of the critique are often homogenising – they usually reference feminism in general - although the activities that form the feminist discursive landscape in the Czech Republic turn out to be rather diverse at closer inspection.

It is the complexity and often contradictory character of the activities and discourses forming local feminism that are at the centre of this thesis. I hope not just to point out the heterogeneous rather than homogeneous character of the activities but also establish the possible reasons for this diversity and its perceived effects.

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<sup>1</sup> The reforming concerned the Czechoslovak and later Czech Women’s Union while the period before 1948 continued in the form of reestablishment of associations and more broadly in terms of intellectual continuity in the Czechoslovak Federal Republic and later in the Czech Republic.

### *Research on women's and feminist movements*

Women's and feminist movements have been at the centre of feminist, sociological and political research interest for decades. The focus of the research depends on the historical period it targets. Historical accounts of the organised fight for women's rights such as suffrage and access to education, focus not just on the concrete activities conducted and political repertoires deployed but also on the theoretical background justifying and driving the activities in the first place [Myhall 2003, Christensen, Halsaa and Saarinen 2004].

In the local context, it is possible to trace two approaches to the study of early women's organising for political goals such as gaining access to education and employment [Horská 1999, Malečková 2004, Bahenská 2005]. The first larger one, often targeting the general public, centres on key figures and in the given context frequently drives attention to the involvement of men in these initiatives [Lenderová 1999]. The other stream then focuses more on the intellectual basis of these initiatives, presents the gender order of the contemporary society in its complexity and the strands of thought with their contradictions and intellectual clashes [Hanáková, Heczková and Kalivodová 2006, Hymlar 2013].

Scholarship on women's and feminist movements from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century focuses on the political claims, protest repertoires as well as the establishment of women's/gender/feminist studies at universities in the "West" (this seemingly self-explanatory category – derived from geography – has been shown to be culturally and historically with specific political effects – Hall 1992). Owing to the overwhelming focus on the US women's movement [Flexner and Fitzpatrick 1996], counterhistories and accounts have emerged depicting the local developments and their theoretical consequences for how claims to history are made [Christensen, Halsaa and Saarinen 2004] including a critical reassessment of the concept of waves to account for changes within this type of activities. The waves concept rests heavily on a singular, reductionist description of developments both in terms of feminist activism and thought and makes continuities, overlaps and circularity invisible [Hemmings 2005, Withers 2010, Van Der Tuin 2011].

The local political developments after 1948 changed both the gender order and women's organising. For an extended period after another political change in 1989,

local feminist scholarship reflecting both the organising and the changes to the gender order mostly refrained from a rigorous analysis of the 1948-1989. This silence resulted in homogenising accounts of the gender order under state socialism [Šiklová 1997] and perceived lack of political organising of women during that period.

This lack of reflection has come to a halt in the recent years although there were individual attempts at theorising the period – Oates-Indruchová 2000. Currently, there scholarship has emerged both on the possibilities of political and organising with regards to “women’s issues” [Nečasová 2011] and on the changes to both the gender order and the related policy shifts that continue to affect the present [Hašková and Uhde 2009, Dudová 2012, Oates-Indruchová 2012, Havelková and Oates-Indruchová 2014].

If we move back to the transnational context, within the body of literature on the women’s movement in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most attention is paid to the types of political action taken and therefore to activism. In terms of studying the women’s movement as such, I would like to point out the developments made in how the different levels of political activity in mostly Anglosaxon feminist movements have come to be theorised.

Since the mass mobilisations of the late 1960s, academic attention has been paid to what actually happened to the women’s movement once the main wave of activism (and public and media attention) was over. For the purposes of the study of the local feminist scene, the most interesting seem to be the theoretical takes and empirical analyses of feminist movements in a stage that mainstream social movement theory would call decline [Znebejánek 1997].

Feminist researcher Verta Taylor coined the term “abeyance” to describe the state in which the movement finds itself when mass mobilisation is not possible (typically due to adversary political conditions) [1989]. The need for such a label comes from the perceived continuity of the activities that harbour the potential to spill into a new stage of high mobilisation once the conditions become more favourable. The mainstream conceptualisation of the movement seems not to take this into account (a rift between each “wave” of protest is assumed). In a similar vein, Maddison and Shaw [2012] analyse movements in the “doldrums” – a stage resembling Taylor’s abeyance, typical for low (or none) protest activity, professionalised organisations

using mainly lobbying tactics vis-à-vis state and political actors, cultural rather than protest activity.

These activities seem to resemble those engaged in locally in the period after 1989. The original attention paid to the establishment (or lack of) women's, pro-women, gender-oriented (as hardly ever feminist – see Hájek 1995) was largely driven by the framework of the end of the Cold War and the ensuing democratisation process. The establishment of “civil society” (see Rakušanová 2005 for a critique of the concept) was framed within the newly dominant transformation discourse [Kodíčková 2002] as a necessary prerequisite for full democratisation. Groups advocating the rights of women were thereby framed as a necessary component of a democratic society. This notion itself is dubious, for it disregards the historical development of such groups in the societies that have come to act as the “norm” in relation to the states undergoing “transformation.” Nevertheless, this emphasis resulted in a continued local and transnational interest in the state of local pro-women organising coming from all corners of social science [Hájek 1995, Vodrážka 1999, Čermáková, Hašková, Křížková, Linková, Maříková and Musilová 2000, Hašková 2005, Kapusta Pofahl, Hašková and Kolářová 2005, Chaloupková 2006, Goldfarb 2006, Hašková, Křížková and Linková 2006b, Petrova and Tarrow 2007, Vráblíková 2007, Císař and Vráblíková 2010].

The respective authors, however, mostly focus on one of the a priori defined segments of the scene, such as anarchofeminism [Vráblíková 2007] and the non-profit non-governmental sector (NGOs) [Chaloupková 2006, Saxonberg 2011]. However, as the scholarship on women's and feminist movements seems to suggest, the cooperation across all the segments, including the academia, proves crucial for survival during the times of “abeyance.” Moreover, given the relatively small number of people long-term active in either of the segments and in total and also the persistence of “personal unions”, i.e. the fact that many navigate more than just one segment playing the role of both liaison officers and gatekeepers, the segmentation seems rather instrumental.

The long survival as well as perceived lack of effective cooperation and communication, which I felt as a member of a gender information agency and more generally in conversations with those active in the NGO and academic “segments”

led me to start looking for a term that would better capture the interrelated and yet not exactly cooperative character of the activities. The terms used by Taylor [1989] and Maddison and Shaw [2012] both seem problematic although they acknowledge the cooperation across the board. Both the terms rely on the metaphor of some peak, be it a physical one or a peak of activity, in contrast to which the present state of the activities is defined. This is hardly applicable to an environment with a 40-year break in civil organising. In terms of mainstream social movement theory, Mario Diani edited a special issue on the survival strategies deployed by Australian feminists under completely closed political opportunities [2010], in which he also uses the “scene” to describe such cooperation and mutual ad hoc help among actors otherwise studied separately. I combine his rather vague term with insights from studies of musical genres and their following where the term scene supplanted that of subculture in much of the writing [Bennett 2004, Glass 2012, Císař and Koubek 2012]. The use in this discipline stresses the shared space of the actors making up the scene despite their specific roles (band members, fans gig organisers). I thus adapt the term to signify the various actors that engage in feminist activism, scholarship, art or other type of activity in the Czech Republic.

With this focus in mind, I then strive to establish what the factors that seem to prevent a higher level of cooperation across the board are. The body of literature on these activities provides various reasons for the shortcomings. Among these, the type of funding and Europeanization seem to be the master frames used for accounting for the specific topics addressed and the relative success of such activities [Hašková 2005, Císař and Vráblíková 2010, Saxonberg 2011]. While funding certainly plays a role and some even blame the strings transnational comes with for the “wrong” focus of feminist activities [Ghodsee 2004], this explanation fails to explain the long survival of the organisations and individuals under the previous more austere conditions and indeed even today given the precarious dependence on transnational funding. It also seems to rely on the presently dominant neoliberal discourse for that it should strive to explain [Bourdieu 1998].

A different set of explanations, this time usually coming from within the scene, targets the side and type of motivation for engagement in the activities in the first place. Such explanations seem more plausible as far as the explanation for the continued

effort is concerned. However, the focus on “feminism” in the singular cannot help to explain the issues preventing more effective communication.

One of the explanations for this paradox came from activist and self-identified feminist Mirek Vodrážka, who has been active on the scene ever since its establishment after 1989. He has published extensively and continually on the state of pro-women activities in the Czech Republic [Vodrážka 1999, 2003, 2006, 2009a-e]. His critique has been taken up by scholars such as Ondřej Císař [2008] as a reliable account of the reasons for the state of Czech feminist activities and he continues to speak on issues related to feminism [2013]. Moreover, during his work for the gender and information agency gitA, his texts were made widely available on the website- this pertains to the set of interviews [Vodrážka 2009a-e].

Vodrážka centres his critique on the activists themselves as he takes inspiration from existentialist philosophy rather than social movement theory. The problems that hamper a better efficacy of feminist advocating are: the heterogeneous and exogenous origins of local feminism that prevent its authenticity [1999] and the resulting reluctance to identify with feminism on the part of the activists [2006], another related issue is the type of feminism they are willing to identify with as the type is not radical enough and as such cannot lead to any subversive and effective political action. In 2003, he added the ignorance of the global positioning of the local feminism to his list. His critique provides no alternative – since the problems are de facto ontological, they seem insurmountable.

We can find some similar points in the work of Tereza Kodíčková [2002], who offered a critique of the type of feminist theory used by the local feminist social thinkers. She points out the type of theory is the original liberal feminist one, i.e. before it was forced to reflect on its racism, homophobia, class blindness and other issues, and she tries to establish why this is the type popular across the academic segment of the scene. She also arrives at the missing critical reflection of the local geopolitical situatedness as the main reason for the adoption of this strand of theory and more importantly for why no local theory has emerged since 1989.

What the two critiques (and indeed many others as emerged from the preliminary research – e.g. Horký 2008, Kampichler 2010, Kolářová 2010) share is their focus on feminist theory as a possible key for the explanation of how the respective segments

of the scene mal/function. This has inspired me to focus on whether a divergence (rather than homogeneity) of feminist theories engaged with by the whole Czech feminist scene could serve as the explanatory framework for the problems of cooperation and communication. Since a relatively long time elapsed from the minute analysis<sup>2</sup> of the theoretical framework [Kodíčková 2002], I decided to study the present-day relation to feminist theories and its effects for the scene as such.

As the geopolitical location has been pointed out by Kodíčková [2002] but also Kolářová [2010] and Kampichler [2010] as a possible source of theoretical issues, I focus, among other things, also on the role played by the broader context. The focus is on the impact of the shifts to the local geopolitical situation since Kodíčková's critique – the dominant discourse is no longer that of transformation, but rather that of neoliberalism, which should be somehow reflected in self-reflective feminist theorising and practice.

I understand the shortcomings of the scene as problematic not just because of their political repercussions but also because I see them as at odds with feminist ethics as defined by Rosi Braidotti [2006]. Based on her theory of feminist subjects, stressing their temporal and territorial dimension, she sees ethics as based on reciprocity as insufficient for it does not found responsibility for the future. Since feminism is in all its contradictory streams directed towards change of the present social system not perceived as just, it should abide by this logic and strive for the establishment of a platform for action not based on some shared identity but rather based on the ethics [Braidotti 2010]. I therefore strive to see how the theoretical stances, inclinations and controversies contribute to the possibility of founding such a platform for action.

In order to map the current feminist theoretical discursive landscape in the Czech Republic I conduct an analysis of the textual production of the scene (including some of their activities), which has started to surge (not just in terms of theoretical texts) after 2005 with the establishment of the two gender studies programmes at FSS MU in Brno and FHS UK in Prague. To relate this analysis to the geopolitical focus, I use the theoretical framework of transculturation for the study of travelling feminist thought [Cerwonka 2008] contrasting it with an older model by Marina Blagojević. To

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<sup>2</sup> Mirek Vodrážka does not always reference all of his sources.

supplement the textual production, I interviewed 27 members of the scene using a guide with topics derived from the study of the scene's literature and issues mentioned above. I finally triangulate the results of the two analyses in order to map the discursive landscape of the Czech feminist scene as well as to answer how (and whether) theoretical allegiance impacts on the current state of the scene and its ability to form a platform for action.

### *Research questions and structure of the thesis*

The goal of this thesis is to map the current Czech feminist scene from the vantage point of its theoretical inclinations, stances and possible controversies. The central research question is: **What is the current Czech feminist scene's relation to feminist theories and what does the relation imply for its self-conception?**

The central research question leads to a set of subquestions that should facilitate the research. I will therefore focus on the following issues:

What feminist/gender theories do individual organisations/research collectives or other groups use to define themselves? Do new theories emerge? How are foreign theories "assimilated"?

How does the allegiance to a particular group with its theoretical starting points interfere with individual theoretical affinities?

How pertinent are some key present questions of transnational feminism (perception of globalisation and transnational feminism)? How pertinent are some of the questions identified in literature (activism/academism divide, generational difference, salience of feminist theories for everyday lived experience)?

The dissertation starts by an overview of the general theoretical underpinning of the concrete analytical concepts that I use in the rest of the thesis. These are respectively broadly defined critical theory with emphasis on feminist ethics and reflexivity, conceptualisation of discourse and finally feminist takes on geopolitics. Once the theoretical field and key concepts are outlined, I move to a more detailed

critical overview of analytical approaches frequently used for theorising feminist thought and organisations for both the literature and interviews reference these concepts (e.g. the salience of waves, generational perspective, and epistemological divisions).

The theoretical part concludes with a methodological chapter, which details research ethics, the selection of the sample and concludes with an outlined of issues sought within the sample.

The analytical part starts with an overview of the current shape of the scene including a detailed explanation of why and how the term “scene” was adopted. I also critically evaluate the literature written on the disparate activities forming the scene from other than explicitly insider positions (mostly focusing on political scientific takes on the scene). I continue with an analysis of the scene’s textual production. For the purpose of the study, textual production includes, especially in the case of grassroots activists, even the specific activities they engage in. I especially outline some of the critical voices within the scene and their discursive points of reference and claims but also classify the rest of the textual production following theoretical work on how feminist thought travels. This analysis is coupled with the main findings from the 27 interviews conducted with the scene’s representatives – feminist academics, NGO-employees and grassroots (volunteer) activists (and those in between). The analytical part ends with a triangulation of the findings from these three areas and I draw a conclusion addressing the central research question.

## **1. THEORETICAL PART**

### **1.1. Theoretical frameworks**

The theoretical part presents the general theoretical frameworks and traditions to which the main theses are related. The overarching theoretical vantage point stems from critical theory with its emphasis on criticality and reflexivity. Section *1.1.1 Critical theory: Introduction* elucidates which parts of the extensive scholarship on critical theory I am mostly concerned with here.

The second section is devoted to discourse. Since discourse has come to mean several interrelated things in social science, I present the definition relevant for the study at hand. The goal is to present the general theoretical framework for the analysis.

The third section presents the geopolitical grounding of the thesis. The focus is on the role of location and transnational perspective on feminist thought and movements. This section also presents some of the points raised in the *Introduction* related to the critique by Tereza Kodíčková [2002]. Finally, this is where some of the key concepts for the analysis are presented.

#### *1.1.1. Introduction: Critical theory*

The aim of the study is to scrutinize the relation of Czech feminists to feminist theories, the manifold implications of this relation, and the factors that possibly influence this relation. The material needed for the study is of diverse origin, both in terms of methods and epistemological background. Moreover, the points raised by the authors in the *Introduction – Kodíčková [2002], vodrážka [1999, 2003, 2006]* – but also by others to be discussed in this part also come from different traditions of thought. For the sake of theoretical congruence, an overarching grounding is

therefore needed. It has to be one that would enable us to evaluate the different theoretical frameworks used within/co-constructing the scene and is flexible enough but also allows for taking normative stances. These needs seem to be best served by critical theory, which comes to form the theoretical background of the whole study.

The field of critical theory has been evolving for decades, and similarly to feminist thought, it includes multiple currents. For the purposes of the study, I start by focusing on the possibilities outlined within critical theory for combining different methodological approaches, namely those of the magpie approach and bricolage. In the remainder of the section I focus on the theorisation of (self)reflexivity and the work of Rosi Braidotti presenting her vision of the feminist project for the future.

At least two different<sup>3</sup>, if related, forms of critical theory seem to prevail at present. The first - narrow - one has been mostly informative for political theory, as exemplified in the work of Jürgen Habermas, which has been criticised, among others, by feminist political thinkers [see, e.g., Young 1990, 1997; Fraser 1989]. In sociology, the narrow approach comprises the work of the Frankfurt School associated with Western Marxism [Bohman 2005]. Although this take on critical theory is still very vivid even in present day sociology (reminiscences can be traced, e.g., in Michael Burawoy's take on public sociology [Burawoy 2005]), it is better suited for appraising inequality and justice in society for its strong normative claims.

I believe the more broadly defined take on critical theory will therefore better correspond with the analytical needs of the study at hand. It nevertheless includes elements from the critical theory traditionally associated with sociology.

The broad definition of critical theory is mostly associated with cultural analysis as outlined by Stuart Sim and Borin Van Loon in their introductory text [2001]. The focus on the scene entails the need to outline the points in common of a rather heterogeneous whole in terms of both the theories the members of the scene use and the types of activities they engage in. Similarly, every conceptualisation of

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<sup>3</sup> This division serves clarity of the argument but is by no means intended to claim an exhausting description of the vast field of critical theory. Joe L. Kincheloe and Peter McLaren, for instance, acknowledge the hybridity of the field claiming “there are many critical theories” [2005: 303] and focus on “four ‘emergent’ schools of social inquiry” [2005: 305] that are informed by neo-Marxism but also “post-approaches”. A similar division has been also used by Uhde [2014].

culture requires a theoretical and methodological approach that would provide the researcher with enough flexibility without losing the theoretical grounding. Sim and Van Loon call it the magpie approach, i.e. the choice of tools to create a synthetic model based on multiple theories that serve individual needs of a given research question [2001: 6-7].

Sim and Van Loon trace the origins of the broad version of critical theory back to the Enlightenment and its modifications in modernism and postmodernism. They include both the above-mentioned Marxism and the Frankfurt School (mostly for they allow researchers to make strong normative claims) but also streams of thought as varied as postcolonialism, black feminism and cultural materialism [Sim, Van Loon 2001: 24-25]. While they are careful not to claim all the strands share a solid common ground, they identify their different emancipatory efforts (and results where applicable) as the loose unifying factor. They thereby manage, by the very design of their work, to challenge the strict division of the strands of theory and rather choose to focus on how different theories work to inform one another.

The critiques offered in the Introduction come from very different philosophical traditions. While Tereza Kodíčková is mostly concerned with postcolonial studies, Mirek Vodrážka often bases his critique of the current state of feminism in the Czech Republic off existentialism. Authors based in political theory then turn to new social movements for theoretical grounding of their accounts of feminist activism [Císař 2008, Vráblíková 2007]. What these approaches share is their critical stance on the activities and on the sources of the perceived lack of momentum thereof. Nevertheless, without an overarching theory outlining the various possible critical approaches, their insights would be difficult to combine.

The magpie approach may be criticised for its relative silence regarding its normativity. Moreover, it comes from an introductory text. A more sociological approach with similar effects is that of bricolage.

Kincheloe and McLaren understand bricolage as involving “the process of employing methodological strategies as they are needed in the unfolding context of the research situation” [Kincheloe and McLaren 2005: 316]. This, however, does not mean, just like in the magpie approach, an instrumental approach to research pragmatically (and rather uncritically) driven by the object of inquiry. Quite the contrary, Kincheloe

and McLaren stress the importance of situatedness and the need to clarify the researcher's position in the web of reality since all research is understood as "a power-driven act" [Kincheloe, McLaren 2005:316]. They see research methods as more than tools for analysing research material - as "a technology of justification, meaning a way of defending what we assert we know and the process by which we know it" [Kincheloe, McLaren 2005: 318].

The difference between the way in which the magpie approach and bricolage are used stems from the type of critical theory they are based off. While the magpie approach allows for combining different theoretical vantage points, bricolage as described by Kincheloe and McLaren stresses a neo-Marxist perspective of power and believes in the possibility of emancipation albeit claiming to acknowledge its limitations stemming from the impossibility of existence outside the web of power. In other words, bricolage is more tied to the narrowly defined critical theory strand in Kincheloe and McLaren's reading. Nevertheless, there is also a broader definition available: Yvonna Lincoln sees bricoleurs as those "committed to research eclecticism, allowing circumstance to shape methods employed" [Lincoln 2001 paraphrased in Kincheloe and McLaren 2005: 317]. Here the starting point is the belief that the object of inquiry is far too mercurial and always a part of many contexts and processes. The task of bricolage is then to present the complexity of the object of inquiry in its full, i.e. to avoid reductionism. In relation to my research this means focusing on the theories deployed by the people making up the scene in the specific context they use them in – for instance, there is a difference between what theories are invoked in written texts and in the one-to-one interview setting. Moreover, it is not just the theoretical stances that vary but also the actual activities (and emotions) the members of the scene engage in. These may even translate into their institutional backing and may also result from it. Not taking the different contexts into account might result in thwarting the assessment of the respective activities – e.g. comparing the theoretical concepts in the description of a project carried out by an NGO to the theoretical introduction of an academic text. Nevertheless, I need some background that would enable me to make assessments and the bricolage approach seems to allow for it. In this particular example it means taking into account the purpose of the respective texts, their institutional backgrounds as well as intended audience and effects. The contexts then constitute part of the assessment.

All assessment is value-laden. If the focus of the study is as heterogeneous as the Czech feminist scene, it is all the more imperative to take a step back from the methods used to see what values they entail. This “taking a step back” then brings us to a point that bricolage (however defined) shares with the magpie approach, namely the emphasis put on reflexivity in research.

The reflexive approach to science, as outlined by Burawoy, asserts that the “road to knowledge [is p]remised upon our own participation in the world we study, [and] reflexive science deploys multiple dialogues to reach explanations of empirical phenomena” [Burawoy 1998: 5]. In line with what he terms critical sociology [Burawoy 2004: 261], he challenges the very possibility of a clearly defined border between the object of knowledge and the knower, typical for neo-positivist approaches in social science. This impossibility then leads to the necessity of reflexivity, which tries to account for the complex boundary work (between the knower and knowledge) at place in any reflexive and critical research.

Theoretical reflexivity, in its crudest form, means the acknowledgment of the theories used in order to account for the interpretations as well as things understood as facts. Similarly, it should work to prevent unchecked interference of theories that could import hidden ideologies into the research process. On a more personal level, reflexivity requires an overview of possible interfering factors stemming from the researcher’s own position be it biographical, cultural or otherwise. This has two broad implications for the research at hand.

Firstly, it influences the ethics of the research partly because I am one of those co-creating the scene by not only this very research but also other forms of activity, such as being a former member of the gender and information agency gitA. It follows from the boundary between the researcher and the object of inquiry, which keeps being delineated in the process of research and thus never actually reaches a final form and stays malleable until the final report is drafted, that the researcher is always to be concerned with reflexivity, his/her standing in relation to the object of inquiry notwithstanding (i.e., no position vis-à-vis the object can rid the researcher of the need for reflexivity). Secondly, reflexivity as displayed by the research participants in relation to theories is one of the subtopics of the present analysis – it appears both explicitly in the interviews and more implicitly in the analysis of their texts. We can

look into the forms and effects of boundary work as it is done by the research participants co-creating the scene by their performances.

Given the political nature of feminism, the reflexive work done by feminists has clear ethical repercussions, stressing the importance of the activities forming the scene, which often aim at transforming society at large together with its values and structural organisation. This is why reflexivity has long played a central role in feminist research [Hesse-Biber 2012]. Reflexivity and its relation to ethics has played a central role in the work of Rosi Braidotti [2006, 2010], whose approach to feminist subjectivity and ethics form part of the normative background of the thesis because she outlines a broad but grounded vision of the future of the feminist project.

Rosi Braidotti is best known for her work on nomadic subjects and ethics. Her philosophical work responds to the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, whose emphasis on a radical redefinition of subject as a (permanent) creative becoming is formative for Braidotti's own concept of the nomadic subject. The nomadic subject can be best understood as a subject in permanent becoming, grounded in specific historical situation and embodied. Braidotti defines subject as follows: "The subject is but a force among forces, capable of variations of intensities and inter-connections and hence of becomings. These processes are territorially-bound, externally oriented and more than human in span and application" [Braidotti 2006: 19]. I am not concerned with nomadism here but I find the reconceptualization of the subject as crucial for the analysis. The new definition is not compatible with the idea of identity and the related identity politics but at the same time it does not fall into the disarray of relativism due to its emphasis on the web of relations that define the subject.

In the research at hand this is especially relevant for how I define the research participants and conceptualise the scene as such. Traditionally, the scene has not been treated as a whole but rather as separate fields (the academia, anarchofeminism, feminist art, etc.) constituted of actors with attributes defining their identity stemming from their allegiance to the respective field. However, if I am to conceive of the scene as a whole (of sometimes loosely, sometimes closely intertwined segments), the salience of descriptors such as "grassroots activist," "academician," "NGO activist" gets challenged. The relational definition of subject

means that these categories will have to be reserved for situations or locations where such an identity is actively embraced or assumed.

In other words, the scene can be theorised as an outcome of performances of those forming it. This acknowledges the agency of those making up the scene even as they do it in the framework of this research in interviews and through their texts. We might even claim, together with feminist epistemologist Lorraine Code, that “it is as important to affirm identities and allegiances as politically informed, active thinkers as to acknowledge the falsely essentialising, solidifying tendencies of identity politics and political categories to impose premature structures on events and circumstances that need to be open to transformative intervention” [Code 2000: 183]. The stress in the quote for the purpose of this paper is on “affirm” rather than on “identities,” i.e. on the politically and theoretically informed, reflexive doing that I try to trace here.

Besides the relational concept of subject, which allows for making normative claims based on ethical obligations stemming from interpersonal relations based on theoretically and politically informed doing, I also need a definition of feminism that would allow me to evaluate the present shape of the respective feminist scene.

Braidotti suggests that we “think of feminism as a coalition of interests on common issues: it is historically contingent and changeable and it has to be reconstructed at each generation. Now there are many possibilities, but you need to map out the contradictions of our generations and take the responsibilities of your generation seriously” [Braidotti 2010]. In congruence with critical theory, she puts the stress on emancipation at the centre of such a loosely and ever just temporarily defined feminism. Out of this definition I especially focus on both the historical and spatial contingency that has been the focus of feminist theory ever since the focus on location as well as on the emphasis put on responsibility. The only part of the definition I find problematic is the implicit importance Braidotti ascribes to generational changes for I believe that just like the overdependence on what is presented as different geographical location for explanation of epistemological and other difference [Cerwonka 2008], depending on the metaphor of generations (or waves for that matter) also imagines epistemological if not ontological shifts are caused by “objective” – time - difference. This, in my opinion, precludes analysis of the actual reasons for divergence when it occurs.

The coalition of interests allows for the cooperation of feminist elements that need not agree on all points of their politics and it also stresses the importance of such a coalition for pragmatic reasons, namely as a platform for political action. I can thus base off the analysis on searching for the reasons why such a platform or coalition seems not to work very well, how such a common platform is perceived by the research participants and what role such perceptions may play in the establishing of such a platform. While Braidotti stresses that there is not a common feminist subjectivity and agreement “will not” happen, the need to lead a dialogue and cooperate at least on selected issues despite the sometimes insurmountable differences is seen as crucial for meeting the responsibilities mentioned above. Without such a platform (or at least perceived need for it), the political goals, on which the different feminist subjectivities are contingent, would be reduced to empty proclamations and so would be the subjectivities.

What this means for the research is that it allows us to focus on how the building of coalitions and cooperation in general are regarded and what they are deemed to depend on, what the obstacles are supposed to be and what role theoretical differences are ascribed and seem to play in these processes. Besides analytical approaches stressing the salience of time and timescapes [Lorenz-Meyer 2013], the relational focus facilitates the inclusion of emotions, which form an inseparable part of the scene. Since different strands of feminism strive for a change towards greater social justice they are driven by emotions that also need to be part of the analysis. Coalition building means social interactions, which are by definition saturated with emotions and it is therefore not possible to omit these from the analysis.

If the subject “is composed of external forces, of the non-human, inorganic or technological kind” [Braidotti 2006: 21], then the corollary ethics puts at its centre the “symbiotic inter-dependence” [Braidotti 2006: 23] with external forces. This approach is most widely used in ecofeminism for it makes it possible to accentuate our interdependence with the environment - Braidotti states that: “A sustainable ethics for a non-unitary subject proposes an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the non-human or 'earth' others, by removing the obstacle of self-centred individualism” [Braidotti 2006: 36]. How has, then, this approach to ethics impacted on the research at hand?

The emphasis on interconnectedness is the central normative claim that I use to assess the scene. Since all the research participants identify with feminism, they should pay attention to the possibility of political action and its effectiveness regarding future social changes. The dimension of responsibility as something not reduced to reciprocity is crucial here: “The future per definition cannot be reciprocal, so we should exit the Kantian morality “I do that for you, you do that for me”... No! You do that for the love of humanity, because if we don’t do that, there is not going to be a humanity! So we have to give up the idea of reciprocity and we instead need to know that we share a specificity of a certain condition” [Braidotti 2010]. In relation to the research, this means that I look into how those making up the scene frame their responsibility and the goals of their activities.

The emphasis on the subjectivities and mostly their epistemological dimensions has also driven the work of the two critics of the state of feminist theories in the Czech Republic mentioned in the *Introduction*. Tereza Kodíčková refrained from using a specific theoretical grounding for her critique and instead approached the texts she analysed as a translator would [Kodíčková 2002], i.e. through preliminary rigorous textual analysis and later via comparison with her own theoretical knowledge. Mirek Vodrážka’s starting points are notoriously obscure as besides full books, he hardly ever outlines his starting points. Nevertheless, his focus on the theoretical dimension of local feminism [vodrážka 2006, 2009a-e] is continued. Although I also work as a translator, I decided to assess the theories using an explicit, albeit very loose, theoretical framework. The goal here is thus not to elaborate a new theory but offer a critical assessment of the state of the feminist scene and the role played by theories in its capacity to cooperate across the board. I also focus on other issues that may hamper such cooperation but the importance thereof hinges on the works cited in this section.

In summary, the overarching theoretical vantage point of the dissertation is that of broadly defined critical theory. This allows me to combine insights from different theoretical venues while acknowledging the influences and the employed perspective. I find the work of Rosi Braidotti as especially informative for the conceptualisation of the research participants and authors, whose work is analysed here. The emphasis on being as permanent becoming with the associated ethics

stressing responsibility guides the normative claims of the analysis. The stress on reflexivity also concerns me as the author. Thus, my goal is not just to provide an analysis of theoretical stances present at the feminist scene but also contribute to the discussion of whether and how they affect the formation of a platform for action. Following the eclectic theoretical work of Rosi Braidotti [2002], I conceptualise the scene as a permanent becoming through performances of those forming it while the performances inform the subjectivities of those doing them, too. Rather than claiming to have represented a clearly cut object of inquiry readily available out there in the restrictive and reductionist form of a thesis, I believe, together with Samantha Frost, that “[t]he key, then, is to remember that we have produced rather than found distinct objects, that we have artificially reduced complexity and not mastered it.” [Frost 2011: 80]. With regards to the concept of scene outlined in the Introduction and in this section this means that the scene I am trying to analyse and describe is co-constructed through this very account.

### *1.1.2. Discourse - feminist perspectives*

*“If we take seriously the post-structuralist notion of the “performativity” of social representations – the ways in which representations construct that which they seek to describe – we can register the significance of analyses and accounts of women’s political agency” [Roseneil 2004: 349].*

The overall critical approach to the theories that appear within the local feminist scene hopes to elucidate the implications of different theoretical allegiance of those making up the scene for its functioning and possibly also political success. The theories the feminists use do not exist in a vacuum. Rather they are derived, composed of, and defined in opposition to different discursive traditions. Together, the theories employed by the local feminists form the discursive landscape of feminism in the Czech Republic (however contingent this location may be). The subjectivities of those making up the scene thus have a certain discursive aspect,

which I believe has both discursive and material (in terms of embodiment and action) effects.

The central research question, as well as the subquestions that hope to help answering it, focuses on the scene's members' relation to theories and the implications of this relation for their self-conception. Thus, the question itself is based on the idea that structured systems of ideas aiming at explaining a group of phenomena, or theories, have actual effects and consequences for how people act and by de fault, at least to some extent for the outcomes of their actions. At the same time, the people that are one of the foci of the study, are supposed to enact the theories and be in/formed by them, i.e. a simple causal relation between the two is not assumed. This conceptualisation of the central research question can be seen as stemming from conceiving of the scene as informed by different feminist discourses with possibly divergent effects for the scene as such.

This section focuses on how discourse informs the analysis at hand and it also serves as a background to the more particular methodological concerns outlined in section *1.3.4 Analysis of the discursive landscape*. Given the focus on theories, I analyse texts produced by the scene that inform and are informed by various feminist discourses. I start by offering a working definition of discourse to be used in the remainder of the dissertation. I then turn to why discourse still matters decades after its introduction as a theoretical/methodological framework and what makes it relevant here also in the light of feminist criticism of discourse theory and how it corresponds with the above-stated general theoretical framework.

#### *Discourse – working definition*

Since we focus on theories, their relation to the Czech feminist scene composed of feminist subjects and vice-versa, self-conception of those making up the scene becomes salient. Self-conception, or the understanding of oneself, entails more than just the linguistic expression thereof. It reflects the emotionality as well as materiality that are part of the process of re/constructing a self-conception. At the same time, both the emotionality and the materiality get reflected in language and the particular language patterns affect both the emotionality and materiality. This is true not only for

an individual, who can be seen as an intersection of different language patterns and meanings (discourses), but also for whole communities and their functioning (for details of how gendered identity is generated see Zábrodská 2009). Claiming that it is possible to understand feminists as intersections of different discourses, including feminist theoretical ones, requires that I define what I mean by discourse.

The word *discourse* has been interpreted and used in many different ways and scientific projects and just like in the case of critical theory this means that there is no singular definition thereof. It may, among other things, be used to describe the intricate web of words, their patterns, levels of meaning and material consequences of the meanings as well as the linguistic patterns formed in response to the material world. Susanne Gannon and Bronwyn Davies define discourses as “complex interconnected webs of being, thinking, and acting [that are] in constant flux and often contradictory [and] always located on temporal and spatial axes; thus, they are historically and culturally specific” [2012: 73]. In a similar vein but emphasising the role of language, Gillian Rose defines discourse as referring to “groups of statements which structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking” [2001: 136].

The general nature of the definitions cited above leads to a common practice when using discourse theory, namely that of selecting several key terms from the vast framework and using them in the analysis (e.g., Zábrodská 2009, Dudová 2012). I, nevertheless, mostly adhere to the general definition as it is the discursive landscape in its broadest sense that we are interested in here. The discursive landscape consists of texts, practices and feelings, which form the Czech feminist scene. When Tereza Kodíčková analysed the academic social scientific feminist production, she concluded that the discursive landscape (although she did not use this term) was a dull flatland of a certain type of liberal feminist theory. I use the image of the discursive landscape to see whether 12 years later it is possible to discern different feminist discourses that interact, compete or ignore one another and with what effects.

Besides the common point of subjectivity, which is in its relational dimension also formed by discourses, the focus on discourse falls under the broadly defined critical theory due to its concern with power. Recognising one's ethical responsibilities

implicitly acknowledges one's agency, which in turn entails the power (not) to act. This is related to Foucault's power/knowledge concept: "power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); ... power and knowledge directly imply one another" [Foucault 1977: 26]. Unlike in the narrow version of critical theory, power is not conceptualised as working in a top-down fashion in discourse theory with some "possessing" it and others deprived of it. Rather, in its close relation with knowledge, it is capillary and productive of human subjects and "nets of domination and subjection within which subjects are always in motion" [Gannon and Davies 2012: 74].

Such a view of power and knowledge then allows us to conceptualise different subject positions within the scene from this perspective. The power/knowledge notion is closely related to the operation of institutions, such as academic ones. In general, the claims to truth made within such an institution are likely to be more productive than those made outside them. In our particular example this could mean that the definition of gender offered by an academic institution could be taken more seriously by decision-makers than that of say a group of queer activists with no comparable institutional background. However, the concept of power/knowledge at the same time prevents the reductionism of believing that knowledge produced within an institution will always be more productive (powerful) because "the subjects are always in motion" within the web of domination – it may be possible to make claims to truth based on other than institutional grounds or on the grounds of explicitly refusing any institutional backing that can be ultimately more productive than those backed by an institution. I therefore also look for the ways power/knowledge is invoked in the interview process.

Thus, in the analysis I use discourse to refer to sets of statements as they appear in the research through textual analysis and analysis of interviews. At the same time, however, discourse, or the discursive landscape created in this thesis, also encompasses the ways of being and acting and therefore also feeling within the Czech feminist scene. To expand the definition of the scene, discourse thus comes to signify the interconnected web of statements and acting that forms the researched scene. I am interested in how the respective research participants construct their position in relation to the scene, the scene's position and shape as well as the more

detailed issues addressed in the question guide. The emphasis here is therefore not on discovering the “objective, actual state of affairs” that is supposedly available beneath the surface of interviews treated as “data.” Rather, the focus on discourse allows me to acknowledge that the interviews as well as accounts written for various purposes (e.g., to familiarise the general public with feminist concerns, get academic credit for publications, obtain an academic degree, state an organisation's mission) are always locally and historically situated performances. My intention here is to provide a persuasive account of the present discursive landscape of the Czech feminist scene through an analysis of some of these performances.

It is clear from the definitions above that there is the issue of a singular discourse versus multiple discourses. Given the level of generality of some of the quoted definitions, it is possible to conceive of “reality” as of a discourse. However, within this grand discourse, smaller discourses operate that co-create it via their interactions. For the purposes of this study, when I use discourse in the singular, I refer to the overall production of the scene including the acting of those making part of it. This is not to suggest this discourse is unitary and/or unanimous. It would be tempting to speak of a single feminist discourse, which defines what pertains to the scene and what does not. This tactic might hope to create an impression of unity behind the various threads presented here. However, this is not possible here for there possibly operate multiple, maybe contradictory feminist discourses and not just a singular one and their interplay and definitions are what I focus on.

Although I have deliberately used a definition of discourse that points to its material and emotional effects, it is not possible to overlook the current move towards what some call the new materialist turn in feminist theory. In response to some its allegations I therefore outline why I believe it is still reasonable to focus on the linguistic dimension of the phenomena under study.

### *Why discourse (still) matters*

“How did language come to be more trustworthy than matter? Why are language and culture granted their own agency and historicity while matter is figured as passive and immutable, or at best inherits a potential for change derivatively from language

and culture?“ [Barad 2003: 801]. How much discourse matters is a question guiding current explorations in feminist new materialism, which underscores the under-researched area of matter [Barad 2003, Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012]. Feminist new materialism, or simply new materialism, is the emerging field of research into, among other things, non-human agency such as that demonstrated by instruments used in laboratory research but also into affect. In terms of theory, the field is heavily based on science and technology studies but also thinkers such as Rosi Braidotti and Gilles Deleuze. This fresh interest in matter has even been called a materialist turn in opposition, most importantly, to the linguistic turn that foregrounded the importance of language to social inquiry.

How much, then, does and should language and its analysis matter to any social inquiry? Is engaging with the more linguistic aspects of discourse desperately outmoded and off the mark? It seems, even after engaging with some of the new materialism, that not quite so. The term “turn” has already been contested by some; most recently, a workshop called *Orientating feminism(s): Feminist ‘turns’ and the political economy of knowledge production* was scheduled by the University of Warwick, UK for February 2014. Its focal point was the questioning of the consequences the use of the word “turn” inevitably has for feminist scholarship with emphasis on work of those who do not feel affiliated with the new trend. While this emerging controversy may be of interest of its own, it should not overshadow the fact that new materialism is heavily informed by poststructuralism and its proponents, including feminist ones.

I believe that rather than seeing feminist new materialism as standing in stark opposition to feminist strands of thought concerned with discourse, it is more appropriate to see it as intrinsically related with it, albeit often quite different. The new emphasis on matter and its epistemological relevance for feminist thought hints at the most important feminist criticism of discourse theory used for feminist goals. This criticism has been elaborated on in many works, including those ranking in political critical theory (most notably Fraser 1989, Benhabib, Butler, Cornell, Fraser 1995). To briefly summarise, it challenges the possibility of using discourse theory for truly feminist goals of emancipation on the following grounds. Firstly, for it is believed to erase the subject's agency because it is seen as overwhelmingly deterministic (in this

reading, the human subject is seen as the result of different discourses interacting with one another). Secondly, on a related note, it is seen as undermining the feminist cause of emancipation by destabilising the concept of (collective) identity, upon which action could be taken. By drawing attention to matter and its role in ontology, new materialism is believed to be positioned to overcome some of these perceived shortcomings. Nevertheless, I believe that based on the definitions of discourse cited above including the one deployed in the research at hand, the material dimension is not completely erased. Indeed, although I do not probe deep into the materialities of the Czech feminist scene, its emotional dimension is re/created in the interview process and it is reflected in some of the writing both explicitly (when referred to) and implicitly (such as when the goals of the writer is clearly to arouse some sort of emotional response in the reader).

In congruence with the quote opening this section on discourse, I believe that the study of discourses informing and forming the Czech feminist scene is important for its own sake. Drawing the discursive landscape of the scene should show the interconnectedness between segments that have been traditionally studied separately. The focus on the discourses used by the scene, including the emotional dimension directly related to power/knowledge and claims to truth, is to clarify the rifts that may hamper the cooperation across the board.

### *1.1.3. Geopolitics - feminist perspectives*

The central research question and especially the following subquestions, such as how foreign theories and approaches are “assimilated”, direct our attention to the importance ascribed to the origin of the theories and also to the presumed located position of the Czech feminist scene. Bearing in mind the general emphasis on a critical approach as well as the discursive approach to the activities, thoughts and statements, I now turn to the final starting point of the dissertation that focuses on the geopolitics of the scene under discussion, i.e. its location and the meaning thereof.

The seemingly unequivocal focus of the study – on the *Czech* feminist scene – implies a reliance on the concept of the nation state and could be read as an attempt

at further solidifying it. However, I have only opted for the term for the sake of brevity and the apparently unambiguous focus of the study under this heading. That is at first glance. The moment we actually start the analysis, even the description, it becomes clear the unambiguousness is only seeming for we immediately run into a host of related issues, such as who actually constitutes the scene, what are the influences we should focus on and whether texts written by scholars with a foreign passport settled in the CR are part of the scene while those written by foreign scholars not settled in the CR are not. To complicate things further, the broader context cannot be ignored as epitomized in Marta Kolářová's claim: "I believe that we are influenced by global processes and flows (of people, capital, and information). When exploring global phenomena such as the antiglobalisation movement or feminism, it is important to go beyond the European Union framework"<sup>4</sup> [Kolářová 2009: 13]. The context within which the scene is located thus represents a field in need of reflection, which is the task of this section.

In addition to the need to situate the scene into an international and global context and the abundance of literature investigating the influence of (foreign) funding on the scene's form and functioning, another impulse came from my teaching experience. Since my students mostly come from the USA, the issue of the "feminist East/West debates" [Kampichler 2010: 9] is frequently at least implicitly present and in need of being critically addressed. When framed with my teaching experience, the "feminist East/West debates" mean the reliance on the part of the students on the seemingly self-explanatory character of geopolitical location. In particular, this means that they attribute all gender-based discrimination (since gender is the focus of the course) to the local historical developments, which resulted in the present day situation of lacking recognition for such discrimination. A constitutive part of this perspective is the belief in the ultimate possibility of overcoming such perceived local and historically contingent backwardness if the right path is taken so that the local society "catches up" with theirs. The critique of such interpretation then points out the fact

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<sup>4</sup> I did all the translations. Where possible and deemed potentially enriching, the original appears in a footnote: "Já se však domnívám, že jsme ovlivněni globálními procesy a toky (lidí, kapitálu, informací) a při zkoumání globálních jevů, jako je antiglobalizační hnutí nebo feminismus, je důležité jít za rámec Evropské unie."

that analysis (trying to find out why) is precluded with answers given in advance (because of the ultimate difference).

Focusing on location means, just like in the two previous sections, focusing on power and its functioning. The difference here is the emphasis on the political-economic and related symbolic world order as criticised most concisely in postcolonial studies (post-colonial studies are embedded both in deconstruction and critical theory). I therefore start by focusing on the criticism of local social science feminist texts offered by Tereza Kodíčková [2002] for her text drew my attention to the salience of and obstacles to possible local theory-building and it also suggested the application of the insights from post-colonial theories to the local setting. I then turn to some other criticisms by local scientists (both feminist and otherwise) of the scene in relation to geopolitics. After outlining some of the critiques, I finally reflect on scholarship dedicated to how knowledge travels and what power implications this has for the thinking about the local scene.

In 2002, Tereza Kodíčková published an article based on her diploma thesis [Kodíčková 2002]. The initial idea for her thesis was to analyse Czech feminist theoretical texts, mostly from social sciences, that would allow her to distil the local type of feminist theory [Kodíčková 2002: 70]. She assumed that due to the local historical and political developments as well as continued scholarship on feminist issues since 1989, there would be a specific, local feminist theory pertaining to the local reality and problems. Coincidentally, my initial motivation for this dissertation was rather similar in that one of the issues I intended to pursue was searching for a feminist theory or theories based on the local situatedness. That was until Marta Kolářová<sup>5</sup> pointed me to the text by Kodíčková.

In her analysis, Tereza Kodíčková soon reached the conclusion that there was no such local, idiosyncratic feminist theory and she therefore criticised the mainstream type of feminist theory embraced by local feminist theorists for their rather smooth acceptance of narrowly defined liberal feminism of the proverbial white middle-class heterosexual (US) women, the idea of universalism, and the ignoring of postcolonial

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<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank her for pointing me to the text in her review of the dissertation project.

criticism of these two phenomena and the “West”<sup>6</sup> more broadly. She called for more independent thinking and more engagement with theories that might better express local realities. Using such theories, i.e. those inspired by postcolonialism, she also questioned the transformation metaphor accepted by the local feminist theorists. The problem with this metaphor is – for the account regarding my teaching experience concerns the spring semester of 2013/2014 – that it is teleological: it takes for granted its end point, i.e. the successful transformation into a new, better state that could be labelled “normal.” Following the theories of Edward Said and his followers, Kodíčková sees the acceptance of such a metaphor as “internal Orientalism” [Kodíčková 2002: 77], i.e. the perception of oneself as backwardish and an attempt to counteract this perception with pointing out to others who are blamed of being backwardish even more. This principle causes lack of dialogue across post-socialist countries, which prevents the very possibility of establishing a local canon of feminist thought.

It is certainly possible to disagree especially with the somewhat uncritical calling for the establishment of such a “voice of our own.” This belief de facto reiterates the Cold War discourse [Cerwonka 2008], with its reliance on the Cold War division of the world (politics), which is perpetuated by attempts at searching for some core characteristics assumed before any analysis has even begun. Nevertheless, this does little to refute the core elements of her critique. She was especially critical of the fact that local feminist thinkers adopted, without much if any opposition, the then obsolete form of liberal feminism. That is the form before it was forced to respond to the critiques launched especially by the proponents of Black feminism, women of colour feminism, working women, and other “other” women [e.g., hooks 1981, Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983] ignored and silenced by it. A similar critique, this time also targeting the corresponding theory of the category of gender was simultaneously published by Gerlinda Šmausová [2002] and later repeated by Hana Havelková [2011] (one of the original targets of Kodíčková’s critique).

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<sup>6</sup> Following Mohanty [2002] as well as Kampichler [2010], the terms “West/ern”, “East/ern”, “Third World” and the like are written in inverted commas in order to challenge their seemingly descriptive nature innocent of the complex construction work they are in fact the result of.

Part of the critique also concerned how ubiquitous the phenomenon of acceptance of liberal feminism in its particular form was. The present analysis therefore strives to show to what extent this is still the case, if at all. This should be aided by the fact that just like Tereza Kodíčková I come from a social scientific background and the texts that form the core of the analysis thus come from a similar realm.

As another issue ailing the local feminist thinking before 2002, Kodíčková pointed out the lack of engagement with postcolonial theories and transnational feminism more broadly (only a year later, Mirek Vodrážka also criticised the lack of interest in international and supranational issues on the part of the local feminists, this time in relation to the war in Iraq and its missing local feminist reflection [Vodrážka 2003]). At the same time she was critical of the comparative framework in which issues identified by the locally preferred theory, i.e. liberal feminism, are sought locally and their absence is then pointed out strengthening the claims of local backwardness. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it is not possible to point out that some issues, such as reflection of the situatedness of the local within the global and transnational, are indeed pertinent. This normative emphasis on the need to reflect and relate to the global context of feminism is based on the assumption that without this reflection, the local (and in fact any) feminist discourse is inadvertently limited to precisely the comparative framework, which leads to the production of representations of the local gender order that then allow for the comparison.

This thesis and especially its focus arguably also contribute to a similar comparative framework. After all, I am concerned with the *Czech* rather than any other feminist scene thereby embracing the ideology of the nation state as the ultimate unit of analysis, which can also mean disregarding the interconnections and dependencies stemming from the very definition of the scene as a contextual, historically situated hub of discourses. Nevertheless, the definition of the scene suggests that I am aware of its situated ever-changing character yet still need to label it in an intelligible way. The very use of the label together in combination with the fact that texts by foreign scholars dwelling in the Czech Republic were also included in the textual analysis might work to at least partly contest the seeming smoothness of the adjective.

In terms of both theories and activism, feminism has evolved under the influence of input from authors from different countries [for an influential Czech reader providing

an overview of some of the Anglo-American roots, see Oates-Indruchová 1998] since its very beginning. This cross-fertilisation, whether acknowledged or otherwise, has also concerned forms of activism and its goals and targets [Milweritz 2004]. Several labels have been used to stress the importance of reaching beyond one's state borders. International feminism is mostly related to historical cooperation between national initiatives – cooperation was seen as fruitful but state borders were usually not the target of such activism. Global feminism and specifically the contested term global sisterhood [see Busheikin 1997] were currents emphasising global omnipresence and universality of patriarchy. It maintained it was imperative for women from the First World to assist disadvantaged women in the Third World. Through postcolonial critique pointing out the hierarchy implicit to the call with women of the global North patronising those of the global South, this term went mostly out of use. The term currently preferred for the labelling of feminist cooperation across borders is transnational feminism that hopes to critically address the critiques pertaining to the previous two concepts [for a finer analysis of the differences in the Czech context, see Kolářová 2010]. An attempt to offer another neutral term that could work as an umbrella one for all the ones just described is cross-border feminism [Heitlinger 2004], yet it does not seem to have caught on.

These briefly presented terms all strive to encompass the complex power struggles caused by transnational cooperation (or lack of it) within feminism, both in terms of theory and practice. They also address the position of local feminisms within their contexts. Their focus is the salience of geopolitics for accounting for the local feminist praxis. To be able to respond to the current geopolitical situation of the Czech feminist scene, I need to elaborate on the geopolitical perspective and afterwards also to introduce the authors, whose work I use for the actual analysis of this situation.

In her chapter on locational feminism, Susan Stanford Friedman provides a definition of feminist geopolitics: “a feminist *geopolitics* can be understood to incorporate an examination of power relations as they are embedded in the earth, in a given location, and as they migrant around the earth locally, regionally, nationally, and transnationally” [Friedman 2001: 25]. She argues for the return to feminism in the singular, the goal of which is not to return to the refuted idea of a universal category

“woman” (which then enabled the disputed global feminist sisterhood project) but rather an emphasis on the location of all feminist thought and action that is always also influenced by global power relations. In this way, she hopes to do justice to the spatial dimension of feminism, which was somewhat marginalised by the focus on time, such as we could see in Braidotti’s emphasis on generations or that is present in the “master narrative” of feminist history that uses the concept of waves [Hemmings 2005].

If we are to concentrate on the locally embedded power relations as Friedman urges, there is one elephant in the room, namely that of the above-mentioned “feminist East/West debates” [Kampichler 2010: 9] that started with the demise of state socialism in some countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia<sup>7</sup> after 1989. The demise brought with it the re/introduction of various discourses, including feminist ones also via scholars and activists coming into the region to conduct research and engage in (feminist) activism.

The reasons given for the rise of the feminist East/West debates as outlined by Kampichler [2010] are as follows. The position of feminist/gender/women’s studies in the “West” at the time was affected by the backlash, which meant that feminism was publicly criticised and blamed for many social problems; gender studies programs were also undergoing a wave of closing down; these factors meant public discourse was relatively hostile towards feminism, which allowed for the transfer of many of the arguments to environments with distant feminist past [Cerwonka 2008]. Some have argued that this discursive environment coupled with the political developments after 1989 also provided many émigrés with an exceptional epistemological position so that their personal views on feminism would be given disproportionate public attention [Oates-Indruchová 2003].

Another author trying to dissect the power hierarchies affecting local engagement with feminist theories is Marina Blagojević. She has elaborated on the concept of geopolitical world centre (in the West) and periphery (East) by including a semi-

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<sup>7</sup> As above, Central and Eastern Europe is also not an unproblematic, descriptive term. In this sentence “some” is a qualification showing that e.g. Austria did not undergo such a change although it could hardly be claimed that it is not geographically in the centre of Europe. The origin of Eastern Europe as a geopolitical and symbolical marker has been described in detail [see, e.g., Wolff 1994].

periphery where those on the road to the centre and no longer in the east find themselves locked. She is not so much interested in the geopolitical situation as such but focuses on the consequences such a division has on the possibility of knowledge (and theory) production of those not in the centre. Besides claiming that CEE states are on the semi-periphery defined by its constant instability (it could fall into the periphery any time), Blagojević also differentiates between the epistemological roles available based on the geopolitical location of the “knowers.” Thus, those located in the centre, are the “creators” of knowledge while those outside the centre can only occupy the positions of “transmitters”, i.e. those that have the capacity to grasp and “translate” the theories produced by the centre and disseminate them to the semiperiphery and periphery, and “users”, i.e. those who locally apply the theories and epistemologies created by the centre. Blagojević emphasises the inequality that prevents the counterflow and questions the very possibility of those not in the centre to create (influential) theories. Her approach is remarkable for accentuating the epistemological repercussions of geopolitics rather than merely pointing out the material disbalance. I use her prism for the analysis of the textual production of the local scene in order to see whether it applies and if so, to what extent. Her approach is one that accepts the Cold War discourse and uses it as her springboard, i.e. she accepts it despite the introduction of the semi-periphery.

In her analysis of the feminist East/West debates, Kampichler shows they are constructed as driven by several points of contention. These are: absence of activism/feminist reflection, relevance of “Western” feminist theories/concepts/practices, specificity of local experience, communication problems and transnational cooperation, and the related issue of power and material inequality [Kampichler 2010: 8]. Kampichler looks at how this discourse is framed and what consequences this framing brings. She shows the framing rests on solidifying rather than questioning the East/West hierarchy ad divide and on the perpetuation of using the universalising notion of “woman.” This is by no means a call for turning a blind eye on the differences that may arise in exchanges or that there is actually no difference. Rather, she calls for never taking the differences for granted as de facto ahistorical, determined by “objective” geography. This also means, similarly to Šmejkalová Strickland’s call, that it is not just the “Western” part of the East/West binary that has to be critically scrutinised.

It is possible to trace a similar, albeit only anecdotic, reference to the need for problematizing the categories (and the frames within/through which they operate) already in an article by Jiřina Šmejkalová Strickland [1995]. Although she does not give answers to her questions, she problematizes many of the notions taken for granted also in the most famous “East/West exchange” between Nanette Funk and Slavenka Drakulić [Drakulić 1993: 123 - 132]. Šmejkalová Strickland calls for deconstruction of the terms that would require the deconstruction of the frames analysed by Kampichler. Besides the idea of a universal core to the category of “woman”, this also concerns the classification of feminism into a binary of a homogenous Western feminism and “the Rest.” We can see here a parallel to the analysis of the “West and the Rest discourse” as coined by Stuart Hall in 1992.

Hall offers an analysis centring on discourse, its formation and post-colonial criticism to scrutinise the idea of the “West” as unproblematic and in fact geographical to show its temporal dimension, or its historicity. Following Said’s orientalism, he points out the constitutive importance of the “Rest”, or the “Other”, for the “West.” The “feminist East/West debates” may be seen in a similar way for the homogenising idea of “Western feminism” depend for its content on the construction of “other feminism/s” that are perceived as “less real/authentic” [Loutfi 2009: 81] and identified with the “Rest.” Their discursive claims to truth are automatically seen as less viable simply due to their non-Western origin. All the afore-mentioned discussions and critiques relate to the position of Czech feminism as they show its specific position in the past but also suggest that if the calls are heard, its position should be constructed differently.

It is the task of meta-analysis of feminist thought and practice to challenge the monoliths created by binary concepts and show their genealogy as well as analyse the contradictions and conflicts that inadvertently materialise once the binary focus is challenged, i.e. show the conflicts that hamper the monolithic vision and challenge any simplistic views of feminist theory, which I hope to contribute to with the analysis.

In this vein of challenging the binary of in her case global South and North, Ien Ang has vehemently criticised what she perceives to be feminism defined “as a nation, a ‘natural’ political designation for all women, no matter how multicultural” [Ang 2003a: 191]. In a different piece, she then uses “hybridity” as “a concept that prevents the

absorption of all difference into a hegemonic plane of sameness and homogeneity“ [Ang 2003b: 141]. The point is to problematize the possibility of homogenising all voices by integrating them within the dominant feminist discourse and stress the necessary areas of contention. She thereby possibly challenges the idea of a common feminist platform for action as long as it is based on the necessity to “reconcile” (or rather silence and erase) contentious voices seen as harmful to the unity of the feminist “nation.”

A slightly different approach to a similar issue was taken by Clare Hemmings who calls for changing the way in which the history of the feminist movement is written [Hemmings 2005]. She shows that despite the many challenges posed by “other” feminists to the mainstream, the history of “Western feminism” seems to be told as a relatively homogenous narrative that manages to do exactly what Ang criticises as conceiving of feminism as of a nation, which manages to subsume and de facto colonize the “other” voices without acknowledging them and accepting the necessary ambiguity and ambivalence that is not to be reconciled [Ang 2003a].

A final take on the issue of (lacking) heterogeneity within feminist thought and practice together with the related power dynamics is the one by Allaine Cerwonka [2008]. Referring to Mohanty, Ang and Hemmings, Cerwonka also challenges the analytical relevance of binaries such East/West and the related practice of asking the “Other” to articulate only just the “difference”, which confirms the homogeneity and superiority of the “Centre.” She states: “If we only or even mainly focus on the CEE experience (or the Romanian, Hungarian, or Polish experience) in feminist scholarship, we unwittingly reproduce the highly political assumption that the East-West border was/is a fundamental marker of difference for how women’s and men’s lives are gendered. And by uncritically continuing to use national and/or regional categories for their analyses of gender, feminists uncritically reproduce the Cold War paradigms that continue to haunt academic knowledge production and institutionalization” [Cerwonka 2008: 821]. In order to show why the “Cold War

paradigms” should be abandoned<sup>8</sup>, she borrows the term transculturation from anthropology.

Transculturation helps to focus on “the relations, borrowings, and copresences that influence feminist ideas/praxis in different contexts” [Cerwonka 2008: 825] rather than conceiving of feminist praxis/thought as determined by a dichotomous East/West (or North/South) discourse. Transculturation is achieved by focusing on the actual interchanges, influences and groundings that usually go unquestioned if the Cold War discourse is adopted as it only allows for making visible the always fixed dichotomy. Transculturation thus means making visible all the influences that inform, in my analysis, local feminist thought and practice. Instead of expecting it to be defined by its “difference” to the (Western) norm, it requires looking for which theories are actually used and how. Cerwonka’s approach to the study of feminist thought (and gender) is thus in opposition to the analytical framework suggested by Blagojević above for Cerwonka expects differences (rather than “the difference”) to stem from multiple sources rather than the binary Cold War discourse. My aim in the analysis is thus to show what are the actual limitations/manifestations of Blagojević’s approach and whether and in what form can transculturation be traced in the local feminist thought.

Even the approaches critical of the Cold War discourse do not try to hide the often uneven power and material conditions that underpin the feminist theoretical exchanges. What they rather do is challenging the possibility to take the effects of the conditions for granted without the need to investigate how they operate at the given moment and place. The concept of transculturation seems especially fruitful for the analysis at hand for it makes it possible to de facto surpass the comparative logic introduced at the beginning of this section. In practice it means looking into what theories are used by whom and especially how they are used.

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<sup>8</sup> This becomes especially relevant at a time when we are allegedly facing the “New Cold War” with its possible new frontline in Ukraine [cf. Cohen 2009]

#### 1.1.4. Summary

As the title of the first section in this part suggests, the goal is to introduce the three key theoretical groundings of the dissertation at hand. These three starting points, namely critical theory in its extended form, discourse theory and finally feminist geopolitics, form the theoretical background of the whole dissertation. Moreover, they are seen as relevant not just to the approach to research on a methodological and analytical level but they can also be found among the topics that seem to be of concern to the Czech feminist scene.

The introductory section – *1.1.1 Introduction: Critical theory* – provides the most general level of theoretical grounding in the form of the broadly defined critical theory. Owing to the diverse research material, I was looking for a theoretical approach that would provide me with enough flexibility but that would at the same time allow me to make normative claims vis-à-vis the scene under scrutiny. It is within the critical theoretical approach that the concept of bricolage is introduced together with its less theoretical cousin – the magpie approach. Both the approaches include aspects of eclecticism and stress the importance of reflexivity in social science research stemming from the blurred boundary between knowledge and knower [Burawoy 1998]. Besides general theoretical issues, the section also includes an overview of Rosi Braidotti's contribution to the issue of (feminist) subjectivity. Braidotti stresses the relational quality of human subject – its interdependence on its environment and others – which helps to ground her theory of ethics. The interdependence is ongoing as long as the subject exists as subject is understood as a permanent becoming. This concept opposes the idea of identity and need for (feminist) politics based on it although even Braidotti calls for the establishment of a common feminist platform for action. Such a platform and especially the action are imperative due to the ethics not based on reciprocity but rather responsibility for the future. These normative frames will guide the assessment of the shape of the present-day Czech feminist scene.

The second section – *1.1.2 Discourse – feminist perspectives* – provides a working definition of discourse as it is used in the remainder of the thesis. A broad definition, emphasising both the linguistic and material dimension of discourse (in terms of its effects in the form of emotions and action), is chosen for the analysis. I do not deny

the feminist issues with Foucauldian discourse analysis (the justification for normative claims is questioned by pointing out their constructed nature) yet believe that if used for paying attention to what and how gets constructed within Czech feminist discourse and with what effects, it represents a valid tool of analysis. Moreover, it also provides a valuable conceptualisation of power (power/knowledge), which I use for analysing the positions enacted by research participants both in the framework of the scene and of the research itself.

The final section – *1.1.3 Geopolitics – feminist perspectives* – is based on the two previous sections for it is concerned with post-colonial criticisms of feminism that heavily rely on both critical and discourse theory. It focuses on what Martina Kampichler calls the “feminist East/West debates” [2010: 9]. Besides outlining their overall context, I also focus on two approaches to feminist thought. The first one, by Marian Blagojević [2005] extends the centre-periphery dualism with a third category of semi-periphery and claims that epistemological positions available under such a power hierarchy are limited to those of creators (in the centre) and transmitter and users in the latter two sites. I contrast this approach with that of Allaine Cerwonka [2008], who uses the term transculturation to show the actual influences materialised in feminist writing.

## **1.2. *Feminisms - possible analytical approaches***

The previous section outlined competing geopolitical approaches to the conception of feminist theory and showed why geographical location is contested as a reliable means for the classification of feminist theory.

Part *1.2 Feminisms – possible analytical approaches* is devoted to making it easier for the reader to navigate through the different discourses invoked both in Czech feminist writing and in the interviews analysed in this dissertation. It offers an overview of three other possible analytical approaches to feminisms. Since volumes could be written on the topic, this part is partly guided by a preliminary research into the theoretical frame most frequently used by the local scene. The first section presents two approaches. The first one outlines the classification of feminist theory based on epistemological differences. The larger part of this section is however devoted to streams of feminist thought associated with political thinking for this classification seems to prevail.

The second section outlines the possible ways of using time and sequence as a category namely in the form of different waves of feminism. I believe it is possible to draw a parallel between the geopolitical overreliance on the Cold War discourse discussed above and the reliance on waves for classifying feminist thought. In the summary, I then also touch on a more technical approach to analysing especially feminist activism, which is related to the geopolitical perspective introduced in section

### *1.2.1. Classifying feminisms*

This section is reserved for outlining different approaches to classifying feminism. Before we begin, it is important to stress that by calling all the different currents outlined below “feminism” we de facto claim there is something that can be identified as some feminist core traceable in all of them. This resonates with Drude Dahlerup's claim: “Today it is common to talk about ‘feminisms’ in the plural, indicating that there

are many different types of feminism – which of course is true. ... Rather, the question is whether we can identify a common core of feminism. I see feminism as the ideology of the women's movement as well as that of certain individual writers. It is my claim that *if we cannot identify a common core of feminism, then feminism cannot be labelled an autonomous ideology, an ideology in itself*. In that case, feminism would be reduced to serving as a sub-ideology to other doctrines" [Dahlerup 2004: 64]. This would mean in practice that there would be feminist socialism rather than socialist feminism.

This is a concern for many feminist researchers/thinkers with some also opting for feminism in the singular: "What I do mean by *feminism in the singular* is a *locational feminism* that is simultaneously situated in a specific locale, global in scope, and constantly in motion through space and time. A locational feminism is one that acknowledges the historically and geographically specific forms in which feminism emerges, takes root, changes, travels, translates, and transplants in different spacio/temporal contexts" [Friedman 2001: 15]. We use this latter quote to point out that the "common core" is by no means stable and it is even continually contested with many voices defying any attempted "colonisation" by any feminist mainstream [see Ang 2003a for a critique of a universalising tone inherent to the liberal pluralist model and also above].

With this in mind and since the goal of this research is to map the current Czech feminist scene from the vantage point of its theoretical inclinations, it is expedient to provide at least a brief overview of possible analytical approaches to feminism. Like any classification, this attempt will too be reductionist and limited. The major issue in any similar endeavour is the level of particularity that can be engaged and makes sense for the analysis at hand. Since the written production represents a large body of material and so do the interviews that form the core of the analysis, I have decided to focus on two possible approaches to classifying feminist thought and practice. The first one deals with possible approaches to categorising different feminist takes on epistemology for it is central to any thinking about theories.

The other approach then introduces a focus on feminisms in the plural or the issues stressed by feminisms defined by adjectives derived from other streams of thought that seem to define them. Although these two approaches may seem to be

sufficiently clear-cut and easy to grasp, the contrary is the case. The categories established by using these lenses are only homogenous until we get a step closer. That moment they tend to fall into disarray for the need to focus on various topics dealt with within these frameworks then becomes evident. Since there is by no means enough space to provide an exhaustive account of even the most salient topics in feminism,<sup>9</sup> we only turn to topics that are addressed on the local scene to ground them. As we proceed, it will become clear that there are numerous overlaps (often in the writing of a single person) that defy any simple categorisation. This should also make it evident that a clear definition of one's position is always needed to prevent false feelings of belonging. I still believe this outline is necessary in order to at least hint the vast number of different approaches that make up present day feminism.

The first approach turns our attention to epistemological differences within feminist thought and will be more relevant to the study of textual production with scientific background (usually either by those based in the academia or feminists conducting research, e.g., for NGOs). It is inherently connected with feminist takes on philosophy and can be to some extent categorised with regard to current philosophical feminist thought.

Largely within science, it is possible to identify feminist empiricism<sup>10</sup>, which “draws in various ways on the philosophical tradition of empiricism, which can be defined as epistemology that gives primary importance to knowledge based on experience” [Hundleby 2012: 28]. This strand is akin to analytical philosophy with its emphasis on pursuing “truth, logical consistency, objectivity, rationality, justice, and the good” [Cudd in Garry 2012]. Both the definitions show that these strands rely on time tested scientific methods, including detachment from the object of study/knowledge and they most typically believe in the possibility of revealing the truth about the reality

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<sup>9</sup> For instance, Pilcher and Whelehan have identified 50 key concepts in gender studies that are all concerned with feminism [2004]. A search for “feminism” in the online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy yields 144 entries (as of January 2014).

<sup>10</sup> However, it is possible to discern another stream of feminist empiricism, this time one closely related to philosophical empiricism [see Garry 2012 for details].

they explore – the belief in objectivity stems from that conception of the “object” of knowledge.

This belief is in opposition to three distinct epistemological positions, which are marked by their different concept of “reality” and the possibility to know it. These are postmodernist, psychoanalytical and phenomenological feminist traditions.

Postmodernist and psychoanalytic approaches use different types of deconstruction “to uncover the sexist, racist, and homophobic core of Western thought” [Hansen 2013]. Postmodernist and more widely used poststructuralist feminism draws on discourse theory together with its specific concept of power as inseparable from knowledge. It provides the most detailed insight into deconstruction, including such approaches as deconstructive writing [Gannon and Davies 2012]. Poststructuralism is also marked by rendering identity politics (often used by feminists for making political claims) problematic for it deconstructs the very idea of identity. This stream of thought is also related to queer theory with emphasis on the heterosexual matrix and its epistemological consequences [Marinucci 2010]. An iconic writer of both postmodern/poststructuralist feminism and queer theory is Judith Butler with her emphasis on performativity of gender [Butler 1990] although her thought did by no means develop in isolation [for a critique of the iconic status of Butler and other feminist thinkers see Hemmings 2005]. The difference between this approach and that of empiricism/ analytic feminism is the concept of reality and the possibility to know it. Deconstruction means looking for ways in which the things we believe to know have been constructed as such. The idea of a reality “out there” that can be revealed if the right – “scientific” – methods are used therefore makes no sense here.

Psychoanalytical feminism “develops a theory of the unconscious that links sexuality and subjectivity ineluctably together. In doing so, it discloses the ways in which our sense of self, and our political loyalties and attachments, are influenced by unconscious drives and ordered by symbolic structures that are beyond the purview of individual agency” [Zakin 2011]. This stream of thought has developed to understand the roots of inequality in (Western) societies as derived from the development of subjectivity. It often refers to difference and maternity. The work of Jacques Lacan has been an important influence and was elaborated on by theorists such as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous but also (in some of the first

articulations) Nancy Chodorow and Juliet Mitchell [Brenna 2000, Zakin 2011]. Psychoanalytical feminism is less concerned with the ontology of reality as it is preoccupied with its effects.

By contrast, phenomenological approaches (e.g., in the work of Iris Marion Young related to comportment, Elisabeth Grosz and many others) help “develop new, more inclusive concepts of identity, agency, sexuality, race, and power” [Hansen 2013], i.e. their focus is more reconstructive than deconstructive. These theories put great emphasis on embodiment and comportment. When it comes to their relation to the idea of “reality”, in congruence with the phenomenological tradition, they refuse the possibility of grasping it as a whole and focus on what and by what means (senses) is available to analysis.

While the above-mentioned takes on epistemology stem from other than feminist strands of thought, there are at least two more specifically feminist takes on epistemology that have to be mentioned here: feminist standpoint theory and the concept of situated knowledges.

Feminist standpoint theory (feminist standpoints) is mostly connected with Sandra Harding but also Dorothy Smith and Nancy Hartsock and with feminist science studies (although this field is much broader in terms of its epistemological perspectives). A standpoint is “an identification of ‘a morally and scientifically preferable grounding for [the] interpretation and explanation of nature and social life’” [Harding in Pilcher and Whelehan 2004: 163]. What this has meant in practice was giving voice to those traditionally misrepresented, ignored or silenced in mainstream research for their specific location on the margins is believed to provide them with insight not readily accessible to those rather identified with the centre (this idea is inspired by Marxism and Hegelian philosophy).

Dona Haraway is a theorist associated with a different take on epistemology forging the term “situated knowledges” which strives for objectivity although it is not attainable in the form of “seeing from nowhere” [Haraway in Code 2000: 181]. Through denying the possibility of distinguishing between the object/subject of knowledge, this epistemology is especially fruitful for the ecological perspective on feminism. In terms of how we arrive at knowing, a recent development in feminist theory also has to be mentioned. It also rests on the notion that any clear-cut

distinction between the object/subject of knowledge is futile and focuses on the role of matter in knowledge building. It is mostly referred to as new materialism and strives to counterbalance the perceived overemphasis on discourse within contemporary feminist thinking with focusing on matter, such as in the form of instruments used in experiments [for an overview of some of the key concepts see Dolphijn and Van der Tuin 2012].

The difficulty in enlisting the different currents that join to form the sea of contemporary feminism stems from the multiplicity of foci available. Although most of the currents just listed have a clear link to philosophy and epistemology, they are also firmly based in practice (e.g., in the case of queer theory the existence of queer subjects is formative) and many directly stem from. I now turn to a classification of feminist thought stemming from its association with different streams of political thought. It has to be noted that this categorisation is the most common one also because it allows looking at the functioning of feminism as a continuum (i.e. socialist feminism pertains both to political theory and concrete feminist political action) while the epistemological focus is more readily applicable to theorising within feminism.

Since feminism is generally concerned with making political claims (including a redefinition of what counts as political in the first place), I focus on the modifiers that pertain to political thought but are also related to the conceptualisation of desirable feminist goals. In 2010, Mimi Marinucci identified the following forms of feminist theory as the most noteworthy ones: “*liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism, and socialist feminism*, and it would also seem that the field is expanding to include *multicultural feminism and global feminism*<sup>11</sup> as well”<sup>12</sup> [Marinucci 2010: 85]. She also continues to add ethics of care and ecofeminism as relevant fields of feminist theory. The issues that differentiate these often competing and contradictory streams of thought are especially the perceived roots of gendered inequality found in society and the means perceived as best fit for eradicating it.

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<sup>11</sup> For a critique of the use of the term “global feminism”, see section 1.1.3 *Geopolitics – feminist perspectives* above and Kolářová 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Italics in the original.

Liberal feminism offers a good starting point because many feminists use it to define their view of feminism against it. As the modifier suggests, it is based in the tradition of political liberalism. Liberal feminists therefore believe that it is not needed to completely challenge and restructure social relation but rather that the liberal political project already includes measures that if truly and rigorously applied would result in a just social structure (we can see here a parallel to the trust in scientific methods mentioned above). The focus of liberal politics is therefore especially the legislative framework, i.e. the fight for various rights. This stream is often identified with the EU strategy of gender mainstreaming although such an identification can be contested [see Stratigaki 2004 for an analysis of how originally radical feminist projects get translated into similar policies]. Liberal feminism is also concerned with the position of women in the workforce. One of the most widely known theorists of liberal feminist thought is Marta Nussbaum; in history John Stuart Mill as well as Mary Wollstonecraft have been identified as liberal feminists even if they did not claim the label [McHugh 2007, Marinucci 2010].

Critiques of liberal feminism are mostly concerned with its perceived insufficiencies and shortcomings, such as the ignorance of its own prejudice, including but not limited to racism. Another issue is usually taken with the seeming acceptance of the social order that other feminist streams see as marked by its men-made origin, andro- and phallocentrism, patriarchy and masculine domination (depending on where the critic stands).

Radical feminism seems to be used in two different ways. The first one refers to the historical origins of this perspective mostly identified with the women's liberation movement in the USA in the late 1960s. Unlike liberal feminism, radical feminism does not believe the contemporary ("Western") social structure can be simply broadened to include women. They see it as contingent on patriarchy, which first needs to be subverted for there could be justice. The view is that the oppression of women is the primary oppression that should trump all the other oppressions for without its removal no real change can be achieved. Patriarchy is seen as being kept in place via institutionalised heterosexuality that helps to control women (a related issue is that of reproduction seen especially by Shulamit Firestone to be the core of inequality). One of the possible ways of working towards the ending of patriarchy was

(lesbian) separatism, i.e. the creation of independent collectives and cultures of women [McHugh 2007, Marinucci 2010].

Following McHugh, radical feminism thus theorised can be further divided into its cultural and libertarian stream [McHugh 2007:112]. While cultural (radical) feminism focuses on constructing feminine characteristics “free from patriarchy” [Jaggar in McHugh 2007:112], libertarian (radical) feminism is seen as targeting the sex/gender system as the source of patriarchy's power over women. To complicate things more, other scholars, such as Ann Ferguson, juxtapose radical feminism and libertarian feminism with regard to their stance on sexual practices [Ferguson in Zita 2000: 314-315]. While in her reading both stress consent and equality of the partners, the libertarian approach stresses pleasure and allows for techniques such as S/M. Radical feminism, in this reading, shies away from violence in sexual practice for it is seen as suspect of reproducing patriarchal power inequality.

There is then the second reading mentioned above. In this interpretation, radical feminism does not represent an internally coherent whole. Rather, it is contingent on feminist practice that is not seen as radical enough. Claims to radical feminism, such as those made in the interviews conducted for this paper have to be therefore interpreted with utmost caution for this use of the word “radical” seems to prevail over the rather historical usage outlined above.

Marxist feminism, similarly to radical feminism in the first, historical interpretation, does not believe that the contemporary model of society and politics offers means that could simply be adapted to its needs. In other words, it also sees the root of injustice as deeply embedded in the organisation of society, this time stressing class oppression as the main source of all oppression. In classical Marxist feminism, the oppression on the basis of gender would be seen as secondary to that of class-based oppression. This has in the end resulted in much criticism of classical Marxist feminism. Although it is not mentioned by Marinucci in her list, there has also been a vivid feminist debate in post-Marxist critical theory. Here we can find propositions for seeking social justice via redistribution of property and recognition. An exhaustive account of debates internal to feminist critical theory was written by Zuzana Uhde [2007].

Although she seems to focus on feminist thought as such, she mostly focuses on some of the axes of contention, namely those of equality versus difference, deconstructionism versus multiculturalism and finally how critical theory feminists Iris Marion Young and Nancy Fraser suggest overcoming these [Uhde 2007]. According to Marinucci, multicultural feminism “addresses the unique issues that racial and ethnic minority women experience as a result of the intersecting influences of gender, race, class, and sexuality on cultural identities” [Marinucci 2010: 89]. Multicultural feminism, however, has been heavily criticised for both solidifying often internally contradictory identities and rather conserving than altering the status quo (of lack of discussion of diversity).

The political takes on feminism based on the power / location interface (such as transnational, locational and postcolonial) also include Third World feminism (mostly representing the perspective of migrant women from the “Third World” into the “First one”), Chicana and Latina feminisms (describing the perspective from the borderlands introduced by Anzaldúa 1999), anti-racist feminism, black feminism, intersectional feminism and strategic essentialism.

Intersectionality is currently a frequent approach to understanding the interdependence of gender and other possible axis of discrimination. This approach, which some associate with the “third wave” of feminism (see the following section), has in fact originated in the critique of mainstream liberal feminism associated with white, middle-class heterosexual women by Black feminists especially in the 1970s [Thornton Dill and Kohlman 2012]. Although it originally exclusively focused on the intersection of gender and race in US society, over the following decades, it has come to include intersections with any possible lines of discrimination in any given society. It is important to bear in mind that the lines of discrimination do not simply intersect in individual lives and otherwise exist on their own. This would lead to a simplified version of intersectionality where layers of discrimination/oppression would simply pile up and it would then be possible to simply compare how big the piles were to say who is discriminated/different “the most.” Rather, intersectionality invites us to “ascertain how phenomena are mutually constituted [as in a matrix] and interdependent, how we must understand one phenomenon in deference to understanding another” [Thornton Dill and Kohlman 2012: 169].

Intersectionality shows how the position of an individual in relation to social structure is always complex and how it is possible to at the same time oppress and be oppressed. Strategic essentialism, a tactic popularised by subaltern studies and their proponent Gayatri Spivak, strives to de facto take advantage of the perception of different lines of discrimination by contingently claiming identities on the basis of which subversion could be achieved [McHugh 2007: 139]. This term is included in our list because it was also mentioned in some of the interviews.

To summarise, it has to be repeated that the categorisations outlined above are, by no means, exhaustive. They are mostly instrumental in that we need to mention at least the main streams of thought whether they actually denote something well-defined or not for these are likely to appear both in literature and in the interviews. We offered two general approaches to the modifiers used together with “feminism“. The first one stems from philosophy and epistemology with the second mostly based in political theories and possible roads to justice. These two types of modifiers are of course not the only ones available. We could for instance look at how different religions and religious currents have cross-fertilised and intersected with feminism (there are for instance Catholic feminism and Islamic feminism; the tenability of these combinations has been repeatedly questioned – see a recent critique by Hawthorne 2013). Alternatively, it is also possible to look at how feminism informs practice within relatively clearly defined fields – hence the difference between psychoanalytic feminism (see above in this section) and feminist psychoanalysis, which is mostly concerned with how to practically conduct psychoanalysis in a feminist way.

### *1.2.2. Waves and generations*

The analytical approach to feminism introduced in this section is mostly concerned with the metaphor of waves and its possibilities and especially restrictions it imposes on the present forms of feminisms. A related topic is that of generational change and its implications and explanatory potential for accounting for change. Last but not least, we are interested in how all these issues, mainly developed outside the local feminist thinking, relate to the scene under study and what they can offer and how

they have been embraced. The reason for choosing this perspective is that waves are used in teaching feminism in the Czech Republic<sup>13</sup> and have also been reflected in local theoretical work [Šmausová 2007]. Thus, we can see here both the most widely used approaches to waves (and generations): the one using the metaphor as an instrument for studying history and the other looking beyond this seemingly descriptive task at its theoretical and epistemological implications.

A related issue is the relation of periodization with the alleged absence or presence of a movement, such when (and whether) it emerged, subsided and/or died. I start by introducing some authors embracing the wave metaphor. Then, I contrast this body of work with some of its criticisms and pitfalls identified in it. This leads me to the most recent (and advanced) take on the issue penned by Iris van der Tuin [2011]. Finally, I offer an interpretation of how the insights apply to the local situation and some of the paradoxes we inevitably encounter.

The concept of waves has been widely used in literature and teaching on feminism and its developments. The narrative usually identifies two past waves with the first one occurring at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century targeting firstly education for women and secondly suffrage. The second wave is typically placed in the late 1960s spanning sometimes until 1980; it is defined by the “personal is political” slogan entailing a shift in focus to the power hierarchy embedded in the private sphere, which is directly linked with the public one as well as to the issue of the public/private split. Finally, a third wave is sometimes added or alternatively, the term postfeminism is used. The third wave implies a lot is left to be achieved yet and is often characterised by its emphasis on intersectionality and culture [McHugh 2007]. It has to be noted that the grand narrative is also located as it is based on the developments allegedly taking place in the United Kingdom and the USA thus canonising not only a certain historical account but also its distinct location.

One of the core issues pertaining to periodization is whether it is possible to see the variegated activities and manifestations of attitudes associated with feminist and

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<sup>13</sup> See syllabi of local gender studies programmes; this claim is also based on the author’s personal experience with feminist studies at FHS UK Praha.

women's movements<sup>14</sup> as an ongoing endeavour lasting at least 150 years or whether the periods of public attention to these issues have to be treated separately and there is little or no link between them. Thus, Verta Taylor<sup>15</sup> [1989] wrote an article mapping out the survival strategies as enacted by the US women's movement from 1945 to mid-1960s. She did it to successfully challenge the core of the new social movement theory, i.e., the assumed newness of the wave of social movements in the 1960s in the West. She is using the case of the women's movement as it is commonly used in the singular suggesting continuity rather than death and rebirth or even death and an unrelated birth as the new social movement theory would inevitably suggest [Taylor 1989].

We can see this continuity materialising, e.g., in the comparative mapping of the history of the feminist movement in the USA and the UK as done by Olive Banks [1981]. She is covering the period from 1840 to 1980 as a continuous effort; she calls the period between 1920 and 1960 "the intermission," implying the relative subsiding of distinctively feminist endeavours once suffrage was won but identifying at the same time these efforts with what she terms "welfare feminism," i.e., a feminism in its own right [Banks 1981].

To account for the process of how movements survive during such "intermissions," Taylor coins the term "abeyance," which she defines as "a holding process by which movements sustain themselves in nonreceptive political environments and provide continuity from one stage of mobilization to another" [Taylor 1989: 761]. She then proceeds to define five core characteristics of activism and organising in abeyance as temporality (longevity), commitment (of members), exclusiveness, centralization (both contribute to high professional level of organisation), and (political) culture [Taylor 1989: 765 - 770]. Our goal here is to outline how her insights are informed by and inform the ontological narrative of the feminist movement.

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<sup>14</sup> As Anna Loutfi notes, there is a great ambiguity regarding the difference between feminist and women's movements [2009: 96]. The problem is the potentially implicit tacit hierarchy of feminist movements being believed to be better, "more transformative of patriarchy than others" [Loutfi 2009: 96], i.e. "just" women's movements.

<sup>15</sup> For a further discussion of Taylor's abeyance concept see section 2.1.3 *Forms of activism* below.

Taylor is both challenging and confirming parts of what some today see as a hegemonic narrative of the feminist women's movement history, i.e., the one that uses the wave metaphor as its main vehicle. She is challenging the idea of a complete breach between the first (for suffrage and women's education) and second feminist wave by offering an overview of how the activities of those formerly active in the suffrage movement transformed and allowed the re-emergence (rather than a new birth) of the movement in the 1960s. The confirmation comes in the form of her geopolitical focus – on the US movement – and from the linearity it helps to reinforce. However, Taylor's theoretical framework for studying social movement continuity is that of resource mobilisation theory and political opportunities [Taylor 1989: 761 – 762]. We shall therefore now turn to Drude Dahlerup's account devoted solely to the wave metaphor in relation to what she calls the feminist women's movement.

Drude Dahlerup's chapter [2004] also targets new social movement theory, albeit from a different angle. She is focusing on three dimensions of continuity – organisational (only the case in a few Nordic countries), shared identity over time (partial visions seeking autonomy and equality), and a common core of feminism (the latter two are seen as conditions actually met by the movement) – in order to explore the continuity of the women's movement and thereby challenge the "newness" claims made by the new social movement theory [Dahlerup 2004: 60 - 65]. Similarly to Taylor, but using a different feminist movement for support,<sup>16</sup> she suggests, "the concepts of 'peaks' and 'doldrums' are preferable" for the description of developments in the feminist women's movement [Dahlerup 2004: 67]. This is to say that both continuity and change occur within the movement and that these need to be studied paying attention to both the movement's imminent conditions (synchronously) and its history (diachronously) [Dahlerup 2004: 73]. She is thus embracing the waves concept, just suggesting "doldrums" instead of Taylor's abeyance.

Finally, tracking the developments in the feminist movement over the past forty years, Marian Sawer and Sandra Grey [2008] offer another positive approach to the wave metaphor. They, too, speak of old Western democracies, as they believe the feminist movement there is not being paid enough attention for it is overshadowed by

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<sup>16</sup> She is using the Danish Redstockings feminist movement.

research on the new transitional democracies [Sawer and Grey 2008: 2]. Their use of the metaphor is also bound to social movement theory and they believe it to actually circumvent the trap most social movement research falls into: that of only researching the movements in times of high mobilisation. They regard the movement as a sea that has different waves and that de facto guarantees there will always be a feminist movement even in the future [Sawer and Grey 2008]. If we consider this stance in the light of Braidotti's emphasis on responsibility stemming from non-reciprocal ethics, this perspective comes off as compromised. If there always will be a movement, why bother and take part in the first place?

Having summarised the arguments for using the wave metaphor, I can now turn to those critical of the concept. One of the most often mentioned issues with the concept stresses the effects it has had on the current state of feminism, which many, and especially the media, have proclaimed dead and over. This has been manifested by the widespread use of the term postfeminism<sup>17</sup> although not so much in the CR.

Thus, Angela McRobbie sees feminism today as "perhaps [expelled to] a retirement home in an unfashionable rundown holiday resort" [2004: 512]. She believes there is an oedipal narrative of feminist past impacting or even effecting the allegedly postfeminist present. This very narrative makes *identification* with anything to do with feminism as "capable of instilling dread and horror in young women, for fear that they might be mistaken as a 'feminist' and thus robbed of a sexual identity that counts and that has value" [2004: 512]. The first objection to the wave metaphor may be defined as preventing identification with feminism at present. It is rather haunting than appealing, just like the image of an aging mother clinging to the place she ought to vacate for her daughters [Hemmings 2005].

In a less theoretical study of the contemporary feminist movement in Great Britain, Catherine Redfern and Kristin Aune [2010] suggest a similar pattern but this time based on a nation-wide survey: "The belief that feminism is no longer necessary since 'we're all equal now' is a major contributor to non-identification with feminism"

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<sup>17</sup> Postfeminism is also used to express quite a different meaning. In this tradition the post- prefix suggests an intersection with poststructuralism and postcolonialism, i.e., this term is not seen as in opposition to feminism [McHugh 2007].

[Redfern and Aune 2010: 7]. A related issue, although it looks like the very opposite of this problem, is the reading of the revered second wave feminism as the “golden age” characterised especially by high levels of activism. In this case, the identification is prevented by the feeling of the present not living up to the past. However, while this may well be the case in the countries on which the wave metaphor has been based, applying this concept to the local environment requires even more caution. This brings us to another set of issues with the metaphor that are based on minute comparative women’s movements research.

Deborah Withers [2010] questioned the mutual exclusivity (as one wave ultimately supersedes another one) and the idea of some (possibly teleological) development implicit in the wave metaphor. She has done this by using examples of repertoire deployed during what would be called the second wave but what is very strongly based on challenging cultural forms, i.e., a repertoire ascribed to the problematic third wave. She has repeated this challenge together with Niamh Moor at the 8<sup>th</sup> European Feminist Research Conference in Budapest, Hungary, this time using examples of activism from the UK and Canada. They tried to counter the erasure of activities that are not in sync with the wave metaphor from shared feminist memory and also the erasure inevitably caused by representation by engaging actively with the knowledge produced by activists through their activism. The important point with analytical repercussions for us is that the homogenising effects of the metaphor actually have their casualties even in the countries on which the metaphor is based.

To elaborate more on this point, let’s return to the above-mentioned Dahlerup’s analysis [2004]. She uses the case of the Danish Redstockings movement, i.e., a Nordic rather than English-speaking movement to build her argument. As mentioned above, one of the key differences between the history implied by the metaphor and the movement she studies is that organisational continuity actually appeared between all the waves [Dahlerup 2004]. Moreover, although Dahlerup also speaks of three waves, she places them differently, with the first wave equalling that of emphasis on education, the second on suffrage and the third in the 1960s [Lønnå 2004]. The geopolitical location thus proves crucial and makes the rather vague concept of waves as a meaningful vehicle for theorising the feminist movements’ history difficult to keep on track.

Many of the above-stated critical takes on the wave metaphor as an instrument for feminist movements' research can be found in the most recent contribution to the discussion on how viable the wave metaphor is by Iris van der Tuin [2011]. Her starting point is that "when using the wave model, feminism appears spatiotemporally fixed" [Van der Tuin 2011: 15], i.e., both the timing and the locus of individual waves can be determined. The metaphor can lead to the idealisation of second wave feminism (or the golden age – see above in this section) and to a reduction of all feminisms to this form, which is out of reach at present and makes a feminist identity here and now de facto untenable. The ideal state has either already arrived (a claim made by postfeminism) or the real feminism is a matter of the second wave and hence of the past (it is not possible to count as a second-wave feminist now).

In other words, Van der Tuin is challenging the sequential negation (a new wave as excluding the previous one) and progress narrative embedded in the metaphor. She then proceeds to outline her project of repositioning the "neodisciplinary apparatus" of the wave metaphor, which might enable that the "feminist movement [makes] a comeback" [Van der Tuin 2011: 17]. The goal is to focus on both the epistemological characteristics of the concept and its effects in the form of im/possibility of a feminist movement, in other words on its ontoepistemology.

To achieve this, Van der Tuin uses Karen Barad's work on agential realism, which takes agency out of the exclusive possession of subjects and widens it to include the instruments in the process of measurement [2011: 18 - 19]. This concept is based on science studies in which instruments, such as laboratory equipment, started to be regarded as part and parcel of the "knowledge" that is produced using them. They are no longer seen as separable from that what is "known" and rather their agency in producing knowledge is emphasised. Van der Tuin uses the term dis-identification to envision the possibility of how "a third wave of feminism [can] come within our reach" [2011: 25]. Dis-identification is the tool that allows us to critically engage with concepts of the past without having to *either* identify with them *or* refute them thereby overcoming the sequential negation as well as the progress narrative aspect as this allows for "unactualised virtualities" [Van der Tuin 2011: 24] including those of the wave metaphor, to come into being in the present.

Interestingly, we may find points in common with this positive take on the metaphor as simply under-utilised in its full potential in Clare Hemmings writing although she does not focus on the wave metaphor as such [2005]. Investigating feminist “second wave feminist theory” [Hemmings 2005: 115], Hemmings also calls for “an approach stressing the links rather than the discontinuities between different theoretical frameworks, as a way of challenging the linear ‘displacement’ of one approach by another“ [2005: 131]. Her focus in the article is thus similar to the efforts to overcome the Cold War discourse that gives rise to some differences while making others invisible. Similarly, Hemmings shows how feminist theoretical approaches are interconnected with one another – this time across time *and* space – in order to challenge the writing “out” of some authors, whose work defies the wave concept.

This leaves us with an uneasy task if we are to decide how, if at all, the wave metaphor is applicable to the Czech feminist scene. It follows from the above-stated that the metaphor’s agency has been both embraced but also heavily criticised even by those situated at least within its margins (the Nordic feminists). Its spatiotemporal effects have been especially fiercely criticised for they seem to perpetuate the dualism of “us versus them” and do not allow for cross-references and inclusion.

If we take another look at the first discussed author, Verta Taylor, it may seem that her theory only concerns the US as she states, “I hold that the abeyance process characterizes mass movements that succeed in building a support base and achieving a measure of influence” [1989: 762]. Even if we consider the 19<sup>th</sup> century women’s organising in what is today the Czech Republic a movement, it is questionable whether it could be called “mass” one. Turning to the later developments, the institutionalised form of the Federal Czechoslovak Women’s Union also hardly meets this qualifying criterion. However, it is interesting to see some of the characteristics of abeyance present in the local case (e.g., professionalization, longevity, often criticised exclusiveness and centralisation).

It is even more interesting to consider the applicability of a critique of Taylor’s concept offered by Traci M. Sawyers and David S. Meyer [1999]. They also use the framework of political opportunities but suggest an important nuance: instead of understanding political opportunities as either open or close, the possibility of missed opportunities not taken up by activists is proposed. The former approach, as also

observed by Czech political scientist Kateřina Vráblíková [2007], leads to explaining the occurrence of mobilisation by investigating the opportunities. The investigation always only takes place once the mobilisation has occurred and the predictive potential of this approach is thus flawed. Sawyers and Meyer therefore suggest attention should indeed be paid to the movements even when they reach abeyance but they also warn against interpreting the abeyance stage in solely positive terms [Sawyers and Meyer 1999].

Sawyers and Meyer point out that “[w]hile social movement abeyance may indeed contribute to movement continuity, this continuity comes at a price” [1999: 201]. The price they claim the movement may have to pay is (unnecessary) loss of influence on the policy domain and fragmentation, which makes mobilisation difficult. The fragmentation as well as the other aspects of this theoretical advancement is demonstrated on the case of the US women’s movement in the 1980s. One of the traits of the fragmentation is polarisation of the “radical and institutional wings” [Sawyers and Meyer 1999: 201], which then leads to breaking up their unity that the authors identify as crucial for effective mobilisation. Therefore, the authors call for a “unity of purpose” [Sawyers and Meyer 1999: 201], which is not predicated on ideological consensus. Quite the contrary, they show how the cooperation of the radical flank and institutionalised feminism can bear fruits for both.

If we look at the state of Czech women’s organising, it seems tempting to adopt the nuanced version of the movement in abeyance concept. Here, too, it appears that the movement (as political scientists sometimes call it) is fragmented, that there is a small radical group critical (formerly the anarchofeminists, today queers) of the institutionalised groups (mostly NGOs and the academy), etc. The reality seemingly meets the criteria. However, the main obstacle in the way of adopting this concept is the lack of the mass movement that would now be in abeyance after its peak period, or the “golden age.”

The absence of the “golden age” cannot, however, be interpreted in any self-evident way. Bearing in mind the example of the Nordic countries (and even of the USA), we can see that the actual historical shape of the organising has a rather loose relationship with this grand narrative. Therefore, we may expect to find this “golden age” even in the local accounts partly also due to the way the history of feminism as

such is taught here and it is thus not possible to regard this concept as not bearing on the local scene. Indeed, if we glimpse at historical accounts of the women's movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can see a constant comparison to similar developments elsewhere in the world [Horská 1999, Malečková 2004]. This golden age becomes double-inaccessible for it a) is over and cannot return due to epistemological issues and b) it never occurred here (although this aspect is sometimes interpreted as a latent need for the "second wave" without which Czech feminism can never progress [vodrážka 2006]).

The use of the wave metaphor that focuses on its epistemological effects rather on its seeming function to describe the actual history of the movement might prove even more fruitful as long as it shows what effects it has had here. We are now proceeding to two works concerning the local scene, which use the timeline as a means of analysis but reaching very different results. The first one is not so much concerned with waves but rather generations [Martin 2009], the second concentrates on mapping the developments in feminist theories and their relation to the reality they claim to represent.

Megan Martin suggests that it is possible to look at the feminist endeavours taking place in Czechoslovakia from 1968 to 1993 as three different generations of women [2009]. She is using Simone de Beauvoir's work on freedom predicated on the shift from immanence to transcendence to show how the three groups proceeded from claims based on universalism of human rights (women dissidents from Charter 77) to resistance through culture (younger generation of women revolting through their art) to the current group tackling the inflow of western feminist ideas and education [Martin 2009]. This conclusion is based on a text analysis and five interviews and demonstrates the teleological belief (feminism has already come and can only get stronger) as described above. While the optimism as to the future developments in gender research, education and possibly even relations is appealing, caution is in place as it first and foremost manifests a need for a grand narrative that would somehow systematise the chaotic roots of today's feminist endeavours. However, it has to be acknowledged that Martin does not support the superseding logic that Iris van der Tuin sees as critical for the metaphor. Rather, Martin believes all the different approaches are present and work together right now [Martin 2009].

The chapter by Gerlinda Šmausová [2007] corresponds more with the ontoepistemological concerns voiced by Iris van der Tuin and Clare Hemmings. She also presents an overview of different streams in feminist theory positing feminist empiricism and deconstructionism but also trying to relate back to the actual reality these are hoping to capture. In her outline she also shows that the perceived changes in feminist epistemology do not necessarily progress in a linear manner although she clearly defends deconstruction as the more advanced epistemological form. The whole text is trying to crack the problem she perceives within the feminist academy, i.e. that of not engaging in revealing how gender is being done and undone and is critical of the epistemological preference for the study of gender identities as she sees it as necessarily connected with essentialising tendencies. When addressing specifically the Czech context, she claims that “socio-political efforts to improve women’s situation” are diversified in terms of their agenda and it is impossible to “match them with specific “waves” of the feminist movement,” which she presents as living in an “untimely presence” [Šmausová 2007: 32].

In spite of what could be read as her criticism of the local gender research and praxis, she concludes by underlining that it is not possible to claim all the responsibility for failed feminist endeavours due to the fierce response on the part of the “men’s hegemony” and warns against fragmenting forces due to epistemological differences as she, too, believes in a common feminist core. Her definition of the movement’s core – or the “spiritus agens” – is that “it is the common praxis of all women to take a *ceteris paribus* subaltern status,” something she sees at the root of all the waves [Šmausová 2007: 32]. Thus, we can see that although she uses the waves concept, she is not really engaging with its historical accuracy/value even if the claim that all the waves are *de facto* currently present might suggest otherwise.

In this section, I first outlined the possible positive use of the wave metaphor in terms of its close relation to the idea of feminist activity as a sea suggesting eternity of the endeavour, an idea clearly indebted to the modernity project. I then looked at the criticism of this seemingly historical approach offered by those minutely mapping the actual developments within the movement in their respective country and, most importantly, in comparative research. This undermining of the accuracy of the wave model and its limited capacity to capture the complex history and its impact on the

issue of continuity of the movement then brought us to current debates of the concept. These focus on the epistemological and theoretical repercussions of the model and have been, in a very similar manner, also developed locally [Šmausová 2007]. I may thus conclude that the continuous engagement with the metaphor is required by the very place it has had in feminist thinking and that the local setting offers a unique chance for the dis-identification suggested by Iris van der Tuin owing to local feminist histories. In other words, I do not see generations, waves of time as ultimately heading towards a given goal. Nevertheless, due to the prominence of the waves concept in the classification of feminist thinking, it is important for the analysis of local feminist discourses.

### 1.2.3. Summary

The aim of this part was to present several possible analytical approaches to feminism with regard to the scene at hand. The first section – *1.2.1 Classifying feminism* – outlined two approaches of analysing the multiplicity of feminisms. The first one is mostly concerned with philosophical and epistemological approaches for these are important with regard to the central research question – I believe theories may have actual effects in terms of action (not) taken by those holding them. I also expect these effects to possibly differ depending on the particular theory embraced. The other approach to classification is more traditional as it strives to encapsulate the most frequent and clearly defined streams of feminist political thinking.

The second section – *1.2.2 Waves and generations* – then offered a critical assessment of one of the most frequently used concept for providing an overview of how feminism “is”, how it works and how it has evolved. I would like to draw a parallel between the use of seemingly objective geographical location for the grounding of classification of feminist thought into the West/East or North/South and that of the use of similarly seemingly objective time used for classifying feminist thought based on the waves concept. Since neither space, nor time are neutral objective entities but entail power-imbued negotiations as to their exact meaning, the metaphors cannot be

seen as providing some safe shortcut to explanation of the feminist scene's current shape.

### **1.3. Methodology**

This section gives detailed information on the research design divided into separate sections. The section on ethics and linguistics applies to the research as such, from the initial idea to the completion of this thesis. Details on individual methodological proceedings and dilemmas can be found in the following sections. I pay special attention to the process of sampling, how discourse is analysed and interviews conducted. I also discuss the methodological merit of the chosen approaches.

#### *1.3.1. Feminist research ethics, linguistic implications*

*“Loyalty is misplaced and harmful if it hardens into an inability to be self-critical.” [Mandle 2000: 2]*

Section 1.1.1 *Introduction: Critical theory* outlined the theoretical direction of the research. In general, the selected theoretical approach stipulates that “[r]esearch in the critical tradition takes the form of self-conscious criticism – self-conscious in the sense that researchers try to become aware of the ideological imperatives and epistemological presuppositions that inform their research as well as their own subjective, intersubjective, and normative reference claims” [Kincheloe and McLaren 2005: 305]. The “self-conscious criticism” also directly relates to reflexivity as outlined by Michael Burawoy [1998].

The “self-conscious criticism” tries to address the fact that in qualitative research “researchers face ethical issues in every stage of the research process as a sort of dilemma” [Flick 2006: 45]. It strives to maintain the researcher's consciousness of the dilemmas that are bound to be present even when they are, e.g., obscured by fast and emotional developments in an interview. Flick [2006: 44 - 53] reviews the suitability of codes of ethics and ethics committees to conclude that neither can guarantee a blueprint for conduct in the field. Nevertheless, the main points stressed

are those of a) informed consent, b) avoiding harm in collecting data, c) doing justice to participants in analysing data, and d) confidentiality in writing about the research conducted. Before we proceed to detail some of the dilemmas encountered when conducting the research at hand, we will briefly summarise how these issues were generally dealt with.

*Informed consent:* The authors of texts that entered the analysis were not asked for consent due to the public nature of their writings. No confidential written information was researched. Before every interview, the research participant-to-be was sent a set of topics and an e-mail explaining the goals of the research<sup>18</sup>. Although the consent might be derived from the fact that the research participants agreed to actually become parties to the research, they were additionally asked to voice their consent at the beginning of each recorded interview. This helped to prevent the creation of a too formal setting such as when the consent is required in writing but at the same time provided a recorded (audio) evidence of the consent.

*Avoiding harm in collecting data:* This issue proved to be one of the biggest concerns of the research. At times, the interview process gave rise to emotions, often negative ones, such as despair, pessimism, and anger. Such a situation then required a consideration on the part of the researcher as to whether the negative emotions might have a long lasting effect on those interviewed and also whether the effects could solely be attributed to the research process itself (in which case a thorough ethical reasoning concerning the perceived benefits of the research would have to be undertaken). The interviews, however, revealed that in many cases the research was seen and deliberately used by the research participants as an outlet for such feelings or as a possible way pass the problems inducing the negative emotions. This is not to say that the researcher should not be accountable for the possible harm caused by the interview. Rather, within the research framework, I understand it as my added responsibility to do my best to meet the hopes of those interviewed.

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<sup>18</sup> The letter is enclosed as Appendix 2.

*Doing justice to participants in analysing data:* The preceding point has led to the adoption of a rule stipulating that all the outcomes of the research, especially the analyses of the interviews, are sent to the research participants for comments. While I may not always accept possible comments and criticisms, if they arise, they need to be reflected in the outcomes. This means that I do not try to pretend the relationship between those researched and me is (or actually can be – see Rupp and Taylor 2011) equal but that I acknowledge the inequality and try to reduce it as much as possible.

*Confidentiality in writing about the research conducted:* The final general rule as to how to conduct an ethical qualitative research stipulates confidentiality or anonymity of those researched. This “may become problematic when you do research with several members of a specific group” [Flick 2006: 50], which was also the case of the research at hand. The need for confidentiality was made clear at the very beginning of the research process: when an acquaintance was approached with a request for interview, she pointed out that her statements would be greatly affected by whether or not the research was anonymous. Since research where the researched from the scene under consideration gave their names is relatively frequent [e.g., Vráblíková 2006, Lundin 2008, Martin 2009], we decided for a research design granting as much anonymity to those taking part in it as possible. Besides translating the transcribed interviews from Czech to English, I also strive to only use short excerpts from the interviews in order to limit the possibility of identifying the speaker from the context. On the other hand, since the regional background, as well as information on general institutional background, proved to be relevant this information entered the report.

It would be possible to stop here and proceed to the next section claiming that the crucial concerns over ethical qualitative research have been at least addressed. However, this would hardly explain why the adjective feminist is used in this section's title. The last problem mentioned under d) was indeed burning due to the relatively low overall number of those active in the scene for a period of at least three years who also either produce texts related to feminism or are labelled by others in the research as important. Another aspect that made it burning was the responsibility I feel towards the scene and feminism at large. Just like Joan Mandle [2000], who

researched the conflicts and infighting at the Women Studies Centre at Colgate University, the relationships and the possible consequences of their representation through the research report had to be addressed.

The four basic guiding principles enlisted above under a) – d) already include some of the emphasis put on relationships by feminist research ethics. In addition (and in some instances in contrast) to mainstream research ethics, which is defined as principle-based [Preissle and Han 2012], feminist research ethics pays special attention to relationships that are always situated. This stipulates that besides observing the guiding general ethical principles (such as beneficence), ethics should also be inspired by feminist scholarship on situated knowledges [Haraway 1988] and ethics of care. In more general terms, this means accepting the challenge of getting beyond the Kantian reciprocal model of morality (i.e., do not do to others that you do not want others do to you) presented by Braidotti: “The future per definition cannot be reciprocal, so we should exit the Kantian morality” [2010]. What she calls for is responsibility fostered both in relation to nonhumans but most importantly in relation to the future (such as if responsibility for the environment was based on reciprocity, the preservation of the environment for the future would be difficult to ground). In our case this necessity was felt at all stages of the process but perhaps most painfully in the instance of representing the analysis.

Ethics of representation is crucial from the standpoint of relational morality overlapping the temporality and exclusivity of one's life (such as that projected merely in terms of one's extended family, whose welfare in the future is reduced to their increased consumption). “Feminists have a particular stake in the ethics of representation because of what many of us believe to have been misrepresentations of women and our experiences” as Preissle and Han pointed out [2012: 596]. This becomes even more important if the representation of individuals contributing to the shape of feminism in the Czech Republic is at stake. The fact that those who took part in the research had decided in the first place to talk to me created my accountability to them. The call of Rosi Braidotti as cited above then shifted this feeling of accountability beyond the concrete individuals to the possible future shape of the activities described here.

It is clearly the case that the shift from principle-based ethics to ethics of relation does not solve the problems encountered in the field but rather causes new ones. In the analytical part of the paper, we reflect on particular instances where this became evident. As part of self-critique, I take full responsibility for the instances where my accountability was breached. In the remainder of this chapter, we turn to two other issues related to the ethics of representation: the role of the researcher and linguistic implications.

### *Role of the researcher – insider/outsider*

The above-stated rules may seem somewhat abstract and detached. I therefore turn to the very practical issue of the role played by the insider or outsider status of the researcher for the collection of material and its analysis.

From its beginning, feminist research has challenged mainstream science for its multiple biases (e.g., uncritical concept of objectivity, using research on particular men as if it yielded universal findings, research used to affirm societal inequalities as necessary). A preoccupation with power and its effects within the research process has also played an important role. For some researchers, the feminist participatory action research (PAR) with its explicit emphasis on helping concrete individuals and groups through research has become the only truly ethical option [Lykes and Hershberg 2012]. This type of research mostly targets clearly marginalised groups within communities and strives to work towards their empowerment.

Although we may claim that feminisms are marginalised within most of the spaces they navigate, the situation of those engaged in feminism for an extended time period can hardly be described as comparable to say minimum-wage single parents. Due to their established status, most of the research participants hold some position of power and privilege, at times also vis-à-vis me. What is kept of the ethical prescription related to PAR then is mostly the focus on benefiting not only those immediately researched but perhaps more importantly the broader community. To give a concrete example: seeing some of the contentions arising in relations among various feminist individuals and groups these need to be interpreted in their context. Thus, if we focus on the institutional setting of the academia, we can see that

infighting and the game of “taken topics”, i.e. the presupposition that topics that have already started to be pursued by a particular researcher (or collective) are no longer “fair game”, are by no means reserved to feminist science. It should be possible to see from the concrete example both the roots of this practice (typically fight for academic prestige, originality and money) as well as its effects (only limited knowledge of the subject can be reached, careers and perceptions of the academia as a field of reason get compromised). This in turn shows how the research at hand can be used in order to promote a critical assessment of the phenomenon and change (or at least challenge) such a practice.

Much of the feminist methodological discussions concern the positionality of the researcher in relation to those researched but also in general [Gilbert 1994]. Special attention is paid to whether the researcher shares characteristics of those researched (is an insider/knower-to-be) or not (and operates as an outsider/known-to-become). This dualistic conception of a relatively stable identity has come under criticism calling for a more nuanced approach [Damaris 2001] that takes into account the building of knowledge (and its imbrication with power), i.e. the fact that there is always a temporal and local side to it, which may change with time and place. This is not to say that we should abandon positionality<sup>19</sup> and accounting for it as has become commonplace in feminist research (i.e., stating one's position in order to at least partly account for its influence on the research). Rather it points out the contextual nature of all in/out positions.

In the research at hand, I may be seen as an insider by some but also a not-trusted outsider, who first has to win the trust of the particular research participant. In general terms, my positionality can be summarised as that of a white, middle class, full-time employed, educated and privileged heterosexual feminine-looking feminist with reference for critical approach to social reality informed by intersectionality, post-approaches and newly also new materialism. The research is de facto made of temporary encounters where this positionality can easily be overshadowed by a

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<sup>19</sup> According to Damaris, “[p]ositionality refers to the shaping of perspective by identifiers such as class, occupation, gender, “race”, sexual orientation etc. (or several of these in interaction with each other) as well as location in time and space – these can all affect the interviewer’s perspective and also that of the person being interviewed” [2001: 23].

different emphasis such as questioning of my research skills by those already holding an academic degree the assumed privilege may then prove rather relative. Similarly, given the performative nature of the interview situation, it will change with the perceived goal of the research – whether it is seen as a possibility to change the negative aspects of the situation or whether it is rather interpreted as a possible threat to the practices of those researched (e.g., when some believe I might criticise their feminist research).

What these comments and observations are trying to convey is the situation of the interview and its consequences for the research as such. The interviews are not just influenced by my “objective” positionality (in terms of the above-mentioned characteristics) but also by the perceived goals/possibilities/threats of the research (although I communicate how I perceive the goals in advance). I believe that although accounts of one's position are important, they should not be used as a way of getting past the multifaceted power relations and inequalities that will inadvertently manifest in the research process. Neither the self-critical statement of one's position nor the reflection on the possible influences in a given situation can rid the researcher of the responsibility towards those researched, partly also because the possibility to conduct the research is a privilege to begin with [Denzin 2001].

The attention paid to power relations in feminist research is justified. Despite the limitations of some of the requirements linked to “truly” feminist research (in some cases this may mean giving up research due to its hierarchical nature), I set to make the power imbalance related to the presentation of the research a bit more subtle by sending all the research participants a copy of the interpretations to be published. While this practice does not mean the levelling off the field, it can improve both the ethics of the research and its results. Since representation of the research has been one the key foci here, I now turn to the final ethical conundrum I faced, i.e. that of the use of language.

### *Linguistic implications*

Since the outcomes of the research at hand are presented through the medium of written academic English, the particular choices made merit attention as part of the

ethics of representation outlined above. The choice of the English language was made a) in order to boost the anonymity of those researched, b) to make the research accessible to non-Czech speakers, and c) because I find it easier to formulate some of the ideas in English. However, the choice of English brings with it the danger of what Karen Bennett calls epistemicide [Bennett 2007]. The use of academic English means that some of the possibilities of reasoning potentially available in a different language (Czech in our case) will be inadvertently erased. In addition, Bennett has drawn attention of translators to the fact that the English academic discourse is neopositivistic [Bennett 2009] and in tune with neoliberalism as it is practised within the academia [Bennett 2013].

The use of the English language is taken for granted – for instance, Kathy Charmaz in her otherwise informative study of how to write feminist research [Charmaz 2012] provides a range of possible approaches to how to write so that the research serves its purpose (often the advancement of those researched) but only for the English language and apparently without taking into account the implicit obstacle her requirements for attractive writing will pose to non-native speakers of English, who are often forced to accept English as the norm.<sup>20</sup>

To summarise, this chapter outlined the feminist ethics of research, based not only on principles but also an acknowledgment of responsibility stemming from relations that form an inseparable part of most of qualitative sociological research. The responsibility is underscored by the fact that the researcher is a member of the researched scene and because we hardly live in a place and time not in need of a feminist critique. Thus, the possibility of inflicting harm to the scene poses a double-risk to the researcher.

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<sup>20</sup> This is indeed a problem unaddressed by most English academic journals. When a non-native speaker tends to use certain turns of phrase it is likely the effect of his/her language education rather than an attempt at plagiarism.

### 1.3.2. Sampling

So how was the sample put together? Although validity and reliability are contested approaches to the evaluation of qualitative research [Flick 2006], I believe that making the research process as open to critique as possible is one of the principles to be followed. This is all the more important here as due to the anonymisation process, a lot of information on the interviews cannot be revealed (e.g., full transcripts, biographical/demographic details of the research participants). Since the research design combines data of different origin (from literature, websites, zines and interviews), we will start by an overview of the steps undertaken to gather textual material and then proceed to the way used for the selection of research participants.

Flick maintains that sampling techniques “are located at two poles-on more or less abstract or concrete criteria” [Flick 2006: 123] and also the fact that in qualitative research, sampling is not a one-time accomplishment but rather occurs repeatedly at different stages of the research. This has proved true in both major instances of sampling, i.e. when choosing the texts for analysis and when selecting the would-be research participants.

The first instance, detailed below, was especially affected by the decision to follow a more inclusionary feminist approach to the research design, i.e. not to sever contact with the research participants and send them the interpretation and representation of the research. When an article was to be published based on the research in *Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research*<sup>21</sup>, and it went through the review process, some of those active (also) in the academia, commented on its conclusions. These comments proved enriching as they pointed me in the direction of gathering more texts for analysis and following up with the research participants in a dialogical way.

#### *Choosing textual material for analysis*

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<sup>21</sup> NYKLOVÁ, Blanka. 2013. Krajinou současného českého feminismu. *Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum*, 14 (1): 52-63.

The choice of texts for the analysis was primarily influenced by the central research question, i.e. the orientation on feminist theories used. This immediately led to the necessity to make a choice between sampling that would cover a field as wide as possible or one that would enable an analysis as deep as possible [Flick 2006: 131]. Since the definition of the central research question suggests its focus on the scene in its breadth, we decided to try “to represent the field in its diversity” [Flick 2006: 131] (as opposed to focusing, e.g., on a single segment that would be analysed in greater depth). This means that in terms of the scope of literature reviewed, reductions had to be done in terms of how fine-grained the analysis can be given its scope.

The main criteria for selecting material to be read were as follows. With respect to the time of publication, texts written after the year 2000 were preferred for there are analyses of texts from the preceding period (for an overview of these, see Kodíčková 2002). In general, texts published after 2012 are not involved in the analysis although there are some exceptions when the texts published later are seen as especially important (especially Uhde 2014). As far as the purpose of the texts is concerned, the following were included: texts produced as output of academic endeavours including selected theses (special attention is paid to the Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research journal), texts setting mission statements (e.g., the “About us” section of websites) of NGOs, texts appearing in FEMA and Kvér (the queer zine).

Since it is obvious from this outline that the number of texts that could be included can easily surpass the analytical capacities of a single researcher, further downsizing of the sample was due. Therefore, most attention was paid to including at least some texts from all the academic centres focusing on gender/feminism and the long standing feminist organisations/groups (see section 2.1.3 *Forms of activism*). In the texts and websites, attention was then mainly paid to theoretical introductions or mission statements, which need to include some form of stance on feminism, possibly theoretically informed.

The choice of texts is firstly, mostly influenced by my own interest in gender and feminism, mostly in connection with my lecturing role<sup>22</sup> but also in relation to my previous studies in gender. Secondly, to widen the scope of the analysis, I consult my supervisor and also incorporate texts I was pointed to by research participants.<sup>23</sup> Since I mostly navigate media studies, sociology and linguistics, I also deliberately focus on other disciplines – especially philosophy, literary criticism and history – to widen the scope and also in order to see whether preliminary conclusions drawn on the basis of the other texts also applied elsewhere.

As can be seen already from the design of the research, I pay most attention to the texts produced by the scene on the scene for they seem to best reflect the thinking about the scene as a web of practices, something that can get easily lost if the focus is on the particular issue of an academic article or mission statement of an NGO.

#### *Choosing research participants for interviews*

Although the goal of writing a thesis is to create the impression of linearity and logical consequence, in this section I breach this logic by referring to the actual problems and choice in the process of selecting research participants for interviews. The choice of those to be interviewed was also not a one-time process. A combination of factors and approaches informed the selection. As mentioned above, the focus of the study is on presenting the diversity of the field, i.e. rather on width than depth [Flick 2006: 131]. In the case of selecting those to be interviewed and take part in the research afterwards, some reductions had to be made, too. Flick [2006: 131] summarises J. Morse's criteria for whom makes a good informant:

It has to be someone with the *necessary knowledge and experience*. This was guaranteed by limiting the search to those actively engaged in feminist activities for at least three past years with some tangible results (such as articles or books printed, projects implemented, teaching done). The decision on who has the “necessary”

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<sup>22</sup>I have taught courses on gender for the Council on International Educational Exchange for over five years.

<sup>23</sup> I would like to thank all the research participants who put forward their insights especially in relation to the article in Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research as it substantially improved the quality of the thesis.

knowledge was also extended to those interviewed in the first wave of interviews as all the research participants were asked for tips as to who would definitely be included in the research. While the recommendations were not always followed, they were always considered and in several instances led to the inclusion of people completely unknown to the researcher. In such cases, it was decisive whether more than just one person from a given locality named the same person as influential/important for the research at hand.

It should be someone who is capable to *reflect and articulate*. In order to meet this requirement, the guide presented in Appendix II had to be at times used loosely as not all participants were willing to reflect on all topics. This is caused by the fact that the central research question explicitly focuses on theory, something that not all the research participants reflexively do on a daily basis. In some instances, the reluctance to speak about theories was directly linked to self-identification in opposition to the academia and its hierarchical set up (and perceived approach to others involved in feminism). Notwithstanding, those who did not want to comment on some of the topics proved to bring new perspectives on other issues and also clearly showed reflection regarding their activities.

It should be someone who has *time* to be asked. This point was facilitated by the research grant, which allowed me to travel around the CR to meet with the research participants and thereby lowered the time input on their side. It did not, however, eliminate it altogether and every research participant-to-be was offered as many time possibilities as possible. As a result, only one participant-to-be did not take part in the research for time constraints.

Finally, it should be someone who is *ready to participate* in the study. This point is formally recorded as the agreement to become part of the research but it also informed the study in another way. One person approached via email communication with a request for interview declined it providing a lengthy critique of the methodology, rationale, design, and purpose of the whole research, even questioning my supervisor's input. She also made it clear that she had already said all that was needed on the topic and especially criticised the fact the interviews would be anonymized. The person comes from an academic institution and did not,

unsurprisingly, become a research participant. The case is elaborated on here in order to demonstrate that the power imbalance in the research process is indeed rather complex and hardly ever simply top (the researcher) down (the researched). As mentioned above, 30 people were approached with a request for an interview, one of whom declined for time reasons and another for what might be called professional ones. The third person, who was approached but did not participate, never replied to any of the attempts at contact (via Facebook and email).

All the participants are primary selection [Morse in Flick 2006: 131]. This procedure was furthermore coupled by purposive sampling, i.e. the gradual selection of participants serving a defined purpose in the study. The field was entered via people at least to some extent known to the researcher. Here, the researcher used her own network of acquaintances and friends, out of whom some might be described as gatekeepers, i.e. people with a wide network of people forming some parts of the scene. Besides the pool of people immediately known to the researcher, people identified in the preliminary literature review were also approached. Both these groups then named new people they believed to be influential.

This procedure proved especially fruitful in areas not directly available to me, namely at sites other than Prague and also the current group of people active in queer/feminist activism. Especially the latter group would have been otherwise difficult to approach as it tends to be rather exclusionary and suspicious of hierarchies, such as those implicit in the research situation. It also allowed for including “lone wolves” – people with a long term investment in feminism who prefer to stay outside any type of organisation. Moreover, it helped to broaden the scope of works included in the textual analysis as some of those named as influential by the research participants could not be included in the sample for time constraints.

As described in the reasoning for the sampling choices in the part on texts above, the entry into the field is not understood as an entry from some objective position. This is indeed impossible due to my status and ethical responsibilities. Therefore, it was attempted to account for this implicit direction by asking the research participants for their own tips giving reasons. Especially if somebody was mentioned more than once by people with mostly different institutional backgrounds, such people would be sought out and included in the sample. The sample also included people described by those

already interviewed as “weird” or “problematic”, again in order to secure a sample as diverse as possible.

The method certainly has its drawbacks as it is inadvertently selective. I only realised rather late in the interview gathering process that none of the people teaching in the academia named any of their students when the only teacher to do so actually named about fifteen of them. This could be interpreted as a fundamental failure to follow one's students' work and engagement as, e.g., some of the students are performers with some following again often recruited from fellow students of gender programmes. At some of the events hosted by the former Genderfuck collective, these performances form the core of the programme (e.g. rapper ensemble Fakné) although the group has since fallen victim to infighting. I finally decided to leave gender studies students for a future study and include just a few students and alumni of such programs contacted via the methods described. Similarly, with one exception, the sample does not include artists focusing on gender or politicians concerned with gender issues. One of the reasons for this is the fact that their self-identification with feminism is suspected to be rather low, also based on a survey the researcher took part in as an interviewer for Fórum 50% in 2007. Who, then, was included?

It is tempting and has been repeatedly required by various reviewers and research participants to segment the scene just as was done above (as if artists and students formed clearly defined categories), i.e. into more or less clear cut categories based on institutional background and main activities performed by the respective research participant. Although this approach is intuitive I believe that it poses several problems. Firstly, it means using a priori categories, which makes their validation difficult as it is too easy to simply confirm them. Secondly, it produces a distilled image of the scene in that it assigns its members clear-cut roles or rather identities that are supposedly stable over time and place. And thirdly, it can de facto contain the impact of the category by making it as if self-evident. This is why, in the analysis, I only refer to institutional background only where the background has proven salient but also where there are similarities across the assumed segments. I do not call for the abolishment of the use of similar categories as is clear from the preceding paragraph but rather for caution, just like in the case of the use of concepts such as waves and generations and geographical location as shortcuts to analysis.

With these precautions in mind, we can say that the sample includes people focusing on the theory of art, queer theory, media studies, sociology (of gender, family, education, labour market), political science, linguistics, literary theory, globalisation, and critical history and philosophy. People more involved in non-governmental organisations and grassroots focused on the intersection of gender and class, political art, queer activism, politics, the body, language, media, negative effects of globalisation, violence and job opportunities as well a combination of these areas with other forms of oppression (e.g. of animals). We believe that this list alone clearly shows the impossibility of clear-cut categories reducing the scene to two or three segment (e.g., activism and academism). This is so also because many of the research participants are active in more than just one area and to tell the difference between their activities can prove quite tricky.

Consider for instance the case of people working for an NGO.<sup>24</sup> In some accounts, these are believed to be distinct from activists refusing this type of organising for its dependence on external funding [Ghodsee 2004, Kapusta-Pofahl, Hašková and Kolářová 2005]. However, when talking to NGO employees it soon becomes clear that they work many more hours than they are paid for and do so for their belief in the cause (this is certainly not always the case though). How is this activity, working extra hours for free, supposed to be regarded? What sets it apart from activism done on a voluntary basis and for free?

This finally also applies to the problem of geopolitics, i.e. that of defining who can be seen as constituting the *Czech* feminist scene. Does this automatically exclude people not born in the Czech Republic/Czechoslovakia? How about people who spent a large portion of their lives abroad only to come back to the CR later on and possibly moving between the CR and another place/s? The sample includes people born and based in the CR for most of their lives, people regularly moving between the CR and a foreign country as well as people born outside the CR who have been engaged in Czech feminism for at least three years and lived in the CR at the time of the research.

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<sup>24</sup> I would like to thank Dagmar Lorenz Meyer for bringing this point to my attention.

## *Coding*

The coding procedure – concerning the interview transcript and textual material - combines both inductive and deductive approaches to coding. The inductive one is mostly based on the coding procedure used in grounded theory [Lewins and Silver 2007: 84-85]. The texts were first read for their main topics and then read again and in more detail in order to consider possible links between the preliminary and rather descriptive codes. The second reading made it possible to draw some parallels between the texts. Especially in the more interpretative phase of coding, deductive elements also informed the coding process. This means the theories that frame the whole analysis and especially those on transculturation and travelling feminist thought entered this stage of coding.

When it comes to the interview transcripts, they were coded in a similar but finer way. First, before reading and considering the detailed transcripts, the notebooks detailing the interviews were read repeatedly to allow for a preliminary map of topics to form. I used the notebooks during the interviews to take down all the important points because of my previous negative experience with technology and also because it allows for writing down statements with special emphasis as well as quotes that stood out already during the interview. I also used the notebooks to take down basic information on the respective interview (place, date, duration, remarks).

After this preliminary phase, I closely read and again coded the transcripts using a mixed approach. Since the study at hand started out based on my interest in the scene and readings about it, I can hardly speak of a purely inductive approach, which seems to be preferred in qualitative research [Flick 2006]. Nevertheless, I strived to make the first rounds of coding as closely based in the data as possible and only then arrive at finer levels of codes. Key themes were then retrieved and used as a basis for the interpretation presented in the analytical part of the dissertation.

### *1.3.3. Semi-structured interview using a guide*

The focus of the dissertation is on the scene's relation to feminist theories and implications of this relation for the scene's self-conception. While textual analysis appears to be a self-evident thing to do in order to answer the central research question, we decided to supplement it with interviews with those co-constructing the scene. Besides the fact that this approach proved rather fruitful with the analysis of the interviews forming the core of this dissertation, this approach was chosen for its alternative approach to knowledge making. Written texts allow for careful wording as well as the selection of theories best fitting the task at hand whereas face to face encounters give the opportunity to create meaning in a localised, performative way [Denzin 2001:25].

I do not believe interviews reveal the “actual” theoretical stances of those interviewed although this might be argued as well (the theories most deeply informing the practices of the research participants are those they are most likely to recall when asked about them and more importantly when forming their stances on issues). Rather, I consider the interview an opportunity, an invitation to explore the discourses driven upon when discussing the topics of the interview. Semi-structured interview is one of the staples of feminist approaches to social research (for an overview, see DeVault and Gross 2012). After the entry of women's and later gender and feminist studies programmes to universities of the One-Third World to use Mohanty's term [1984, 2002] it was mostly used in order to give voice to the experience of those neglected by contemporary mainstream androcentric science. Thus, various groups of (especially marginalised) women were those to be given voice through research interviews, mostly unstructured or semi-structured. This approach was soon criticised for it became clear there are power imbalances present in the process of the interview that needed to be addressed. The issues are usually identified as the power dynamics and legitimacy, reflexivity, listening and accountability [Oakley 1993, Ironstone-Catterall et al. 1998, DeVault and Gross 2012].

I believe the previously mentioned power imbalance needs not to be assessed as a pre-given, unchangeable problem inherent to all research situations (although some use this point to question the possibility and morality of research as such, e.g. Kirsch

quoted in Preissle and Han 2012). Rather, power dynamics changes with the interview but also before it actually takes place and long after it “is” over, namely in the form of who gets to write the research report.

In general, I attempted to give over some of the control over the interview to the participants. This was achieved by using the semi-structured form with a set of topics that allows keeping the interview focused but at the same time provides manoeuvring space to the participants as they can choose what they want to share. In addition, following Kasper, the initial topics - relation to the scene and its beginning – gave the research participants space “where they may take control of the interview by ... recalling and recounting the details important to them” [Kasper cited in Ironstone-Catterall et al. 1998: 33]. I have to self-critically admit that in some cases the beginnings were not all at ease and the participants were asked several times and clarifications (interference) had to be given in order to build at least some rapport.

DeVault and Gross [2012] emphasise the reflexive nature of feminist interview practice, which also means that the “strategic disclosure on the part of the interviewer” [2012: 215] is often expected to take place. While it seems just and fair to reveal information about oneself or one's position on the particular issue researched, this practice may cause some problems, such as influencing and directing the research participant where it would be better to simply listen (paying attention to listening is another key feature of the feminist interview practice). In the research at hand, I informed the research participants-to-be about the purpose of the research as well as the topics the interview would focus on. No information on my stance on the issues was given beforehand. However, before and after the recorded part of the interview, I revealed more information if sought by the research participant.

### *Preparation of the question guide*

The selection of the topics for the guide (see *Appendix I*) was based on the analysis of texts about the scene, by the scene as well as my general interest in current feminist issues. Some issues were not always raised. For instance, when interviewing a participant explicitly opposed to the idea of theories as something useful, questions regarding these were not pressed and instead activism was given

more space. This is justified as it respects the preferences of those interviewed without foregoing valuable insight on issues also related to the scene at hand.

I now turn to the individual topics as they appear in the guide. As mentioned above, the first topic invites the research participant to share how his/her engagement with feminism started and what the current relation is. Once the account reaches the present, I ask about how the participant regards the possibility of not being interested in the topics anymore sometime in the future. The role of this topic is twofold – to let the research participant take control of the situation and also to give a different account of the relation to the issues at stake (in a future perspective).

The next topic concerns self-identification with feminism, i.e. whether or not or under what circumstances the research participant identified with feminism. Again, there are two main reasons for including this topic: firstly, it is based on the literature review and the attention paid to the “I am a feminist, but...” controversy in both global [e.g., Sutter and Toller 2006] and local literature [Vodrážka 2003, 2006]. Secondly, it aims at opening a field for defining what feminism means to the respective research participant that would also enable a smooth shift from the previous topic.

Two more topics also relate to the biography of the research participant and thus the next topic, if not already opened and discussed in the framework of the opening one, focuses on personal influences, such as groups, books, events, and movies on the formation of relation to feminism and also on change in time. This topic is, besides its relation to the opening one, based on the literature review. Especially texts written by local authors that target the scene and try to depict it (see, e.g., Noe, Chuchma, Klimentová 1999, Havelková 2009) often attribute the perceived fragmented feminist activities to the highly individualised ways through which those active have become familiar with and interested in feminism. When discussing one of these topics or alternatively at the end of the whole interview, I ask about how the respective research participant perceived their future relation to feminism, namely to consider the possibility of losing interest in feminist activities and thought. This subquestion is informed by statements appearing in the media, in personal conversations with professional and also at an art exhibition of Ivana Lomová.

In a leaflet promoting her 2010 exhibition called *Sisterhood*, Ivana Lomová reflects on how the portraits of her friends emerged: she first painted them about ten years ago

(“In 1998... I was going through a feminist period”) and now returned to the topic to see the shift. Of the later period she says: “The feminist period is long over for me” although she then claims there is still a strong feeling of allegiance with the friends she paints. This perception could be seen as a result of the disassociation of feminism as a set of ideas and as a way of living. Lomová seems to relegate feminism to the area of abstract thought, which can be embraced and then abandoned, something hardly conceivable of if feminism gets defined also as a way of living that effects the ongoing becoming of one’s subjectivity.

The following topic is also closely related to the preceding ones as it directly asks about preferred and influential feminist theories as well as for any perceived change with time regarding the preferred approach. This question directly follows from the central research question (What is the current Czech feminist scene’s relation to feminist theories and what does the relation imply for its self-conception?). Although I do not believe an interview as a performance can reveal the “actual” truth, otherwise (e.g. in texts written by those interviewed) hidden from sight, I assume that the central and lived or at least preferred (even if not embraced in scholarly or activist work) theories might be brought forward with respect to this topic. At the same, this topic enables us to see what a diverse variety of topics is seen as theory and vice versa, how many approaches that could be deemed theoretical are defined differently.

The next topic focuses on the geopolitical situation of the research participants and follows from the critique of (lack of) reflection of the local and global situatedness of feminist thinking – it asks about the perceived influence of the postcommunist situation on it. A related set of issues concerns the relevancy of terms and theories imported from elsewhere as well as the stances of the research participants on the global power relations and their position in them.

The remaining topics targeted how the respective research participant viewed the shape of the scene under discussion, including how they constructed their place within it. Thus, the next two topics focus on possible lines of contention with the first one asking about issues derived from the literature review, and the second on the issue of whether there is a movement or not. A related topic is also that asking about the relevance of waves as an analytical tool for the local activities. Finally, a question

regarding cooperation with other movements was also raised. This was mostly informed by both criticisms in literature [Sokolová 2004] but also informal encounters with LGBT activists who claimed there was no cooperation with feminism at all.

It follows both from the (interrelated) topics of the interview guide and the approach taken to the interview situation that the order of the topics may change in some instances such as when the research participants touch on an issue when addressing a different theme. In other instances, when, e.g., a participant opposes some of the topics and only agrees to take part in the research after voicing their disagreement/reluctance/opposition, the topics may be exchanged for issues that emerge in the interview situation.

#### *1.3.4. Analysis of the discursive landscape*

The previous sections describe the rationale behind the selection of the materials for analysis and some of its drawbacks. Although I have briefly mentioned coding, the exact basis thereof needs some clarification, i.e. I try to show here how the materials were analysed. Both the interviews and textual materials can be conceived of as manifestations of the discursive landscape of Czech feminism as it gets re/constructed in the texts and concrete interview situation. By discursive landscape I understand the temporally and spatially contingent interactions of different feminist (and other) discourses deployed/embodyed by the research participants. It consists of texts, practices and feeling, which form the scene. The discursive landscape is a phrase deployed to facilitate talking and thinking about the multiplicity of the discourses present without homogenising them into the idea of a single “Czech feminist discourse.”

By discourse, I understand the spatially and historically contingent interconnected web of statements and acting that forms the researched scene. The relational aspect then foregrounds the power-saturated character of all discourses as they compete with one another. At the same time, it brings us back to conceiving of subjectivities that co-form the scene as permanent becomings through the changing position within that web.

In his handbook for qualitative research, Uwe Flick states: “[m]ethodological suggestions for how to carry out discourse analysis remain rather imprecise and implicit in most of the literature” [2006: 326] and he concludes that most emphasis is usually put on theoretical claims and empirical findings with relatively little revealed about the process in between the two. I do not completely agree with this position although if we were to look for explicit guidance in the work of, e.g., Michel Foucault we would truly be left with very little. Specific ways of conducting the analysis of discourse have emerged and I here offer my own synthesis thereof.

Gillian Rose [2001] distinguishes between two main approaches to discourse analysis. The first one is mostly concerned with the close study of research material of various origin and form while the latter, often using the same body of data, focuses more on the institutional apparatuses within which meaning and regimes of truth are formed. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive and in most instances of actually conducted discourse analysis, elements of both will be found. This is also the case here.

Before gathering the research material, I needed to refine the focus of the study. For these purposes I conducted an analysis of historical developments of women’s organising and its current topics of interest and prevailing forms of activities the organisations as well as individuals and informal association engage in. This provides the needed backdrop for the finer analysis of the workings and effects of feminist discourses.

Once I gathered the research material, I started by closely reading all of it. In many instances, I only selected a specific part of a given text for further analysis, typically the introductory part explicitly addressing the theoretical anchoring of the text (I analysed the interviews in full). I then re-read the texts and interviews several times, noting down any regularities in the turns of phrase, discourses invoked and strategies deployed. This form of circularity seems to be one of the defining approaches of discourse analysis to its material but it also requires that the material should be read “with fresh eyes” [Rose 2001: 150].

Technically, in all types of accounts, I look for the manifestations of the power/knowledge tropes. These may take an explicit form, when, e.g. a research participant discusses how s/he perceives the positions within the scene and their

related power (also to generate knowledge). Alternatively, they are present implicitly when research participants enact the power/knowledge of their respective position, be it in the interviews, before or after them or in the texts analysed. One of the foci of this analysis is also the institutional background and work with it, again in all types of research material. Thus, it is possible to see open claims to truth supported by the institutional (e.g. academic) backing of the research participant. What resources will be used to invoke power in the sets of statements, among others to incite emotions, cannot be predicted beforehand as there are no positions within discourse deprived of power altogether. The power/knowledge notion is useful for the analysis as it enables us to see how rifts within the scene that may prevent cooperation between its segments are constructed in the scene's members' accounts.

I especially focused on how particular issues (see the interview guide for details) and categories are produced, and how accountability/responsibility results from these accounts. Here, I also found the Foucauldian term of normalcy [1978] useful. It describes how a certain practice (or type of person) is labelled as the norm against which other similar practices are measured. The norm is constructed in interactions and it is most salient here because it allows for the marking of some practices as deviant (from the norm). Another key thing to focus on was what was absent from the discourses, especially what parts of the scene seemed invisible in accounts given by those located elsewhere.

A closely related element I look for in the readings and rereadings of the research materials is that of making claims to truth. Truth claiming drives on elements of discourse that may provide justification for the assertions of the research participants. One of the most widely criticised method of claiming truth about gender is pointing out its "natural" essence – claims to naturalness and self-evidence are examples of explicit truth claims [Rose 2001]. In terms of feminist discourses, I have already mentioned the trope of claiming authenticity as key to the justification of claims to truth of the respective feminist discourse. Here, we can see the interplay of the interaction of different feminist discourses with one another and the larger discourses operating in society, which may challenge the truthfulness of feminist claims on the basis of the perceived lack of authenticity of the feminist discourse itself in the given geopolitical location [Loufti 2007]. Looking into these makes it possible to identify the

discourses seen as strong enough to back such claims also because of their status within the scene (the more dominant the given discourse, the more likely it is that claims to truth made with reference to it will be accepted or even better seen as inevitable “facts”).

Both power/knowledge and claims to truth are then related to how meaning is made within the respective discourses forming the researched scene. Meaning making may often come in the form of smaller, relatively coherent discourses, often used rather implicitly as points of reference (critical discursive psychology uses the term interpretative repertoire to label these – see Edley 2001). In written and especially academic discourse, these may operate as paradigms while in interviews they are often deployed for backing claims to truth and as explanatory frameworks for the performance of the interview.

Given the critical inspiration for the research stemming from critiques of lack of reflection of the local geopolitical situation, I also look for how this location is reflected and constructed in the materials. Similarly, since the lack of cooperation (and even of reading one another’s texts) is an issue repeatedly criticised in literature on the scene, I also look for instances of intertextuality, i.e. the interdependence of meanings invoked by the respective discourses constituting the scene.

The goal of looking into these issues is twofold. I want to show how past critiques apply to the present shape of the scene. A related goal is then the description of the topics and their influence on the scene and its ability to take concerted action.

Besides the aspects mentioned above, I also focused on the way the discourses were occasioned, i.e. located “in specific social circumstances” [Rose 2001: 158] with special attention paid to the institutional location of the particular discourse and its intended audience. All these aspects allowed us to identify key themes, which then form the basis of the interpretation of the current approaches to theories on the Czech feminist scene and their repercussions.

### 1.3.5. Summary

The goal of part *1.3 Methodology* is to provide details on the research design with emphasis on the most pertinent issues. These are first and foremost research ethics and its linguistic implications informed by feminist approaches to social research and their stress on reflexivity and self-conscious criticism. Besides providing answers to ethical issues relating to all social research, we also offered some insights from feminist research ethics that mostly focus on the relations implicit to any research and feminist ethics of care and representation.

In line with feminist research, the researcher also dwells on her position in relation to both the research as such and the particular scene she researches. Arguably, this is somewhat at odds with typical discourse analysis for it de facto assumes one enters the field as an autonomous subject with agency (see Rose 2001: 160) but we have decided to preserve the section in order to illuminate some of the institutional positioning of the researcher, which is consequential for, e.g., conducting the interviews.

The next section – *1.3.2 Sampling* – then briefly outlines the methods combined in order to gather the materials to be analysed. I focus separately on how textual materials were chosen and on how and why research participants were selected and approached. This section also briefly outlines the coding process.

The section *1.3.3 Semi-structured interview using a guide* reveals why the method of semi-structured interview was selected. It also provides detailed information on why the respective issues were included in the guide.

The final section *1.3.4 Analysis of the discursive landscape* mostly details how the analysis of the gathered material is conducted and what are the concrete applications of the theoretical framework on the material.

## **2. ANALYTICAL PART**

Similarly to the performative nature of the interviews, the thesis as such is also performative in that it strives to create an impression of a logically structured, linear whole. That this is a performance of sorts becomes evident if we consider that many of the texts to be analysed in the analytical part of the thesis inform the focus of the thesis as such. This is especially the case with texts assessing individual segments of the scene or the scene as such.

The first part of the analysis is related to the afore-mentioned goal of describing the topics and their influence on the scene and its ability to take concerted action. I therefore start by outlining what and who consists the Czech feminist scene in my analysis of the material forming the background of the analysis of the textual and oral material produced by thus defined scene.

I then analyse the material produced by members of the scene mostly focusing on texts that directly concern the scene as such. The other sections in part 2.2 *Analysis of the scene's textual production* are intended as elaboration on some of the aspects identified in the first section 2.2.2 *Literature on the scene*.

The following part – 2.3 *Semi-structured interviews using a guide – analysis* – presents the core of the dissertation for it offers an analysis of key themes stemming from the conducted interviews. I especially focus on topics resonating with those derived from the textual analysis.

The final part of the dissertation then explicitly relates the different segments of the analysis and distils the topics and discourses and their elements identified as most salient both in the interviews and the analysis of other materials. Besides an attempted answer to the central research question, this part also includes questions for future research and some methodological considerations.

## **2.1. Czech feminist scene**

The objective of this part is deceitfully simple: to provide essential information on the make-up of the scene under study. However, just like the authors of the introduction to *Mnohohlasem* [Hašková, Křížková, Linková 2006b], I have met with difficulty when trying to actually define the “what” of the study. The problem stems mainly from the fact that the scene is not an inert object “out there” that would just require us to choose the right tools to uncover it. I try to focus on the historical aspects of feminist activities, what they currently focus on in terms of topics, and whether those forming the scene through their activities form a coherent whole, such as movement. Thus, I opt for covering three topics that seem most salient in terms of assisting us with the definition problems. These are the history of the pro-women and feminist activities in the given region, the topics that individuals and groups cover and the importance of the allegiance they claim, and finally the forms of activism they engage in. I finish with a brief summary of what and who makes up the scene at least for the sake of this study.

### *2.1.1. History of pro-women/feminist activities*

In this section, I present a metaanalysis of how history of the local women’s/feminist movement has been written about. I proceed in a chronological manner but at the same time draw attention to the issues not analysed in great detail by the respective scholarship. The focus is on why such silences happen.

It might seem from the focus of this section that I de facto engage in what I previously criticised as reductionism, namely the use of generations and waves as the ultimate explanatory framework for the present shape of the scene. However, I offer a brief overview of how the history of the women’s movement and feminist activities has been approached by different authors paying special attention to instances of critical

reading of history. This means that instead of summarising the research conducted, I focus on what has been emphasised both in terms of the periods preferred for research and methodological approach. I overview the developments in the area of feminist and “pro-women” [Hašková, Křížková, Linková 2006b] activities after 1989 in the two following sections.

Starting the description of the local feminist scene with an outline of its traceable history appears logical indeed and is typically done in many students’ theses on feminist topics [e.g., Boehmová 1999] as well as in much scholarship [e.g., Osvaldová 2004]. However, when setting on our trip through the history of the “women’s/feminist movement” in what is today the Czech Republic, we immediately encounter a host of problems.

Firstly, the seemingly clear-cut geographical location is highly problematic given the fact that the borders of what has been the Czech Republic since 1993 have been shifting especially throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, this approach rests on the idea of the nation state, which is hardly applicable to the early but crucial organising of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (for there was no nation state where the CR is now at the time and even opinion on its desirability differed), which resulted in allowing women into education and later in winning suffrage for them. Secondly, the idea of a one-state/one-nation venture is also obviously flawed and impossible to apply successfully to de facto any point of “Czech” history. This is especially true if we are to trace the early beginnings of this type of organising as many initiatives of Czech origin have a clear model in similar or even identical to initiatives of local German women’s groups [Horská 1999].

Generally speaking, the body of literature on the history of the women’s movement and feminist organising falls into two major groups. The much larger group of texts aims at filling in the gaps within accounts of historical developments (women’s history). The other, smaller and more critical<sup>25</sup> then assesses the epistemological

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<sup>25</sup> The lack of a critical edge in much of the first body of texts is manifested, e.g. in how its content gets easily translated into nostalgic accounts of biographies of the activists and gender order more broadly. This could be seen, e.g. in the TV series *Domáci štěstí* produced and broadcast by Czech TV. In these readings, that often target the public as large, the critical edge of much of the past thinking on gender relations and activism is only used anecdotically not to disturb the nostalgic fascination.

foundations of past initiatives, their often contradictory effects and what the focus on these may bring for today's relation to history. While the first approach is largely descriptive, the latter one is highly saturated with theory.

The studies concerned with the first modern local attempts at defining rights for women and the related condition of the "woman question" mostly concern the well-documented period starting in the second third of the 19<sup>th</sup> and lasting throughout first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (both the start and the end of this period differ with individual authors; also, different authors divide the relatively long period differently: often the individual achievements, such as the possibility to enrol in university, be elected and obtain suffrage, or changes in the political environment, such as those prior to the Second World War, are used as milestones) [for an overview, see Malečková 2004]. Their focus is often on those that are today identified as having had a great impact on the formation of various groups promoting the rights of women (with different emphasis and views on many issues). The activities of these groups, together with other historical developments, led, e.g., to the opening of the first high school for girls with the possibility to pass a graduation exam granting the possibility to obtain university education in Prague in 1890 [Damová 2010]. The focus on education was then extended by the fight for truly general suffrage. The importance of men involved in pro-women activities in what was to become Czechoslovakia in 1918 as well as the importance of female writers for the re-creation of the nation under which most of the activities were permitted to women, are also very often the focus of research on the given period, usually pointing out names such as Vojta Náprstek [Šolle 1994<sup>26</sup>] and Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk [Kalnická 2010; Wagnerová 1995 names them both].

Indeed, extensive scholarship has been formed around the individual figures, associations and groups, and also the social conditions and their symbolic and legal framework. It is possible to study gender history under the Institute of Historical Sciences at the University of Pardubice and courses with focus on gender and its possible role in historiography are available at almost all Czech universities offering

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<sup>26</sup> But see Secká, Štěpánová and Sochorová 2001 for a very different emphasis put not on Vojta Náprstek measurable achievements but the conditions, from which these stemmed: the authors detail the influence of three women of the family on the formation, education and achievements of both the Náprstek brothers. This makes their an example of gender sensitive historical scholarship.

history programmes. There are therefore both various theses on gender-relevant topics [Pešáková 2006, Hymlar 2013<sup>27</sup>] and historical (sometimes archival) research [e.g., Lenderová 1999, 2008, 2013, Secká, Štěpánová and Sochorová 2001, Bahenská 2005, Malínská 2005, Čadková, Lenderová and Stráníková 2006]. What is then the rationale behind these works?

The historical research works cited above are concerned with both the social position of “women” during the respective period and the contemporary “women’s movement” responding to that position (or rather positions given, e.g., the class and language divisions). Especially the use of the first term – women – which would be critically scrutinised by feminist research conducted on present society for its assumed essentialist core, is often justified by both referring to the contemporary use of the term [e.g., Oates-Indruchová 2012: 360] and by the need to fill in the gaps in historical research that has traditionally ignored the role of those not seen as history-making. We must add here that in some cases the use of the terms “woman” and “women” is not explicitly reflected upon at all (i.e., it is either believed to have been solved in previous research on women’s history or it is not seen as relevant; the problem is the readers are simply left guessing as to which one – if either - is the case; see e.g., Horská 1999). This approach can be identified with that prevailing in the original theoretical efforts striving to map the history of women that was presumably different from the mainstream, mostly political historiography. The approach would be termed women’s history and would be mostly concerned with “filling the gaps” and “making women visible.” Although the project itself has some critical potential in that it points out the partiality of “historical knowledge” and could even point out the power/knowledge operating to forge such an account of history, this is rarely the focus of such studies - for a detailed critique of this approach see Ratajová 2005, Tinková 2006, and Nečasová 2008, who are all invested in gender rather than women’s history.

At present, we can see an attempt at giving historical voice to those typically left out in the international project “Women’s Memory” initiated and coordinated by Gender

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<sup>27</sup> Although this is not a thesis, this academic article is based on the author’s PhD research into early local anarchism.

Studies, o.p.s. in the Czech Republic. Besides its goal to present a “different” history for it starts from a different (than the “masculine normative”) standpoint, it is also interesting because in this particular case, the project was started “as a reaction to Western European and American feminist theories that could not have been applied within the lived reality of women in post-socialist countries” [Gender Studies 2003]. Thus, we encounter here a slightly paradoxical situation when an approach (feminist oral history and narrative interview) developed under what is perceived as a foreign paradigm is applied to challenge that very explanatory framework. Similarly, on an international level, an anthology of women’s movements and feminisms in Central and Eastern Europe of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century (including only deceased authors and thinkers) was published aiming at disproving the often held belief that this type of thought was only imported into the region [de Haan, Daskalova and Loutfi 2006].

This particular study aimed at attaining two goals – firstly, to point out the authenticity of feminist endeavours in the countries of “Central and Eastern Europe.” Such an authenticity is then to work as justification for the present day feminist goals pursued in the given region. Secondly, the study targeted “foreign” scholarship homogenised as that denying authenticity of other than “Western” origins of feminist thought. What we can see here is resistance to the normative mainstream account of the history of feminist thinking such as the one suggested by Clare Hemmings [2005]. Interestingly, similar volumes hardly ever include a critical conclusion synthesizing the points of contention.

There is another approach to historiography, namely that of gender history, which tries to circumvent the bias perceived in the original women’s history.<sup>28</sup> It is largely informed by postmodern approaches to science and is often associated with historian Joan Scott and her seminal article *Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis* originally published in 1986. The difference between women’s history and gender history is by no means clear cut as gender history also often investigates how the

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<sup>28</sup> The bias concerns not only the category of “woman” with related issues such as ignorance of any variation within the category, presumed universal vaguely defined patriarchy, predominance of gender-based oppression across space and time, and no attention paid to the influence of other characteristics, such as class and ethnicity (for a related critique of original liberal feminism see section 1.1.3 *Geopolitics – feminist perspectives* above).

internally differentiated category of women was shaped at different points in time and space. However, the aim of gender history is to use the lens of gender to question not just the focus on the unproblematized category “woman” but also the mainstream discipline and its focus as such. As Denisa Nečasová states, it is much easier to find examples of women’s history (such as most of the works cited above) than gender history in Czech historiography although she claims that even women’s history is not widely accepted and embraced in Czech historiography [Nečasová 2008: 18-22].

As mentioned above, the division between the two approaches is far from straightforward.<sup>29</sup> This means that many of the books that primarily aim at “filling in the gaps” also at least implicitly challenge the mainstream so far ignoring or even denying the very existence of such gaps. This is true of books such as the one depicting the importance of the women of Vojta Náprstek’s family [Secká, Štěpánová and Sochorová 2001; a review stressing the potential of the book was penned by Kalivodová 2004]. The pointing out of the living of history from a socially ascribed position other than the “normative” one can be read as subversive. The crucial difference between the two approaches is nevertheless the amount of analysis and interpretation the readers are left with. While it is crucial to know the broader historiographical context in order to perceive the “filling of gaps” as critical, gender history makes its theoretical starting points explicit in order to better control the grounds on which it then makes its claims to the truth about history. Arguably, this move towards unsettling the very foundations of the original discipline can only take place once at least some of the “gaps have been filled.”

In the Czech context, this work is done in terms of reflecting on the history of elements of thought on the social condition at different periods, such as in the case of publications by authors often publishing together: Marie Bahenská, Libuše Heczková, Petra Hanáková, Eva Kalivodová and Dana Musilová.<sup>30</sup> Their work is specific for its interdisciplinarity, shedding light on issues such as maternity and its role in

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<sup>29</sup> This is understandably not just a local specificity: for instance, the *Journal of Women’s History* does not exclusively publish on “women” and “their” history as might be suggested by the title.

<sup>30</sup> Some of them cooperate under the Gender Studies Centre of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague.

modernism and the movement, which was by no means perceived unanimously by different members of the movement [Hanáková, Heczková and Kalivodová 2006]. It would be too far-fetched to claim that the taken-for-granted nature of the category “woman” is absent from their writing, in fact some other terms stay underdefined. For instance, in the introduction to an anthology of “Czech feminist thought” of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century [Bahenská, Heczková and Musilová 2010], the authors use the term “feminist” without any further specification or clarification despite the fact that most of the thinkers they cite did not use the label feminist for self-identification. This is a grave problem to those that see agency and self-determination as core feminist values and refuse the possibility to ascribe the label feminist to those defying it or outside the discursive setting that would make it intelligible (such as that preceding the first formulations of the term feminist). Nevertheless, the book itself is precious for it makes it possible to relate present-day feminist thought to previous local preoccupations also by showing the divergence within that body of thought that is more than reminiscent of the present status quo, which is also marked by heterogeneous theoretical discourses.

This brief overview shows the various takes on the first phase of activities aimed at improving the social standing of “women.” Within this scholarship, different approaches have taken shape and interdisciplinarity seems to be one of the solutions to the conundrum of women’s versus gender history. Whichever theoretical way framed, this research demonstrates the need to pay close attention to historical and ideological origins of gender-relevant policies and discourses. The findings of the research introduced above can be summarised as follows. The historically first activities in support of granting civil rights to at least some groups (middle class “respectable”) of women were framed within the discourse of modernity and the related national revival. It might be tempting, especially given the relatively extensive scholarship currently available on individual figures, associations, groups and media, to solely focus on their achievements (and failures) in terms of the civil and later also political rights won for “women.” However, such an approach would be reductionist and would inevitably flatten the rich landscape of ideas often found outrageous and rude by the thinkers’ contemporaries [see e.g. Bahenská, Heczková, and Musilová]. Moreover, it would likely reproduce the overwhelming focus on middle and upper-

class women's associations to the neglect of working class women's groups [for a critique of this frequent omission see Juráňová 2006].

Indeed, the perspective solely or mostly focused on the "achievements" that are somehow measurable (e.g., the opening of universities, granting of equality under the first Czechoslovak Constitution) obfuscates the continued effort exerted by the various associations and groups, including those formed around the newly elected MPs. This is not to diminish the achievements, rather to emphasise the continuity and internal clashes of ideas as well as cooperation that seem to have prevailed until the early 1950s as some note the execution of Milada Horáková – "possibly the most distinctive figure in the history of the whole women's movement in the Czech Republic" [Dudová 2012: 41] – has shaken the remnants of the previously vibrant groups [Jechová in Dudová 2012].

The imposition of the new Communist Party government in 1948 and the following changes to the organisation of society (among other things, cancellation of the right to assembly) including the extreme politicisation of women's organising resulted in the silencing of the relatively formalised expression of political attempts at responding to society's treatment of women [Nečasová 2011, Dudová 2012]. It would be a mistake to believe that the end of most formalised organisations meant an end to the thinking about the issues of their concern. The various policies implemented and amended during the following forty years were at least moderately reflected on the pages of the magazine *Vlasta* [Havelková 2008] and were certainly the focus of those drafting the policies and thereby also the contemporary fast evolving discourse [Nečasová 2011].

However, for an extended period, it was not possible but to lament the scarcity of any analyses focusing on the period between 1948 and 1989 [of course with some exceptions, such as Heitlinger 1979] although it would be imprecise to claim that there was no reflection on the given period. In fact, almost every article on feminism in the 1990s opened with an account of the previous social order and its detrimental impact on the contemporary perception of feminism [e.g., Wagnerová 1995, Havelková 1993, Šiklová 1993, 1997]. Yet, while many of the articles were written by scholars, the outline of the relations under state socialism was often rather homogenising (i.e., the differences within the period itself and between different

social groups) and essayistic. Given the critique offered by Tereza Kodíčková, we can frame this trend as accounting for *the* difference, which would then serve as an excuse for the missing feminist activism. The logic of such endeavours thus fails to question the perceived requirement of existence of a feminist movement and instead accepts and corroborates it by producing an account of why this it is (temporarily) missing.

With focus on various issues seen as typically of feminist interest (such as political participation, the public/private divide, reproductive rights and regulations), scholarship finally started to develop and focus on the relatively great variation between different stages of state socialism [e.g., Hašková and Uhde 2009, Hašková, Saxonberg and Mudrák 2012, and most prominently Havelková and Oates-Indruchová 2014].

This type of focus is distinct for its reliance on two interrelated concepts. The first one, used for instance by the authors of the volume *Women and Social Citizenship in Czech Society: Continuity and Change* [Hašková and Uhde 2009], is that of path dependence and entails a minute search for historical origins of the present state of affairs [e.g., Page 2006]. In particular, the authors of the volume focus on the origin of the present day legislative framework pertaining to issues such single parenthood [Dudová 2009] and changes to childcare provisions [Hašková, Maříková and Uhde 2009]. The other approach is more concerned with ideology and discourse theory, and focuses on how different discourses emerged and became residual under state socialism and afterwards. Here, the cultural theorist who has conducted several detailed analyses of the gender-relevant discourses before 1989 is Libora Oates Indruchová [2000, 2002, 2004, and 2012] but we can find the focus on discourse and framing also, e.g., in the work of Radka Dudová [2012]. Most recently, the outcomes of a grand project - *Transformation of Gender Culture in Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989* (conducted between 2009 and 2011) - were published [Havelková and Oates-Indruchová 2014<sup>31</sup>].

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<sup>31</sup> Due to the year of publication, I cannot include an analysis of this volume widely expected by scholars from across the scene. Nevertheless, the volume suggests that the emphasis previously put on accounting for the perceived difference has been superseded by critically embracing history in its discursive and embodied dimension.

Besides the salience of the developments both in terms of actual activities and scholarship on these for the outline of the Czech feminist discursive landscape, the briefly sketched developments are also important for if we apply the concept of residual, emergent and resistant discourses<sup>32</sup> as outlined and used by Oates Indruchová [e.g., 2000, 2004]. This differentiation hopes to elucidate how resistant discourses take shape. Instead of regarding them as the by-products of the newly dominant discourse, the idea of a residual discourse draws attention to the fact that with the subversion or cancellation of the dominant discourse (in the case of former Czechoslovakia, the dominant discourse between 1918 and 1938 would be that of capitalist democracy), it does not cease to exist overnight but rather lingers on and can be easily transformed into the resistant discourse of groups opposing the new dominant discourse. Moreover, the residual discourse (here embraced especially by the dissent in the form of refusal of “bourgeois feminism” and embracing of – paradoxically – bourgeois patriarchy) can transform into the dominant one, even if this would be termed emergent, such as was the case after 1989. Oates-Indruchová uses this theoretical framework to analyse the reasons behind the smooth refusal of feminism in Czechoslovakia and Czech Republic after 1989 as it complies with the idea of abandoning the previous dominant discourse for embracing the re-appointed residual/emergent discourse [Oates-Indruchová 2000, 2004]. Thus, there is always the possibility of continuing the previous discourses and even if not accepted, the overview clearly disproves all the claims that feminist and emancipation discourses are of inherently foreign nature in the Czech Republic (see the *Introduction* and, e.g. Vodrážka 1999). In fact, it is possible to see at least some elements of the past discourses embraced by both general public (usually in the form of sentimental imagery) and present-day activists [Lorenz-Meyer 2013]. For instance, organisations have been “re-established” under the names of associations from the past. This is the case, e.g., of the Slovak Živena organisation but also of Brno-based VESNA, both reminiscent of and embracing the legacy of the original 19th century associations.

### 2.1.2. *Focus and topics*

The previous section established both the historical framework available for grounding the present day feminist activities and critical scrutiny of the way similar historical accounts are told. While the body of literature reflecting the state socialist period seems to only have started to grow towards the year 2010, there has been a steady interest in the topics and focus of feminist organising and scholarship of the period after 1989 [Hašková, Křížková and Linková 2006a]. I therefore focus on the topics across the board of the Czech feminist scene including its different segments that are partly co-constructed by this very focus.

As I have mentioned in the previous section, one of the problems, previously identified by Hašková, Křížková, Linková [2006b], is the exact focus of any study to be concerned with broadly defined "pro-women" activities (in the case of feminist activities, it is possible to simplify the task by setting self-identification as the determining criterion). As Loutfi warns, the distinction in labelling of the activities to be researched is highly politically charged [2007]. Whether an activity is called pro-women or whether it is called feminist is not a mere description. On the contrary, it is informed by the author's definition of what counts as feminism and what does not. In addition, depending on the identification of the author, there is likely to be a hierarchy in terms of which activities are seen as "better" or "more important" [Loutfi 2007]: thus those identified with feminism are more likely to either see topics not in sync with their definition as it is important or worse as seeing them as potentially dangerous.

That this problem is acute becomes clear once we try to delineate the exact scope and activities, or focus and topics, embraced by individual groups and NGOs. One of the most extensive studies mapping "pro-women" activities was conducted by Jana Chaloupková [2006]. The scope of the study not only concerns organisations that could be termed feminist and gender-oriented but also those more broadly pro-women (often reluctant to identify as feminist) and even pro-women projects undertaken by organisations, the primary focus of which is different.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> For instance, Centrum podpory podnikání Praha, o.p.s. focuses on supporting the reintegration into work life for former prisoners as well as parents returning to work life from parental leave.

I start by first focusing on the NGOs, or the third sector.<sup>34</sup> In the early 1990s, the number of organisations concerned with various predominantly women's issues was estimated at over 70 in then Czechoslovakia [Čermáková, Hašková, Křížková, Linková, Maříková, Musilová 2000]. Later research conducted around 2002 spoke of some thirty main organisations in the Czech Republic [Heitlinger 2004, Hašková 2005, vodrážka 2006]. Hana Hašková attributed this drop to the legislative change which started to favour bigger organisations, a move of the mid 1990s right wing government heavily impacting on the often two – three-member organisations. The overall number of organisations also focusing on women and gender relevant topics remained approximately the same, i.e., around 70 as of 2003 in the Czech Republic alone [Hašková and Křížková 2006].

Based on data from around 2005, Chaloupková identified seven major topics addressed by the NGOs: “1) Issues related to women's health and healthcare; 2) Violence against women and trafficking in women; 3) Groups of minority women (sexual minorities, women from ethnic minorities); 4) Family issues and enforcement of equal rights for caregivers for children; 5) Work and career; 6) Environmental protection; 7) Social position of women and gender equality“ [Chaloupková 2006: 28]. She elaborates further to specify that the organisations that do not solely focus on “women,” “gender,” let alone feminism but that still engage in pro-women activities are mostly concerned with 1) Human rights protection and multicultural education; 2) Socially disadvantaged citizens; 3) Development of civil society (via funding for pro-women organisations and projects); and finally 4) Support for families and childcare [based on Chaloupková 2006: 31].

When it comes to the types of activities undertaken by the respective NGOs, Chaloupková has identified four main categories: 1) Social and psychological assistance and counselling; 2) Educational activities; 3) Research and expert activities, monitoring of women's position and gender issues; 4) Mediation of information and contacts“ [Chaloupková 2006: 32-33]. She finally turns to the issues of membership (the only organisation mainly based on membership remains to be

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<sup>34</sup> As Petra Rakušanová notes, the third sector is a more concrete term than civil society and is not to be confused with it as it only pertains to the organised and typically registered groups [2005].

the Czech Women's Union<sup>35</sup>) and geographical reach of the organisations. Since almost 8 years elapsed since the publication of the study, and almost ten since the second volume of the publication *Alty a soprány* was published [Sokačová 2005] we need to see whether there have been any changes.

I believe, especially due to the reasons given by Louffi above, that while it is definitely worth focusing even on NGOs that are not openly feminist and also on those that are not solely concerned with pro-women activities, it is beyond the scope of the present study to include such organisations. A related issue is the near impossibility (besides conducting an independent research devoted solely to this topic) of predicting which other organisations focus on the relevant issues since NGOs very often use rather vague and neutral language to define their goals (in the Who we are section) and their targets may thus stay in obscurity.

What makes the focus on the topics covered seem even more salient than the relatively long gap in its mapping is the fact that the question asking after the present description of the scene seems de facto impossible to fully answer, at least in terms of its NGO part. According to Aleš Mrázek from [neziskovsky.cz](http://www.neziskovsky.cz), an NGO that provides information services to the non-governmental sector, there is no central register of all NGOs currently operating in the CR.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the portal operates a database of NGOs searchable by keywords on the <http://www.neziskovsky.cz/katalog/>. The section that proved most salient for our purposes was "Law and interest advocacy" for it includes two subsections: "gender" and "equal opportunities." When combined together and cleared of duplicities, this search (qualified for all types of organisations and all regions of the Czech Republic) yielded 30 entries. However, the database is mostly formed based on self-identification of the NGOs and it thus offers a mixture of maternity centres but also NGOs focused on the integration of the mentally disabled into the rest of society that do not specifically stress any gender-oriented goals. There is another section, namely that of "Social services and health" that includes

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<sup>35</sup> The Union is still by far the largest organisation engaged in pro-women activities. It is membership-based and currently has about 15,000 members (Zpráva o činnosti 2011). Its past closely interconnected with the regime prior to 1989 made cooperation with the small, underfunded NGOs nearly impossible (vodrážka 2006).

<sup>36</sup> Email communication with Aleš Mrázek from November 2012.

subsections “shelters,” “institutes for single mothers,” and “family.” If the search is combined, it results in 93 NGOs. Since I have decided early on to mostly focus on directly feminist or at least gender-oriented activities (for gender as a unit of analysis and position within the social web originates from feminist theories), I combined the organisations that resulted from the former search (gender and equal opportunities) with a search in a different database operated by the Gender Studies, o.p.s.<sup>37</sup> at <http://genderstudies.cz/gender-studies/organizace.shtml>.

The list of pro-women and feminist organisations contains 78 organisations that focus on a wide range of topics from violence against women to trafficking to work-life balance and Roma women.<sup>38</sup> We combined this list with the list of the thirty organisations but this time cleared of those that do not have a clear women, gender or feminist orientation (this has posed further problems for organisations such as Diakonie with national operation provides services to the elderly, who for demographical reasons tend to be overwhelmingly female). We then added the few organisations not overlapping with the list of all member organisations (the total of 25 organisations as of February 2014<sup>39</sup>) of the Czech Women’s Lobby, whose proclamation includes their feminist allegiance. This resulted in 90 organisations (see Appendix II), which are either listed as members of an openly feminist organisation, target specific groups of women (typically victims/survivors of violence) or that are listed by the Gender Studies, o.p.s., an organisation targeting gender inequality in Czech society.

If we look on the focus of these 90 organisations, we can see that Chaloupková’s conclusions are still widely applicable. There have nevertheless been some shifts, such as an increased emphasis on domestic violence and violence in general as well

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<sup>37</sup> Another list is hosted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at <http://www.mpsv.cz/nahled/cs/508>. However, this list suggests consulting [www.feminismus.cz](http://www.feminismus.cz) (i. e., the list operated by gender Studies, o.p.s.) for an updated version.

<sup>38</sup> All NGOs based in Slovakia, including Aspekt, were removed from the list prior to counting. The list was last updated about two years ago as confirmed by Michaela Svatošová from the NGO (email communication with *Gender Studies o.p.s.* librarian Michaela Svatošová on 17 January 2013). I would like to thank her for her prompt reply.

<sup>39</sup> See <http://www.czlobby.cz/> for both the members and the proclamation.

as the introduction of long overdue assistance to single (or solo) parents, predominantly mothers [cf. Dudová 2009] or activism tackling the issues of homeless women and migrant women. Another important shift pertains to the type of activity. There is a pronounced increase in the provision (usually free of charge) of legal counselling, e.g., to victims of domestic violence but also to people facing mobbing and other issues at work. Another type of activity not explicitly included in the list is community building. This is especially typical of maternity and parental centres as well as centres without a clear or target that can be found more scattered around the CR (e.g., the revived Žába Na Prameni). Educational activities newly also include mentoring provided, e.g. to high school students (National Contact Centre – Women and Science – NKC). This also problematizes the division of the scene into the NGO sector and other clear-cut segments as the NKC operates under the Academy of Sciences of the CR and engages in activism. Similarly, a chamber of gender experts is to be put into operation in 2015 at the latest, which will include members of the scene from across its scope (with the likely exception of the segments opposed to the establishment of hierarchies).

This brings us to the issue of geographical impact. Just like in Chaloupková's study [2006], an overwhelming majority of the organisations is based in Prague (65 out of 90) with 10 in Brno, 3 in Olomouc, 2 in Ostrava and the others in other places (e.g., in Cheb we can find an NGO dealing with the regional issue of sex work). However, we also have to take into account the maternity centres or at least the regional branches of the Czech Women's Union and the associations of women entrepreneurs, which are both more evenly distributed across the republic.

The framework of the present research does not solely focus on NGOs. We believe that it is hardly possible to simply focus on these as if they operated in some sort of vacuum. It is clear from the very list in Appendix II that this view is shared by others, as both the Czech Women's Lobby and the list hosted by Gender Studies, o.p.s., include academic centres and institutions as well NGOs. It is also clear from the outline provided by Chaloupková that research in fact constitutes one of the activities done by the NGOs. It is closely linked to educational and counselling activities. The importance of establishment of academic centres engaging both in providing education and research within the framework of feminist theories has been critically

pointed out in literature [e.g., Mohanty 2002, Cerwonka 2009]. The critique concerns the possible hegemonic effects academic institutions may have owing to their privileged position within discourse (which also concerns the privileged position of the “knowledge” they produce).

If we look into the proliferation of gender studies courses, programmes and institutions, the present picture is as follows. In terms of original academic research, a prominent place has been held by the Gender & Sociology department under the Sociological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic since its foundation in 1990. This is not to say that other centres do not conduct research yet they all usually combine it with providing education, which is not the primary goal of Gender & Sociology. The department also publishes a biannual academic journal Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research (Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum). It was founded in 2000 and since 2006, it has been the only peer-reviewed academic journal devoted to publishing original gender research and theoretical/methodological articles. The NKC is associated with Gender & Sociology. Besides research into the position of “women” within science, the centre plays an activist role, fighting against discrimination, not just against women, within the academia and its institutions (for details of recent events see <http://www.zenyaveda.cz/>; for details on its establishment, see Linková 2006). This project is specific for its pronounced activist side and also the type of activities it engages in, including mentoring.

When it comes to academic institutions that offer education in the area of gender studies and feminist theories, the role of Gender Studies, o.p.s. has to be mentioned since it “played a key role in introducing education on gender topics to Czech universities with the first series of lectures launched at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University in 1992” [Historie Gender Studies 2013]. The series of lectures, certified by the universities but run independently, spread to universities in Olomouc and Brno with many additional lectures and events held at the NGO in Prague.

It was also on the initiative of Gender Studies that the Faculty of Arts Charles University (CUFA) agreed to establish the Gender Studies Centre as an independent academic site under the Department of Social Work in 1998. A small part of the Gender Studies Centre (GSC) at CUFA is still in operation. Instead of its primary goal, i.e. provision of a de facto programme in gender studies open to students at

CUFA, it now operates as an academic site providing one core course in gender and literary criticism for the GSC now belongs to the Institute of Czech and Comparative Literature and Literary Theory. In 2013/2014, it runs a course on the history of women in Czech science [Centrum genderových studií 2013].

The core of the activities, i.e. all the other courses and lectures including most of the corollary research, were transferred when CUFA decided they were no longer interested in offering “systematic academic studies in theoretical and methodological instruments for studying gender issues in historical perspective paying attention to their cultural and ethnic aspects” [Katedra genderových studií 2013]. The Department of Gender Studies under the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University was accredited by the Ministry in 2004. It is the only MA programme in gender studies on offer at present and is no specialised programme offering A PhD in this field in the Czech Republic.

The only other independent study programme in gender studies is offered by the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University in Brno. Lectures were launched in 2004/2005. It is a BA programme in gender studies that has to be studied in combination with another programme under Masaryk University. Unlike in the case of the Department of Gender Studies at FHS UK, the Brno programme is operated under the Department of Sociology. Thus while the MA programme is multidisciplinary by definition, the BA is mostly focused on sociology but due to its mandatory combined nature, it strives at interdisciplinarity in a different way.

All the three above-mentioned academic centres, whose main focus is on education, are also research centres. This is manifested by the number of publications, grants and events organised by the centres. Together with the fact that the NGOs briefly described in the opening of this section also conduct research and organise lectures and conferences<sup>40</sup> this shows that any division into an NGO, academic and activist (see below) section of the scene can be but instrumental. Besides the four academic centres solely focused on gender studies, there are subdivisions and specialised programmes or at least lectures on gender offered at almost all universities in the Czech Republic. For instance, the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts at the University of

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<sup>40</sup> For instance, the historically first Women Congress held in June 2013.

West Bohemia offers several courses and subspecialisations in gender studies and cites this very focus as one of the reasons for studying anthropology there [Katedra antropologie ZČU 2013], PhD candidates in Philosophy at the University of Ostrava are expected to focus on feminism, among other things [Ostravská univerzita v Ostravě 2013], students are encouraged to take courses in gender at the Institute of History of the University of Hradec Králové [Historický ústav FF UHK], can learn about gender at University Palacký in Olomouc, and will find individual scholars interested in feminist theories and gender at other departments as well (e.g., Jana Valdová specialising on gender linguistics at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice). For a more complete picture of where it is possible to study and engage with gender studies, the overview of various (graduation) theses written at Czech universities can be used [for the database visit Gender Studies 2008]. The following institutions<sup>41</sup> are listed:

Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity Brno (FF MU)

Fakulta sociálních studií Masarykovy univerzity Brno (FSS MU)

Provozně ekonomická fakulta Mendelovy zemědělské a lesnické univerzity Brno (PEF MZLU)

Pedagogická fakulta Jihočeské univerzity České Budějovice (PedF JU)

Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Hradec Králové (PedF UHK)

Pedagogická fakulta Technické univerzity Liberec (PedF TUL)

Filozofická fakulta Ostravské univerzity (FF OU)

Filozoficko-přírodovědecká fakulta Slezské univerzity Opava (FPF SU)

Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Pardubice (FHS UPa)

Dopravní fakulta Jana Pernera Univerzity Pardubice (DFJP UPa)

Fakulta ekonomicko-správní Univerzity Pardubice (FES UPa)

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<sup>41</sup> We keep the list in Czech for these are the original institutional names and should make possible searching for them easier.

Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Palackého Olomouc (PedF UP)

Pedagogická fakulta Západočeské univerzity Plzeň (PedF ZČU)

Právnická fakulta Západočeské univerzity Plzeň (PF ZČU)

Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy Praha (FF UK)

Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy Praha (FHS UK)

Fakulta sociálních věd Univerzity Karlovy Praha (FSV UK)

Institut základů vzdělanosti Univerzity Karlovy Praha (IZV UK)

Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy Praha (PedF UK)

Přírodovědecká fakulta Univerzity Karlovy Praha (PřF UK)

Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Jana Evangelisty Purkyně Ústí nad Labem  
(PedF UJEP)

The total number of theses entered was 3364 as of January 2014 with a sharp surge in the number following the establishment of independent gender programmes at the two biggest universities. If we support interdisciplinarity within the academia, the list above may be seen as a sign of a positive change from a time at the beginning of the 1990s when an NGO, Gender Studies, o.p.s., had to not only engage in activism targeting the general public but also in research and education. However, the very fate of the original Gender Studies Centre at CUFA can serve as a reminder that taking the achievements even within the academia for granted may not be justified. Indeed the fact, that in many instances the courses are offered out of personal interested of the respective scholars rather than based on a well-designed logical structure of the programmes hovers over their fate should the scholars leave or change their focus. Thus, while it would be tempting given the number of programmes available, to proclaim the interdisciplinary field of gender studies stemming from feminist theories as well established and thriving, the structural shortcomings should not go unrecognized.

The topics addressed by the academia will be discussed in more detail in the following part. Nevertheless, the outline above shows that the topics targeted

academically are by no means limited to just one discipline even if it is clear that using gender as an analytical category in sociology is backed by two mutually independent institutions while the other perspectives either depend on the third site (the Department of Gender Studies at FHS UK) or various institutions that offer optional scholarship on gender relevant topics.

If we were to generalise as regards the overall topics addressed, it is evident that they are mostly concerned with areas of study belonging to humanities and social sciences although we can also find gender related studies in disciplines such as medicine and archaeology. The focus can be broadly divided as that targeting the difference and then studying the subjects defined by that difference (typically studies of women in professional life); alternatively the focus will be on how gender is performed within a given setting, what meanings it derives and what is the interplay with other social structures. In both areas the establishment of independent programmes together with the existence of a peer-reviewed journal devoted to studies in gender and feminist theory have led to a quantitative increase in scholarship produced as is also hinted by the rise in the number of graduation theses.

When it comes to the topic and themes selected by the groups, in the case of NGOs, as will be argued in the following section, the topics they focus on are somewhere at the intersection of the issues their members see as in need of solving in society and project calls that tie funding to addressing goals defined by the funding institutions. Owing to the fact that the funding available is always limited not only in terms of what is it available for but also in terms of its absolute amount, competition between NGOs over money is the logical consequence. This can lead to narrow specialisation as well as tensions over who defined which theme as the first one and is therefore believed by some to have exclusive rights for that topics. In the case of academia, a greater degree of freedom in terms of defining the topics to address could be expected given the less straightforward type of funding of institutions that provide education and conduct research. However, in the case of the academic institutions concerned with research rather than education, the impact of funding can also be seen with the corollary competition [Stöckelová 2009a].

Besides the NGO and academic sector, however tentative and contingent these labels are, there are also other elements that could be seen as part of the scene. The present study does not concern itself with the area of art although this is not to claim that we do not recognize its importance and indeed theoretical salience [see, e.g. the latest addition to thinking about the relevance of “women’s” art in Morganová 2014]. Similarly, we do not explicitly focus on the area of politics and political participation of women and on the area of business. Again, this is not to say we do not believe these do not form an important and visible part of the scene. Nevertheless, given my academic background, I preferred to monitor the developments within the loosely organised activism that some put in opposition to the institutionalised and professionalised activities done by gender and feminist NGOs [Kapusta-Pofahl, Hašková, and Kolářová 2005].

In this respect, I focus on the activities of those mostly associated with anarchofeminism and its representatives, who started to be active mostly in response to the awakening to their position within the anarchist movement but also in response to the professionalization and shifts within the NGO sector [Kolářová 2006, Vráblíková 2006]. The fact that the zines mentioned by Kolářová and Vráblíková as well as the central “Feministická skupina 8. března” group ceased to function does not mean that the activists and their criticism have left the scene. Rather, their focus seems to have slightly shifted and expanded. Besides the focus on class and the functioning of the left wing radical movement, the collective that until 2014 called itself GenderFuck (an internal rift has apparently led to the dropping of the label according to one of the activists) has embraced elements associated with the term “queer” [for an introduction into queer theory see Marinucci 2010]. Instead of the Bloody Mary zine described by Marta Kolářová, the new collective (including some of the former individuals) issued so far two issues of a zine called Kvér. Besides publishing, the collective mostly holds festivals (GenderFuckFest held in Prague since 2009), screenings and events. In terms of topics, besides sexualities and troubling of the heteronormative matrix, the activities strive to enliven the concepts of intersectionality by highlighting the intersections of different forms of oppression (including, e.g., animal rights).

We hope that it is clear from this brief overview that the research does not concern itself with all the activities that could be seen as part of the Czech feminist scene. We are aware and do recognize that there are elements neglected in the present study. Nevertheless, as is the case of all the three major elements outlined above, there are no clear cut boundaries even between these and the areas not directly addressed by the present study. Whenever overlaps appear, we will comment on them to place them appropriately on the map.

By focusing on groups that embrace the term feminist (the university courses stem from/cover feminist theories, the NGOs are either listed by Gender Studies, o.p.s. or the Czech Women's Lobby, which are both feminist organisations, genderfucking stems from queer theory interrelated with feminist theories) and also since all of the research participants identified (albeit some with several qualifications) with the term feminist, I believe it is justified to speak of a feminist rather than pro-women scene here. The focus on topics shows there are multiple overlaps across the segments of the scene usually defined as distinctly separate. Such a division therefore seems hardly tenable for it obscures the overlaps that in fact form one of the rifts within the scene in the form of fights over who should (not) do what in terms of expertise and focus. Although there competition among, e.g., individual NGOs or academicians over grant money and topics, there are also rifts regarding the belief of who understands – and is institutionally equipped to understand – what, which often follows the binary thinking juxtaposing theory and practice (i.e. the belief that NGOs should not be involved in doing research is often supported by references to their activist rather than knowledge-producing character).

I do not want to suggest that the feminist label is superior to pro-women activities or that there exists a clear boundary between the two. Rather than regarding the word feminist as “better” for the assumed values it conveys, we see it as more specific even in the light of the convoluted state of present day feminist theories. The following section deals in more details with how to address the diverse activities and individuals just briefly sketched in this section.

### 2.1.3. *Forms of activism*<sup>42</sup>

So far, I have used two terms as if they were interchangeable: movement (in historical perspective) and scene (when describing the activities, groups and individuals this thesis researches) with the latter term also appearing in the title of this thesis. In this part I clarify why I believe “scene” is a more appropriate word than “movement” when it comes to the activities presently researched. I first outline the question common to many researchers as whether there is a women’s or feminist movement in the CR. After relating to some of the research in this respect we will return to the issue of funding already hinted in the previous section. We will then summarise the points problematizing the use of the term movement. Finally, we will show what the use of the word “scene” offers and also what makes its use problematic.

Just like the choice of a qualifier (“feminist” or “women’s”), the seeking of a women’s movement per se is far from neutral. If the approach of agential realism employed by Barad is used, we can see how using something believed to be just a tool (the analytical category “social movement” in this case) is more than just instrumentation: it becomes part of the “researched object.” In other words, in agential realism “the idea is that instrumentation does things; that it produces the ontology that we are working with (realism) or cut off from (social constructivism)” [van der Tuin 2011: 18-19]. Focusing on the presence or absence of a movement then has at the very least the effect of measuring activities that could be termed as part of the movement while possibly disregarding (and seeing this as fully justified) those that are not in congruence with the starting definition. This shows how the very “neutral instrument” is part of the object of inquiry already once the question is asked.

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<sup>42</sup> Parts of this chapter and its findings appeared in a forthcoming article entitled “Feminist Mobilization in Post-Communism between Theory and Practice: Insights from the Romanian and Czech Scenes” co-authored with Ioana Vlad from Romania. I would like to thank Marta Kolářová, Ioana Vlad and Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer for inspiration, insights and drawing my attention to the importance of theorising activism.

As follows from the previous section, I am not only interested in the type of theories embraced by NGOs and other actors that could be assumed to operate within a movement with the aim to change or at least challenge the current social status quo. The spectrum of actors I am interested in is more extensive and I do not believe that those most explicitly engaged with theories can serve as a mere background element. Moreover, I am not so much concerned with the study of concrete forms of organising, analysis of the repertoire of activities deployed by activists (e.g., protest, lobbying, street performance and the like) or forms of interaction among different groups, individuals and NGOs. Nevertheless, there has been a continued interest ever since the early 1990s looking into the presence/absence of a “women’s/feminist movement” seen as a necessary element of any “true” democracy [Einhorn 1993, Goldfarb 2006] and I therefore have to address it here.

Is there a feminist/women’s movement in the Czech Republic? And why should it matter? It seems reasonable to claim that the answer depends on two main factors. Firstly, the area in which such a question is posed. If the question comes from, e.g., political science, we can see that the term “women’s movement” can be used automatically, as if no further explanation or definition was needed and its existence is thus implicitly assumed [e.g., Císař and Vráblíková 2010]. However, when the question comes from the feminist academic field, the issue of a collective identity and/or community often gets questioned (see the definitions below), and the question is often answered in the negative [vodrážka 2006, Havelková 2009]. Secondly, the importance assigned to this particular question has to be pondered. The potential implications of the importance assigned to this issue can have far reaching consequences for the overall assessment of the efficiency of the activities being done and personal investment in future activities.

Thus, to answer the two questions after the presence of a feminist movement and its significance, we need to delineate why some perceive movements as salient in the first place. Generally speaking, the study of contemporary social movements has taken two distinct geopolitical forms: that of new social movement theories practiced mostly in Europe (focused on the construction of meaning and identity) and that of resource mobilisation and political process theory typical for North America (concerned with opportunity structures [Sawer and Grey 2008, Maddison and Shaw

2012]. The initial interest in social movements as a type of collective action and identity was sparked by the protests of students, peace activists, feminists and homosexuals in the USA and Europe [Znebejánek 1997]. Both the locations have developed their own methodologies but as we shall see when reviewing the application of the theories to the local “movement,” local authors rather tend to merge the two traditions. Besides methodological issues, there is an ontological one: how to define what constitutes a social movement (and why exactly should such a distinction matter) seems to be an ongoing point of contention. The distinction from other forms of collective action, such as coalitions or political parties [Znebejánek 1997], seems to be central.

One of the most comprehensive definitions of social movements comes from Mario Diani who defines them as networks “of informal interactions, between a plurality of individuals, groups or associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity” [Diani 1992: 13]. Disruptive protest has also been emphasised in the relevant North American literature on feminist activism [Sawer and Grey: 3]. This has been criticised from within and outside the social movement academic community for various lacks this focus causes, such as that of lacking attention paid to the ideas prompting social movements [Zald 2000] or to the impact of relations and communities on the functioning of movements [Staggenborg and Taylor 2005]. The latter criticism is based on a study of the proclamation of the US women’s movement as dead despite the continued effort detected by the authors [Staggenborg and Taylor 2005; similarly for the United Kingdom, Redfern and Aune 2010]. The fact that the instrument, in this case what counts as movement, is far from neutral can be seen if we return to Diani.

In 2010, he offered a different definition: “social movements are a particular mode of coordination of collective action, based on sustained networks of coordination between independent, autonomous organizations and groups. At the same time, their components are linked by specific intense solidarities which go beyond the boundaries of specific organizations” [Diani 2010]. It is clear that this definition strives to circumvent the problems associated with the “shared identity” required in the earlier definition. It also tries to explain the phenomenon or survival of social movements in adverse conditions, such as those posed to leftist movements by

neoliberalism. Although this might seem to be just a play on words, when we turn to how feminist activism is framed in the CR, we can see that it may even decide on whether a research is conducted or not.

In 2008, Czech political scientist Ondřej Císař analysed forms of political activism in the Czech Republic, including activism on behalf of women's interests. He uses the term "transactional activism," which by definition includes a specific range of contentious activities done by closed organizations isolated from popular support. It is a certain type of public engagement localized in the relations between "organized non-state actors and between them and political parties, power holders, and other institutions" and is analytically distinct from *participatory activism* or "the potential and actual magnitude of individual and group participation in civic life, interest group activities, voting, and elections" [Petrova and Tarrow 2007: 6]. The term was coined to address the type of activism Petrova and Tarrow believe is characteristic of "new" Central and Eastern European democracies [Petrova and Tarrow 2007]. It is not based on mass protest, which is in fact very rarely part of its repertoire, but rather on lobbying and advocacy skills of small professional groups, most often in the form of NGOs. Císař's analysis, however, focuses on protest events as is evident from the words<sup>43</sup> he searched in the reports of the Czech national press agency ČTK. The possible role played by gender, e.g., in the repertoire choice is not mentioned.

If we consider another analysis of political activism in the Czech Republic in this light, we can see clearly how the focus on protest events excludes the study of women's and perhaps more importantly feminist groups from such studies [Císař, Navrátil and Vráblíková 2011]. In their study, the authors define public political activism as "an effort aiming to articulate political demands otherwise than in an election, which is expressed using organised, collective and public strategies such as demonstrations and petitions" [Císař, Navrátil and Vráblíková 2011: 138]. They differentiate three types of activism – old (trade unions), new (postmaterial and identity-related issues), and radical – and use the transactional activist framework for their rigorous analysis. Unlike in Císař's 2008 study, however, they start by claiming that "in the Czech

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<sup>43</sup> The words searched were: "protest, demonstration, petition, boycott, strike, march, blockade, assembly, barricade, parade, performance, happening, and confrontation" [Císař 2008: 22].

Republic, advocacy groups advocating women' and gay and lesbian rights also do not correspond [with our definition]" [Císař, Navrátil, Vráblíková 2011: 138]. Thus, the focus on large protest events may lead to neglecting the various aspects of women's and specifically feminist activism.

This is all the more interesting for in a different study a year earlier, Císař and Vráblíková focused on what the term women's groups meant and detailed the impact of Europeanization on the opening of political opportunities for the advocacy of these groups [Císař, Vráblíková 2010]. They offer one of the most detailed accounts of how changes to the ways in which local "women's groups" are funded together with the changes to the political opportunity structures have resulted in an overall shift that "was even more significant for this activist sector than the preceding, obviously critical process of post-communist democratization" [Císař, Vráblíková 2010: 13]. They perceive the opening of opportunities for interaction with the political system, increased and more structured funding opportunities, and boosted opportunities for transnational cooperation (especially across the EU and namely via participation in the European Women's Lobby) as crucial for the new stage of these groups' functioning. Although they acknowledge the range of problems posed by Europeanization, they at the same time present it as the only reason for the partial acceptance of some of the claims made by the groups by the political representation. While we are not trying to suggest that political opportunities did not open up in a certain sense and that political stakeholders would have responded to the claims even without the EU, we believe this explanation is slightly reductionist as it fails to take into account a) that the activity of the scene is not only directed towards the state, b) other factors influencing the activities, and c) the moderate protest events when they appear.

Nevertheless, it is common to rely on both the EU and the CR's accession process and the changes to the ways in which the organisations have been funded in literature concerned with "activism" if not openly with social movements (even if that is the theoretical framework). The overall description of developments in terms of how the various groups have functioned since 1989 typically goes like this: in the early 1990s, local women's groups were inexperienced, lacked resources and their activities were mostly based on volunteering and informal networks of cooperation;

they mostly focused on providing counselling, services and modest advocacy. Under mostly foreign funding, the groups were forced to start cooperating with one another more intensively (including the Czech Women's Union, which was up to then sidelined due to its perceived collaboration with the previous regime) and the shift from international and US funding to EU one has brought about a greater pressure on coalition forming at the end of the 1990s.

At the same time state institutions were forced by the accession process to acknowledge the issues up to then promoted only by women's groups as relevant and started to cooperate with them to some extent as they approached the organisations as experts [Hašková and Křížková 2006: 83-87]. This account would thus support the approach stressing the importance of open political opportunities that had been closed before the accession period started but Hašková and Křížková continue to show that the discourse of inefficient groups only awakened by the EU is flawed as it ignores the fact that by cooperating, the groups were able to actively shape part of the agenda to suit local needs (i.e., it is not possible to say that the "agenda-setting role" of Europeanization was as overwhelming and absolute as has been suggested). They also point out the perseverance and emergence of groups that openly opposed the cooperative tactics and chose to radically challenge such an approach (anarchofeminism – also studied by Vráblíková [2006, 2007], the current radical queer initiative).

The role of funding has been critically assessed. This issue holds a prominent position in the literature on the local scene [e.g. Ghodsee 2004, Heitlinger 2004 Kapusta-Pofahl, Hašková and Kolářová 2005, Hašková, Křížková and Linková 2006, Císař and Vráblíková 2010]. This body of literature forms a discourse of its own that is directly related to the ways in which local feminism has been classified. Claims to truth are intertextually derived from a greater neoliberal discourse preferring economic explanations over any other as the ultimately driving one (paradoxically somewhat touching base with Marxism and its infra- and superstructure). Thus, the activities become mostly the resultants of the type of funding. The funding present in the 1990s was both project and development based, i.e., grants were available for individual projects but also for more broadly defined activities, including, e.g., the foundation of a library [Hašková 2005]. The literature on women's groups especially

stressed the “NGOization“ process. This means the formation of NGOs with a hierarchical structure (typically required by the local legal setting) rather than of a grassroots movement. The local proliferation of NGOization has been heavily criticised for its perceived bureaucratic and at the same time cooperative (with the state) nature - see Ghodsee [2004] – although as Guenther points out, this process is not unique to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe [2011]. However, this relying on the explanatory power of economic relations proves insufficient (whether we see them as an overall positive driving force like Císař and Vráblíková 2010 or as a negative one - Ghodsee 2004) as it fails to fully explain why and how the groups (rather than some other) started up and continued even in the highly adversary financial conditions preceding the accession process. Thus, Kapusta-Pofahl, Hašková and Kolářová [2005] show that informal networks remain a crucial resource for both formalised NGOs and informal groups defying professionalism. In a similar vein, Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer identifies different time sources as having a substantial influence on the shape of the whole scene, functioning of individual organisations as well life trajectories [Lorenz-Meyer 2013].<sup>44</sup>

Unlike the explanations based on Europeanization and funding, the focus on informal networks as well as timescapes of activism manages to account for the persistence of the activities and indeed the members of the scene carrying them out in years of austerity and closed political opportunities.

As we have seen, the answer to the question whether there is a women’s movement in the CR or what type of activities the groups actually engage in largely depends on the definition. Having offered an outline of how funding indeed has shaped the NGO part of the scene, we now turn to some feminist criticism of emphasis put on the existence of a women’s movement in the first place. Hana Hašková, Alena Křížková, and Marcela Linková frame their interest in the “women's movement” as a potential “moment of discursive dominance” [2006: 11] for being concerned with a “movement” rather than a different form of activism stems from their relation to the canonical Western feminist movement of the 1970s. This self-reflection also sheds new light on

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<sup>44</sup> I would like to thank Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer for elucidating exchanges on the overlooked aspects of activism in the CR as well as for providing me with the mentioned paper.

the general concern with the presence or absence of such a movement. Tereza Kodíčková framed these attempts to comply with imported standards with the insights of postcolonial studies and the use these were put to by Maria Todorova who speaks of similar tendencies being the manifestations of “internal orientalism” [Kodíčková 2002]. This is not to suggest that all attempts at applying social movement theory and concern over lack of participatory movements in CEE should be automatically renounced as a form of intellectual colonialism. However, similar comments do indeed point out a much more alarming issue of possible ignorance of idiosyncratic trajectories of activism.

Social movement theory has become the target of feminist critique first and foremost for ignoring the seemingly obvious fact that all social movements and other forms of activism are gendered and besides being present latently, gender often plays a crucial role in negotiating the identity and status of the respective movement (and its members). This has led to gender-blind or at least inadequate formulations of, e.g., what counts as protest and more importantly what role protest plays in social movement definition [Maddison and Shaw 2012]. Similarly, feminist critiques have targeted the concept of social movements and their life cycle in four parts [emergence, coalescence, bureaucratisation, and decline; Christiansen 2009], which also heavily rests on protest events [Staggenborg and Taylor 2005] – we could see practical consequences of relying on counting protest events in the study by Ondřej Císař [2008] discussed above. A related problem is that of using terms developed for the description of social movements operating elsewhere for local realities. The term abeyance [Taylor 1989] is thus hardly applicable although it would manage to show that the activities did not come to a complete stop. The problem here is that since there was no mass movement, we can hardly speak of a decline and by default of abeyance.

Benitha Roth has been especially influential in showing in a broad context how gender works in mixed movements. Some of the problems she names are the compartmentalisation of women's issues which tend to be seen as special, of lesser importance and moreover secondary to the “main” focus of the movement, assigning women reproductive tasks such as typing proceedings, making refreshments, etc. and allowing women less space and time for contributions to discussion [Roth 2001].

In the Czech Republic, Marta Kolářová has paid special attention to gender when studying the anti-globalisation movement and most recently when analysing subcultures in the Czech Republic [Kolářová 2009, 2012]. She also confirms the allegations made by Roth but notes a difference in approach of foreign groups to women as compared to the mainstream of comparable (radical) activist groups in Czech Republic. When the Czech women activists noticed the difference, which de facto exposed their inequality (e.g., in terms of turn-taking at meetings or agenda-setting potential), they started to address issues directly forming an anarchofeminist group together with some men from the movement [Kolářová 2009].

The critique of emphasis on protests and gender bias is not to suggest that a) only women are active in the movement or b) that by definition they do not engage in violent protests (an absurd claim given, e.g., the suffrage movement in Great Britain). However, gender as a variable is simply omitted as we can see, e.g., in Císař's analysis of the other movements in his 2008 book. This confirms the claim that "the aspects of social movement research that privilege visible, state-focused activism tend to "reproduce the marginal status of movements that target society", including the women's, LGBTI ..., and peace movements" [Armstrong and Bernstein in Maddison and Shaw 2012: 415]. The findings concerning the specificities of women's movements from a comparative study of five different movements in Germany from 1970 to 1996 are also ignored [Rucht 2003] although the conclusion seems relevant: "Given the high number of women's groups, on the one hand, and their low profile in terms of protest as registered in protest event analysis, on the other, it becomes clear that the women's movement focuses primarily on settings of interaction other than the streets and the media, such as direct negotiations with public administration, parliamentary hearings, and committees" [Rucht 2003: 259 – 260]. He concludes by emphasising that this means both cooperation and conflict with the state but not confrontation [Rucht 2003].

Moreover, the quantitative nature of a lot of social movement research also may work to the effect of obscuring the modest protest activity that has actually taken place in this area. When the tactical repertoires deployed by the organisations are studied, we are confronted with a range of approaches that have also been changing. Thus, we can see cooperation of some organisations with state institutions in the form of

providing expert opinions and training, being part of advisory groups set up during the accession process, lobbying with individual politicians, taking part in discussions in the parliament on specific issues,<sup>45</sup> and also on the lower political levels.

Cooperation with the state is often coupled by engagement with the world of business. In the past, the anarchofeminist group mentioned above criticised this type of engagement<sup>46</sup> as the sector is saturated with power and interrelated with the state. There are indeed cooperative tactics deployed to influence the business world, such as contests for the most gender-equal company and offers of free gender audits. Besides this rather direct cooperation (with even some former NGO members shifting into politics with the most notable case of Michaela Marksová-Tominová becoming the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs), representatives of NGOs take part in public discussions on the gender-related issues, participate in media discussions or organize conferences. Open letters usually sent to ministers or the prime minister are a common tactic and so has been the issuing of shadow reports to the official governmental reports on gender equality in the CR (the first of these appeared in 2004 – cf. Pavlík 2004).

In the framework of EU-funded projects, which have become one of the main sources of income for NGOs, recommendations and stances for different levels of state administration as well as other actors are often produced. As for less cooperative tactics, there were solitary small-scale demonstrations held already in the 1990s, especially with regard to the restitution of a large building designed by the first Czech woman architect and built with the money of a Czech women's organisation after the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, which was transferred to the state after 1948 and never returned to the women's organisations. The first of these took place in 1998 (a petition was handed over to a representative of the Prague municipality which currently owns the building), the latest in a form of happening in 2008. Protest as such has become part of the repertoire especially in relation with the activities around the anarchofeminist

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<sup>45</sup> Most recently, the issue of free choice of the place to give birth (to counter the high level medicalisation of the issue and increase the clients' autonomy) was debated.

<sup>46</sup> They generally did not interpret work for an NGO as activism for it is mostly cooperation-based and thus complicit and labelled those active in the third sector as “institutional feminists.” Interestingly though, this did not mean zero cooperation as informal relations were preserved (Kapusta-Pofahl, Hašková, Kolářová 2005).

group, which emerged from the anarchist movement to criticise the forms of sexism present in the anarchist and radical left movement.<sup>47</sup> These activities started to appear after 2000, when the International Monetary Fund and World Bank summit took place in Prague and women activists were confronted with the very different status of their foreign counterparts [Kolářová 2006, 2009]. They focused on re-introducing the celebrations of the International Women's Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> March in Prague by organising the Global Women's Strike in 2001 and later focused on opposing the mainstream "institutional feminist" organisations. The group is not active anymore and nor is the zine associated with it (Bloody Mary) but some of the activists transferred to a radical queer initiative (and founded another zine) and some even to the third sector. The radical queer group, which is again non-hierarchical and not registered, has been organising genderfuck events, most notably the GenderFuck Fest, a multifocused festival stressing cultural but also political aspects and actively using intersectional approaches. The performances and workshop have a seemingly public focus but in fact may serve exclusionary practices. Within the given segment of the scene, who goes and does not makes a difference to their status as followed from my informal observations and not feeling exactly welcome especially at the small scale events.

When it comes to activities aiming at the general public rather than just the state, the organisations often act as educators but some also try to engage the public directly. One such attempt is framed by efforts to engage with transnational feminism. Thus, in 2013 and 2014, local organisations, such as Fórum 50%, took part in the international One Billion Rising event. An example of a public activity is the Sexist Pig contest (starting in 2009), which has grown popular both with the public and with the media. Nesehnutí, the organisation behind it founded in 1997 after splintering from an environmental organisation to include human rights activism, has been also calling on citizens to start enacting their rights actively and functioned as an intermediary in a public protest against a controversial construction. Thus, it tries to

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<sup>47</sup> The critiques voiced by the activists were in congruence with the forms of gender discrimination identified by Roth (2001) such as relegation to reproductive tasks or lack of voice. For details see Kapusta-Pofahl, Hašková, Kolářová 2005, Kolářová 2006, Vráblíková 2006.

implement the intersectional approach emphasising the synergetic effect of interacting axes of discrimination and oppression.

Thus, we have seen both the positive contribution of using the social movement theoretical lens for studying Czech “women’s groups” as local political scientists tend to call them as well as some of the drawbacks demonstrated on concrete omissions it results in. I have not, however, questioned the focus common to all the studies whether they embrace a given categorisation of political action or not. The previous section provides an overview of all the activities that should be considered as interdependent, which clearly poses a problem if we were to stick to the framework suggested by social movement theory that tends to focus only on either movements or activities that resemble them.

### *Scene*

Therefore, I started to search for a term that would both clarify I am not concerned solely with the third sector and that would at the same time enable me to include all the envisaged participants. I was also looking for a term that would allow for some level of unity due to the emphasis on interconnected, which is evident, e.g. from the rifts regarding the “ownership” of topics.

In his synthesizing afterword to a volume depicting the survival strategies of social movements under neoliberal right-wing government in Australia, Mario Diani names “scene” together with “milieu” and “organizational field of actors” to describe a “mode of coordination of collective action, in which sustained networking between organizations in terms of joint campaigning is rare” [Diani 2010: 231]. All these terms try to capture the continued political activity of social actors previously pertaining to mass social movements that have declined as a result of adversary neoliberal politics. The aim is therefore to supplement the social movement theory with a term akin to Verta Taylor’s abeyance. While all these inform the present analysis, I am not looking for a term that would somehow help the social movement theory to conceptualise the local activities. Rather, I seek a term that is flexible enough to include various subjects and organisations and yet hint their (however loose and disputed) common allegiance. For these purposes I finally appropriated the term

scene,<sup>48</sup> which is mainly associated with the sociological and cultural studies of music scenes.

Within this tradition, scenes have come to supersede the problematic term of youth subcultures [Bennett 2004]. They are usually divided into several spheres of operation, namely local (usually located in a concrete bar/hall in an urban area), translocal (constituted of the practice to follow the favourite band to gigs away from the local setting) and virtual<sup>49</sup> (addressing the online exchanges between fans, the sites and possibly band members online) [Glass 2012]. In the Czech Republic, this concept has been applied to the hardcore and punk music scene in Brno [Císař and Koubek 2012]. The last study focused on the adversary effects of commercialisation and political activism on the scene.

There are two aspects of this conceptualisation of the scene that I find useful: firstly, it is the relatively great variety of actors that form it. Scene are umbrella terms for the fans, those running the facilities as well as bands and yet it shows their point of reference. This allows for conceiving of the individual actors as united not necessarily in terms of identity (as most definitions of social movements would require) but rather in terms of a shared space that at the same time works to define them as sharing some characteristics (they are members of the same scene). This usage also allows us to focus only some parts of the scene, as if pointing a spotlight, which means we are aware of the presence of other actors (in this case, e.g., feminist artists and feminist politicians from Strana Zelených and ProAlt) and do not see it as secondary to the issues we study even if they are not the ones we focus on here.

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<sup>48</sup> In Czech sociological discourse, an interesting terminological problem arises. Erving Goffman's dramaturgical perspective is largely translated as having to do with a scene although in the original he mostly uses the term stage. Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity, owing to my overarching theoretical grounding affected by post-structuralism, discourse and performativity, I do not see the idea of a backstage as epistemologically compatible with these starting points. It de facto argues there is some core to identity, even if one only temporarily accessible, which goes against the definition of subjectivity by Braidotti used throughout the thesis.

<sup>49</sup> Especially the conceptualisation of the virtual sphere could serve as inspiration for future research as Facebook and other social media have already started to impact on the scene. For instance, I have learned about most of the events either via being a member of an email group or by visiting the genderfuck website while it was still in operation.

The other aspect has to do with the performative element. As Glass [2012] points out, scenes come into being through the performances of their members, which also means that they are in a state of constant flux. Unlike the use for the study of music genres and their following, I am not deeply interested in the aspect of identity construction (as the definition of feminist subjectivity and the related ethics suggests; the question after identification with feminism stems from the literature review). I use the concept of scene to conceptualise the becoming of Czech feminism in its various forms and backgrounds, which enables me to see both the rifts dividing the scene and the continuities otherwise lost in the more traditional divisions based on institutional setting of the actors. Moreover, the introduction of this tool also allows me to abandon the concepts describing social movements in stages that cannot, for ontological reasons, take place in the Czech Republic.

In summary, the social movement theory approach to the study of local feminist activities has its merits, namely its transnational focus [Petrova and Tarrow 2007] and emphasis put on the study of the political environment [Saxonberg 2011]. However, this approach also has some drawbacks. It tends to overrely both on the concept of protest contested by feminist political researchers and on the role played by funding (which is related to the opening of political opportunities). Moreover, it only focuses on the activist segment of the activities and subjectivities I am concerned with leaving out those active in the academia and also foreclosing the possible analysis of continuities and rifts along other than institutionally predefined lines. I therefore outlined my appropriation of the term scene for the purposes of the study at hand.

#### *2.1.4. Summary - points of departure*

Section 2.1 *Czech feminist scene* presented an analysis of the background necessary for anchoring the ensuing analysis of the scene's textual and performative production. I strived to analyse both the historical developments in order to show possible cross-fertilisations and the critical study of how these developments have been framed in historiography. There is a clear rift between women's history, which seems to have firmly settled in Czech historiography, and gender history, whose

proponents have started to voice their criticism [Nečasová 2008] and offer original research in the past several years [Nečasová 2011]. The continuities and changes are of crucial importance as they influence the present shape of the Czech feminist discursive landscape and will continue to do so. Feminist scholars have also started to pay more attention to these factors after 2005 [Hašková and Uhde 2009, Hašková, Saxonberg, and Mudrák 2012, Havelková and Oates-Indruchová 2014] pointing out many discursive continuities that have actual political repercussions in the form, e.g. of childcare policies.

The following section strived to present the topics entertained by the scene in its full. It also summarised the different activities that could be included if the focus of the paper was on “pro-women” rather than just feminist scene and also clarified the reasons for choosing the latter modifier. This section outlines what the different segments making up the scene under discussion are and what are some of their divisions.

The final section then arrives at a definition of the scene that is informed by the preceding points of contention (in terms of the vast array of topics addressed as well as historical developments of the segments of the scene usually treated separately). It also outlined the issue of activism and its relation to the debate over the presence or absence of a feminist or women’s movement.

## **2.2. Analysis of the scene's textual production**

Having outlined the actual scope of the focus of the study, I move to analysing in detail the textual material produced by the scene. I suggest an analytical division of the texts analysed based on the competing approaches by Marina Blagojević [2005] and Allaine Cerwonka [2008]. I next proceed to analysing the texts concerned with the scene produced by its members in order to show the conceptions and basis of criticism of how the scene operates in term of both theoretical production and cooperation. This section elaborates on and grounds the critical points driving the research at hand. I then further detail the analytical division of textual production co-creating the scene in order to provide the description of its discursive landscape.

### *2.2.1. Classification of textual production*

The relations, discussions, silences and exchanges, embodied experience and conflicts that make up the scene under discussion in terms of direct and indirect interactions of its protagonists can be imagined as taking place against a backdrop that does not just stay in the background but forms an indivisible part of the scene itself, including its embodied participants. In this particular case, I see this backdrop as comprising of a certain discursive landscape, which continues to change and shift with every addition to its complex fabric, with holes and pieces torn away and sometimes stitched back. This landscape incorporates those co-creating it and that is why we need to focus on it as well as on its protagonists. Even this very dissertation can be seen as part of the discursive landscape it hopes to describe.

The landscape could be categorized using at least the following five approaches:

*Discipline:* We can focus on the discipline of every given text and subsequently analyse the texts within the discourse of that given discipline. For instance, if we were interested in how gender is used by feminist literary critics, we

would need to analyse the use (or absence thereof) of the category gender in the discipline as such, which would allow us to draw conclusions on the specificities of the feminist approach/es and its/their possible merits. However relevant this approach is for it makes intertextuality central, we believe it is more appropriate for an in-depth analysis of the given discipline rather than for the purposes of our study. This being said, the impact of the discursive landscape in which a particular text is written is not to be underestimated and we try to reflect on it where appropriate.

*Workplace:* The production can be classified following the divisions delineated by workplace membership. This would mean analysing the texts in the context of the individual organisations rather than based on their disciplinary allegiance, which may be in compliance but may differ as well. This approach could be supported by the emphasis some participants put on the geographical divisions they see within the scene, with Prague and Brno described as the two main centres by those most neutral and as rivals by those stressing the differences. Following this logic, it would then make sense to compare how the different academic centres treat the category gender and this could also be done with the other groups. While this approach clearly has a lot of attraction (some of the research participants actively offered such comparisons), it takes the organisations for granted as somewhat coherent units existing prior to the research. Moreover, it also does not really make it possible to compare different types of organisations with one another, let alone individuals and groups that defy formalised organisation. A related issue is the normative expectation of a certain level of discursive unity of organisations (the normativity meaning that if a workplace has a clear and coherent theoretical framework, it makes it relatively better than a workplace that does not have such a unity). Given the heterogeneous nature of feminist thought, I believe such normative claims are contingent at best.

*Topics:* Another possible way is disregarding either of the aforementioned contexts and simply focusing on different topics addressed by people across the whole scene. This would arguably make it easy to put together texts from different parts of the scene, such as perspectives offered on domestic violence in graduations theses (there are 202 theses under this topic in the Gender Studies database), positions of NGOs targeting this issue (such as Brno-based Persefona) as well as social scientists analysing the discourse surrounding the topic [e.g., Marhánková

2006]. I use the topic based approach in the analysis to some extent due to the criticisms of topics being omitted by the scene [Kodíčková 2002, vodrážka 2003, 2006, Kolářová 2010].

*Audience:* The texts produced can also be classified based on their intended audience. This would make it possible to differentiate between texts that target the general public (such as the explanations of the Sexist Piggy Competition organised by Brno-based Nesehnutí), texts that mostly target the scene itself (for instance those appearing on the [www.feminismus.cz](http://www.feminismus.cz) website) and texts that are written with an academic reader in mind (such as those in Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research). We believe that any discourse analysis needs to take this point into account for it affects how intertextuality is to be treated in the analysis [for an original take on the impact of the audience on the content see Hájek, Kabele and Vojtíšková 2006a].

*Theories:* Finally, I believe that it should also be possible to differentiate between the texts based on their theoretical anchorage in relation to the task they explicitly set out for themselves. This is the approach to the texts I mostly follow but I believe it often means taking into account some if not all of the afore-mentioned categorisations. The remaining part presents a general analysis of the texts studied using this focus on theoretical anchorage.

The theoretical categorisation hinges on the central research question, which is in turn informed by the critique of the widespread ignorance of the geopolitical location and its repercussions by local feminists [Kodíčková 2002, vodrážka 2003, Kolářová 2010]. I turn to the theories on how feminist thought travels and by applying two competing perspectives, I try to determine, which one seems to rather fit the current theoretical production of the Czech feminist scene. The first concept is that of creators, transmitters and users designed by Marina Blagojević [2005] who believes the geopolitical distribution of power and the economy of knowledge (production) prevents the taking of knowledge creators for those not situated at the centre. The concept contesting this perspective is transculturation outlined by Allaine Cerwonka [2008] in order to prevent precluding analysis with pre-set notions stemming from the Cold War discourse. Cerwonka's approach is close to that of Clare Hemmings [2005]

who called for a critical reassessment of how the feminist “canon” solidifies due to relying on dubious frameworks of the history of feminist thought.

Based on the model proposed by Marina Blagojević, it is possible to differentiate between three main categories of texts in terms of how they work with theory (under 5) above). Analysing which model seems more in congruence with the production of the Czech feminist scene should then enable us to possibly identify some points shared across the scene that might be the basis for the broader platform for action stressed by Rosi Braidotti.

*Transmitters?:* There are texts that could indeed be described as instances of transmitting and disseminating “knowledge” created elsewhere, to use Blagojević's terms [2005]. These mostly focus on informing about a problem identified in a foreign-language feminist discourse and the way it has been framed and addressed abroad. Typically, in an academic setting, these are overview articles summarising the establishment of a given feminist perspective or debate with the aim of familiarising others with the insights. Articles by Marta Kolářová [2008, 2010] could serve as an example. Besides presenting intersectionality in its historical developments and transnational feminism respectively, she also stresses in the articles why both the theoretical frameworks should become an integral part of local feminist research and tries to explain their local “delay,” which may be seen as both a strategical move with the aim of inciting action and as the embracing of the internal orientalism decrying local backwardness. Part of Zuzana Uhde's fine-grained analysis of developments in feminist critical theory can also be ranked among these texts although she also includes an overview of how the theory has been used locally and what challenges it poses to the local scene (this part then belongs to c) below) [Uhde 2014].

In the area of NGOs, similar texts appear in literature based on projects, usually in the form of some preliminary research prompted by the requirements of the sponsor. It is also possible to read articles outlining various issues within transnational feminism in zines published by grassroots activists: both Bloody Mary (e.g., no. 13 from spring 2008 focused on “Love - under capitalism,” contains translation articles introducing topics such as prostitution in Nazi

concentration camps) and *Kvér* include articles providing an overview of their thematic topics. While the first issue of *Kvér* covered the issue of “queer” from different perspectives, the second issue focused on polyamorous relationships. Both include extensive overviews of the topics then addressed locally – this addressing may take the form of workshops, such as when views on SM sexual practices (in line with libertarian radical feminist stream) published in the zine lead to a workshop on DIY sex toys. Finally, we can find such articles also in the feminist magazine *FEMA*, which also followed the thematic logic when it was still printed, i.e. between 2010 and 2012.<sup>50</sup>

*Users?:* The second group of texts uses some framework theories, typically of foreign origin, and applies these to a local phenomenon or alternatively simply looks for local manifestations of the issues covered by the respective theory. If we were to use Marina Blagojević’s critical analysis again, this practice could be described as that of “users” [2005]. The reason why there is a question mark after this title (and the title above) is for I believe these texts de facto participate in transculturation as they usually need to adjust the theories somewhat to fit the local setting. Nevertheless, I keep the title for the time being as it is possible to regard the three groups presented here as a scale of how much the theories are engaged with. Arguably, the practice summarised under *a) Transmitters?* is also part of the transculturation as it shows “how theories travel” [Hemmings 2005] on the most general level.

On an international level, we could see such a development for instance in the case of the proliferation of the term “domestic violence” and the groups challenging it [for an overview of how the topic entered CEE see Fábíán 2010]. If the term “text” was to be understood more broadly to incorporate practices of groups of actors, the adoption of the whole gender mainstreaming discourse targeting especially the areas of liberal feminist interest (work-life balance) by the local third sector could be seen as an example of this approach.

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<sup>50</sup> Since 2012, the magazine went online and is no longer available in print form due to funding issues. The website is <http://femag.cz>.

In terms of texts written by the local scene, we can see this approach most often in the case of student theses for the very notion of writing a graduation thesis is contingent on the candidate's capacity to demonstrate familiarity with state of the art research methodologies. There are of course also overview theses introducing different stances on a given phenomenon [e.g., Lišková 2010a] as well as theses that rather belong to the following category, however based on the analysis of abstracts of the theses in the database run by Gender Studies, o.p.s., these are in clear minority.

This group also includes texts that focus on local “lacks” or “specifics” such as those criticised by Tereza Kodíčková [2002] and Martina Kampichler [2010].

*Embracing transculturation:* Finally, there are texts that seem to follow the logic of transculturation as outlined by Cerwonka [2008]. These typically ignore the “feminist East/West debates” and instead develop feminist theories of various kinds. They engage in transnational feminist debates [Knotková-Čapková 2007] but also in writing theory on local realities, often in English – the latest and possibly most concise addition being the volume edited by Hana Havelková and Libora Oates-Indruchová [2014].

Besides these texts, some NGOs defy the funding logic (at least at times). This especially pertains to those involved in promoting and embracing intersectionality (most notably the feminist section of Brno-based Nesehnutí) but also, e.g., the publication *G bod* [2011] of the Gender Studies, o.p.s. and some of the texts appearing in the *FEMA* magazine that have taken up the challenges put forward by Kodíčková [2002], Kolářová [2010] and most recently Uhde [2014] and actively engage with postcolonial feminism, intersectionality and more critical version of feminist thought, often openly leftist.

The above-sketches overview presents the takes on theories within the discursive landscape of the Czech feminist scene. Cerwonka's is more appropriate for the textual production in its broadest sense shows cross-fertilisation with theories coming from different regions, including the global South (even if these are still in the minority). The cross-fertilisation means that rather than accepting the theories from a

subordinate position of the “Other,” they are engaged with critically and put to local use. At the same time, this process means the generation of new theories (even if these are not recognised/embraced as such by transnational feminist theoretical discourse).

At the same time, I hope it is clear from this overview that it is not possible to categorize individual authors or NGOs (for, e.g., one of the oldest and biggest feminist organisations – Gender Studies, o.p.s. - predominantly engages in EU elicited liberal feminist activities such as the promotion of work-life balance but also published the magazine *G bod*, i.e. a publication challenging liberal feminism in most of the texts it contains at least by having a totally different focus on issues such as prostitution, cartoons or queer). Rather, each text has to be considered separately as a new contribution. Moreover, the claims that the Czech feminist thought is a monoculture [vodrážka 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2009e] as well as those claiming it is driven by liberal feminism clearly need some qualifications for there is no longer such a theoretical unity and the countercurrents are no longer limited to relatively marginal queer feminist activities and anarchofeminism. This is not to say that funding and the very functioning of NGOs, but to some extent also of the academic sector, do not impact on the type of theories used as default ones (stressing, e.g., equal opportunities as this increases the probability of organisational survival in an environment where almost no other resources are available).

There is, nevertheless, a pronounced shift away from the theoretical reliance on liberal feminism towards a richer discursive environment, a shift probably boosted by the introduction of gender programmes and courses to Czech universities and a change to the dominant political discourse. Some issues seem to prevail, such as the stigmatisation of leftist theories even in social sciences although even here shifts are visible. Nevertheless, in the context after the global financial crisis and the imposition of austerity measures framed in a neoliberal discourse [Bourdieu 1998] hostile to even the milder forms of feminism, it is generally no longer possible to maintain the previous dominant discourse of teleological transformation intact. The relatively new academic institutional grounding of gender studies programmes at the two biggest universities (the BA programme in Brno and MA programme in Prague; there is currently no specialised gender PhD programme available although gender oriented

dissertations also keep emerging) coincides with the newly peer-review status of the journal *Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research*. These institutional shifts have caused a surge in the number of graduation theses on gender relevant issues. This movement is then even more strengthened by a greater emphasis put on mobility of academic workers (albeit with its gendered bias), which again contributes to transculturation. Last but not least, the shift to the geopolitical situation of the Czech Republic as pointed out by Horký [2008] and Kolářová [2010] but also vodrážka [2003] has also started to influence at least some of the production [Uhde 2014].

Within the NGO sector, there have been dramatic changes to the Czech Women's Lobby in terms of its membership base and activity. The appointment of activist rather than bureaucratic heads of this umbrella organisation could also result in a more pronounced differentiation and exchange among the respective organisations.

### *2.2.2. Literature on the scene*

The literature on the shape of the Czech feminist scene or rather its individual parts promises to offer critical normative discourses with strong claims to truth. Before I turn to the analysis of particular texts by the respective authors, there is a normative discourse that has been governing much of the focus of the thesis that needs to be treated in its whole although this will mean some overlaps with the remaining analysis. Namely it is the discourse on the geopolitical location of the scene.

The critique of the ignorance of the geopolitics inherent to the position of local feminist endeavours was penned by Tereza Kodíčková in 2002. This criticism has been repeated several times since then. Only a year later, mirek vodrážka criticised the lack of interest in international and supranational issues on the part of the local feminists [vodrážka 2003]. In particular, he bashes their lack of interest in international affairs, concretely in the beginning of the war in Iraq. Three years later,

he points out an absence of a dialogue of what he terms women's organisations on "essential social and global issues" [vodrážka 2006: 69].<sup>51</sup>

Marta Kolářová's most concise criticism of the shortcomings of local academic feminist thought in relation to international and supranational issues comes from an article published in 2010. Just like Tereza Kodíčková, Marta Kolářová also juxtaposes criticism of "Western" feminist discourse penned by Third World feminists such as Mohanty [1984, 2002], Anzaldúa [1999, originally 1987], and Spivak [1988] with similar criticism by authors most invested in the "feminist East/West debates" analysed by Martina Kampichler [2010]. Kolářová focuses on transnational feminism and its relevance for Czech feminist thought. She concludes by pointing out both the shortcomings of transnational feminism (such as failing to establish a transnational political solidarity) and more specifically those of local feminist thought. The main charge is the need to acknowledge the shift in local feminist subjects from the position of the Other [cf. Said 1978, Spivak 1988] to the position of those belonging to the global North with all the related responsibilities and accountability. She thereby de facto precludes the possibility to reiterate the critique by Tereza Kodíčková for the position of the Czech Republic and thereby also of Czech feminism has shifted since.

A similar critique, this time focusing on Czech development studies and Czech gender studies criticises de facto the same phenomenon but instead of focusing on the more general level of theories and implication of changes to the world order as alluded by Kolářová [2010], Horký provides concrete examples of the shortcomings within the two fields to reflect on one another and include the respective perspective

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<sup>51</sup> In this context, it is interesting to note that in 2003, Jacqui True published her book *Gender, Globalization, and Postsocialism*, which attempts at "[e]ngendering post-socialist transformations" [True 2003: 25], i.e. to provide a synthetic framework for analysing changes in the gender order (albeit understood in a binary way) with an emphasis on global forces. True also participated in the series of talks called "Úterky s genderem" (Tuesdays with Gender) hosted by Gender Studies, o.p.s. in Prague in 1998 giving a speech on International Relations, Policy and Feminism in 1998, and thus her work may be considered locally known. Nevertheless, from the feminist production analysed here, her work is mostly reflected in texts written by Marta Kolářová [e.g., Kolářová 2009], whose focus is on the anti-globalisation/anti-capitalist movement and how it is engendered, among other things.

in their analyses and action [Horký 2008]. This critique is based on the reflection of “gender and development”, a field expanding already in the 1980s, whose local absence in 2008 seems disturbing not because of the “comparative lack” mentioned above but because of the Czech Republic’s involvement in practical development projects in the “global South.” In this respect, the work of Zuzana Uhde [2011] has to be mentioned too as she strives to fill in at least one of the gaps, namely that of the critical concept of care in the light of globalisation and does so again deliberately to address the shortcomings.

These texts operate as a discourse on the geopolitical position of the Czech Republic and by default also of feminists from the Czech Republic. Its claims to truth are based on the changes to the position of the CR such as joining of the EU and NATO and improved economic situation, which are used as the basis for ethical and action-oriented requirements placed on Czech feminists. Besides such calls, this discourse also provides the critics with a discursive position which allows them to make normative claims as to what should and should not be done. In terms of the analysis of the Czech feminist scene, their voices keep pointing out the relative lack of scholarship explicitly addressing the issues they construct as pertinent. Their accounts also contribute to the conceptualisation of the current state of feminist theories in the CR.

Besides this relatively coherent discourse, there are more particular critiques offered of other shortcomings of the scene. These provide rich material for the interview guide and consist of texts written from feminist positions on feminist activities in the Czech Republic. I outline the claims made in this body of literature together with their theoretical background. Given the dates of their publication, it is possible to search for whether the claims still hold true or whether there has been change (and what it entails).

Since many of the graduation theses deal with the status of the “women's movement” or its individual strands (e.g., ecofeminism: Čechová 2006), I need to maintain here that this section deals with texts by established scholars that have commented on the scene continuously. In addition, they all form part of the scene, i.e., unlike in the texts by political scientists [Císař 2008, Císař and Vráblíková 2010], they form part of the discursive landscape I map. Their contribution is important for it strives to critically

reflect on the scene and thereby influence its future developments (but also affect the position of power – related to claims knowing the truth about the scene – of the critics). Many of the topics that are challenged seem to resurface time and time again.

Based on the above criteria I focus on the work of the following authors: Kodíčková, Kolářová, Havelková, Šmausová, Oates-Indruchová, V/vodrážka. In addition, I also include an overview of topics introduced in two volumes on the scene: *Nové čtení světa*, published in 1999 and *Mnohohlasem*, published in 2006. We also include an overview of debates led at a panel discussion held on 2 November 2007 and later published online in *Kontext: časopis pro gender a vědění* [Oates-Indruchová 2008a, 2008b, Šaldová 2008] together with a critical reflection of the discussions [Šmausová 2008].

The volume *Nové čtení světa* [Noe, Chuchma and Klimentová 1999] attempted to collect personal accounts of feminism that could provide the intended reader (from the general public) with an insight into the heterogeneity of feminist thought as presented by the diverse group of ecologists, feminists, theologians, and authors. The contributors mostly explain how and why they started to be interested in feminism or why they have a negative attitude to it. Due to this intended diversity, it is not possible to define an overriding theoretical direction or starting point and as there are antifeminist voices, contributors not directly addressing feminism as well as those who embrace it. I focus on the latter for they had the potential to form part of the scene. The very approaching of the concrete individuals endows them with power to produce knowledge that can in turn contribute to their position within the scene. This was amplified by the liberty given to the authors and the public the book addresses (i.e. general rather than academic one) – the intended audience and the fact that the book soon sold out are also the reasons why I include the volume here despite its year of publication.

These contributions show the individual roots of feminism as constructed by the respective authors. A distinct feature of several contributions is the emphasis put on experience with feminism from abroad: Pavla Jonsson's piece *Důvody k radosti* (Reasons for Joy) [1999] presents several phenomena (such as Guerrilla Girls) she studied in the USA. The contribution stands out because of its positive, i.e. not

negating or self-determining in opposition to, stance on different expressions of feminist activism in the CR. She constructs the role of the abroad as both normative and positive for it highlights new issues.

There are authors claiming allegiance with constructionist strands of feminist thought [Šmídová 1999], this time with a prediction that feminism will first be truly established within the academia. There are also supporters of the feminism of difference in the form of essentialising ecofeminism stressing the innate difference between men and women and thereby constructing them as both actual entities and as hierarchically situated mutual opposites: "...relations are primarily those between women and men. This is unquestionably determined by nature [Haisová 1999: 23]. She thus embraces the binary opposition in contrast to the two previous authors.

Some of the texts focus on specific disciplines, such as theology [Kofroňová 1999] and linguistics [Valdrová 1999, Vangeli 1999]. In stark contrast to some of the very personal accounts of identification with feminism [Benetková 1999], there is the contribution of Mirek Vodrážka/Mirka Vodrážková<sup>52</sup> [Vodrážka/Vodrážková 1999] called *Hranice české společnosti střeží tajná 'pohlavní' policie* (Czech society's borders are guarded by secrete 'sex police'). While the author does not clarify his/her stance on feminism, s/he defines feminism in the CR as a 'displaced discourse' [1999: 255]. S/he is critical of the state of feminism in the CR, especially due to the absence of those willing to use its radically subversive potential for human existence<sup>53</sup> – this reflects the author's stress on existentialism and existentialist feminism (in this case mostly identified with the work of Simone Beauvoir) in particular. Unlike some of the other authors he points out that this radical subversion is not something that has to come (in some sort of a teleological expectation), quite the contrary. Power/knowledge is produced here by establishing a measure against which the perceived shortcomings of the scene can be put. This discursive strategy helps to boost the author's standing as an arbiter with an epistemologically proven

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<sup>52</sup> The correct typing of this author's name can prove rather difficult as with her/his changing theoretical positions, s/he has also changed the lettering of her/his name. When referencing concrete works, we adhere to the name as stated. When referring to the author in general, we use "Mirek Vodrážka" or just "Vodrážka" for brevity based on the name given in the latest publication [Vodrážka 2013].

<sup>53</sup> In less theoretical terms, s/he also criticises the absence of a Czech feminist magazine/journal.

right to judge – he identifies (constructs) the only authentic or true feminism only to lament its local absence.

The teleological expectations are down to the commonly available frame of transformation suggesting the achievement of some desired “natural” state of (civil) society will ultimately take place – the contribution by Pavla Jonsson mentioned above resonates with this frame.

As outlined in the introduction, I believe that the critical voice of Mirek Vodrážka deserves closer inspection against the body of literature and interviews analysed here in order to establish whether his claims regarding the Czech feminist scene are plausible (and under what conditions) and with what discourses they are framed.

In general, Vodrážka's critical voice has been loud and largely consistent in relation to the Czech feminist scene [1999, 2003, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2009e] and may be regarded as minidiscourse in its own right. I start by an overview of some of his critiques and then outline possible points of contention. The first text is different for it focuses on Czech political discourse as such and the role ascribed to women in it in particular. It is charged with quotes from both local and foreign scholars, thinkers, TV stars and artists (sociologist Hana Maříková, former president Václav Havel, photographer Nan Goldin and dozens of others) and argues for embracing of a subversive feminism that would bring about the end of the 'single-sex' politics. The text offers a creative fusion of different strands of feminist thought (without pondering whether the combinations and parallels are epistemologically grounded and doable) that stresses both the emergence of a 'third sexed' and active embracing of one's sex identity performed based on free will. The text can be used as a shortcut for the other texts penned by Vodrážka. While the author points out some actual burning issues and questions for the local feminist scene, the persuasiveness of his argumentation is weakened by not paying too much attention to the structure of feminist thought (e.g., combining existentialism with poststructuralism).

His claims to truth are delivered by referring to a vast body of diverse literature and authors (all the more stunning given how short the brochure is), mainly grounding his critique in the existentialist discourse on sexual difference. The vast body of literature referenced may be linked to his standing outside of the academia requiring him to

prove his academic merit. Nevertheless, the main topic of the position of women in politics was only fully embraced by Fórum 50% founded in 2004.

He continued to offer another critique, this time directly of the Czech feminist scene [2003]. To describe the scene, vodrážka uses the term 'adiaphorisation' borrowed from Zygmunt Bauman, for whom it denotes the emptying of terms and acts traditionally connected with morals in late modern societies. This leads to the spreading of moral relativism to all walks of life. vodrážka claims that some activists tend to produce 'feminism without feminism' and 'politics free of politics' by not identifying with either of these (i.e., he claims they do not self-identify with feminism and do not view their usually socially-oriented work in pro-women's groups as political). He identifies this approach with emptying feminism of all its subversive potential and de facto blames the situation on the activists. Moreover, he is critical of how Czech feminists ignore international affairs and the war in Iraq in particular. Although this text appeared after Kodíčková's critique, he does not reference her. This is a repeating feature of his writing: despite criticising the local scene, he hardly ever references any of the texts. Thus intertextuality and building of theoretical alliances is avoided in order to maintain his aloof, norm-setting position.

The other volume, *Mnohohlasem* [Hašková, Křížková and Linková 2006a], also contains one vodrážka's text on Czech women's organisations and groups. He is critical of their alleged submissiveness and absence of de facto all features he considers crucial for their confidence and identity. While I will return to both the criticisms of Czech activists for lack of international focus and failure to identify with feminism when analysing the interviews with (not just) them, in terms of the description of the landscape, his hierarchy of feminisms seems interesting also due to the normative use he puts it to.

vodrážka outlines a hierarchy of feminist theories, on the top of which there is political feminism (absent from the Czech landscape in his reading), below which stands existentialist feminism (again almost absent), and below those two – i.e. in a position that allows it to undermine them – stands what he calls 'social' feminism (the dominant type in the CR). Again, we run into a conspicuous lack in the proposed hierarchy - there are no explicit definitions of the terms or any clues in the form of feminists he would cite, which makes them quite confusing – this is a problem in itself

for he sets a norm without outlining its actual content. Thus, I may only derive the theoretical background and actual meaning of the labels from the practices he attaches them to. Since his social feminism is characterised by activities aiming at achieving equal opportunities based on a universalist understanding of subjectivity, we may assume this is de facto liberal feminism in the mainstream feminist classification of feminist thought.

Existentialist feminism concerns lived experience and identity: the embodied living of femininity as a category. The main point is the recognition of femininity as otherness and its secondarity. In practice, realizing this often means shifts in personal life caused by activism such as divorce. Nevertheless, he claims that in the Czech feminist scene, these changes remain on the personal level and are not translated into political action. And often, they do not take place at all (here he is critical of the fact that some activists do not live in accordance with their political ideals on a personal level, a criticism also to be repeated in the interviews for the present research). Vodrážka uses the slogan 'personal is political' [2006: 75]. He clearly refers to Simone de Beauvoir although he does not cite her. The norm as well as its effect is clear here – by invoking lack of authenticity on the part of the activists, they are to blame for the present status quo.

The highest kind of feminism is branded 'political.' vodrážka believes this type of feminism is totally unacceptable for what he terms the local 'proto-movement.' This strand of feminist thought 'accentuates the change of power and institutional relations' [vodrážka 2006: 75]. Its aim is not to merely get rid of partial inequalities by including women in the concept of the independent political subject (a liberal feminist – or in vodrážka's terminology social feminist - goal) but a fundamental transformation (or better toppling) of present power structures. This type of feminism seems most in congruence with feminist critical theory. However, vodrážka does not give any clues in terms of those he cites.

The discursive landscape of the Czech feminist scene as so far described by vodrážka is thus highly fragmented (which is to some extent supported by the diverse contributions to *Nové čtení světa*), with a reluctant stance on 'true' feminism, prevented by adiaphorisation – for instance, he criticises the absence of any dialogue of the women's groups on 'serious social and global issues' [vodrážka 2006: 69]. The

discursive strategy he uses is based on labelling the perceived shortcomings of the local scene, almost psychological terms. Those active act as if in oblivion, i.e. not with self-determination and clear political goals. As hinted already in his warnings in 1999, he sees no hope for these groups while he clearly prefers internal causes over external pressures as explanation of the status quo. If he invoked external causes, the discursive framework would be much less effective.

In 2009, Vodrážka, then a member of the Gender Information and News Agency gitA conducted a series of interviews with representatives of Czech feminism from both NGOs and academia [2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2009e]. The texts are centred on another critique of the local scene. This time, he targets the allegedly unclear definition of the term gender and its use within the scene. These discussions reveal his discursive strategy. The strategy is important because it defines the things that can be meaningfully said. This means that instead of an interview as much open as possible, providing those interviewed with space, it can significantly affect (and even effect) their accounts.

To give a concrete example, Vodrážka repeatedly stresses the importance of what he terms 'reflexivity of gender,' i.e. not just its critical approach to social relations but also to itself as a concept: those using gender as a tool of inquiry should always be aware of the construction it creates and critically reflect on whether these actually are the things observed or whether they could be something else. This should immunize them against approaching research with pre-fixed understandings that are then 'discovered.' He claims that: 'gender has already become an ideology. In congruence with Mannheim's definition, not only does ideology maintain certain hierarchies and emphasises inequalities but it also keeps some issues ideologically hidden...looking through ideological structures prevents an individual from seeing certain things' [Vodrážka 2009c]. While this would suggest that he is open about his position, this definition explicitly appears only in the third interview and stays hidden in the others.

What this then creates is uncertainty and the feeling of being implicitly criticised by the interviewer on the side of those interviewed. This can be seen in several instances where those interviewed get upset over not understanding what he is getting at, which however, does not prompt him to elaborate on the issue. This strategy allows him to introduce interpretation of the functioning of the scene in the

form of prepared analyses, which he only partly shares with those interviewed. Hana Havelková supports this reading in one of the interviews: 'By the way, you do it too sometimes. You start by outright criticising something without putting forward any arguments' [Vodrážka 2009d]. In other words, Vodrážka here breaches basic principles of critique by failing to make his presuppositions explicit [Anderson 2003].

Some of his key interpretations are: gender has become ideological. It is not reflected when used by NGOs (he uses the politically charged term 'grant prostitution' [Vodrážka 2009e] to describe this practice) and he alleges this is the case in scientific discourse as well. Besides being ideological, gender has also turned into a 'monoculture',<sup>54</sup> i.e., there is no discussion about the term and it is used without reflection as a given and mostly as strictly dichotomous. Another concern is over the differences between feminism – gender - equal opportunities<sup>55</sup> and the danger of emptying them of any subversive potential if their connection with feminist goals is denied. He attributes this practice mostly to NGOs,<sup>56</sup> sometimes in accordance with those he interviews but suggests this is the practice of the academia, too. This is connected with another problem: that of an instrumental use of gender [2009d]. It implies that gender is disconnected from feminism (he cites the example of gender mainstreaming), which then leads to perpetuating the female/male (rather than at least feminine/masculine) dichotomy and prevents subversive change of power relations. Finally, Vodrážka expresses his belief that the openly feminist strategy adopted by the Slovak *Aspekt* magazine is better than that adopted by local NGOs.

The interviews are of course not only interesting in terms of their co-author's discursive strategies and perception of the scene. On a general level, they support the approach adopted in the present study by stressing the interconnection between the different parts of the scene. The interviewees' accounts of the scene outline several issues: the need to operate within a negatively biased environment (the ill

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<sup>54</sup> In a contribution to proceedings from a conference on women in politics, Alena Wagnerová used this term to describe Czech politics due to its lack of women [Hauserová 1996]

<sup>55</sup> This critique is related to Martin Hájek's 'demasking' of gender as a substitute by means of which feminist 'ideology' can claim legitimacy [Hájek 1995].

<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, he only spoke to representatives of Gender Studies, o.p.s. out all the NGOs in this series of interviews.

repute of feminism within the media and academia and society), which leads to the adoption of at least two strategies. The first one is that of a 'translation' of what feminism and gender are to those 'outside' [2009c, 2009e]. The second one is that of Gayatri Spivak's strategic essentialism [1988] seen as necessary at least for activist practice. The lack of discussion is acknowledged by several interviewees but its roots are perceived differently. Iva Šmídová blames it on the overloading of those capable of leading such a dialogue with administrative and other tasks while Věra Sokolová is more critical of the reluctance to lead any such dialogue. When it comes to naming those who seem to produce feminist theory, although lack of such figures is lamented, the following ones are named: Gerlinda Šmausová, Kateřina Nedbálková, Věra Sokolová and Kateřina Kolářová, i.e. all the authors under 5c) above in 2.2 *Analysis of the scene's production* as those actively engaged in transculturation.

Thus, Vodrážka's texts offer a mixture of identifying issues also seen as problematic by others and the establishment of his own exclusive discursive position within Czech feminism. His insights are nevertheless important as he is both cited by scholars outside the scene [Císař 2008] and is arguably a member thereof as he repeatedly contributes his texts to feminist spaces (such as was the case with the volume *Mnohohlasem*, his work for the gitA agency). If we refer his "discourse" to Braidotti's call for a common platform for action, he at the same time as if embraces it (for lack of unity is a key criticism of his) but also denies it by both anointing the scene as hopeless and also culpable.

*Feminism in the academia: activism in academia – commitment of feminist research – topics – language of equal opportunities*

In November 2007, a seminar called *Feminismus v akademii: aktivismus v akademii – angažovanost feministického výzkumu – témata – jazyk rovných příležitostí* (translation above) was held at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. Its focus was different from the one of the interviews just analysed but there are overlaps, not just in terms of those taking part in the panel. The setting and the topics of the talks have an impact on the form of the statements and comments within the debate (published in *Kontext: časopis pro gender a vědění* in 2008). There is less

confrontation in the discussion, something criticised by also present Mirek Vodrážka, who interprets it as a proof of lack of reflexivity [Oates-Indruchová 2008b: 9].

The angle from which the scene is constructed is also different. Instead of focusing on one of the core terms of feminist theories – gender – it centres on defining what counts as activism, how (and whether) it differs from committed research, what (if anything) makes feminist research specific and finally, how the academic sector cooperates with the non-academic one. The latter issue of cooperation has been criticised by Věra Sokolová [vodrážka 2009b] as an example of monoculture, since she understands it as a topic frequently addressed especially within the academia with no tangible outcome in terms of a resolution. Another issue that seems to resurface is that of the difference between feminism and gender studies, also mentioned in the interviews mentioned above. The difference, perceived as specifically local, is attributed to sociologist Jiřina Šiklová's article, in which she differentiates between politically charged feminism and scientific neutral gender [1999]. Another effect of this reading is the name of Gender Studies, o.p.s. which, despite its name, has never been solely devoted to education and/or research. It is something also reflected in the accounts of strategic choices mentioned in the interviews above.

The three rounds of debates [Oates-Indruchová 2008a, 2008b, Šaldová 2008] show the prevailing approach to gender within the debates is de facto dichotomous, as was also pointed out by one of the participants, Jitka Kolářová. Intersectionality, including emphasis on sexualities and ethnicity, as an approach to feminist theory is not embraced by most of the discussants. This confrontation reveals a conflict of two different conceptualisations of gender with one defined as ultimately better for its greater inclusivity and tacitly also for following developments in feminist theories coming from abroad. When they focus on the specificity of feminist research and science, they run into the problem of how distinctive the stress on self-reflexivity really is. It is shown that in this particular case, it is not possible to consider feminist research in isolation from the situation in Czech social science as such, which is criticised for not being reflexive. The background of such social science then marks self-reflexivity as different. The emphasis put on reflexivity is thus framed as

oppositional, which simultaneously asserts the progressive (positive) nature of feminist science and blames its marginal status on the environment it has to operate in. The panellists sometimes use 'abroad' as a measure or ideal for they assume such issues are less of a problem 'there': "...While 'outside' there are more people who identify with positionality and situated knowledge approaches, it is only a minority in the Czech Republic, which has to constantly defend itself"<sup>57</sup> [Oates-Indruchová 2008b: 7]. Interestingly, the 'West' is not mentioned in the debates leaving the abroad as if unmarked. Given the highly theoretical content of the references this shows that the referential framework has settled on the EU and the USA to such an extent that it is no longer necessary to even name it. A similar discourse is invoked, e.g., by Věra Sokolová, who finds the Czech feminist environment as lacking in inspiration. Due to her biography (studies in the USA), the referential framework is clear [2009b].

In its published version, the debate is supplemented with an analysis of the arguments put forward regarding activism and commitment within the feminist academia and research by Gerlinda Šmausová [2008]. Using Niklas Luhmann and Sandra Harding, she analyses the debate to arrive at the necessity of treating the academic and non-academic sectors as distinct. In congruence with the accounts of some of those interviewed by Mirek Vodrážka, she acknowledges the need of establishing 'translation services' [Šmausová 2008: 13] functioning between science and the other sectors although these are not necessary from the viewpoint of why scientific work is done (according to Šmausová, it is done solely for the sake of science, not anyone/anything else). The application of the results of academic research is not a matter of research but of practice, hence the needed differentiation between feminist activism and academic research.<sup>58</sup> The discursively salient part stems from the creation of a binary opposition – whenever attempts are made at merging the two sets of practices, the activities get compromised.

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<sup>57</sup> Lucie Jarkovská: "...Zatímco „venku“ je více těch lidí, kteří se identifikují s přístupem pozicionality a situovanosti vědění, v Česku je to pořád menšina, která se musí neustále obhajovat."

<sup>58</sup> Šmausová is not critical of activities such as those by the National Contact Centre – Women and Science, which take place within the academia but constitute a different set of activities than research does. She thereby stresses the importance of maintaining the division even when they concern a single person [2008].

In 2011, the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Conference of Czech and Slovak Feminist Studies: Borders and Beyond*<sup>59</sup> took place in Brno. Gerlinda Šmausová was one of the keynote speakers. In her speech on the concept of emancipation and in the following discussion, she reiterated the conclusions of her analysis of the contested place of activism in the academia. The speech incited a debate that spilled over to discussions among the conference participants, of whom many disagreed with the delineation of scientific practice suggested by Šmausová. Unfortunately, no proceedings were published after the conference, and the articles appearing in the issue of *Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research* dedicated to 8 articles from the conference [2/2012] did not concern these debates.

The conference managed to elicit papers on the concept of border and thereby of difference in various areas. Although the initial intention was to invite participants from the non-academic sector, this failed to happen in the end. The topics presented as well as the level of their elaboration varied greatly, leaving mostly the impression of huge heterogeneity at least in terms of topics, as if reflecting what Věra Sokolová complains about when mentioning the preceding first conference held in 2005. She claims that at that conference the goal was not so much to start a cooperation across the scene but rather to 'stake out' [Vodrážka 2009b] the topics "take" by the respective authors.

The "staking out" is thus a trope repeatedly found and established in the self-reflective critical discourse on the scene. This practice is seen as open to criticism for its perceived negative effects of preventing cooperation. This situates cooperation as a desirable but lacking feature of local feminism.

Diversity is another re-emerging topic. In 2006, a volume on the Czech 'women's spaces' – *Mnohohlasem* [Hašková, Křížková, Linková 2006b] - was published. Unlike *Nové čtení světa*, this volume targets the scientific community having been published by the Sociological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, it contains analyses and contributions also from people based outside the academia in order to capture the diversity of the activities [Hašková, Křížková,

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<sup>59</sup> 2. Konference českých a slovenských feministických studií: Feministická studia na hranici (3 – 4 November 2011).

Linková 2006b]. The authors of the introduction (the volume does not have a conclusion that would comment on how the individual texts interact) stress their feminist approach but do not specify it anyhow: 'Although we define ourselves as feminists...' [Hašková, Křížková, Linková 2006b: 8]. The aim of the volume is not to map the theoretical background of the scene but just the activities that constitute it: 'Last but not least, we need to stress that it was by no means our goal to capture the state of feminist theory in the CR' [Hašková, Křížková, Linková 2006b: 13]. The need to operate within the limits posed by local social science leads the editors to defend the book's commitment, focus on achieving change and the fact that they also asked for contribution from people outside the academia. The introduction includes a reflection on feminist epistemology in relation to the issue of what counts as science and how a scientific object is established as well as theories of subjectivity and identity in relation to the attribute 'women's' in the subtitle.

The frame of reference here is thus also a comparative one – the authors construct the local situation as somewhat abnormal leading to the writing of the volume in the first place.

The heterogeneity thus constitutes another feature of the discourse. While it might be interpreted in positive terms [Jonsson 1999], it seems to be rather constructed critically, and often gets connected with a debate on the presence/absence of a movement in the CR. The focus is on the historical sources of Czech feminism/s, such as those in a chapter by Hana Havelková [2009]. She questions the applicability of the term 'movement' to local activities for she stresses the discontinuity and exogenous origin of the Czech scene, which is defined as at odds with a "true" home-grown movement. This topic was raised by Mirek Vodrážka in 2006 in *Mnohohlasem*. He claims that for Czech pro-women organisations feminism is something introduced from the outside – abroad – not something emerging out of their ontological needs (which would be the case of the existentialist feminism he promotes). Havelková also stresses the necessity to differentiate between specific periods under state socialism and warns against approaching it as a homogenous whole with simple and homogenous effects (a similar conclusion to the one of Hana Hašková and Zuzana Uhde published also in 2009; their edited volume emphasises path dependence when researching the present effects of state socialism). This focus then

counterbalances the accusations of lack of authenticity (which the exogenous origin strategy is based on) with showing local resources.

In more general terms, Gerlinda Šmausová (2011b) pointed out the crossroads on which local feminism found itself: between feminism focused on a limited, economically privileged group of women at the expense of other groups, and feminism accentuating social justice [Šmausová 2011b: 203]<sup>60</sup>. Hana Havelková interpreted this text as a 'gauntlet thrown down to Czech feminism' [Havelková 2011: 97] with the aim to catch up with theoretical debates (an implicitly normative claim again oriented towards those 'more advanced') and start to criticise middle-class feminism and the universalism it claims.

Another critique of Czech feminist thinking was offered by both Šmausová [2011a] and Oates-Indruchová [2011], who responded to the former, rather latent, critique. Both the texts are concerned with the domination of sociology in writing on gender and its neopositivistic tendencies, which get mostly visible in how the category of gender is treated in them. Šmausová criticises treating gender as if it had an 'ontic' core, inherent to sex. This would de facto make gender redundant. Šmausová therefore outlines the history of gender and relates it to the labour market and other areas of sociological inquiry but this time without reproducing the dualism, on which both feminism of difference and liberal feminism rest.

Libora Oates-Indruchová [2011] then comments on the dominance of sociological writing on gender in the Czech scientific version of gender. She interprets Šmausová's text as a critique of where the sociology of gender stood at the turn of the millennium. She believes that at the time, theoretical debates stopped and left a 'white spot on the map' [Oates-Indruchová 2011: 83] of the Czech feminist sociological thinking.

To conclude, the analysis of texts mostly concerned with the scene as such and its shortcomings (and possibly successes) outlined some of the topics that seem to dominate the "metadiscourse" on the scene. The topics span the roots of Czech feminism/s (individual as well as general), different takes on feminist theories

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<sup>60</sup> The text was originally published in 2006.

(intersectionality or lack of it, constructivism in contrast to feminism of difference ascribed to NGOs, strategic essentialism), the dominance of sociology, the relations between academic and activist feminism, the concept of gender, relation between feminism, gender studies and equal opportunities as well as missing theoretical debates.

This section also introduced some discursive strategies within which these operate on texts produced by the scene on itself. The most widespread within this body of literature seems to be the critical metadiscourse. Unlike a different possible approach, stressing the external environment that I believe can still be described as not welcoming towards feminism (despite claims of more open political opportunities – Císař, Vráblíková 2010 – and improved public discourse – Saxonberg 2011 – see the *Introduction*), this discourse focuses on the scene itself as the source of the shortcomings. It manifests internal diversity, as not all the authors are concerned with the scene in the same way: some texts focus only on a selected segment of the scene, others on the whole. The critique, in the form of the strategies persuading of the salience of such an approach, can concern individual actors from NGOs, the academia or both. It can focus on their mutual relations, or on the way they address a specific issue (e.g., gender and intersectionality). Some of the strategies seem to lead to change (they suggest changes) with others arguing against any possibility of change.

A different discursive framework is the one that acknowledges some shortcomings but instead of looking for sources in the individual characteristics of those making up the scene, it focuses on the mainstream discourses within which the respective feminist operates. This not only stresses the relative marginality, even if this is improving due to both external and internal pressures, but also shows the overloading of those active with multiple tasks. Here the blame is more evenly distributed, which makes this metadiscourse more in compliance with Braidotti's call for a platform for action as it does not condemn the local activists as such, based on their epistemological or even ontological faultiness, which seems to be the case with some of the critiques. Moreover, the more contextual discourse also works less towards establishing the discursive position of the critic.

Given the account of the history of local feminism in section *2.1.1 History of women's/feminist activities*, there are other debates taking place on the scene (such as between women's and gender history). I focused mostly on the sociological sector but with overlaps into other disciplines (both frequently mentioned Věra Sokolová and Libora Oates-Indruchová are rather concerned with cultural studies and history). This is down to the disciplinary focus of this paper but I do realize that such a choice may in fact contribute to the domination of sociology perceived negatively by some. Nevertheless, as the debates in the field of history show, the forces inside and working on the discipline as well as the mutually exclusive definition of gender and women's history are also present there.

### *2.2.3. Production by the scene*

Going back to the broad division of the texts produced by the scene, I now turn to the ones by the scene members but this time not on the scene itself. In this section, I further elaborate on the divisions proposed by Marina Blagojević [2005] and Allaine Cerwonka [2008] trying to find out the present state of this body of feminist discourse. In particular, I focus on the division into the relation to theory based on the three categories of transmitters, users and transculturation.

#### *Transmitters?*

This group of texts is of diverse origin, i.e., it is produced across the scene. The focus of these texts is on introducing a problem, which the authors see as not engaged with by the scene and yet important. Besides problems, such as trafficking in women following 1989 or domestic violence, which rose to prominence especially after 2000 [cf. Fábíán 2010], this type of texts also introduces strands of thought and theories from abroad.

The focus on problems can be readily found within the agenda of feminist NGOs that thereby legitimise their focus on the respective problem (to paraphrase Hájek 1995). This does not necessarily mean that the problem has to be somehow

constructed/invented by the authors (i.e. that it is automatically irrelevant). Rather, it requires that a new perspective on the functioning of society is adopted in order to make the issue visible. This is why I added the question mark to the title as simple transmittance is hardly imaginable within a context focused on social change. The texts that could be most easily “accused of transmitting” are those by NGOs, which get criticised and cited (often in public discourse) for importing foreign issues (contingent on money) rather than engaging in addressing some issues of local importance (or alternatively of global one). One of the major effects of such “accusations” (as those outlined in the previous section) is that they tend to homogenise those criticised into a conglomerate with their written production.

However, I have already argued that the overreliance on funding and Europeanization as explanatory for the discursive practices of the NGO sector tend to obscure the very functioning of the organisations that often have to somehow survive when no funding is available.<sup>61</sup> It is the motivation that can sometimes be expressed in the form of a publication such as *G bod* mentioned earlier, which keeps at least some of the organisations going via continuing enthusiasm of their members.

In the more street oriented or grassroots activism, transmittance is present in the form of articles translated from foreign sources but also in the form of informing about forms of (contentious) action, protest and activity that could serve as inspiration<sup>62</sup>. Nevertheless, the very goal of the publications and especially events that also form part of the discourse even if not in a textual form is to put the “appropriated knowledge” to some local use. Thus, after the “gender screenings” organised by one of the activists active in the genderfuck collective there would always be a discussion eliciting responses to the film or documentary just watched. It also has to be noted that the activities of this loose group try to reach out into regions outside Prague (partly those some of the activists come from). In activists texts, informing is never

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<sup>61</sup> This observation was made during visits to NGOs in Prague and Brno with US students.

<sup>62</sup> See the zine *Bloody Mary*, *Kvér* but also the websites [www.genderfuck.cz](http://www.genderfuck.cz) and <http://followers.thcnet.cz/CyberNet/Punk-Rock%20Rebels%20Library/2.%20Anarchist%20Newspapers/Anarxofeminismus/anarchofeminismus.org/cs/kd-o-jsme> and the programmes of GenderFuck Fests that have so far been held in the CR.

just that. It both serves to show the sophistication of those bringing in the topic but also to start action based on the topic.

Where it is possible to encounter transmittance in a more crystal form are textbooks, readers and literature recommended within the framework of the gender programmes offered by Czech universities (e.g. in the two Czech readers by Oates-Indruchová 1998, 2007). However, even here, some qualifications are in place. When the texts are translated (by gender sensitive translators or alternatively by lay translators from other disciplines), the very practice of translation already requires a substantial engagement with the text and mapping of what can and cannot be said within its new context. When the texts are kept in their source language, they may be expected to be put to some contextualising practice in the classroom. Moreover, this reading of similar anthologies is also problematic within the periphery-semi-periphery-centre perspective because, e.g., the anthologies on Czech feminist thinking of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century [Bahenská, Heczková and Musilová 2010, 2011] introduce thought that used to present in the local discursive environment but has been erased since. The question would now be whether the historical and geopolitical difference counts as the same or distinctly different...

In the academic setting, the texts that could be tentatively described as engaged in transmittance are those focused on a theoretical perspective that is missing or only present marginally. Here, we could rank the two critical articles by Tereza Kodíčková [2002 – when she explains the terminology and its usefulness] and Marta Kolářová [2008, 2010] but also the review parts of works on feminist critical theory and its internal discussions and confrontations as introduced by Zuzana Uhde [most recently 2014]. The very fact that in the first and last cases we have to focus on the introduction signals that the concept of transmitters can be contested. The introductions serve to point to the salience of the focus for the local environment. Despite differences between the texts, the texts centre on how to locally apply the issues and what the merits of such an application are.

Similarly, Hana Havelková acknowledged in an interview with Mirek Vodrážka [2009d] that she translated a book on feminist philosophy [Nagi-Docekal 2007] in order to introduce a different, more genuine and better style of argumentation into Czech (feminist) environment.

Within the journal *Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research (Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum)*, the practice implemented on the tenth anniversary is that of publishing translation of foreign feminist articles, often centring on feminist theories. This practice, formerly predominantly done within the Slovak *Aspekt* feminist magazine, can also be seen as an act of introducing foreign “knowledge” and theoretical stances into the Czech feminist scene.

The mentioned examples show that the practice of introducing texts and whole strands of thought is actively present in the Czech feminist discourse. There is some difference in the provenience of the strands of thought. There are texts from relatively mainstream feminist thought (such as the examples of feminist critical theoretical thought). Next, there are texts that introduce critiques of this mainstream from postcolonial and Southern environments. Finally, especially in the case of grassroots activism, there are texts from across the globe but often from protest movements in other than “developed” or “One Third World” [a term used by Mohanty 2002 to describe in demographical terms what is usually termed the “First World”]. When it comes to introducing texts from the CEE region however broadly or narrowly defined there seems to be quite a gap despite attempts at, e.g., developing a theoretical stance of one own [cf. Kupla and Mizielińska 2011]. The sources of inspiration are generally predominantly situated in the Anglosaxon world, “Western” Europe and to a lesser extent in the South and Eastern Europe (here authors such as Eva Fodor are cited).

### *Users?*

In Marina Blagojević terminology, users are those who can only use the theories created by dominant others based at the centre [2005]. The problem with this perceived global academic practice is the ignoring of local epistemologies that can be erased through what Bennet [2013] calls epistemicide in translation. Moreover, some epistemological stances are simply not recognized as relevant while there is a power hierarchy as to whose vote on such relevance is worth more. In practice, “using” foreign theories mostly means applying them to realities social relations supposedly different from those in which they emerged.

In this reading, this type of practice would constitute the overriding take on theories within the formal production of the NGOs. Because they are still largely financially dependent on EU funding [cf. Hašková 2005, Císař and Vráblíková 2010], they de facto have to adopt the terminology and its theoretical baggage as it is used by the donors. The stress here might, however, be on the “theoretical baggage” and so much on the terms themselves for especially when it comes to gender-oriented EU projects, extensive negotiations are carried out before the terms are established. Often, originally subversive and contentious feminist goals are deprived of their potential on the way for they have to compete with other, often neoliberal economic, discourses [Stratigaki 2004]. Again, this does not necessarily relate to how the organisations perceive the social relations in society they try to change and interpreting their practice simply based on the project materials would mean distorting their practice and action they take.

This perspective also entails what Ang [2003a] describes when although she is allowed some space, its exact span is limited to her speaking her difference (from the norm) as long as it does not trouble the desired unity of the “feminist nation.” Thus, texts looking for local specifics and characteristics fall under this heading. I have to self-critically admit that the original idea for this research was de facto driven by this logic (what specific Czech feminist has emerged and what makes it specific? Specific could of course be replaced with “other” or different).

The difference from some perceived feminist normative practice or theoretical approach can be framed either neutrally in largely descriptive terms or normatively. Thus, we could claim that the most of the texts assessing the scene (see section 2.2.2 *Literature on the scene*) would belong here [vodrážka 1999, 2003, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2009e, Kodíčková 2002, Kolářová 2010]. The two large volumes published on the local stances on feminism [Noe, Chuchma and Klimentová 1999, Hašková, Křížková and Linková 2006a] would also belong to this group for they both search for local specifics and these are the very reason for the emergence of the volumes (especially in the first case).

This group would then also have to include all the texts falling under the heading of the “feminist East/West debates” [Kampichler 2010: 9] concerned with the perceived inequality and ontological difference between the “East” and the hegemonic “West”.

Just like in the previous subsection, some reservations are due here, too. The embodied practice surrounding the use of the texts by the scene is already an act of using the transmitted texts. This is true for how NGOs, especially those with long-term investment in feminist issues, approach the projects they undertake and should not be underestimated. This practice is, e.g., reflected in the many extra hours that could be de facto seen as volunteering rather than working for an NGO (which entails being paid) as noticed by Dagmar Lorenz Meyer [2013]. Similarly, the projects although based on an external “order” start to be invested and moulded to fit local meanings once the grants start to be solved.

This also applies to how the texts and thought are used within the academia. Diploma and other graduation thesis may really mostly consist of taking a theory and applying it to some concrete issue or just presenting an analysis thereof. This is affected by the purposes of graduation theses (i.e. the graduation itself) although it has to be noted that even in this area of academic production there are exceptions striving to go beyond this practice.

The application of foreign theories then most pertinently affects the production within the academia itself. To give an example, in her analysis of the panel organised in 2007, Gerlinda Šmausová mentions there is something as the “Brno gender discourse, which has started to use the term 'sex category'” for the level of gendered organisation of the world [Šmausová 2007: 14]. The adoption of intersectionality as done, e.g. by Sokolová [2004], of critical theory as done by Uhde [2012] and poststructuralism and deconstruction as practiced by the scholars of the gender studies programme at the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University in Brno but also by, e.g. Radka Dudová [2012] from Gender & Sociology department, or psychologist Kateřina Záborská [2009], could all be seen as belonging to this frame. As for dissertations, the one by Marta Kolářová, published in 2009, could also belong here. In it, she manages to do more than just apply a ready-made theory to the local context – this very context requires modifications to the theory itself as well as its grounding not just vis-à-vis the centre but the anti/alterglobalisation movement itself.

The above-listed literature thus defies the categorisation as only perpetuating the thought of others by actively supporting it with one's own work. The texts stress the parts (often rather abstract) of the theories to be used. There is no denying that the

array of theories used is again rather big and the relative theoretical unity at the site in Brno and the Gender Studies Centre under the Faculty of Arts in Prague is rather exceptional. Just like in the previous section, texts more reflecting on the theoretical input from the immediate neighbours are relatively missing (although this depends on the position and education of a given scholar – those who have studied/worked at the Central European university in Budapest are often the exception).

The need of adjusting the theories to fit the local setting has also taken a slightly different path than the one decried by Kodíčková in 2002. While there is still a substantial portion of texts produced by both the NGO sector and the academia that serves mostly to confirm some activity was done (and the grant money therefore does not have to be returned), there are also texts that focus both on the shortcomings but also on their overcoming by actually meticulously applying the methods and epistemologies from across the globe.

### *Embracing transculturation*

The previous two subsections show that the concept of creators, transmitters and users has its limits once we attempt to apply it to the local practice. The texts presented hardly ever function as solely transposed or as merely used for purposes serving the hegemonic centre. Surely enough, theories do travel to the CR from abroad. However, what happens with them, how the discourse is engaged with, is far from straightforward and no longer seems to fit a singular pattern. This subsection looks at instances in which theories are further developed.

I have mentioned that graduation theses often work to introduce a problem, sometimes a theoretical one, into the local discourse although their primary function is the graduation itself. Nevertheless, especially on the level of dissertations, the theses often do much more. That is the case, e.g., of the dissertation on the “feminist East/West debates” by Martina Kampichler introduced in section *1.1.3 Geopolitics – feminist perspectives*. Besides introducing a topic well established in the local discourse (although not really embraced any more by local scholars as she points out, in difference to theorists beyond such borders), she elaborates on it both in epistemological and methodological terms.

It could be argued that transculturation rather applies to the production of the academia than that of NGO and grassroots activists due to its predominant focus on how theory and thought are disseminated. Yet since I define discourse more elastically to include the practices of these organisations even the events these organisations hold are open to scrutiny. In such reading, both the grassroots and some practices of NGOs can be ranked here.

When it comes to the GenderFuck collective (which recently went defunct due to an internal rift but part of it keeps organising events, screenings and concerts), we can see transculturation “in the act.” The GenderFuck Fest festivals and events organised in cooperation with the collective or advertised on its Facebook page<sup>63</sup> (starting in 2009) bring topics and perspectives from queer theory that are enacted and embodied in performances, rap, slam poetry but also more traditional lectures and workshops. While some of the lectures could be seen as an introduction of foreign concepts, this is hardly the case in some other instances. The emphasis is on local reality in the context of globalisation. Thus, although rap music can be seen as a foreign import, its ideological roots have to be taken into consideration and its concrete form, addressing gender related violence, inequality, the body and critique of locally widespread liberal feminism all address local realities.

The volunteering within NGOs (the material outcomes of which are e.g. the *G bod* and *FEMA* magazine) and events organised, e.g., by their members in Brno to mark the International Women's Day on 8 March, also belong here for they include performances that are inspired both locally and transnationally (for instance in terms of stressing aspects of heteronormative oppression). Interestingly, this also partly concerns the functioning of the Czech Women's Lobby for although it is a member of the European umbrella European Women's Lobby, it is locally run mostly at the expense of the member organisations, which has the side effect of them sometimes doing more than the umbrella organisation requires (when reforming the organisation, the word “feminist” became part of the mission statement leading to the leaving of the Union of Catholic Women). We point out these events not because they represent the majority of what the NGOs listed in Appendix II do. Their main

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<sup>63</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/GenderFuckFest/128466497727>

activities, especially when they target already privileged groups such as entrepreneurs or when they focus on issues predominantly connected with narrowly defined equal opportunities,<sup>64</sup> are much more in compliance with the perspective seeing them as users although even this can be challenged. The projects they participate in (e.g., conducting gender audits for companies) may operate within frameworks defined elsewhere but they still have to report on the achievements back. This creates a potential (however sceptical we may be of its actual use) of incorporating the practice into the frameworks themselves.

As mentioned earlier, the main area where transculturation in terms of travelling feminist thought [Hemmings 2005] can be seen is the academic production. This is down to the by far greatest pressure on the theoretical elaboration within the academia as compared to other settings. As mentioned in 5c), we can find texts that engage in transnational debates on global issues: e.g., in the case of an article on care by Zuzana Uhde [2009] or Blanka Knotková-Čapková [2007]. Texts contributing to intersectionality also belong here, such as those published in a volume on the intersection of gender and generation [Kolářová and Sokolová 2007].

There are also texts that use local analyses for contributing to theoretical debates.<sup>65</sup> Here, we can find the texts for instance by Libora Oates-Indruchová who conceptualises state socialism in relation to both gender and the body within the framework of ideology and residual and emerging discourses [2007, 2012], Denisa Nečasová offering a meticulous discourse analysis of the first years of women's organising after 1948 in Czechoslovakia [2011], Tereza Stöckelová focusing on the workings of science [2009b], Kateřina Kolářová [2007], Věra Sokolová focusing on the intersection of gender, sexuality, discourses of parenthood and family [2004, 2006], Marcela Linková also focusing on how science works and the power implicit to the process [2009], Hana Hašková [2007], Ema Hrešanová engaging in ethnography

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<sup>64</sup> This means that instead of using the concept broadly to denote attempts to eradicate all forms of discrimination, it is typically understood as only pertaining to inequalities between heterosexual white men and women that readily participate in the labour market. For a critique see the debate in *Kontext: časopis pro gender a vědění* 1/2008.

<sup>65</sup> The issue of whether these are taken up by others is a different matter. I here solely focus on the fact that such texts are available and form part of the scene even if perhaps not the one with the spotlight on.

of Czech birthing centres [2008], Marta Kolářová [2009], Lucie Jarkovská [2010] who together with Iva Šmídová [2010] and Kateřina Lišková [2010b] focused on how gender works in combination with other discursive positions in Czech schools, Kateřina Nedbálková analysing how gender operates in lesbian families [2011], Gerlinda Šmausová criticising Czech feminist sociological practice [2011a, 2011b] and lately also Hana Havelková [2011]. This is by no means an exhaustive list and it also has to be pointed out that many of these authors also contribute to the other categories, especially in terms of introducing theoretical thought [Oates-Indruchová 1998, 2003b, Lišková 2010a] but also engage in focusing on local specifics [Hašková, Uhde and Pulkrábková 2011]. We may also rank the texts of the collective under the Gender Studies Centre under the Faculty of Arts of Charles University here, especially those focusing on intersectionality and disadvantaged groups.

#### *2.2.4. Summary*

In conclusion, I would like to reflect on why I question but still use some of the categories outlined by Blagojević [2005] although in combination with Cerwonka's transculturation [2008]. The reason stems from the uses the texts are intended for.

I believe that the classification introduced by Blagojević expresses the effects of the texts on the position of those that re/produce and use them, whereas the latter concept is more concerned with what happens to the content, to the concrete ideas that are presented in them. These two layers are inseparable and inform the intertextuality of the texts if we understand it more broadly. In other words, they refer both to the writing academic texts as a form of practice requiring highly sanctioned and regulated skills that lead to the inclusion in (or exclusion from) the academic community and the related material consequences (tenure, income, status). At the same time, however, such a pragmatic approach to the texts is not sufficient for their content also gets disseminated. The dissemination is arguably easier for some than for others given the language barriers but also the epistemological spaces navigated by the writers that may or may not resonate with the highly sanctioned and regulated practices of the “gatekeepers”, not to mention different material conditions, in which

the authors have to “create.” These two components have to be analysed in combination to prevent too much pessimism or optimism respectively.

The overview of the texts presented is not intended to be representative (e.g., the activities of the GenderFuck collective are mostly limited to Prague - although they also organise events usually in the places the individual members come from - and also only to the circle of those that actually know such events are going on). Its selective nature is influenced by my interest in different topics that is partly governed by my teaching experience. Nevertheless, I believe that the discursive landscape of the Czech feminist scene has undergone some of the changes called for by Kodíčková in 2002. Although liberal feminism is arguably still the mainstream form of feminist activities for it is the best match for the neoliberal discursive framework, there are important contributions to other strands of feminist thought, most notably trying to implement intersectional approaches and poststructuralist approaches to social reality. Interestingly, if we compare the two (as e.g. conducted by Gender & Sociology in Prague and the department of Gender Studies in Brno), we can see that there are in fact many overlaps for the approaches strive to focus on the interplay of different structures leading to oppressive social relations and privileging of some combinations over others.

I would also like to highlight the fact that looking for the salience of the institutional setting as required by Rose's definition of discourse analyses [2001] has proven as less straightforward than some analyses of the scene suggest. Although there is some stratification within the scene that allows for focusing on a single element, there are continuous attempts at communication, which has been most recently evident from the appointment of the head of the once ill-reputed Czech Women's Union Jana Chržová as the head of the Czech Women's Lobby.

The institutional setting has real effects especially in terms of pursuing its economic interests (such as when grants are to be delivered). Nevertheless, the textual production and discursive landscape are driven by more than just economy. They are also concerned with ideas and emotions, which cut through institutional barriers as can be seen at events held by feminist organisations.

The theoretical landscape is heterogeneous both in terms of the theoretical background of the texts and their intended use. While this does not constitute a

problem to the setting up of a platform for political action, the discursive strategies deployed by some may hamper effective communication and thereby also cooperation although there are promising signs both in terms of the amount of theoretical texts produced and cooperation within the Czech Women's Lobby.

### **2.3. Semi-structured interviews using a question guide – analysis**

This section presents some of the recurrent topics that correspond with the issues identified in the preceding part on the production of the scene. Just like the “setting” of “fabric” out of which the background materially intertwined with the subjects on the stage is made, the interviews, discourses alluded to and strategies used in them as well as biographical accounts. As follows from the introductory theoretical sections, I do not treat the interviews (or the texts) as a manifestation of some reality that I can reveal through careful analysis. Rather, I see the texts, including events and activities, and the interviews as parts of the scene in constant interaction although often, the interaction is notable for being absent (such as when texts are written and enacted but seem to be left standing without much engagement by others).

This does not mean that I resign on conducting an analysis. Nevertheless, rather than focusing on holes in the narratives and internal contradictions, the analysis aims at showing how some issues are conceptualised by the actors, how accountability and responsibility (for what, of whom) is produced and also how normalcy is evoked. I do not stress topics analysed elsewhere, such as the role of funding, European Union [Kapusta-Pofahl, Hašková and Kolářová 2005, Císař and Vráblíková 2010] and the perceived importance of generations. These topics have emerged in the interviews but I focus mostly on those contributing to the understanding of the divisions preventing the establishment of the platform for action as well as on those breaching feminist ethics.

#### *2.3.1. Personalised feminisms*

The self-identification with feminism was one of the first questions addressed within most of the interviews. This was the focus because there is ample literature suggesting the self-identification or refusal thereof affects the overall social behaviour of the respective actor [McCabe 2005]. The overview of the discursive landscape on the local scene also reflects a similar belief: when mirek vodrážka labelled the local

pro-women organisations as of exogenous origin [2006], he suggested that this ontological “inauthenticity“ had real consequences for the efficacy of the activities done by the actors (he presented the same idea already in 1999 in *Nové čtení světa*). He claims that “just like society, individual activists have a deep-ingrained ambivalent relationship to feminism” [vodrážka 2006: 64]. However, Hana Havelková's [2009] mapping of local sources of these groups contradicts such claims and so does a detailed description of the local historical interdependencies regarding the gender order as presented by Libora Oates-Indruchová [2012]. The repercussions of the perceived unwillingness and reluctance to self-identify as feminists, observed besides vodrážka also by Kateřina Vráblíková [2007]<sup>66</sup>, are might mean, among other things, that a collective identity uniting the scene and underpinning its movement status is missing (and therefore we cannot speak of a movement). Moreover, in relation to the theoretical background, this reluctance to self-identify would pose a big problem to the analysis since it focuses on how the research participants embrace feminism and what type thereof.

### *“I am a feminist”*

Nevertheless, all of the 27 research participants identified with feminism. Moreover, many of them directly reflected on the issues of such self-identification and its importance. Some even hinted some developments with time: “*Now I am a feminist with no attributes,*” “*I am a feminist with no but,*” “*I have already reached the stage when no further explanation is needed...I have reached the final stage.*” Given the autobiographical opening of the interviews I tried to lead it in an environment as much open and comfortable as possible. This strategy shows the importance of emotions and emotional work for cognition as it effects and elicits certain accounts while discouraging others. The accounts are highly personalised, i.e. rather than

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<sup>66</sup> Vráblíková states that “all the representatives of women's groups I interviewed...self-identified as feminists” [Vráblíková 2007: 238] but in a footnote she adds: “*However, [this] does not change the fact that they say “I am personally a feminist,” or use feminisms with different attributes (such as the reasonable, normal one).*” [Vráblíková 2007: 243].

stressing some external influences and putting forward defences, the research participants stress their individual development and advancement. Such a self-identification is thereby framed as a personal achievement.

Several of the research participants conditioned their identification with feminism but not out of reluctance hinging on ambivalence to the subversive, radical and negative image associated with the term. Rather they stressed the recognition of their operation within different settings, which lead to putting forward or conversely back-burnering parts of their subjectivities: *“I would identify as a feminist but it depends on the situation.”* Some of the research participants thus wanted to stress that when they are, e.g., in an anarchist group and feminism seems as a relevant discursive strategy, they use it but at other times, when operating in groups stressing the undoing of gender, they rather do not. What all of the research participants that chose to condition their identification with feminism share,<sup>67</sup> is their active engagement with queer theory and practice. We can here see the direct impact of theoretical allegiance on the self-conception of the research participants, which tends to stay more implicit in most of the other instances.

This has to be differentiated from the strategic use of the label mentioned in the interviews conducted by vodrážka [2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2009d], which also serves discursive goals and persuasion on the part of the interviewees but in a rather defensive sense. A similar strategy has been identified by the research participants (whether operating within the academia or in negotiations with state authorities) but rather than in terms of self-identification in relation to the terminology they use. Here the main point of contention is the label of feminism itself.

The self-identification with feminism was thus decidedly influenced by the setting of the interviews but also further confirmed in response to an additional question asking about whether they saw feminism as something they could “grow out of” or something that would simply “pass” one day. All the research participants, even those qualifying their identification, answered in the negative: *“It will definitely not lapse, I think that feminism and ideas related to gender equality have helped to*

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<sup>67</sup> They come from different regions as well as institutional settings. Two of them are mostly invested in grassroots activism with the others navigating all the settings of interest to this study.

*define my life,*” “*No, I definitely do not believe it will pass,*” “*I hope I will not grow out of it.*” Some of the statements were rather emphatic: “*It will never pass; I will maybe become more radical with time,*” “*I cannot imagine it could pass,*” or most radically “*Only once I die.*”

It therefore seems that the term adiaphorisation is not relevant as a label for the scene, something also supported by the openly feminist identification of the highly institutionalised Czech Women's Lobby. The question that seems more pertinent under such circumstances is then what it actually means that someone identifies as a feminist. If the label was used without any substance or meaning, it could de facto lead to the same, if not more serious, result as refusing it.

Nevertheless, the positive identification with the term raises hopes that the definition of feminism might be less of an issue for the research participants and could therefore help to better define the participant's stance on theories. These stances relate to how feminist identities were enacted in the interviews and for what purposes, which limits the possible scope of their interpretation.

#### *Liberal feminism and more*

However, most of the research participants were not quick to identify with one of the concrete strands of feminist thought. Rather, they framed their responses to questions regarding what feminism means to them as a struggle for general social justice, equal opportunities, freedom from ascribed categories, human rights as the basis of all other rights and right to self-identification.

This means that the often criticised universalism is present as well as themes mostly associated with liberal feminism (such as equal opportunities and general social justice, which is to be achieved by applying it equally to all members of society and not just the privileged ones). However, the picture seems more complex than this.

Firstly, even the general definitions de facto include a different approach to gender than the one, largely based on difference, to be found in liberal feminism. This is especially the case in the freedom from ascribed categories. Secondly, concluding that liberal feminism is simply the most widespread feminism would seriously flatten the debates and uses to which it was put in the interviews.

A few of the research participants openly identified with liberal feminism: *"I think I am liberal feminists," "I would belong to liberal feminism, it still serves me as a relatively useful tool...but I have moved to other than solely gender related topics and apply it there."* Both these participants come from the academic background and are not invested in activism. Others used this label tentatively to identify the definition of feminism they use for communication outside the scene. This means that it is not how they personally define "their own" feminism but rather what sort of feminism they see as communicable to others: *"You cannot say after every sentence that, well, this is not how it actually stands, I just use the terms as a construct...people would think you are crazy. ... In everyday communication or when you try to communicate the views, you end up on a middle ground of liberal feminism, especially when dealing with the media."* This account, repeated by others pointing out the problems of "translation" of relatively elaborate feminist terminology, shows the pressure of the large discourses within which the participants operate and the need for constant strategic choice of the repertoire they use.

Finally, and most frequently, when liberal feminism was mentioned, it was used in order to show one's opposition to it. This served to define oneself in opposition to it: *"I believe that non-profit organisations are connected with liberal feminism but it never resonated with me."* However, and perhaps more importantly, liberal feminism is used to assign (and produce) accountability for the perceived failures of the feminist scene: *"... liberal feminism or feminism ... in accordance with the current power structure and ideology is almost non-sense for me...I in fact think it is not a real feminism,"* and similarly *"And above all, I am really allergic to liberal feminism, which does more bad than good...by saying that now we will cooperate with the system,"* and finally commenting on the operation of an NGO *"I see feminism and liberal feminism as totally incompatible."*

In these accounts, liberal feminism is mostly constructed as in opposition to "actual" or "real" feminism thereby implicitly defining "authentic", "true" feminism as in opposition to the system, which is perceived as perpetuating inequalities and discrimination. This manifests the opening (and realization thereof) of discursive opportunities to embrace other than the sanctioned type of feminism. In relation to liberal feminism, some of the participants also mentioned sociologists Hana

Havelková and Jiřina Šiklová as those promoting its thought especially in the 1990s without reflecting on the critique it had undergone elsewhere even before 1989. Some then put this sort of liberal feminism in opposition to the one that is present today: “*Then there are people who promote liberal feminism today and it much more complex than before.*” This is mostly related to EU funded strategies and events, which in fact stem from rather radical feminist positions targeting fundamental social change, which are then largely deprived of their subversive potential in the negotiations with the prevalent neoliberal discourse and the need to operate within the highly institutionalised and bureaucratic EU environment [Stratigaki 2004].

The reluctance to identify with a concrete strand of thought may have other reasons than embracing some universalising form of liberal feminism. Many of those engaged in research pointed out the need to choose a theory that would be in compliance with what they research. The choice thus has to be situational and may often take the form of, e.g. poststructuralist takes on feminism as we could see in the analysis of literature: “*I have encountered different strands of feminism gradually ...and although I find many of them interesting it is rather the questions they enable that inspire me than my need to belong to one.*” This participant later describes her strategic use of liberal feminism for the purpose of communication and she also stresses the actual importance of not closing off the debate to certain strands of thought.

What follows from this is that the general emphasis put on (social) justice should not be simply interpreted as perpetuating the situation decried by the scene’s internal critics. Rather, it can be seen as one of the initial drivers that led to self-identification with feminism and that then always become fine-grained on a more practical level where strategic choices often have to be made. Nevertheless, even these choices are then often criticised for their “*functionalism and pragmatism,*” which many see as in opposition to the socially subversive goals of feminism for they can be interpreted as mere co-optation.

### *How to be a good feminist*

The issue of co-optation and critique of embracing liberal feminism touches on a related issue of how feminism is seen as best put to practice. Many of the research

participants started to be interested in discrimination long before entering the educational system and university and they often see feminism as part of their subjectivity. This leads to a normative requirement regarding feminism: it should not just be theorised, it should be embodied and lived. This approach is in congruence with Braidotti's emphasis on feminist subjectivity as permanent becoming that has a core ethical dimension.

These participants are then ready to criticise what they perceive as a deficit in terms of embodied and lived feminism, especially on the level of personal life: *"I am tired of the girls that almost deconstruct a chair in class and then go for a smoke and complain about how it itches and that they have to be shaved due to their boyfriend."* This lack of personal commitment and investment or reflection of what the theories could actually mean echoes the critique of Mirek Vodrážka [2006]. However, it should not be interpreted as a need for feminism of difference, rather as a call for authenticity. Lack of it, in the eyes of some participants, leads to the shortcomings of feminist activities in Czech society. This shows the strong normative charge of thus defined feminism. In particular, it is evident when the participants criticise the fact that due to EU funding, many of the organisations that received funding for gender-related projects are not in fact associated with feminism at all.<sup>68</sup> These are normative claims stressing the individual position in relation to liberal feminism, which thereby becomes the frame of reference. It is frequently a negative one, which then impacts on how the respective individual situates herself vis-à-vis the (potentially liberal feminist) others.

For some, being a good feminist means *"being proud that I am a woman"* as an academic participant identified with cultural feminism, which is by some called radical (meaning resistance to men). Due to her perceived difference from most other academic feminists at the given university, she was one of the few participants readily identifying with a concrete strand of feminist thought. Nevertheless, this identification was only embraced by one other feminist, this time from the sphere of activism.

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<sup>68</sup> This element requires further research as it seems to contradict the idea that gender is a Trojan horse for feminism.

Deconstructivist approach together with intersectionality also seemed to be interpreted as the most recent turn in feminist thought that should be embraced in order to secure the research but also activism are up to date. In such identifications, the stress is put on recognising inequalities previously not acknowledged. This can again be associated with the emphasis put on social justice.

Besides relating to one's personal life, "good feminist practice" to use a paraphrase of an EU term, also entails how other feminists within the scene are treated. Especially the interviews with people I knew or befriended prior to the research often turned into a session of complaints about the maltreatment of members of the scene by one another. Rivalry and even mobbing and exploitation was seen as especially problematic. Such perceptions are underpinned by the underlying belief that the scene should act in a united way in order to achieve change, which is hardly possible if individuals do not respect one another. We may conclude that the normative requirements put on feminism are best visible when those identified as feminists fail to meet them, such as is the case when, e.g., one participant complained of mobbing within a feminist NGO.

*Theories? No, thanks!*

Finally, there were also some activists (and one academic stressing methods over theories) that refused the very need to belong to some theoretical framework at all. "*Theories do not affect me,*" "*I am not interested in theories; I have no relations to them.*" This approach poses the evident problem of possibly pursuing an agenda influenced by theories that are never reflected and thus introducing bias to the perspective.

If we look at how these research participants defined feminism, we can see that the first one mostly stresses "*freedom of choice,*" i.e. freedom from ascribed categories. However, the very category "woman" remained unquestioned in her accounts (despite my probing). An analysis of the comments on equality in difference shows liberal feminist leanings.

The other participant disliked theories due to her mistrust of the academic sphere and its low willingness to explain and apply its findings to lived reality. The idea of

what feminism should do therefore influenced the participant's overall attitude to theories due to the perceived failure of the academia to fulfil "its role." Nevertheless, this participant actively engaged in queer practices and de facto reflected on most of the objects of feminist deconstruction.

To conclude, the idiosyncratic nature of many of the definitions hints at the missing (normative) debate that would require taking clear theoretical stances. This situation makes it possible to continue having individualised feminisms without the need to relate to the local geopolitical and historical situation and build a broader theoretical framework. At the same time, however, it also does not preclude the formation of such a platform as also previous attempts indicate (gitA, FEMA).

### *2.3.2. Key influences*

This section summarises the key influences cited by the participants as crucial in arriving at their identification with (particular) feminism. The questions directly asked the participants to try to name any influences they see as crucial for the formation of their relation to feminism, i.e. these could be both intimately personal (family, friends) and more formal (books, films, events).

Based on the discussion on whether there is a movement and what form the activities take as presented in both the volumes (*Nové čtení světa* 1999 and *Mnohohlasem* 2006), we believe it is important to try to map the sources of feminism. The authors mentioned earlier see the high level of differentiation (vodrážka spoke of "a discursive conglomerate" 2006: 73) as a problem that de facto prevents the effective cooperation across the scene in terms of defining a common goal and policy.

When we look at the paths to feminism mentioned by the participants, common features seem quite obvious. There are three main paths to feminism:

Firstly, more than half of the participants got to feminism through studies, either independent (e.g. via seminars organised by an NGO such as Gender Studies or

Nesehnuti) or at university. While some of the (former) university students studied sociology, quite a few studied English literature. Linguistics in general can also be seen as one of the possible venues to feminist thought.

Secondly, some participants described their route to feminism as “*more or less natural.*” This means an initial interest in discrimination and organisation of society and one's own family. We believe that an important role in this could be played by the fact that an overriding majority of the research participants were ascribed to the female sex category and compared what they could have done without being ascribed to the other one: “*I could then see that our grandparents gave different presents to me and my cousins...it really seemed that boys get the good ones, the hard ones – books and building blocks – and us, girls, always got something for when we get married such as towels...*”

Family-based influences do not have to be by definition negative, as the example above might suggest. For some the interest was influenced by reading at an early age, which sparked their interest in justice in general terms, which then led to also focusing on discrimination as in the case of a research participant working as a lawyer. Alternatively, the influence of a relative (typically mother, father or grandmother) discussing life with the participant from an early age was decisive.

Thirdly, some of the participants got involved with feminism through their activism in a different movement. These would typically be the environmental and anarchist or punk ones. Interestingly, none of the participants cited involvement in activities to do with sexuality as a path to feminism.

These three main areas do not suggest the heterogeneity is so great in terms of personal paths to feminism, which is further corroborated by the shared orientation on some of the general goals of liberal feminism. This is not to say that feminisms are not individualised across the Czech scene as is obvious from the preceding section but rather that the paths to feminism themselves do not fully account for the divergence as previously suggested [Havelková 2009]. We now turn to the influences that impact on the formation of stances on different issues and that even spark the interest in the first place.

Since the path to feminism leads via university studies for many of the participants, the theories encountered there may have a formative impact on them. The very fact of having studied was cited by some as the most important influence of all. Some of the most frequently cited names were Judith Butler, Sandra Harding, Donna Haraway but also Don Zimmerman and Candace West, Michel Foucault, Luce Irigaray, i.e. figures associated with poststructuralist thinking and feminism as well as standpoint feminism. Other influences include women of colour, Chandra Mohanty, Audre Lorde and also books and films associated with Spanish-speaking protest movements: *Mujeres Libres* and *Las Libertarias*. Critical theorists Iris Marion Young and Nancy Fraser were also mentioned by several participants.

When the students/young academics could travel, they also frequently mention this experience as formative as it enabled them to see “*that things could be different.*” In these cases, the experience from abroad often functions as crucial in defining what the norm of feminist practice should be. Most notably, the fact that US feminists from the academia (often belonging to the canonical “Second Wave”) are very active politically in terms of participating in marches, organising life at the campus but also “*calling their congressperson*” seems to be most impressive. Besides meeting foreign academics, some also commented on becoming members of a local counterculture, bonding and community building associated with activism.

This influence of university education can also be seen when it comes to Czech influences: the names of Hana Havelková, Marie Čermáková, Jiřina Šiklová as well as Petr Pavlík, Gerlinda Šmausová, Kateřina Lišková, Lucie Jarkovská and Iva Šmídová are also often mentioned since they all lecture or used to lecture at gender programmes of universities in Brno and Prague.

Another important source of influence besides family members is friends starting in early childhood. This is partly also the case of influence coming from participation in a particular organisation (such as *Nesehnutí*, which is frequently mentioned) or taking part in activism in general (riot grrls). This then also leads to the influence of people working at the organisations or active in the area: Dita Jahodová (“*she is a sort of a guru of the queer community here*”), Tonča, Bára Pěchotová and Jitka Kozáková.

Mainstream influences are also frequent ranging from books (Tolstoy, Chekhov, Dostoyevsky) to movies such as *Tootsie* or the already mentioned *Las Libertarias* but also the whole queer film screening.

When focusing on other local influences, Marina Blagojević was mentioned but most notably, the influence of the Slovak *Aspekt* magazine as well as of the feminists behind it, Jana Jurášková and Jana Cviková was said to have influenced several of the research participants.<sup>69</sup> In this particular case, the geographical closeness to Bratislava seemed to play a role as *Aspekt* and the two Slovak feminists were more frequently named by research participants from across the scene in Brno. In Prague, they were also mentioned but rather by those mostly based in the academia.

Finally, issues related to the body were also mentioned, such as beauty (Naomi Wolf) and motherhood.

This list shows that the influences that further affect the adoption of a certain feminist perspective (many of the participants say they started with rather essentialising concepts of feminism to move to either deconstruction or more identity-politics related feminism) are indeed varied. If the diversity is to be put to some political use, it needs to be thoroughly discussed in order to identify both some common ground and irreconcilable points of contention without foreclosing communication. This need for discussion was also reflected in the often emotive accounts of some of the research participants: “*Czech feminism is very unclear as to its interpretative dimension. This leads to the illusion that we are all in it together but we really aren't because everyone has their own interpretation, which often remains hidden.*” Another participant questioned the very existence not just of a movement but even of a scene: “*Discussion is missing here. The feminist scene here – well, we do not really talk to each other, we do not read one another, let alone discuss theories,*” and elsewhere “*We do not read each other; I think that Brno rather does not read Prague than the other way.*” A related issue, albeit scarcely mentioned in the interviews, is a debate across the neighbouring countries: “*What is Eastern Europe, Central Europe?*”

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<sup>69</sup> If I were to consider my own influences, then in compliance with those taking part in the research, activism has had a far reaching impact on the identification with feminism as well as university courses taught by Hana Havelková and Marie Čermáková.

*I feel as if it does not entail any historical experience or even a cultural one but then there are some specifics that we research too little.”*

The heterogeneity of how the research participants got introduced to feminist thought is not as big as suggested in literature and its automatic influence cannot be taken for granted. Nevertheless, the later developments influenced by often highly individual and idiosyncratic influences sometimes lead to the adoption of a feminist current (as we could see in the preceding section) that is then hardly ever discussed. Many but not all of the participants also did not see any substantial development in their stance on feminism, no shift in focus or direction, which would also suggest that a debate or rather a platform for such a debate is missing and therefore instead of a play with a clear goal, we can often rather see several monologues taking place on related issues across the scene.

*Is there a movement?*

The very mapping of the heterogeneity or its relative lack is framed within the focus on whether or not there is a feminist or women's movement (one of the participants made an interesting distinction: *“We are of course talking about a women's movement, feminism is a matter of the academia.”*). The research participants were asked whether they believed there was a movement. Their responses seem to be guided mostly by whether they frame Czech feminist activities as rather successful or failing. A certain portion of the participants from all sorts of backgrounds also added: *“I personally do not care at all whether there is a movement. Everyone does whatever they can.”*

Nevertheless, those sceptical as to the state of Czech feminism were steadfast about the absence of the movement: *“There is no movement...everything is so fragmented...we hardly talk to each other.”* Some, mostly based in the academia, also seemed to be uncertain not due to how they perceived the scene but because of the theoretical baggage the term “movement” has: *“There is women's activism...but there is not a movement in the true sense of the word,” “There is no civic engagement, no broad base [of a movement] here.”* Finally, there were those most optimistic: *“If a movement is a group of active people, then the feminist movement is*

*one of the most active ones...there is an essentialist women's movement too, it is legitimate," "There is a movement, it has formed also in the Czech Women's Lobby, the organisations can agree on issues," "A small one, but yes, there is a movement."*

While I have already stated my stance on the issue of presence of a movement in the CR, I believe that even within the most rudimentary constructivist framework it is not possible to ignore the possible effects of some defining the activities as a movement. The definition of discourse provided by Rose: "groups of statements which structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking" [2001: 136] frames the possible consequences of such thinking as possibly leading to acting accordingly.

### 2.3.3. Divisions

As is clear from the allegations of "who reads whom" or rather "who does not read whom" as well as from the complaints as to how feminists should treat each other, there are some divisions running across the scene. Out of these I focus on the presence/absence of waves, geographical/geopolitical and disciplinary/theoretical divisions here. The perceived divisions are instrumental for the idea underpinning the present research revolves around the impact of theoretical divisions on the fracturing of the scene.

The research participants were directly asked about whether they believed there were waves discernible within Czech feminism. Responses to this topic were those most varied across the board. Some readily cited the division outlined in 1.2.2 *Waves and generations* but then were quick to add that "*it is rather for teaching.*" Others believed in congruence with some authors that all the waves were introduced at once to the local context. Others yet stress the differences between generations rather than waves such as when differences among local liberal feminists are mentioned. When a generational difference is mentioned, the first generation is largely associated with those who founded the programmes and conducted research as they were usually also the first ones to be active in activism. On the whole, although there is not much criticism of the concept of waves, it does not seem to resonate with local

perceptions of the developments. One exception pertains to feminist theory: while some of the participants believed that theory was locally done in the 1990s, at the latest by the year 2000 such developments largely stopped and were replaced by empirical research.

In terms of theories, one more axis has been observed by one of the participants: in her reading, there are those focusing on liberal theories: *“and then there are people from the academic sphere and from the non-governmental or activist one as well”*. The other group focuses on identity politics and then there is yet another that does not easily fit anywhere - those from queer activism. This participant sees the scene as fragmented by these divisions. Although they do not exclude communication for some people work as “liaison officers” and are active in different settings, their agendas hardly ever meet. This reading has been supported by the researcher's participation in several events focusing on women in Czech politics.<sup>70</sup> While those active in this area, i.e. politicians and entrepreneurs form a relatively stable group, they hardly ever attend the events hosted by other segments of the scene.

When it comes to geopolitical and geographical divisions, two major topics emerged. The first one concerned the division already mentioned above, i.e. that between Brno and Prague. While it might seem to be straightforward due to the presence of two universities and different centres engaging in gender research and simply interpreted as competition between these centres, the perspectives on this division are more nuanced.

Some of the participants indeed see the relationship between Brno and Prague as mere competition bordering on rivalry. This is testified by the quotes above but it also concerns representatives of NGOs, not just of the academia. An NGO director from Brno believes that *“It is not really fair. They are a big NGO while we are smaller but would like to do the same things but in Brno. But we never win a grant.”* However, others believe there is cooperation and the division is artificial or no longer relevant.

Those who have moved between the two cities also mention a difference in the level and quality of cooperation between the academia and local activism: *“I think it is*

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<sup>70</sup> I previously researched women in Czech politics. As a result, I attended several conferences and events on the topic between 2006 and 2010.

*much more connected in Brno than in Prague...if you compare the events for instance on the International Women's Day, it is much livelier in Brno.*" In a similar vein, some see the activities done in Brno as "fresher" than those done in Prague, which is in general perceived as more institutionalised and better funded.

This division implicitly includes another one – that between these cities and the rest of the republic. I was asked several times whether I found somebody beyond Prague and Brno except for the several individuals working at universities in smaller towns. When I asked as part of the snowball technique about contacts outside the centres, I failed to add anyone new to the list. In one instance, a research participant referred to herself as: *"I am a regional feminist and I am proud of it."* Although the sample includes people from across the republic, most of them are not planning on returning to their towns of origin: *"I cannot go back if I want to keep my profession, there is nothing to do."*

The urban-rural divide led some feminists to changes – such as moving – due to which they no longer perceive the divide itself as burning. Nevertheless, the lack of focus on the regions has been criticised by some of the feminists, again from across the scene. In such instances the critique is based on identifying the norm for feminist conduct with inclusiveness: *"We have to go back to the regions," "It's all dead everywhere..."*

In terms of a larger scale, some of the geopolitical issues raised in literature were also reflected. Some of the participants saw the lack of cooperation across CEE countries as a problem, others, mostly from NGOs such as the Czech Women's Lobby, who have cooperated in the past pointed out the points in common: *"When we meet, the issues [in CEE] are alike as peas in a pod...but only here in Central Europe, we realized it is different in the Baltics."*

In terms of regional academic cooperation one of the accounts described the situation as follows: *"My experience with academic work in Central Europe is that we do not really communicate, cooperate...we do not quote or read one another."* This is surprising given the fact that some of the foreign experience mentioned in the section on influences takes place at the Central European University in Budapest.

It was within the academic sector that the following practice was criticised: “*Eastern and Central Europe is only good as a source of empirical data but not for critical inspiration,*” or to put it more bluntly: “*We provide the data, they the theory.*”

Most of the academics acknowledged the larger system of power they had to operate in but instead of being critical as the “feminist East/West debates would suggest, they often accepted it as a fact: “*I feel as if it is inadvertent, we have to respond to the big shots, it is not possible otherwise and we can then participate in making some local issues visible but we cannot avoid reading the big shots and working with them,*” “*When you write for abroad, the things you can usually present are the results from a local research because how would they respond to a Czech creating a theory of feminism, postsocialism or globalism, that would not be acceptable anyway. There are inequalities... We can de facto no longer have ambitions to make a breakthrough with a theory. I would have to leave and create something there, not publish something only in English from here.*” Alternatively, they drew attention to the cooperation and networking that they were actively engaged in. Some stressed that the engagement had to be done on an equal footing, otherwise they were not willing to take part while others complained about past occurrences of exploitation by research partners, e.g. from the UK. The latter stances are at odds with the quote above for they stress the option of agency.

In terms of the EU framework, some of the activists positively related to the opening up of opportunities: “*Although it is dictated from above, it is positive...sometimes nothing happens without such an impulse.*” Equally, the possibilities of transnational cooperation were also sometimes seen positively: “*The associations give us an opportunity for action.*”

Thus it seems that both the participants more engaged in activism and those rather based in academia are aware of their operation within a larger framework but unless they have had some personal (or mediated) experience with cooperation – or its failure - they do not tend to emphasise the topic and the related possible issues and tensions. This in turn confirms Martina Kampichler’s assertions that the “East/West debates” are locally silent and not engaged with [2010]. The driving factor is not their local resolution and overcoming but rather reorientation to other topics giving in to the perceived unchangeable distribution of power, at least in terms of knowledge

production. The latter argument then arguably confirms the subordinate reading of one's position, criticised earlier by Tereza Kodíčková [2002], although in this case a shift is evident in the perceived new possibility to change the situation by one's own agency.

Another division perceived across the scene is that of "taken topics." Some members of the Czech feminist scene tend to define and treat certain topics as their property. In one research participant's account (she studied a gender programme offered by a Czech university), a fellow student was told that she would not be able to study the topic she picked for her thesis for a member of the faculty saw it as her own topic. The research participant complained about the practice: "*There were things [about the studies] that really made feel bad...such as when my friend was almost scolded for wanting to do a topic that one of the professor's claimed was hers.*" She continues to point out the discrepancy between feminist ethics and such conduct. At the same time, she constructs this problem as typical of the Czech academia. In another instance, this logic was mentioned when generally discussing the developments and divisions within the scene with a research participant mainly based within the academia but with a distinct interest in activism: the "new generations" of feminists were seen as in need of finding "*topics of their own for many topics had already been taken*" by the feminists already established within the scene. While in the first instance, the participant was highly critical of the practice, in the latter the perspective is embraced as inevitable.

This issue is shared across the scene, i.e., it is not limited to the academic setting although its emphasis on originality is probably a contributing factor. Besides conflicts set in the academia, the issue is also very visible within the NGO sector with a participant complaining of having a smaller and less experienced but local NGO that can hardly compete over the "same topic" with a major NGO based in Prague. Moreover, the issue may also be constructed as one of purview. Thus, some scholars tend to be critical of activists' takes on theoretical concepts and see them as their realm. Boundary work is the common denominative

It is of course possible to claim that this tactic is deployed as a result of the funding logic: if an academician or an NGO are to obtain a grant, their work has to be assessed as original, which is threatened the moment somebody else starts to

address the same issue. However, we believe that such reasoning rather takes the result (the possessive approach to topics) as the explanation. Cooperation is not something that could be explained under such a framework although it does happen when coalitions are built.

Another topic also alluding to boundaries and related to the “staking out” of topics and even spheres of influence concerns the relation between academic and activist strands or theory and practice was also part of the guide. My interest stemmed from the panel debate analysed together with literature on the scene and due to the reflections of the topics in the “feminist East/West debates” as they are reflected in my teaching practice.

The question after the possible division between academic and activism was questioned by one of the participants: *“By asking such a question you already construct them as opposites. But are they really?”* The discursive frames of reference regarding this question seem to vary the most. While there are different strategies of addressing liberal feminism, which vary from expressing a negative stance due to its perceived consequences and non-feminist nature to indifference to embracing it, when it comes to the division between academic and activist practice, the background of the participant is suddenly actively addressed and raised.

Those who found the question interesting and dwelled on it from among the academic sphere often repeated the arguments put forward by Hana Havelková [Oates-Indruchová 2008a] that support seeing the academic practice as activism of sorts: *“We open new world and perspectives for them”* and compare the relative activism as a label negatively used against feminist theories and gender within the academia, e.g., to the activism of psychology. In other words, the positions criticised by Gerlinda Šmausová are sometimes repeated [2008]. Other from the academia stress the cooperation that takes place: *“I give a lecture when they ask me for one”* and also emphasise that they see their contribution to activism in the form of providing arguments: *“activism can give some incentives to the academia, which then provide arguments, figures or theories to activism.”* Here the stress on either engaging in activism or providing assistance to is based on the accepted norm of political action as inherent to feminism.

Some of those based in academia were less happy to cooperate based on negative experience from the past: “*Somebody there said, we will not invite anyone from the FSS [Faculty of Social Studies in Brno] because we do not want that academic crap, which made me really angry.*”

Nevertheless, the power imbalance was especially used by those primarily based in activism: “Academism is often accused of being career-oriented and divorced from reality...I believe research is important but it is too detached from activism here,” “[Academic feminism] is reductionist, only dealing with selected, politically correct topics so that no serious, important research gets done to enrich activism.” Here, rather than simply driving on personal animosities, a broader phenomenon is seen as a dividing factor. The critique comes from all corners of the scene, i.e., both from those solely concerned with academic pursuits and those who never studied gender and solely engage in unpaid activities but also, and perhaps even more importantly, from those who are somewhere in between or actively take on more roles.

To complicate things further, there are also rifts between those engaged in solely unpaid grassroots activism and those at least part-time employed at an NGO: “*These days, you need to have a degree to get employed at an NGO. And it is a well-paying job.*” What these rifts show quite clearly are at least two things: the research participants have different normative expectations as far as the “proper” roles of those making up the scene are concerned. Some activists (both from NGOs and otherwise) perceive there is a clear power imbalance with the academia backed by its knowledge-producing (and well paid) institutional position. Some of those based in the academia have experienced the reverse when they ventured outside academia. The related second issue is that of lacking communication other than either through some of the above-mentioned “liaison officers” or limited activities done together (that can lead to more frustration). What the repertoires share is the conviction that the communication ought to take place and active listening (on all parts although this is not always stressed) should take place.

I believe that the very statements decrying the lack of communications and maltreatment by “the other” segment are interesting for they show that the rift is more complicated and nuanced than simply activism against academism. It is likely dependent on the question being asked in the first place since we encounter the

statements to be found in literature on the Czech scene itself and these are the ones most readily pulled in the interviews. However, especially the personal accounts of failed communication and attempted exchange (as one activist put it: “*they never send us anything*” – meaning data and outcome of research) reflect a real problem preventing better cooperation already burdened by the multiplicity of tasks most have to fulfil.

The fact that the rifts are finer and more nuanced can be well observed if we look at the final issue here: that of the perceived dominance of sociological discourse on gender. This might pose a problem due to the rich disciplinary history of feminist thought, which was for instance locally mostly connected with culture and literature (although social and political issues were part of the stream).

The disciplinary location of two of the biggest three centres focusing on gender (Gender & Sociology and the Gender Studies Program at FSS), which includes the site of publication of the only specialised academic journal on gender in the CR, suggests that at least the institutional background is biased in favour of sociology. This has been latently described by Šmausová [2011a] and explicitly by Libora Oates-Indruchová [2011].

Many of the research participants have indeed mentioned the prevalence of sociological research on gender. Except for two participants, they did not comment on the character of the research, which is the target of both the critiques cited above: to briefly paraphrase it, the critiques concern the instrumental character of many of the studies which rather than looking for how gender is done take it as one of their variables and only then start the actual research, which then can only produce knowledge within the framework of a dichotomous gender.

Those who were critical, targeted the very fact of the sociological dominance: “*The things that have become popular here are sociological theories but not the crazy French ones,... rather the modest academic ones...the others are not taken seriously because they are leftist.*” Some participants (including some of the activists) never pondered the question: “*I think it is natural that two of the biggest academic centres are sociological...but it is interesting.*”

One of the participants, based in the academia in social sciences referred the problem to the larger discipline, i.e. sociology, within which sociology of gender has to operate: *“Although sociological theory is taught here I personally consider [Czech] sociology a very empirical science...the provincialism of [Czech] sociology then affects the provincialism of feminism.”* However, this was challenged by another social scientist: *“In the last few years, theory started to be written again...but the strands have diversified...there is a strong empirical one, you know, at the Sociological Institute, and then there are many people who focus on cultural and historical issues, and these groups no longer communicate that much...not because they dislike each other but the local discussion is so, well, rich so that...people now specialise, which I consider healthy.”*

While the analysis of the literature mostly focused on texts based in social sciences and sociology both because that is my field and the production is the one most widespread and extensive, I have shown that debates take place within other disciplines and that there are other centres within the Czech academia that focus on gender. It may therefore be the case, that due to the establishment of the academic centres, the scene has become more fragmented in terms of its disciplinary focus but this not necessarily have to hamper the scene’s action potential.

#### 2.3.4. Summary

The topics and discursive strategies presented above do not represent all the topics and codes that I identified in the research. I decided to focus on issues paid less attention in terms of research through interviews but also wanted to present some excerpts that relate back to the analysis of literature presented in the previous part and that speak back to the criticisms outlined thus far.

I first focused on the biographical part of the interviews, namely those related to the self-identification with feminism. Since all the research participants identified with feminism – and many of them did so rather emphatically – I then tried to map what it actually meant for them, given the vast array of possibilities sketched in 1.2.1 *Classifying feminisms*. The responses fleshed out a common rather vague emphasis

on issues such as social justice. Further probing then revealed a host of different takes on feminism, often influenced by personal experience with interaction and cooperation within the scene.

I then turned to the key influences that affect the heterogeneity of foci among the participants. This section ends by showing the different stances on the issue of whether there is a movement in the CR as well as the possible influences that lead to a respective answer.

The final section then focuses on the various divisions that seem to operate within the scene, such as those between the academia, NGOs and grassroots feminists, those following geographical lines and disciplines. I then also looked into some of their possible consequences and the background used for justifying the applied norms, which could point us to the salience of theoretical divergence. Although some divergence fleshed out, its emotional and relational aspects seem to be at least as prevalent as the theoretical ones. This being said, the emotional response often stems from what is believed to be good feminist practice, i.e. when it is breached, this is not just seen as a rational but also ethical issue.

The analysis shows different discourses operate within the scene. This would not be a surprising finding if the boundaries followed the expected paths. However, it seems that issues typically reduced to binary oppositions in fact work in a much more complex way. This has best been manifested in the case of the academism and activism divide. I do realize that parts of the responses are the result of the circumstances under which they were elicited and also of the fact that they were elicited in the first place. Nevertheless, I hope the outlined finer division might help foster future debate on the mentioned issues.

## **2.4. Triangulation – interpretation**

Using triangulation [Flick 2006: 389], in this part I synthesize the analysis presented in the previous two parts. Since I combine different techniques of gathering the input into the analysis, I need to justify the combination of the different sources. Norman K. Denzin asserts that the “triangulation of method, investigator, theory, and data remains the soundest strategy of theory construction” [Denzin cited in Flick 2006:390]. Although my goal is not the construction of a new theory, the research design was informed by the need to combine different sources to increase the possibility to provide a persuasive account of the role played by theories on the scene under scrutiny. Out of the elements that can be heterogeneous within research, I conducted interviews at different dates, places and with different people (in terms of their demographics and also main institutional background) and it could be claimed that the theoretical underpinnings of the research are also multiple even if operating under the umbrella of critical theory.

This part offers the interpretation of the analyses of both the written and oral (in interviews) production of those making up the Czech feminist scene. I use triangulation to point out to attract attention to the otherwise more or less hidden various background and especially effects of the discourses put together in the following interpretation. To add another dimension to the interpretation, I also draw on my personal observations made during different events (e.g., the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of Czech and Slovak Feminist Studies held in Brno on 3 and 4 November 2011, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary party of Gender Studies, o.p.s., and the concerts and performances organised by the GenderFuck initiative while it was active). It might be possible to include the observations as another analytically and methodologically separate source but since they were made often without the primary intention to conduct an observation, I only use them to give more flesh to some of the interpretations.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> A major problem depriving me from the possibility to use the observations as a regular source of the analysis is that I had not sought the consent of those observed. Nevertheless, when using this pool of experience, I also adhere to strict anonymity of anyone who might be concerned.

The following sections focus on theoretical inclinations constructed within interviews and written material, the controversies that seem to affect the scene at present and methodological implications of the analysis as well as suggestions for future research.

#### *2.4.1. Theoretical inclinations*

While I embrace the term feminist discourse to generally mean the summary production forming the Czech feminist scene, I am cautious to point out the actual range of different feminist discourses operating on/constituting the scene. As the section on the metadiscourses critiquing the scene shows, the at times contradictory multiplicity is something many members of the scene perceive as ultimately negative and defeating the normative goals of feminist activities and activism since the needed momentum is never created and action is never taken (in time) [vodrážka 2003, 2006, Havelková 2009]. Interestingly, the contrary, i.e. lack of theoretical richness within the feminist – or in Vodrážka's reading gender – scene [Vodrážka 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2009e] was also criticised, which to some extent resonates with Tereza Kodíčková's older critique [2002].

How am I then to understand this contradiction and what does the present study say on the issue of theoretical inclinations of the scene? Does the fact that all the research participants self-identified as feminists mean anything beyond the fact that the research situation and possibly also the overall climate has changed since the research conducted by vodrážka [2006] and Vráblíková [2007] as suggested by Císař and Vráblíková [2010] and Saxonberg [2011]?

In terms of textual analysis I first focused on a detailed of the critical discourses together with their background as well as some rather fragmentary discursive strategies. Given the relatively large amount thereof, when analysing the production by the scene, I focused on a classification that focuses on theories. Rather than reducing this approach to its disciplinary version, I opted for a more general approach dividing the texts further into three main categories loosely termed following the

competing categories outlined by Marina Blagojević [2005] and Allaine Cerwonka [2008].

The classification yielded first and foremost a questioning of the relevance and actual applicability of Blagojević's terms although it has to be admitted that some of the texts co-forming the scene are of a rather informative nature. Nevertheless, it cannot be claimed that they all follow the same geopolitical logic as claimed by Blagojević. Some of the texts trying to disseminate a particular theoretical strand within feminism come from other than the mainstream feminist environment associated with a transnational form of liberal feminism. Besides this finding, supporting instead the idea of travelling feminist thought [Hemmings 2005] and Cerwonka's transculturation [2008], the analysis shows that starting at the latest in 2005, a boom of literature (and graduation theses) engaging with theories from different disciplines and feminist strands started in the Czech Republic.

Notably, many of those involved in this production are also actively engaged in transculturation by not just applying theories created elsewhere (a practice common in the scientific community) but also by developing theories based on their original research [see, e.g., Lišková 2010b]. I failed to confirm the often mentioned salience of relying on the importance of generations for the theoretical focus of the scene's members. This reliance can be overcome by highlighting the work of those that have kept engaging with theories before the increase in production and continue to do so now, such as Libora Oates-Indruchová. Another author disproving the determining influence of generational change is Mirek Vodrážka for his critiques resonate with those of researchers much younger than him. Finally, one of the most radical research participants claiming allegiance to cultural feminism, was in her late fifties.

This tactic of foregrounding those made invisible by a metaphor such as the wave/generational one should then also concern the activism-oriented part of the movement. Although the scene does not work in unity as the discrepancies and divisions are too pertinent, it also does not function in complete mutual isolation. Especially the new emphasis put on queer practice in the form of "genderfucking" [Marinucci 2010] within the grassroots part of the scene has to be mentioned. Some of those performing at the events organised by the collective study or have studied a gender studies programme, which is reflected in their performances and also has the

potential to influence others that come to watch. Moreover, those primarily based in other segments of the scene also take part in the events and their impact should therefore not be underestimated solely based on its limited spatial outreach.

As will be detailed in the following section, the shifts and arguably also the things that refuse to change cannot be interpreted solely in positive terms, even if it were in accordance with the perception/construction of the present state of the scene by some of its participants. Based on the literature review, I identified the salience of self-identification with feminism and looked for the various strands of feminist thought present and driven at. Despite the increase in theoretical production and shifts in terms of grassroots activism, identification of concrete strands of feminist thought using a direct (open-ended) question has proven as not very productive.

I was thus faced with the choice of either resigning to the issue or trying to piece the inclination together from other excerpts of the interviews. While the former approach seems rather defeatist, the latter runs into ethical and methodological issues, for it de facto means trying to “reveal” the “truth” about the research participant thus postulating such a thing is possible in the first place. I opted for a different option and instead analysed the responses to the question itself (which yielded rather vague but homogenous “definitions” across the scene) with the influences the participants perceived as crucial for their feminist position and possibly development.

When we look into the analysis of the interviews, we can see that despite the production going through marked changes, this is not so perceived by all those taking part in the scene. Some stress the bigger geopolitical power relations they have to operate in that did not – and some believe will not - change substantially. Many complain about the perceived shortcomings of the scene. For some of the participants this has potentially serious consequences as they fear of being criticised by the following generations for not having achieved enough. Such fears resonate with the ethical framework regarding feminist endeavours and subjects by Rosi Braidotti. They are often framed with a reference to a concrete (mostly liberal) feminist discourse, which results in setting goals cooperative with the ruling system, which is seen as at odds with the actual, i.e. subversive feminist goals. Thereby the activities undertaken by still a substantial part of the scene are seen as counterproductive.

If we compare the theoretical inclinations derived from the analysis of literature with those stemming from the interviews, we can see there are some discrepancies. “Personal feminism” seems to be mostly connected to abstract values such as social justice and freedom (from ascribed roles). This differs greatly from the often elaborate theoretical constructions built within the texts. However, the key to the discrepancy seems to lie in the context. While even for putting together an event, a lot of concrete conceptual (if not theoretical) thinking has to be done, which is not the case if one is asked about the core of one’s feminist inclination as such.

When put together, the analyses seem to suggest that there are some features pertaining to feminism that are shared across the scene, such as focus on social justice and equality. This unity crumbles once we take a step closer for once actual work is to be done, a finer definition is needed and that one is always contingent on the context although this is more readily expressed by those operating on the margins of the scene, who claim deploying various subjectivities depending on the context – rather than suggesting lack of integrity, this deploying is deliberate and informed by conceptual work regarding boundaries. We believe it is due to their need to mutually negotiate within different contexts and de facto knowingly and critically engage in intersectionality.

The overall theoretical inclinations are hardly surprising. While an appeal of a universal justice is still in place, the prevalence of liberal feminism (in various forms) has to be read in the larger context of the organisations the funding of which often depends on being able to resonate with this framework. This should not, however, be mistaken for what all those engaged in liberal feminist practice, see as the most pertinent and personal feminist theory (this would indeed mean taking the neoliberal logic of the market a step too far). As has been shown, e.g., at the event hosted to mark the occasion of Gender Studies, o.p.s. twenty years of operation and in the magazine published at the time to mark the occasion (*G bod*), and the personal theoretical inclinations even of those working for a liberal feminist organisation can be quite different.

I believe that this is important for it de facto means that there is greater theoretical potential, albeit relatively untapped, than it seems from simply looking at the written production. This is of course only relevant to some members of the NGOs but almost

all of those taking part in this research showed theoretical inclinations different from liberal feminism. The possible repercussions of this concern the survival of the scene. The divergent theoretical focus helps the scene to survive throughout extended periods of adversary conditions and closed political opportunities.

Besides liberal feminism, the poststructuralist approaches seem to have been well established across the scene [Jarkovská 2010, Dudová 2012] and so has feminist critical theory as outlined in the work of Zuzana Uhde [2014]. Besides these strands, especially in terms of the interviews a great emphasis was put on the intersectional approach that can be seen enacted and embodied also at the genderfucking events. The research participants constructed intersectionality, although usually in a fairly general form, as one of the norms for “correct” focus and content of feminist practice.

#### 2.4.2. *Controversies*

The preceding section has outlined the diversity of theoretical inclinations across the scene. Many of the differences are compatible and I do not want to stress here that the controversies prevail by ranking them after the opening section. Nevertheless, I believe that some of the controversies can be interpreted as more serious, often resulting from lack of effective communication.

If we look again at the accounts of the nature of the activities done and steps taken by various groups primarily implicated in activism, we can see a prevalence of a need for more radical forms of expression. This is an urge shared by those involved in less hierarchical groups with less conventional tactics as well by members of well-established NGOs. Similar claims could be heard from those active in more areas at the same time who also felt that what they often perceived as the dominant *liberal feminism* was based on cooperation with the standing gender order to such an extent that it precluded any chance for an actual change. Interestingly, this implies that the internal criticism, on the verge of despair in some, does not translate into the actions taken by the respective groups and individuals. While this is typically explained with funding as the driving force behind the activities and some of the participants'

accounts suggest the same, I believe the very presence of an internal conflict is important for it defies the “market logic” at least in some instances. This then can also explain how the scene survived the twenty years of closed political opportunities [Císař 2008, Císař and Vráblíková 2010].

Besides the controversy regarding liberal feminism, there is the often repeated allegation that most of the members of the (mostly academic part of the) scene do not read what the others write. Interestingly, the only academic journal on gender in the Czech Republic introduced a Discussions section but when it is actually used, it concerns general topics through a gender perspective rather than discussions within the scene. The disparity of theoretical inclinations thus still has no substantial platform where to be communicated and given the fate of at least two past attempts (gitA and FEMA – although the latter thrives on the Internet) it is questionable whether the expressed need of discussions really resonates across the scene. What seems to be main problem is lack of personal resources devoted this endeavour despite the belief of how salient communication is for reaching political goals is widespread throughout out the scene.

Since this section is devoted to controversies, I believe that a topic that should be highlighted is one relevant for all segments of the scene. It is the “staking out” of topics and activities as already mentioned in the analyses above. This practice, described at least in science as education to non-cooperation fostered by emphasis put on individual achievement rather than cooperation [Rabinow 1997 in Stöckelová 2009c], seems to be present in the other areas as well. Within the NGO sector, tensions mentioned both in literature and in the present interviews show that the funding and competition for the “same bunch of money” is one of the divisive factors.

While this may not seem surprising, the reason why the competition is not accepted as “natural” by some and why it leads to the feeling of burnout or seclusion and loss of interest in group activism is that such a practice is in opposition to how many of the research participants in fact regard feminism. One of the participants commented on the practice as follows: *“It is really sad for me, the rivalry, I don't want to compete with my colleagues and I won't.”* The same claim is made by many within the other areas as well. The participants in the research mentioned the practice of *“delineating one's topic”* in science and not letting anyone else engage with it. Given the relatively low

number of positions and opportunities within the Czech academia, such practice may easily result in effectively pushing out other researchers interested in feminism.

If we consider such moves in the light of the ethical framework of this thesis, we will see why the practice is at the very least not ethical. The accountability towards those coming after us seems to be breached by such a practice for the diversity of thought as well as the possibility to “hear a different voice” is effectively erased. Such conduct breaches not just the ethics oriented to the future but even the more traditional reciprocal one.

Another controversy resulting from the different theoretical leanings is that framed within the interviews as the relation between activism and academism. The debate published in *Kontext: časopis pro gender a vědění* [2008] finishes with an analysis by Gerlinda Šmausová [2008] who concludes that the institutional division between the academic and non-academic sectors is desirable and should be maintained. While her argumentation is persuasive, it has emerged in the interviews that the controversy is far from settled as suggested by Věra Sokolová [Vodrážka 2009b].

While it would be easy to simply pose the two camps in opposition, this is hardly possible. Individual participants from different segments of the scene provide very similar accounts of how in different contexts they felt angry and hurt by being refused or even offended simply based on the basis of their perceived institutional allegiance (see the analyses of the interviews for the quotes). I have encountered this problem several times, too: when writing for the gitA agency, I was harshly criticised by a member of an associated NGO solely based on my friendship with another member of the newsroom. Later, when conducting the present research, the feeling of total mistrust based on my intention to conduct an interview with a representative of the GenderFuck collective was also palpable.

Interestingly, when the participants talk about such instances, it is usually the discursive strategy stressing the power inequality than any other that is used to account for the perceived malfunctioning relations between the segments of the scene. At the same time, we can see another trope: normativity in relation to how feminism ought to work and the related ethical claims are also at play. Subject positions that stress the power inequality between those outside and inside the official institutions granted often a monopoly for producing “knowledge” obscure part

of the discursive landscape. The very example of my own problem with gaining access to one of the participants from the grassroots part of the scene shows that the fabric of power at play is much more delicate (for she thereby exerted quite a lot of power, too). This is also evident once we realise a similar controversy exists between those often perceived as a single entity from the outside: grassroots activists and activists from NGOs [it has been described in some detail by Kapusta-Pofahl, Hašková and Kolářová 2005]. And a similar web of different power positions also operates between at least some participants from within the academia, this time along disciplinary lines.

Although the analysis of the literature shows clear theoretical shifts within the scene towards greater engagement with varied theoretical positions starting around 2005, the divisions running across the scene became most visible within the interviews. The most disturbing rifts pertain to disrespecting basic ethical premises (mobbing), which out of the political nature of feminism together with its marginalised status within society have far reaching consequences for those affected, sometimes leading to measures such as change of employment.

I suggest that despite the perceived harm to feminist goals, the debate on the status of liberal feminism within the Czech scene should also be scrutinised. Although the critiques of liberal feminism as searching more privileges for the already privileged have some currency judging from the events I attended, the outright opposition to all liberal feminism seems to serve at least at times the very same goals as those pursued by the criticised staking of topics. The policies in which the individual NGOs engage as well as who their members are differ even across the mainstream ways of doing liberal feminism. Under such conditions, the self-identification in opposition to all liberal feminism can in fact be also a self-defeating practice for those members of the NGOs that in fact prefer different theoretical strands are repeatedly attacked by such identifications disregarding their complex position.

In other words, the critique of liberal feminism on theoretical grounds as well as the pointing out of concrete steps seen as harmful are justified unless the agenda is in fact just to demarcate one's own position as theoretically more authentic and better. The theoretical inclinations thus come out as marked by the uneasy relation with the mainstream form of feminism practiced in the Czech Republic. Its predominance no

longer stems from the discursive environment of transformation effecting its theoretical salience (and perceived limited resources for resistance to it as analysed by Tereza Kodíčková). Rather it is the effect of both a certain level of theoretical path dependence, i.e. the effect of the previously dominant discourse, and the normative frameworks exerted by the sponsoring institutions. The general dominant discourse is no longer that of transformation but the neoliberal one stressing austerity measures as the only legitimate (sic!) response to the financial crisis. This framework is not just local, it stems from the developments on a transnational level, which further back the discourse, which is by definition hostile to feminist transformative efforts. Nevertheless, it is its dominant position, bordering on that of hegemony that helps to shape opposition and resistance to it. The local feminist discursive landscape is thus thorn between its (largely formal as most of the interviews show) allegiance with (EU sanctioned) liberal feminism and currents opposing such a pull. This is manifested on the different critical positions taken by members of the scene – although they are far from united, they work against the dominant neoliberal discourse. The geopolitical location of the discourse thus continues to play a role, yet it is no longer a unifying factor for the position has shifted [Horký 2008, Kolářová 2010] undermining the previously dominant transformation discourse. Braidotti's call for establishing a feminist platform for action as a logical consequence of her theory of the subject and its ethical corollary is thus strangely both seen as salient but not really embraced yet. There are, nevertheless, clear shifts even in this respect – the Czech Women's Lobby (CWL) has taken a clear discursive position (claiming allegiance to feminism for all the member organisations) and it therefore remains to be seen what the effect of such a move will be. The potential for cooperation is not to be overestimated as the role of the unifying actors is still rather big as can be also seen from the importance of who the CWL's head is.

### 2.4.3. *On a methodological note*

This section briefly outlines some theoretical implications stemming from the chosen theoretical and methodological framework. It introduces some problems as they emerged during the research.

The presented research involved an experiment with feminist methodologies as most importantly described in the volume on feminist research edited by Nagy Hesse-Biber [2012]. This has especially affected three areas: a) the choice of the topic, b) the research ethics, c) methodological choices. We now briefly turn to each of the points to summarise the lessons learnt.

*The choice of the research topic.* The choice of the topic was directed by my long-term interest in feminism but also commitment to scientific inquiry. At the crossroads of these two incentives was an interest in how the theories used influence the functioning (and efficacy) of feminism not just within the academia but more broadly.

Nevertheless, the choice of the topic also proved problematic for it originally hoped to reveal the local brand of feminist thought, i.e. to find something defined before the very beginning of the analysis. According to some critics of how feminist research is done, this represents a common issue [Šmausová 2011a]. I hope that the framing of the research that tries to anchor it in three interrelated traditions of thought has helped to circumnavigate some of these issues. This is especially pertinent to the third framework of geopolitics, which warns against reifying seemingly geographical (and therefore descriptive and neutral) borders.

Another problem related to the topic was its very delineation. The choice of the word “scene” to describe the discourse and the subject positions within it together with the available interpretative repertoires has only partly solved the issue and I am aware of this shortcoming. If the spotlight came from a different angle or from more angles at once, the results might be different. Notwithstanding, I believe that even the “scene” thereby described represents a relevant glimpse of some of the issues and changes to these in time. In addition, it allowed me to focus on more activities and subject positions at once for they are arguably interconnected (at least in terms of the

theoretical toolbox) and this aspect should not be overshadowed by analytical categories stemming from a priori beliefs about the salience of descriptors such as institutional background and generation.

*The research ethics.* In terms of the research ethic as outlined in section 1.3.1 *Feminist research ethics, linguistic implications* at least two comments are due. Firstly, as Rupp and Taylor have observed [2011], the idea of involving those researched in the research process has a lot of appeal especially (but not only) for feminist research. It hopes to lessen (rather than eradicate) the inequality that is inherent to the research and in some instances stresses the necessity to “give back” to those researched. We have tried to live up to at least some of these standards. On a linguistic level, instead of describing the people involved as the subject (or even objects) of study, I refer to them as research participants. To avoid the emptying of the word by simply using it and believing that is sufficient, I tried to involve them in the research process.

Before the actual meeting, some (although only in three distinct instances) voiced their reluctance to take part due to how they perceived the salience of theory – in these instances, the focus on theories was toned down and the issues covered more extensively in these cases mostly related to relations across the scene and especially those with groups perceived as distinctly different. While the guide for the interviews was drafted beforehand, they were given space – and some asked for it – to add to the guide topics they deemed important. These most frequently concerned the interaction and interconnection of their activities under the heading of feminism with other activities, such as the protection of animal rights or of the environment. Moreover, the interim results of the analyses were circulated among the research participants for possible comments and to provide space for expressing disagreement with the findings.

Here I ran into the first major problem. A minority (about five) of the participants commented on the results. However, the majority either only expressed their overall support or never wrote back at all. This clearly poses an ethical problem for a silence may mean various things, including disagreement that one does not want to express to avoid conflict.

Overall, this practice has proved not much time-consuming because the majority of research participants either did not respond at all or only very briefly. Nevertheless, I would like to thank those that did for their comments and critiques enriched the research by e.g., drawing attention to its limits and in more concrete terms, by pointing out new literature, and forming new relationships. This has confirmed the merit of both regarding interviews as temporarily and locally situated performances [Denzin 2001] and the insights of feminist research ethics.

Secondly, neither of the techniques has truly managed to effectively challenge the power hierarchy implicit in the very distribution of roles (who asks and who responds). Moreover, since some of the outcomes, especially conference papers, were delivered in English and the researcher lacked enough resources to translate all the papers, sending the interpretations to everyone was not always possible. Some research participants also do not speak English and thus these results remained beyond their control.

Nevertheless, I would like to recommend considering the use of feminist ethics in research for I believe it has managed to at least keep the people involved for an extended period of time; it also helped to foster new relationships and, last but not least, to make me feel more responsibility and accountability to those researched. This type of ethics can thus also be used as a means of motivation.

Due to the often highly emotionally charged development of the interviews, the concept of self-care rather than just care for others was expedient. I could only reflect on some of the encounters after debriefing and coming to terms with the emotional effect of the interview.<sup>72</sup>

In general, power imbalance and at times feeling of more or less achieved equality kept coming up in the interview situations. It was immediately clear when asking for an interview a person based in the academia with a higher degree that the situation is more complex than often suggested when exploitation is unilaterally assigned to the researcher [e.g., Ironstone-Catterall et al. 1998: 32]. Given the small scope of the Czech social scientific academia, it would for instance not be exaggerated to claim

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<sup>72</sup> For details, see Nyklová 2014.

that the researcher seeking her PhD might approach all those “higher up” as her potential opponents or at least as possible reviewers of any of the outcomes of the research.

This is not to say the power dynamics was simply reversed. People from non-governmental organisations may be seen as relatively detached from me but this does not mean that power is missing from these interviews. Rather it was formed and reformed at every single encounter and is therefore paid the necessary attention in the analysis of the interviews. This is closely linked to need for reflexivity of any feminist research.

Besides direct questions, there were many instances in the interviews that required active listening on my part. For instance, one research participant engaged in both a feminist NGO and in volunteerism criticised the perceived practice of feminists “*from the academia*”, to cite the research participant, of leaving the field and hardly ever giving back. While I could have tried to maintain distance and a level of “objectivity” to simply code this as an account of the perceived practice, in the context of the interview, this statement was implicitly questioning my own practice. I interpret the particular statement as a question regarding my own practice, which prompted me to react by promising to send the results of the study.

*Methodological choices.* Just like the previous two areas, this one is inseparable from the others. The most obvious methodological choice is heavily informed by both the topic studied and the ethics. It is the choice to continually share the interpretations and representations of the scene as they were formed during the research process and especially when drafting papers to be published. This concerned both academic papers and media articles.

The method for informing the participants was simple – before the publication of any conclusions made also on the basis of the interviews, each participants would be sent a copy of the paper to their email address. I decided to send individual copies for two reasons: fears of disclosing the names and addresses of the other research participants if blind carbon copy went wrong, and in order to provide a possibility to further foster the relations with the participants. Although this may sound time-

consuming, it is a method to be recommended for at least three reasons. Firstly, it provides the research participants with a possibility to voice their criticism directly to the researcher and thereby challenge the hierarchy implicit in any research.

Secondly, and as a side-effect of the previous point, it provides an opportunity to foster a relationship between the research participant and the researcher, which given the nature of the research has to be regarded positively, since more communication and networking are needed to make the scene more efficient. And thirdly, it allows those who do not really want to respond back the possibility not to. This would be more difficult if, e.g., a meeting or even a range of meetings were to follow the initial interview. Especially when researching a set of people invested in political activity, which tends to be time-consuming, this is a factor to consider.

This being said, I have to self-critically admit that I was surprised by the low number of replies to the academic texts, and also unsettled by some of the feedback. What exactly is the researcher to do about the feedback that de facto refuses the results, especially in a setting where the research participant could become the opponent at the defence of the dissertation or a reviewer of an article? Answers to such questions are hard to find in literature although reservations and issues related to the methodology do appear. We believe that these issues should be further discussed and addressed also locally where feminist research is taking place.

#### *Questions for future research*

The sample used for the present analysis did not include all the areas of the scene. While there have been studies of artists addressing gender in their work [Štefková 2003, Pachmanová 2004] as well of politics and the potential it offers for feminist challenges [Rakušanová 2006], when it comes to research on those currently studying gender programmes and those who have already graduated since 2004, there is clearly a lot of work to be done. This group merits attention for both scientific and applied reasons. Its study could illuminate the effects of that education, especially in terms of their future professional trajectories. This would concern not just the applicability and “usefulness” of their education but perhaps more importantly their contribution to increased gender awareness in society and possible activism based on that awareness. At the same time, such research should also focus on the

micro-level of personal embodied experience and the impact of the studies on this experience as it has potential to change the respective person's values. At the same time, the impact of teaching on those engaged in education should also be paid more attention.

I also believe that the present study, especially the topics it has identified, could serve as a springboard for a large-scale, possibly quantitative study across as many parts of the scene as possible in order to secure a more comprehensive picture of the stances across the scene. Part of this study should be an analysis of how feminist theories are approached by organisations that receive funding for gender-related projects and whether they reflect the feminist origins of gender as a category of power organisation/distribution in society.

Finally, as is outlined in the following section, the methodology and ethics I have tried to implement throughout this study would benefit from more discussion not just among those engaged in feminist research but more broadly across Czech social science. I do not assert that reflexivity is something inherent to just feminist research (or that it is always employed in it) but should be embraced by science as such and social sciences in particular.

#### *2.4.4. Summary*

This part of the dissertation presents some of the results of the triangulation of the analyses of the production on and by the scene with interviews conducted with the scene's representatives. I focused mostly on two topics, which are related to the central research question.

The first section – *2.4.1 Theoretical inclinations* – focused on the theoretical inclinations as constructed on the basis of the two analyses. We focus on the perceived relative gap between what seems to be the case based just on the analysis of the texts and then when contextualised with the interviews.

The second section – *2.4.2 Controversies* – outlined some of the controversial points that seem to be burning or at least smouldering at different places of the scene.

Interestingly, while some, such as the presence/absence of the movement were not seen as important by some of the participants, other issues, such as the relation between activism and academism seem to live on.

The final section of this part – *2.4.3 On a methodological note; questions for future research* – focuses on some of the methodological problems mostly related to the feminist framework of the research at hand. It also includes suggestions for future research that should, most importantly, target the students of and graduates from the gender studies programmes offered by universities.

## CONCLUSION – Czech feminist scene

*“The subject is but a force among forces, capable of variations of intensities and inter-connections and hence of becomings. These processes are territorially-bound, externally oriented and more than human in span and application.”*

*[Braidotti 2006: 16]*

Although technically speaking, the present study analyses the categories of feminist theory currently in/forming the discursive landscape of the Czech feminist scene, the ethical imperatives derived from Rosi Braidotti’s thought on the responsibilities of feminist subjects have informed the normative claims I put forward in the thesis.

The thesis is based on the assumption that theories impact not only on the academic parts of the scene but also on all the other components for they affect the self-conception and thereby also conduct of the respective actors. Based on an extensive literature review, I have identified that the realm of feminist theory as it is engaged with across the Czech feminist scene has lately been rather neglected together with the impact of the theoretic background on the functioning of the scene. In particular, I wanted to see whether divergent theoretical frameworks may be the reason for the not quite working cooperation across the scene as well as within more clear-cut segments of the scene.

While there was research suggesting the opening of political opportunities has de facto enabled the activists organised in NGOs to enforce their agenda [Císař and Vráblíková 2010, Saxonberg 2011], comparable attention has not been paid to the other segments of the loosely interconnected scene (for the purposes of the study these mostly include groups as well as individuals invested in feminist academic endeavours and grassroots activism). The research on “pro-women” and feminist organisations usually focuses on the non-profit sector [Hašková 2005, Chaloupková 2006], anarchofeminism [Kolářová 2006, Vráblíková 2006], and academic feminism [Kodíčková 2002, Šmausová 2011a] while attempts at analysing the relations across the board are less frequent [Kapusta Pofahl, Hašková a Kolářová 2005]. My goal was to focus on the segments in their interaction. Owing to the still relatively low number

of people that have been active members of the scene for an extended period of time and the perseverance of “personal unions“ (when the same person studies gender at university, volunteers and works at an NGO and thereby functions as at the same time a liaison officer and a gatekeeper), the division into segments is rather instrumental as it stems from an almost ontological conceptualisation of individual segments of the scene.

To overcome this epistemological shortcoming, I derive the term scene from two main sources: social movement theory and cultural (sociological) studies of music scenes (subcultures). The theory of social movements outlines the life cycle of a movement, which owing to the final stage of decline poses a problem to those studying feminist organising. Even after the stage of mass mobilisation is over, feminist political activity has been largely preserved in the studied locations and therefore various concepts, such as abeyance [Taylor 1989] and scene [Diani 2010] have been deployed by Anglosaxon scholars to depict this state of feminist activity. However, given the local historical developments, I needed to better anchor the concept of the scene for it is hardly possible to transpose the concept of abeyance when there was no preceding wave of mass mobilisation. Nevertheless, the focus on the political dimension of the activities and theories is preserved from this tradition. The cultural studies concept of scene [Bennett 2004, Císař and Koubek 2012, Glass 2012] is used for it allows me to conceive of the various actors as sharing the same scene without losing sight of their very loose (and sometimes contested) interconnectedness. In addition, this focus also enables to see the actors as continually constructed through their performances.

I tried to answer the central research question: What is the current Czech feminist scene's relation to feminist theories and what does the relation imply for its self-conception? It would have been possible to conduct an analysis similar to that of Tereza Kodíčková [2002] looking solely on the texts produced by the scene. However, I was interested in the lived and embodied inclinations as the word “relation” in the central research question hopes to suggest. I therefore decided to couple the analysis of the scene's production with an analysis of semi-structured interviews providing the research participants with enough structure but also freedom. The total of 27 interviews were conducted with representatives of the

academia (based in social sciences but not only sociology), NGOs (although due to the extensive attention paid to this segment by political science but also feminist researchers this segment formed a smaller part of the set) and grassroots activism, some of whom were reluctant to speak of theories at all.

As for the more general patterns emerging from the triangulated analysis, there has been a clear shift towards conceptualising the local positioning in terms of theories over the past ten years since Tereza Kodíčková's study [2002]. These attempts sometimes take the form of critique of the lack of attention paid to the geopolitical situatedness and its repercussions for the tasks local feminists should address (such as gendered provision of humanitarian aid – Horký 2008 or position of local feminism in a transnational context – Kolářová 2010). Alternatively, they entail engagement with theories from and on the global South [Knotková-Čapková 2007]. They may also mean amending “travelling” theories to fit local needs. This very account shows it is no longer possible to see the reflection of the local position as completely missing. Neither is there a unity in terms of the theories used – the liberal feminism decried by Kodíčková as well as the “theoretical monoculture” criticised by vodrážka [2009a-e] do not seem to prevail at present.

However, this is not to say the overall reflection of the situatedness has simply become part of all the theoretical engagements nor that the assessment is united. There seems to be acceptance (even if opposition is voiced) of the local position as one not positioned to locally produce theory within the global knowledge economy. This very acceptance is rather striking – it is not framed as a problem to be addressed due to its inevitability based on a relatively homogeneous concept of the CR's position in the world knowledge economy. It is all the more striking given regional attempts at creating central European local theory in the neighbouring Poland [Kulpa and Mizielinska 2011]. Nevertheless, the acceptance has very different effects in terms of action (not) taken – it may lead to insisting on taking part only in theoretical exchanges and cooperation based on an equal footing. It may even mean that original local contributions to theory building are made, yet they are not perceived as such even by those engaging in them. The possible dangerous consequence is resignation on trying to create theory.

Following the conceptual framework suggested by Allaine Cerwonka [2008] for the study of mutual cross-fertilisation within feminist theory, it follows from the analysis of the textual material that the texts emerging in larger numbers after 2005 resonate with this concept rather than the one solidifying the geopolitical discourse of the Cold War (as used in the work of Marian Blagojević 2005). The rise in the theoretical production of the local scene is likely down to the establishment of independent gender studies programmes at state universities at two biggest cities of the CR, the newly acquired peer-reviewed status of the sole academic journal devoted to gender studies (*Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research*) as well as the surging number of graduation theses. Besides these structural shifts, the greater divergence in terms of the theories developed (spanning critical theory, poststructuralist and deconstructivist approaches using different types of discourse theory, cultural feminism applied to literary criticism, intersectional approaches as well as queer theory) is down to the shift in the geopolitical location of the Czech Republic [Horký 2008, Kolářová 2010] as well as the corollary shift in the dominant discursive frame feminist theories have to operate in. Thus, while the previous acceptance of a subordinate, backwards local position as implicit in the widely accepted form of feminist theory [Kodíčková 2002] was framed within the dominant discourse of transformation, this frame is no longer prevalent. Although it is still invoked, especially when applying for international grants (pointing out local “delay” or another failure to live up to the typically “Western” norm, and this partly also concerns the academia: as one research participant put it: “*it is much easier to get published if you write about women than about how gender is actually done*”), it has been largely superseded by neoliberalism. This new framework discourse is by definition hostile to social movements based on ethical claims [Bourdieu 1998] and therefore also to even the mild form of liberal feminism. This then leads to divergent theoretical reactions, which share the feature of critique of the present social situation but otherwise stay rather isolated (even if cross-referencing seems to pick up).

The theories present in texts coupled with issues identified in the interviews yielded discrepancies and issues:

Firstly, judging from the scene's recent production, the main theoretical frameworks have mostly shifted within the academia and grassroots activism while NGO activism

seems relatively stable due to the structure of funding. However, we have to note that the orientation on projects funded by mostly EU-related donors does not necessarily mean identification with the goals that have to be met. This has been manifested at events organised e.g. to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gender Studies, o.p.s., which included the publication of the *G bod* magazine focusing on topics deemed interesting by the members of the NGO. At the same time, this does not have to signify the “grant prostitution” suggested by Mirek Vodrážka [2009e], rather it shows the theoretical potential some of the organisations have that is presently not tapped due to mostly external circumstances. The potential is tapped when events are organised across the scene (usually in terms of volunteering).

There are two other shifts concerning both grassroots activists and feminism as it is done in the academia. Grassroots activism (in Prague) seems to have shifted its focus to include, besides anarchofeminism, also queer practices giving foundation to the GenderFuck collective around 2009. Although there has been an internal rift within the collective, events keep being organised, which invite the participants to engage in actively refusing heteronormative identities. Although the collective is small and its span is spatially limited (despite organising events also outside of Prague), we believe it is important also because some of those institutionally based in the academia (including the researcher) and NGOs attend their events and thereby can engage with the concepts they promote through embodied (rather than written) practices. Moreover, the research participants who claimed allegiance with queer theory of subject were those to claim only contingent identification with feminism as all identities are seen as highly contextual and politically contingent. This is not to claim they are reluctant to embrace feminist goals but quite the contrary that their conduct is indeed informed by the theories they adhere to. Interestingly, this adherence appeared across the board with participants from across different demographic as well as institutional backgrounds.

The other part of the central research question asking after the implications of the scene's relation to theories has partly been addressed when I referred to the fact that some of the research participants embrace theories not necessarily in sync with their “donor.” The implications of the diversity of approaches to theories often lead to the feeling of fragmentation. Some see it as “*natural*” and actually welcome the increase

in academic production for it finally enables them to engage only with their immediate colleagues. Others, however, are critical of the prevalence of liberal feminism within the NGO sector and see the diversity within the academia as driven by rivalry and need to “stake out” one's field. When it comes to more material implications, it seems that the assessment of whether the local scene could be termed as a “movement” (which could then have repercussions in terms of engaging with it) hinges mostly on how the activities done within the scene (forming it) are assessed.

If the respective research participant sees them as not living up to the “norm,” such as when lack of personal application of feminist ideals is criticised and even fears the potential accountability (*vis-à-vis* the future generation, i.e. following the ethics promoted by Rosi Braidotti), s/he is less likely to perceive any unity. The contrary is the case as well: if a research participant felt activism (or academic work) was bearing fruit, s/he was more likely to believe there is a feminist movement. We have to add that some of the research participants were indifferent to the presence/absence of a movement.

Finally, the research has revealed many of formerly identified controversies still thriving within the scene. One of the most burning issues seems to be the relations within the scene, which are again often driven by different perceptions of what the members of the respective segments “should do.” This especially pertains to the relations between those primarily based within the academia or activism but we have detected more nuanced tensions than could be captured by such a dichotomy.

The research thus shows the feminist scene in the Czech Republic is actively engaging with feminist theories, its academic production is growing and new topics and approaches are being developed. At the same time, the scene seems to be missing a platform for communication although it has to be emphasised that this mostly means it lacks financial and especially personnel capacity to run such a platform. As far as the theories are concerned, there has been a shift away from the homogenising teleological discourse of transformation to the overarching (even transnational) dominant neoliberal discourse hostile to feminism. Although allusions to the transformation discourse are still made especially in grant projects, it no longer constitutes the dominant framework of theoretical work. It rather seems that the

production of feminist theories has started to reflect the historical and cultural conditioning of current social institutions and settings but without the formerly “mandatory” emphasis on local ‘otherness’ (and by default also subordination and inferiority). It remains to be seen whether this shift will result in greater unity that would enable the creation of the broad feminist platform for action corresponding with the still largely interdependent character of the Czech feminist scene.

## Resumé

Předkládaná práce se na základě přehledu dostupné literatury zaměřuje na českou feministickou scénu, konkrétně pak na její vztah k feministickým teoriím a jeho implikace pro fungování scény. Výchozím předpokladem práce je, že teoretická východiska mají svůj dopad nejen v rámci akademické části dané scény, ale i ve všech ostatních jejích částech, neboť ovlivňují sebepojímání a tedy chování jejích aktérů/aktérek. Konkrétně mne zajímalo, zda rozdílné teoretické rámce mohou být příčinou ne zcela fungující spolupráce napříč scénou i v rámci jejích jednotlivých úžeji vymezených okruhů.

Výzkum tzv. pro-ženských i feministických organizací se běžně soustřeďuje na neziskový sektor [Hašková 2005, Chaloupková 2006], anarchofeminismus [Kolářová 2006, Vráblíková 2006], či akademický feminismus [Kodíčková 2002, Šmausová 2011a] zatímco snahy o podchycení vztahů jednotlivých sekcí se objevují méně často [Kapusta Pofahl, Hašková a Kolářová 2005]. Mým cílem v předkládané práci bylo ale zaměřit se na dané segmenty ve vzájemné interakci, neboť i vzhledem ke stále relativně nízkému počtu lidí, kteří se na dané scéně dlouhodoběji (alespoň tři roky) aktivně pohybují a existenci řady personálních unií, kdy jeden člověk zároveň studie na VŠ, je aktivní dobrovolnicí a pracuje na částečný úvazek v neziskové organizaci, se jedná spíše o instrumentální dělení vycházející z ontologického pojímání institucionálního ukotvení jednotlivých „segmentů“ scény.

Pojem scéna vychází ze dvou hlavních zdrojů: politologického zkoumání sociálních hnutí a sociologického/kulturálního studia hudebních scén (subkultur). Teorie sociálních hnutí popisuje průběh „života“ sociálního hnutí, což vzhledem ke konečné úpadkové fázi postavilo teoreticky feministických hnutí před palčivou otázku, jak konceptuálně uchopit aktivismus, který udržuje politickou aktivitu v dostatečné míře na to, aby v případě příznivých podmínek (otevření politických příležitostí a jejich včasné rozpoznání) mohlo znovu vypuknout v masovější podobě [Taylor 1989, Diani 2010]. Teorie anglosaského světa přinášejí různá označení pro podobnou fázi, nicméně pro místní podmínky nejsou zcela vhodná, neboť zde nedošlo k úpadku aktivity dříve masového hnutí.

Koncept scény v rámci studia hudebního žánrů a jejich publik scénou rozumí jak publikum, tak i pořadatelky koncertů i samotné hudební skupiny a fyzický prostor, kde se daná scéna setkává [Bennett 2004, v ČR viz Císař a Koubek 2012]. Zatímco z politologického zaměření čerpám především zacílení na povahu politické a jiné aktivity feministických skupin a jednotlivkyň mimo období masovější politické mobilizace, s pojetím hudební scény mne spojuje kombinace různých aktérek a pozic v rámci jednoho konceptu, který tak dovoluje uchopit jednotlivé prvky scény, aniž by ztrácel ze zřetele jejich (volnou či rozporuplnou) propojenost.

Dané pojetí mi rovněž umožňuje zaměřit se pouze na určitý výsek scény bez toho, abych tím vyjadřovala domnělou okrajovost ostatních složek. Pro potřeby výzkumu scéna zahrnuje akademickou složku (účastnice/i rozhovorů pocházející z různých oborů sociálních věd), neziskový sektor a aktivistickou složku, která na rozdíl od obou předchozích nevykonává aktivismus za finanční odměnu (toto rozlišení ale slouží spíše jako komparativní východisko, neboť pokud je bráno příliš doslovně, zamezuje analýze jevů, jako jsou výše zmíněné personální unie i neplacená práce přesčas, ať už v rámci neziskové organizace či akademické instituce). Scénu tvoří i řada dalších složek, ty však především z kapacitních důvodů nebylo možné pokrýt (jedním z doporučení pro budoucí výzkum je proto i sledování vzájemného působení dalších složek scény a především pak výzkum mezi studujícími a absolventkami genderových univerzitních programů nabízených v ČR).

Hlavní výzkumná otázka zní: Jaký je vztah současné české feministické scény k feministickým teoriím a co tento vztah znamená pro její sebepojímání? Cílem práce je proto i zmapování dané scény z hlediska jejích teoretických inklinací, postojů a kontroverzí, neboť tyto mohou mít vliv na celkovou spolupráci napříč scénou a tedy i její úspěšnost při prosazování politických cílů.

Analýza textů produkovaných o scéně i v rámci scény jsem doplnila o analýzu 27 polostrukturovaných rozhovorů uskutečněných mezi podzimem 2011 a létem 2012. Vzhledem k objemu textové produkce scény (pro potřeby výzkumu rozumím text v jeho širším významu, tj. zahrnuje např. i aktivity nejradikálnější složky sledované části scény), jsem ji roztříдила na základě způsobu, jakým nakládá s teoriemi. V prozatímním souladu s klasifikací navrženou Marinou Blagojević [2005] pro analýzu textů psaných v rámci postkomunistických evropských zemí, jsem texty

rozdělila na ty, které se primárně zaměřují na představení určité teorie či konceptu místnímu publiku; na texty, které víceméně instrumentálně používají teorii „cizí“ provenience, kterou „roubují“ na místní podmínky a konečně na texty, jež se snaží dané rámce překročit. V rámci klasifikace Mariny Blagojevič není ale pro poslední, v českém prostředí neustále narůstající produkci, prostor. Jedná se přitom o texty, které jednak vstupují do aktivního dialogu s teoriemi nejrůznější provenience – v rámci šířeji pojatého textu tak můžeme například sledovat místní queer aktivity – a jednak mají potenciál ke zpětnému přispívání do teoretických feministických debat, a to i v rámci určitého znevýhodnění, zapříčiněného např. ekonomickými podmínkami či rodným jazykem, jímž není angličtina. Tyto texty (ale jak se ukazuje i texty z předchozích dvou kategorií) naopak umožňuje uchopit Allaine Cerwonka [2008] a její přizpůsobení antropologické teorie transkulturace pro potřeby konceptualizace vlivů, včetně těch geopolitických, na transnacionální šíření feministických teorií. Podrobnější pohled na rozdíly mezi jednotlivými kategoriemi navrženými Blagojevič ukazuje, že apriorní dělení myšlenkové produkce na základě předpokládaného geopolitického postavení jejich původkyň není udržitelné, neboť ke vzájemnému teoretickému ovlivňování dochází neustále. Tento závěr nenaznačuje, že by „herní pole“ bylo vyrovnané, ale zabraňuje předpojatosti, jež předpokládá výsledky analýzy (tedy nemožnost tvorby místních teorií v dialogu s teoriemi odjinud) před jejím zahájením.

Analýza literatury, rozhovorů a některých aktivit pojímaných jako text v širším slova smyslu navíc ukázala, že od posledních větších výzkumů (zejména Kodíčková 2002) došlo v rámci diskurzivní krajiny českého feministického teoretického uvažování k jistým posunům. Liberální feminismus (ač ve více diferenciované formě než v té, již kritizovala Tereza Kodíčková v roce 2002) stále formálně převládá především v rámci neziskového sektoru, jak plyne z analýzy materiálů a sekcí věnovaných posláním v rámci webových stránek. Podle některých účastnic rozhovorů je možné vysledovat tlak na tento v zásadě kooperativní proud feminismu i v rámci (české společenské) vědy, a to na základě obsahu přidělených grantů. Provedená analýza diskurzivní krajiny nicméně ukázala, že v rámci aktivismu „zdola“ i publikované akademické produkce došlo k posunu. Vzhledem k pojímání scény jako nejednotné, ale zároveň propojené (personálně, identifikací s feminismem, povědomím o politickém rozměru

feministického myšlení) propojené, mají tyto posuny vliv i alespoň na část neziskového sektoru.

Aktivismus zdola se posunul od dříve pospaného anarchofeminismu [Kolářová 2006, Vráblíková 2006, 2007] k rozšíření záběru o genderfucking, tedy aktivity, při nichž je aktivně odmítána a zásadně zpochybňována heteronormativní matice společenských vztahů [Marinucci 2010]. Vzájemné působení s neziskovou sférou lze spatřovat na zapojení jejích členek/členů na těchto akcích a i na produkci některých neziskových organizací mimo grantové projekty (např. časopis *G bod*). V rámci rozhovorů také ty účastnice, jež se zabývají ať už žitou či spíše teoretickou queer teorií nebo obojím [Marinucci 2010], shodně zdůrazňovaly kontextuální podmíněnost svého sebeurčení jako feministka. To neznamena odmítnutí daného označení [jak bylo údajně běžné ještě po roce 2000 – vodrážka 2006], ale praktickou aplikaci jiného než identitního přístupu k vlastní subjektivitě. Na tomto příkladu můžeme zároveň pozorovat i konkrétní politický dopad přihlášení se k jednomu teoretickému proudu a tedy do určité míry i potvrzení výchozí premisy výzkumu.

V rámci akademické sféry kolem roku 2005 došlo k nárůstu produkce odborných textů, která přetrvává, a jak ukazuje i předložená analýza této literatury, řada textů se do transkulturacy zapojuje nejen prostřednictvím přejímání a přetváření cizích teoretických modelů, ale aktivními, byť značně individualizovanými příspěvky do teoretické diskuze [např. Lišková 2010b, Nečasová 2011, Uhde 2014].

Z hlediska teoretických rámců se kromě zmíněného liberálního feminismu a queer přístupů, etablovaly feministické postpřístupy pracující s různými typy (kritické) diskurzivní analýzy [Jarkovská 2010, Nečasová 2011, Dudová 2012], přičemž účastníci a účastnice výzkumu kladli v rámci rozhovorů velký důraz na studium intersekcionality, tedy analýzu (a potažmo teoretizaci) průsečíků nerovnosti.

Jistá teoretická roztříštěnost celé scény se pak projevuje i v jejím sebenazírání. Ti, kdo mají pocit, že „norma“ ve vztahu k feminismu zde není naplňována (pokud kupř. spojují feminismus s důrazem na aplikaci přístupů i na osobní život a vztahy alespoň s feministickým okolím), mají tendenci zdůrazňovat neefektivitu aktivit („*dělají to, jen aby to bylo*“), absenci společných prvků a negativní představu o budoucnosti feminismu a potažmo i postavení žen v rámci české společnosti. Naopak ti, jejichž norma feministického fungování je spíše splněna (aktivity vznikají, konají se akce),

mají spíše pocit, že feministické hnutí zde je („malé, ale je!“). Části účastníků/účastnic výzkumu na podobné definici ovšem nezáleží, proto není možné tvrdit, že se jedná o ostrou dělící linii jdoucí napříč scénou.

Analýza rozhovorů ukázala, že některé z kontroverzí dříve identifikovaných v literatuře, stále přežívá. Jednou z nich<sup>73</sup> je i vzájemný vztah jednotlivých složek scény a předpokládané role, které by dané složky měly plnit. Součástí těchto představ je mimo jiné i utvrzení daných dělení či ještě spíše jejich diskurzivní znovuvytváření. Jedná se zejména o téma vztahu mezi „akademickou“ a „neakademickou“<sup>74</sup> sférou. Na rozdíl od tématu hnutí tuto kontroverzi tematizovali takřka všichni v rámci rozhovorů, přičemž se jako zásadní ukázalo, že pojmání daných vztahů jednoduchou optikou toho, kdo má v kterém kontextu moc na svojí straně, v praxi neobstojí (zrovna jako není možné vystačit s jednoduchým dělením na centrum, semi-periferii a periferii, jak naznačuje Blagojević 2005). Vedlejších zjištění pak byla potřeba pocíťovaná alespoň některými členkami/členy scény po zvýšení komunikace napříč jejími jednotlivými segmenty - v současné době sice vychází odborný časopis Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum a do virtuálního prostoru se přenesl časopis FEMA, nicméně se nezdá, že by se jednalo o platformy, které by danou debatu dokázaly ukotvit. Jistý posun v tomto směru lze naopak v tomto směru sledovat v rámci především neziskových organizací, ale i spolupracujících akademických pracovišť na činnosti „obrozené“ České ženské lobby: nutnost přijmout explicitní feministické prohlášení pro vstup do této zastřešující organizace a následný odchod některých uskupení stejně jako spíše aktivistické než byrokratické obsazení jejích vedoucích funkcí se zdá usnadnil spolupráci komunikaci stávajících členských organizací.

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<sup>73</sup> Dílčí závěry tohoto výzkumu byly publikovány v časopise Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum [Nyklová 2013].

<sup>74</sup> Dané dělení se zdá být stabilní do chvíle, než se ukáže, že řada neziskových organizací buď přímo s akademickými pracovišti spolupracuje na řešení grantových projektů anebo naopak zaměstnává vysokoškolsky vzdělané zaměstnankyně pro provádění výzkumů a odbornou činnost. Ze zdánlivě ontologického dělení je pak třeba ustoupit na pozici hlavního zaměření dané organizace, nicméně i zde je možné narazit: například Národní kontaktní centrum – ženy a věda je součástí vědecké instituce, ale věnuje se i aktivismu a mentoringu.

Problémem se tak nezdá být neochota ke vzájemné komunikaci, ač se v rozhovorech ukázala řada problematických komunikačních strategií (včetně „zabírání si témat“), ale spíše nedostatek lidských zdrojů schopných provoz podobné platformy zajistit.

Výzkum nicméně ukazuje, že česká feministická scéna se opět začala aktivně zabývat teoriemi, její produkce kvantitativně i kvalitativně stoupá a dochází k vzájemnému ovlivňování jejích jednotlivých složek (v řadě případů dochází stále k vytváření personálních unií, kdy jedna osoba operuje v rámci více aktivit a prostředí a může tak plnit úlohu „styčné důstojnice“ či důstojníka). Nárůst produkce začal především po roce 2005, přičemž především v minulých pěti letech bylo možné zaznamenat teoretický i aplikovaný výzkum období 1948 až 1989 ve státněsocialistickém Československu (se zaměřením na ČR). Zároveň po roce 2005 došlo k prudkému nárůstu počtu bakalářských, diplomových i dizertačních prací (přestože žádná univerzita doktorský studijní program zaměřený na gender studies nenabízí). Domnívám se, že oba trendy souvisí především s etablováním bakalářského (FSS MU v Brně) a magisterského (FHS UK v Praze) oboru gender studies i s větším počtem možností věnovat se studiím genderu a feministických teorií v rámci 21 fakult vysokých škol v ČR.

Zatímco analýza společenskovedního akademického feministického myšlení publikovaná v roce 2002 [Kodíčková] poukázala na nekritické přijetí liberálního feminismu v českém prostředí v 90. letech 20. století, v současné době je situace komplikovanější. Diskurzivní rámec transformace již není možné považovat za dominantní a současný převládající neoliberální diskurz je k feminizmu i v jeho „krotké“ liberální verzi nepřátelsky naladěný [viz Joch 2014]. Ačkoli neziskové organizace a v zásadě kdokoli usilující o získání podpory např. z výzev Evropské komise stále hojně používají rámec společnosti v přechodu pro získání strategické výhody (nejčastěji pomocí odkazu na „pokročilejší“, „civilizovanější“ normativní vzory s jasným geopolitickým vymezením), nejedná se již o převládající rámec pro teoretickou práci. Naopak se zdá, že v rámci produkce feministických teorií začíná hrát větší roli důraz na historickou a kulturní podmíněnost současných společenských institucí a nastavení, ovšem bez dříve „povinného“ důrazu na vlastní jinakost (a tedy i geopolitickou podřazenost).

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## **APPENDIX I – Letter to research participants**

An email of the following wording (English text follows) was sent to each research participant-to-be in order to provide some basic information about the research and interview to be conducted. Additional information was sent upon request and usually also given before the beginning of the recording.

Žádost o rozhovor

Dovoluji si obrátit se na vás s žádostí o poskytnutí rozhovoru. Jsem doktorandskou studentkou sociologie na FSV UK v Praze. Má disertační práce pojednává o teoretických východiscích současného českého feminismu. Součástí výzkumu jsou i rozhovory s představitelkami a představiteli feminismů a genderových studií v ČR (sběr dat – do konce června 2012). V rámci navrhovaného rozhovoru bychom se v duchu feministického kvalitativního výzkumu dotkly níže uvedených témat a případně i témat, která sama považujete za klíčová. Rozhovory jsou striktně anonymní, konkrétní způsob anonymizace je možné po domluvě upravit.

Tematické okruhy vycházejí z rozboru produkce místních genderově a feministicky orientovaných kruhů i z témat aktuálně relevantních v zahraničí. Jedná se o tato témata:

Váš vztah k hnutí a jeho začátek, možnost změny v budoucnosti – místo v biografii

Označení za feministku/feministu – jaký feminismus

Vliv skupin, osob, knih, událostí, filmů, ...

Názor na feministické teorie – proměna v čase?

Provenience teorií – vliv postkomunismu? Relevance patriarchátu – ČR

Aktivismus a akademismus, teorie a praxe – opozita?

Existuje u nás hnutí? Dělicí linie? Společný prvek? Regiony?

Spolupráce s queer hnutím?

Existují u nás vlny?

Rozhovor by měl zabrat 60 - 80 minut.

Děkuji za zvážení žádosti. Jakékoli doplňující dotazy vítám na této emailové adrese. Přeji příjemný den.

S pozdravem,

Blanka Nyklová  
FSV UK Praha  
[nyklova@email.cz](mailto:nyklova@email.cz)

Request for an interview

I would like to approach you with a request for an interview. I am a doctoral student of sociology at FSV UK in Prague and my dissertation is concerned with the theoretical starting points of the present-day Czech feminism. Part of the research consists of interviews with representatives of feminisms and gender studies in the CR (collection of data is to be completed by June 2012). In the proposed interview, we would consider the below-stated topics and possibly also topics you deem crucial. All the interviews are strictly anonymous; the concrete type of anonymisation can be altered upon request.

The topics were derived from an analysis of both local gender and feminist circles and from topics relevant abroad. The topics are as follows:

Your relation to the movement and its start, possible change in the future – role played in biography

Self-identification as feminist – what feminism

Influence of groups, books, events, movies...

Opinion of feminist theories – change with time?

Origin of theories – influence of postcommunism? How relevant patriarchy is in the CR?

Activism and academism, theory and practice – opposites?

Is there a movement in the CR? What are the dividing lines? A unifying element?

Regions?

Collaboration with the queer movement?

Are there waves in the CR?

The interview takes between 60 and 80 minutes.

Thank you for considering my request. Any additional questions are welcome on this email address.

Best regards,

Blanka Nyklová

FSV UK Praha

[nyklova@email.cz](mailto:nyklova@email.cz)

## APPENDIX II – List of NGOs

(name, site, website, focus – where available)

Acorus - psychosociální centrum, Praha, <http://www.acorus.cz>, domestic violence

Agentura GAIA, Praha, <http://www.quovadisfemina.cz>, <http://gaia.ecn.cz>, ecofeminism, sustainable development

Aliance proti domácímu násilí, Praha, Brno, Plzeň, Ostrava, Olomouc, Jihlava, České Budějovice, Liberec, <http://www.domacinasili.cz>, under Bílý kruh bezpečí

Aliance žen s rakovinou prsu, Praha, <http://www.breastcancer.cz/>, breast cancer

Alma Femina, Praha, <http://www.almafemina.cz/>, assistance to addicted women

Alternativa 50+, Praha, <http://www.alternativaplus.cz>, legal counseling, equal opportunities, intersecting age groups

Amnesty International ČR, Praha, <http://www.amnesty.cz>, human rights advocacy

Aperio - společnost pro zdravé rodičovství, Praha, <http://www.aperio.cz>, birthgiving, (single) parenthood

Asociace podnikatelek a manažerek ČR, Praha, <http://www.apmcr.cz>, women entrepreneurs

Asociace pro rovné příležitosti mužů a žen, Praha, equal opportunities

BAABA, Horoměřice, artistic group

Business and Professional Women Praha II, Praha, <http://bpwcr.cz/>, women entrepreneurs

Centrum podpory podnikání Praha o.s., <http://www.cppp.cz/>, reintegration of released prisoners, return from parental leave, entrepreneurs

Centrum sociálních služeb – Kontakt, Praha, <http://www.mcssp.cz>, social services

Consulte, o. s., Plzeň, <http://www.consulte.cz/>, legal counselling, lectures, coordination

ČAPA - Česká asociace porodních asistentek, Praha, <http://www.capacz.cz>, umbrella organisation for midwives

Česká asociace dul, Praha, <http://duly.cz>, Czech midwives

Česká konfederace porodních asistentek, Olomouc, <http://www.ckpa.cz/index.htm>, Czech midwives

Česko-německé fórum žen (občanské sdružení), Liberec, <http://www.hca-deutschesektion.de>, Czech-German cooperation

Český helsinský výbor, Praha, <http://helcom.cz/>, human rights

Český svaz žen, Praha (headquarters; national operation), <http://www.csz.cz>, pro-women activities

Český výbor ceny Žena Evropy, Praha, <http://zena-evropy.webz.cz>, Czech branch of the Woman of Europe competition

Demokratická alternativa - Hana Vosečková, Praha, politics

Élektra - centrum pomoci ženám zneužitým v dětství, Praha, <http://www.centrumelektra.cz>, [www.zachrannasit.cz](http://www.zachrannasit.cz), assistance to women abused in childhood

eLnadrouhou o. s., Praha, <http://www.elnadrouhou.cz>, LGBTIQ association, cultural activities

EVA - poradna pro ženy a dívky v nouzi, Diecézní charita Č. Budějovice, <http://www.charitacb.cz>, counselling for women in need

Evropská kontaktní skupina v ČR (EKS), Praha, <http://www.ekscr.cz/>, services for individual development and NGOs

Fórum 50 %, o.p.s., Praha, <http://www.padesatprocent.cz>, political representation of women

Fórum žen, Praha, <http://www.forumzen.cz>, meeting point for career women

Gender centrum Fakulty sociálních studií Masarykovy univerzity, Brno, <http://www.fss.muni.cz/gender>, student association

Gender Studies, o. p. s., Praha, <http://www.genderstudies.cz>, equal opportunities, educational activities, audits

Genderové informační centrum Nora, o.p.s., Brno, <http://www.gendernora.cz>, equal opportunities, educational activities

Hnutí za aktivní mateřství (H.A.M.), Praha, <http://www.iham.cz>, active motherhood

JANTAR, Praha, <http://www.feminismus.cz/org/jantar>, women after breast removal, cancer

JAPM - Jihočeská asociace podnikatelek a manažerek, České Budějovice, <http://www.wib.cz>, women entrepreneurs of South Bohemia

KARO - poradna Marita T., streetwork pro ženy pracující v sexbyznysu, Cheb, sexworkers

Klub Českého svazu VTS - Ing. Květoslava Kořínková, CSc., Praha, sports

Klub K2, Praha, <http://www.klubk2.cz/>, parental centre

Klub moderních maminek - Ivana Baroňová, Mařatice - Uherské Hradiště, centre for mothers

Klub ŽAP - pomoc ženám s rakovinou prsu, Praha, <http://www.klubzap.cz>, breast cancer

Kluby křesťanských žen - PhDr. Eliška Janšová, Praha, Christian women

Komise žen při Ekumenické radě církví, Praha, Ecumenic women

La Strada, Praha, <http://www.strada.cz>, trafficking in women

Levicové kluby žen, Praha, politics

Liga otevřených mužů, Praha, <http://www.ilom.cz>, new men

Mamma HELP - sdružení pacientek s nádorovým onemocněním prsu, Praha, <http://www.mamahelp.cz>, breast cancer

Medúza Brno - knihovna Gender Studies, ženský spolek Vesna, Údolní 10, Brno, library of Vesna

Mezirezortní komise pro rovné příležitosti při MPSV, Praha, committee for equal rights under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the CR

Moravská asociace podnikatelek a manažerek, Brno, <http://www.podnikatelky.cz>, women entrepreneurs of Moravia

Most k životu, o. p. s., Trutnov, <http://www.mostkzivotu.cz>, social services, shelters

Nadační fond Růže, Praha, support for women's public and political engagement

Národní centrum pro rodinu, Brno, <http://www.rodiny.cz>, support for families

Národní kontaktní centrum - Ženy a věda, Praha, <http://www.zenyaveda.cz>,  
women in science

Nezávislé sociálně ekologické hnutí - NESEHNUTÍ Brno, Brno,  
<http://zenskaprava.ecn.cz>, [www.nesehnuti.cz](http://www.nesehnuti.cz), intersection of human rights,  
ecological and citizenship oriented activities

Občanská inspirace, Praha, <http://www.obcanskainspirace.cz>, equal  
opportunities, community life

Občanské sdružení ZNOVUZROZENÝ POROD, Vrchlabí,  
<http://www.znovuzrozenyporod.cz/>, birthgiving

Oddělení Gender & sociologie, Sociologický ústav AV ČR, v.v.i., Praha,  
<http://www.genderonline.cz>,  
<http://www.soc.cas.cz/departments/cz/4/42/Gender-sociologie.html>,  
sociological research in gender

One Woman Press, Praha, <http://www.owp.cz>, publishing house

Otevřená společnost o.p.s., Praha, <http://www.osops.cz>, gender equality, civic  
participation, against discrimination

Pansophia - sdružení pro výchovu v sociální oblasti, České Budějovice,  
domestic violence

Persefona o.s., Brno, <http://domacinasili@persefona.cz>, legal, psychological  
and social assistance to victims of domestic violence

Pomoc v nouzi, o.p.s., Sokolov,  
<http://www.pomocv nouziops.cz/www/script/main.php>, shelters, social  
assistance

Poradna pro občanství/Občanská a lidská práva, Praha, <http://www.poradna-prava.cz/>, legal counselling - discrimination

Porodní dům U Čápa o.p.s., Praha, <http://www.pdcap.cz>, birthing centre

Pražské matky, Praha, <http://www.pmatky.ecn.cz>, ecological association

proFem, o. p. s., konzultační středisko pro ženské projekty, Praha,  
<http://www.profem.cz>, legal counseling

Projekt Jana - centrum pro prevenci HIV, AIDS, Domažlice, AIDS and HIV  
prevention

Rada vlády pro lidská práva – Výbor pro odstranění všech forem diskriminace žen, Praha, <http://www.vlada.cz>, committee for eradication of discrimination against women

Regionální klub MAPM Ostrava, Ostrava, <http://www.podnikatelky.eu/>, regional centre for female entrepreneurs and managers

Rodinné centrum PEXESO, Praha, <http://www.pexeso.org/>, parental centre

ROSA-občanské sdružení, centrum pro týrané a osamělé ženy, Praha, <http://www.rosa-os.cz>,

Rozdílné Rytmy o.s., Praha, <http://rozdilnerytmy.blgz.cz>,

Rozkoš bez rizika, Praha, <http://www.rozkosbezrizika.cz>, sexworkers

Sdružení Jihočeské matky, České Budějovice, <http://www.jihoceskematky.cz>, ecological association of mothers from South Bohemia

Sdružení žen a mužů samoživitelů, jejich dětí a mládeže, Kopřivnice, single parents association

Síť mateřských center v České republice, Praha, <http://www.materska-centra.cz>, network of maternity centres of the Czech Republic

Slovak-Czech Women's Fund, Praha, <http://www.womensfund.cz>, foundation for pro-women activities

Slovo 21 o. s. – Manushe, Praha, <http://www.slovo21.cz>, Roma women's association

Sociálně demokratické ženy, Praha, <http://www.socdem.cz>, Social Democratic women - politics

Středočeská asociace podnikatelek a manažerek – STAMP, Praha, <http://www.stredoceske-podnikatelky.cz>, women entrepreneurs from Central Bohemia

Studio pro život, Olomouc, <http://www.materstvi.cz>, maternity centre

Unie katolických žen, Praha, <http://ukz.katolik.cz/>, Catholic women

UNIPA - Unie porodních asistentek, Praha, <http://www.unipa.cz>, midwives union

Výbor pro rovnost ČMKOS (Českomoravské komory odborových svazů), Praha, <http://www.cmkos.cz>, trade unions – equality committee

Výzkumný ústav práce a sociálních věcí, v.v.i (VÚPSV, v.v.i), Praha,  
<http://www.vupsv.cz>, <http://www.rilsa.cz>, research institute of the Ministry of  
Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic

YWCA v České republice - Křesťanské sdružení mladých žen, Praha,  
<http://www.ywca.cz>, Christian women

Ženský vzdělávací spolek – VESNA, Brno, <http://www.vesnaspolek.cz>,  
educational activities

ŽENSKÝ WEB, Praha, <http://www.zenskyweb.cz/squeeze-page/>, multicultural  
networking

Ženy 50, o.s., Brno, association for (not only) women over 50

ŽnP - Žába na prameni, o.s., Praha, <http://www.zabanaprameni.cz>, local  
activities, community life