

## **The Politics of Sensibilities toward Sexual Harassment of Women in Polish Press Discourses during the Transformation Period**

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This project examines how sexual harassment of women was constructed in the Polish press during the 1990s and 2000s. The introduction of “sexual harassment” into Polish public discourse brought to light pre-existing ways of making sense of behaviors covered by this category. As part of the anti-discrimination agenda, workplace sexual harassment regulations were embedded in the postsocialist transformation, a process marked by the adaptation of 'Western' values, identities, and institutions in the former Eastern Bloc, alongside their negotiation with the local gender order.

The research draws on an archival collection of press articles about sexual harassment of women and the oral history interviews with feminist experts and activists working on various forms of violence against women at the time. The research objective is to analyze how media discourses on sexual harassment in postsocialist Poland produced different sensibilities through which this phenomenon was constructed. At the same time, these sensibilities represented political stances towards the broader question of gender inequality.

The project addresses tensions between the expert knowledge with roots in North American feminist activism and alternative ways of constructing this phenomenon in discourses that focus on affects, masculinity, social class and nationality. Reluctance or ignorance of sexual harassment regulations, evident across the spectrum of institutional politics, was consistent with the broader attitude toward anti-discrimination measures as an unwelcome burden of the transformation to a market economy. Consequently, the press discourse on sexual harassment was a minor yet distinctive element of the post-socialist transformation, as it did not criticize how neoliberal markets produced gender inequality and sexualized violence.