

Gender representations in Cyprus TV and the necessity for their deconstruction

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This paper presents the results of a research study on genders' profile in public life as it has been broadcast by the Cyprus TV and it investigates its relationship with the perceptions of youth. The study aimed at showing the relationship between TV's gendered representations, cultural pattern construction and students' gendered perceptions. For the purposes of the study, 158 episodes from 8 Cypriot TV series were randomly selected and analysed. Based on these results, two questionnaires were developed. The one was completed by 588 fifth grade elementary students and the other by 1158 secondary grade students from randomly selected schools all over Cyprus. The results indicate a gender stereotypical picture in public life in the TV series and in students' perceptions. It is argued that the gender stereotypical picture is culturally produced and reproduced through TV representations as the result of relations of power, which call for discipline and create forms of oppression and obedience.

Theoretical Background

Gender equality has been enshrined in the EC Treaties since the establishment of the European Economic Community in 1957 and constitutes a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU's objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion (Commission of the European Communities, 2006). EU in all its official documents defines gender equality as an equal outlook, empowerment and participation of both genders in all aspects of private and public life. The main principle underlying gender equality is the right to be different and the effort to change the structures that preserve the unequal relationship between the two genders (Council of Europe, 2002; European Commission, 2006; European Commission, 2005). Gender mainstreaming is the integration of the gender perspective into every stage of policy processes – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view to promoting equality between women and men (Council of Europe, 2003).

However, as European Commission indicates in its 2006 and 2007 reports on equality between women and men, women continue to be under-represented in the political sphere and their access to economic decision-making positions remains insufficient. This makes a fundamental democratic deficit both at European level and in the wider international context (European Commission, 2006; Commission of the European Communities, 2007). The 2008 Report (European Commission, 2008) shows significant progress in EU as regards employment, education, change of roles and stereotypes. For example, women have been the driving force behind employment growth in recent years. However, the challenges still to be overcome, like the persistent pay gap and the reconciliation of work and family life are considerable. Moreover, the report stresses the importance of quality in the equality debate. This way, women will be able to fully realize their potential whilst contributing to the improvement of the overall quality of life in our society. Lastly, the fight against stereotypes needs to be kept up, as they contribute in no small way to the persistence of inequality.

Nevertheless, presentation of the inequality in the European reports has little impact on real changes in the society and even less contribution in understanding the roots of inequality. As Davis et al. (2006, p.2) argue “Gender is a system of power in that it privileges some men and disadvantages most women”. Mass Media, as research shows, play a negative role as they produce and reproduce the negative stereotypes derived from the system of power in the society. It is argued that Mass Media promote a non-balanced and stereotyped portrayal of women and they play a dominant role to the stereotyped socialization of youth (Burton and Pollack, 2002; Fenton, 2000; Frankson, 2000a, b; UNESCO, 2003; United Nations, <http://www.un.kiev.ua/bc/tenders/99/>). As UNESCO indicates an under-representation of women at the decision-making levels in the media is both a symptom and a cause of the inequality between the genders and a form of discrimination against women. From thousands of hours of watching television, children receive messages about gender roles (i.e., Singer and Singer, 2001; Witt, 1997). Therefore gender representations in TV impact children’s attitudes and perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour in society (Fox, 1993).

Furthermore, TV has been proved (i.e., Sadiqi, 2003; Abu- Lughod, 2005) to be a key institution for the production and reproduction of national culture. Although a stereotyped understanding of gender that privileges some men and disadvantages most women is a pancultural phenomenon, historically produced and reproduced, the specific historic and socio-cultural context of a state constructs the differentiated characteristics of the country or/and the nation and reveals the institutions and values that preserve inequalities. All societies have experienced, and some continue to experience, domination and oppression in relation to the gender issue, mainly because the structures of domination are strongly embedded in societal institutions, division of wealth, and power holding.

In theorizing gender identity there have been two predominant views, which are usually used in the temporary discourse, the essentialist and the constructionist view. According to essentialism gender roles have been defined biologically, and gender behaviour is innate because of biological differences that lead to the binary dichotomy of men and women. Constructionist perspective advocates gender as constructed along with all the other social categories, in a specific historical, linguistic, and political system. Thus, beyond the European and international observations concerning inequality between genders, the constructivist approach to gender relations advocates analysis of the specific cultural environment in which the relations have been established.

Moreover, from the constructivist and poststructuralist points of view gendered norms and stereotypes can be understood only within a concrete socio-cultural context (Sadiqi, 2003), which focuses on power relations in the society, language norms, and collective identities that interact with the individual roles and identities. Therefore the system of viewing the world and the genders’ relations are pre-given; they also provide the lens through which the new generation views the society. From that point of view, post-structuralism seeks to challenge any universal definition of femininity.

Weedon (1997, p. 29), citing Louis Althusser, argues that the reproduction of norms and naturalized stereotypes is secured by ideological state apparatuses such as schools, the law, the mass media. These mechanisms –apparatuses of maintaining the

status quo structure reproduce gender power relations and give codes of cultural behaviour. This observation agrees with Foucault's (1979a, b) argumentation according to which norms are culturally produced having the power to exert a discipline and therefore to represent a form of oppression. Moreover Derrida, throughout his work, argues that culture is always possessive in the sense that imposes roles that are not natured but naturalized through language and habits.

Foucault, in "Discipline and Punish" (1979), analyses the ways that societies and cultures penalize persons who reject their norms, values and imposed roles. Therefore culture is the arena in which subjects construct their subjectivity by learning what to do, how to behave and what to believe. "Learning" is a mechanism of subordination, control, and power, and "Disobedience" is a form of resistance to those exerting power over others. Language is the vehicle of communicating meaning and the main instrument of cultural transmissions. Mass media use language and other signifying practices for representing the world in a way that appears inevitable. The norms and values of the society are taken for granted and the binary opposition of men and women are presented as natural.

Thus, it is interesting to examine the role of national TV broadcasting concerning Gender Equality, negative discriminations and stereotyped reproduction and to compare these with the perceptions of youth. How much symmetrical are the masculine and feminine values and norms in the local representations? To what extent youth internalize or/and reflect these norms?

Taken the above into consideration, the aim of this paper is to present the results of a research study on gender profile in public (economic, professional and political) life as it has been broadcast by the Cyprus TV and compare it with primary and secondary students' perceptions. The study presented here is a part of a longer research funded for three years by the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation, entitled "Gender mainstreaming in the Mass Media of Cyprus and the relationship with the perceptions of youth. Comparison with the EU policy". The long - term project aims at awareness rising in gender issues at the Mass Media and at supporting change.

Methodology

The investigation of Cypriot women and men representation is studied through randomly selected Cypriot television series of three different private channels. The Cypriot television series consisted of self-existent, meaningful episodes and referred to the daily happenings of Cypriot society, while their script is written only by Cypriot citizens - men and women. The series assemble high rates of audience and attract a diverse television audience from all educational and socio-economic layers, in urban and provincial regions.

The collection, coding and final sampling of television data goes through a five graded phase's process. The sample includes 8 series, 158 randomly selected episodes with 2287 scenes recorded and analyzed. An Instrument of Recording Behaviours (IRB) and Textualised Dialogues was inductively developed for the analysis of the episodes. The unit of analysis and recording of data on each episode was the scene.

The recordings of observed and interpreted action in each scene were undertaken by a team of four researchers (Koutselini and Agathangelou, 2006; Koutselini, Papastephanou and Papaioannou, 2006).

As far as the student sample is concerned, primary school participants were 588 students of the fifth grade from randomly selected schools all over Cyprus. In order to obtain participants in the appropriate age group, parental consent forms were sent home. Self-administered questionnaires were given to the students who returned the consent forms. A total of 569 children (284 boys (49, 9%) and 285 girls (50,1%)) completed the questionnaire. In addition, 556 male (48%) and 602 female (52%) secondary school students from randomly selected Gymnasiums and Lyceums participated in the study.

The instruments developed for this study were two questionnaires which measure students' perceptions about the role of the Cypriot man and woman. The one was completed by the primary school students and the other by the secondary school students. The instruments were developed based on the prior qualitative analysis of the eight Cypriot TV series which revealed specific profiles about gender behaviours, stereotypes, sentiments, roles, characterizations and self-esteem.

Statements included in the questionnaires, were developed in order to best describe these superfamilies. Normative statements (a man/ woman should...) were included in order to further examine whether certain stereotypes produced by the media about men or women emerged into children's perceptual images. The questionnaire for the primary school students consisted of 23 pairs of statements and the one for the secondary school students of 115 pairs of statements. The first statement of each pair referred to men while the second to women. The statements of both questionnaires were scaled from 1 to 4 (1= definitely not true- 4= definitely true). Extreme values (1 and 4) infer that a certain statement can be generalized hence indicating the existence of a stereotype about Cypriot men or women.

Results

Results' analysis is based both on quantitative measurements and on qualitative differentiations that appear among the two genders. The total numbers of codes that are presented per category for men and women, on the one hand, and the frequency with which each code is repeated, on the other hand, constitute the two basic criteria for the quantitative analysis of the data. At the same time, however, the type of codes that are incorporated in each category constitutes an important element of study on the final configuration of the profile of the genders.

Regarding economic life, the total number of codes that are found under the families economic behaviours, economic characterizations and economic stereotypes for men and women and the frequency in which they appear in the eight television series of the sample give an explicit precedence to the male gender. Even in the category of stereotypes that women are seemed to have a quantitative precedence over men, this precedence strengthens the discrimination towards the profile of the two genders in their economic life. Women are those who are economically dependent on men and

thus choose a life partner with criterion his economic status. On the other hand, men appear to have money as their priority, a negative stereotype for men as well.

These results are enhanced by the qualitative differentiations of the codes that appear in these categories. It is realised that regarding their relationship with money men deal, make transactions and discuss profits, while women ask for money, furniture, cars and travels from men. Simultaneously, the conversations women make about money, concern their guarantee for reasons of consumption. Conversely, men never go for shopping, but their economic action is related with investments and is generally consistent with their professional life. Men are those who support their families financially or offer money to their girlfriends.

These results are also strengthened by the results in the categories of professional behaviours, roles, self-image, characterizations and stereotypes for men and women. In the professional life, the total number of codes in each category initially does not show important differentiations between genders. However, the total number of females that appear in the role of employees, in contrast to the total number of male employees that is presented in the 158 episodes, differentiates the picture considerably. In the total of 47 Cypriot women, 27 do not work (57.4 %), while only 11 appear to have a constant job. From them, only 4 are presented in scenes in their work place, while for the remainder of them it is simply reported that they are working. The cases of unemployed men are such as men released from the army, former prisoners or men in the margin that do not fit in with the “standard” professional status of the Cypriot employee.

Moreover, even in the limited cases of women professionals, the scenes and the plot of the script present women to be unreliable professionals: a professor who faces serious problems of indiscipline on behalf of her students who speak ironically to her in a constant base, a military doctor gullible and ignorant on issues of medicine and a TV hostess- student who is crank and considers herself beautiful, a super-model and clever while the plot presents her to be dumb and soubrette. In most of the cases the codes that refer to women’s professional life refer to hires of cleaners in their houses or discussions about the professional career of their children or for the career they think to follow, but they never decide to do so.

It is typical that the word “professional” is used to characterize men only, while the word “unemployed” is used with a negative tinge for men, but not for women. This point legalises to a large extent the stereotype of the non working housewife who is incurious about, or even incompetent for, business action. It simultaneously strengthens the importance that a successful professional career and a distinguished economic status of life play in men’s life.

The results that refer to the educational status of the two genders are also negatively stereotyped. In total of 69 men and 54 women, 13 men (18.8%) and only 8 women (14.8%) are presented in roles that indicate an educational background. These proportions, as well as the codes that refer to the educational roles, characterizations and self-esteem of men and women shape a picture for the Cypriot society where education does not have any value and probably can be characterized as a demerit when compared with the precedence that money and “good” professional position have. Additionally, women’s behaviours concerning reading, dealing with political

and social life, being informed by newspapers and television news and expressing concerns of finding a job are totally absent. Her profile is dominated by the picture of an unemployed and/or uncultivated housewife with a limited range of interests.

In addition, dealing with politics and having political concerns and action as politicised citizens of Cyprus is excessively limited for both Cypriot men and women. With the exception of one series, where two men are presented to have opposite political convictions and discussions about political controversies, in all other cases, men seldom express political concerns. Regarding women, only in six cases are they presented to read the newspaper and talk about politics. In no case is a woman presented to have an individual politicised action or political and social concerns. This allows us to classify these behaviours in the non - observed behaviours of women.

Moving to the results concerning students' of primary education perceptions, paired samples T-test indicated that most mean scores between the statements referring to men ($1.70 < M < 3.44$, $0.738 < SD < 1.110$) and women ($1.90 < M < 3.51$, $0.692 < SD < 1.183$) are significantly different (two-tailed $p < .05$). Generally, mean scores for women were higher in cases emphasizing emotionality and inferior social roles. On the other hand mean scores for men were higher in statements related to more prestigious social profiles.

Specifically, regarding the gender's economic life, students tend to consider that men, compared to women, earn higher income. In the professional life, they consider men to be better as managers than women. As far as the political life is concerned, no significant difference appears in students' perceptions regarding the superiority of men or women in politics. However, students consider that men, at a greater degree than women, read the newspaper in order to learn the news.

In most cases girls tend to be more favorable towards women than boys as indicated in independent samples comparisons of mean scores. Girls' mean scores were significantly higher than boys' ($p < .05$) in most statements where positive qualities were associated to women ($2.45 < M < 3.09$, $0.744 < SD < 0.924$ for girls and $2.06 < M < 2.92$, $0.772 < SD < 0.969$ for boys). On the other hand girls' mean scores were significantly lower than boys' in statements indicating a negative quality for women ($1.74 < M < 3.44$, $0.790 < SD < 1.01$ for girls, $2.02 < M < 3.59$, $1.02 < SD < 1.12$ for boys).

Regarding the results of the analysis of the questionnaire that was completed by the secondary education students, the statements with the highest and the lowest mean scores for males and females indicate the following: a) None of the statements is common for the two genders, b) Almost all statements have a standard deviation ≤ 1 , a value that indicates a satisfactory degree of coherence between the answers and c) the mean scores of the statements that refer to the Cypriot woman are higher (from 3.64 – 3.2) than the highest mean scores of statements concerning the male gender (3.54 – 3.1). The differentiation of the gender profile is enhanced by the comparative results of the common statements for men and women. Paired sample T-test showed statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) in 112 out of 115 statements of the questionnaire. This result shows that all the students of the sample perceive the genders' profile in a different way.

Specifically, as regards public life, among the statements with the highest mean scores, three of them refer to men's public life. For students, men are responsible for the financial support of their family ($M= 3.54$, $SD= .802$), they must be educated ($M= 3.15$, $SD= .863$) and they are capable of political offices ($M= 3.10$, $SD= .906$). None of the statements that refer to women's public life is within the statements with the highest or lowest mean scores. Statements with the highest mean scores for women refer to the role of women as housewives either married ($M= 3.38$, $SD= .865$) or single ($M= 3.34$, $SD= .899$), their consuming relationship with money ($M= 3.64$, $SD= .757$) and their interest in their external appearance ($M= 3.55$, $SD= .817$) and fashion ($M= 3.42$, $SD= .887$).

Comparing secondary students' perceptions and TV depictions, regarding economic and professional life, 75.7% of the secondary school students believe that the Cypriot man should work and be responsible of the financial aid of his family (69.3%). At the same time, the analysis of the Cypriot television series reveals that men's relationship with money is reported in a higher frequency (139) than that of women's (71). Also, in the television series men are presented in professional roles in a higher frequency than women (11). Simultaneously, the consuming relationship of women with money as it is promoted by the Cypriot series is also found in the perceptions of students (77% of secondary education students believe that the Cypriot woman has always a consuming relation with money).

Another stereotypical perception of students has to do with the role of the Cypriot woman as a housewife either married (58.2%) or single (56.8%), something that is easily related to woman's picture in the TV series: Women are presented to have limited action in their public life and their educational background in the script is low. The astonishing majority of female roles (83%) that were analyzed are deprived superior education, while only four out of eleven women who are reported to work are presented in their professional spaces.

Consequently, it is realised that not only does public life constitute a field of action of men, but also, even the limited space that is lent to the female gender is presented as "alien" for women: professional life, pecuniary transactions and political concerns appear not to match with the female exemplar.

The Cypriot woman appears to dedicate most of her daily time in her private life and she experiences a personal-home life that is possessed by negative sentiments particularly hostile ones towards the persons of her close familiar environment. The Cypriot woman appears to be isolated by the wider social environment, thereby living enslaved to, and absolutely dependent on, the "companion of her life". She never asks for a divorce, regardless of what happens in her marital life, while in cases of infidelity, she always blames another woman. Moreover, women restricted in the limited space of their house, in no case they do participate in decision making processes.

Men's profile is mainly constructed in the principle of freedom of will and independence. Men, in contrast with women are presented as free beings, meaning that they are self actualised and present elements of personal life and of choices that are independent from the female gender. Concretely, they are the chiefs and masters. They attract women despite their age and their exterior appearance is not a criterion

for women in order to choose them. Their power and value is straightforward related to their economic situation and not that much to their professional position. The economic wealth constitutes their main characteristic in such extend that it composes their masculinity. They show off their wealth and their material belongings (houses, cars) in order to show who they are. Superior education is not as valued as material wealth.

As the results of the study indicate, the hierarchical differentiation between the genders' profiles is so apparent, that a stereotypical picture for the feminine behaviour is shaped.

Discussion

This study aimed at showing the relationship between TV's gendered representations, cultural pattern construction and students' gendered perceptions. The results show that the woman's profile as it is depicted in Cyprus TV series is constructed in the general principle of her exclusion from the economic, professional and political life.

In contrary, men's profile is constructed in the principle of freedom of will and independence due to economic independence. In the overall results of the random sample of Cypriot television comedies, the profile of the two genders, as a cultural construction, is presented differentiated. The differentiations are located in all the expressions of life and action of individuals: in private and public life, interpersonal relations, the development of self-esteem and the sentimental world.

Cultural contextualization of research data is based on the assumption that we need not only to understand the results but also to explain how they reflect or/and reproduce the social reality, and to what extent they can contribute to the reduction of inequality, domination and dependence. Culture "as a system of practices, rituals, beliefs, values, and ways of meaning of a community" (Sadiqi, 2003, p. 17) constitutes an extremely powerful context in which relationships are formed. Moreover, physical, political, and economic power in a society as well in the society in general creates the socio-cultural context in which the gender profile is constructed and reflected.

Based on our research data, we may argue that Greek- Cypriot television not only remains trapped in a pre-feminist traditional discourse, but it also largely overlooks feminist gains. The traditional, patriarchal male is still the most frequent portrayal of men in local television. Further, the binary opposition between feminist and feminine occurs in such a way that signifiers of femininity are counter-posed to feminist signifiers such as successful professional life. Thus, the visualization of female power is often only a bad copy of patriarchal habits and principles, and testifies to a commitment to ideals traditionally essentialized as male.

Therefore, contextualization of essentialized gender depictions on local TV demand for a historical and sociological situating of representations and symbols, which goes beyond the typical clash of theories and seeks to identify the catalytic hermeneutical social and historical reasons for such pre-feminist TV representations.

Cyprus is an ex-British colony, which in 1960 earned its Independence. A first identification of its historically derived cultural characteristic connects Cyprus with the postcolonial theory, and especially with two main characteristics of the theory: the concept of otherness around which postcolonial theory is built; and the binary opposition of colonizers and colonized people. Knowledge about the world is produced under specific power relations, circulated to serve certain interests. The colonial creation of binary oppositions structures the way we view others and the way we structure power relations: polarization of mutually excluding opposites gives to the one side the power to dominate the other. According to postcolonial theory, totalization of dichotomies expresses a kind of 'nostalgia' of the power holder's domination. The fact that Cyprus's political history as an independent state is very short partially supports that view: the dichotomy of the emotional, feminine orient versus the responsible, rational, masculine occident, which thus knits the network of domination.

Nevertheless, beyond the undifferentiated postcolonial approach, we need also to take into account the peculiarities of the Cyprus modern history. One might argue that the patriarchal understanding of gender relations partly derives from the gender roles during the national-liberal and anti-colonial struggle of 1995-1999. Even today, this struggle is considered by most politicians and Greek-Cypriots, as the most important moment in the Greek-Cyprus history. Without underestimating women's important role in this struggle, one cannot neglect the fact that wars and liberal struggles focus on the strong male presence and the acts of bravery that prove the men's leadership.

Moreover, the fact that the majority of the political and social power-holders immediately after Independence were ex-EOKA fighters, along with the fact that the first president of the Cyprus republic was the political leader of the 1995-1999 liberal struggle, contributed to the signification of male predominance. Given that even today women are non- or under-represented in the political arena (House of Representatives, political parties, Ministers of cabinet) we can argue that this predominance has been well established: all Presidents are men, only three women have served as Ministers, and women need supporting positive measures in order to be elected in the House of Representatives.

One can add to the above discussion the fact that the long-unresolved Cyprus political problem and the external powers' mediation for the solution of the problem have enhanced the culturally (through Christianity) established belief in messianic solutions, in external powers, in big leaders and patriarchs. Messianic beliefs are related to patriarchy and to beliefs that men must be in charge in public affairs and at home.

All the above historically constructed beliefs have been reinforced by the socio-economic situation in Cyprus: the average income of women in Cyprus is still lower than that of men, women head most single families, they represent a significantly high percentage of the poor, uneducated and unemployed persons (Statistical Service of Cyprus, 2004).

Cypriot TV's scripts, pictures, and language represent the way of understanding the world: an unemployed and uncultivated housewife, quarrelling about money and affairs, caring exclusively of her external appearance and fashion, romantic and

hysterical. The binary divide between men and women is based on concrete sets of signifying practices that represent and consent gender power relations.

If indeed no one habits culture by nature, as Derrida argued, the results of this study revealed the reproductive role of TV concerning the polarized gender norms. The fact that the TV series analysed in this study have the highest rates of audience indicates their broad acceptance and consent. Combining that with the identification of the same norms and values in Cyprus students' perceptions, one can support the view that culture consists of the meanings its subjects produce, reproduce, and reflect through the ideological- cultural mechanisms and agents activated in the society.

In final analysis, it is obvious that the struggle for equality is also a struggle against unequal institutionalised social-economic and political relations, at least for the collective identity of women in Cyprus. Although this is a truth, it is not necessary to accept that TV representations reflect the real world and its inequalities, taken into account that the relation between these reproductions and the social, political, and cultural reality is dynamic and complex. TV, as a symbolizing system, produces the norm of *acceptable* inequalities, a happy uneducated and unemployed female dependent on the wealth and disposition of her husband. Thus TV, as one of the institutions that produce and reproduce gender inequalities, functions as an agent of maintaining the status quo of women oppression.

All culturally produced norms are the result of relations of power, which call for discipline and reproduction creating forms of oppression. The lack of education, profession, career, public voice, and independent economic life for the women represented in the Cypriot TV series constitute forms of oppression; consenting to these forms of oppression and internalization in students' perceptions provides codes of obedient behaviour that does not allow any change. 'Consent' is a key concept for understanding the maintenance of gendered hierarchies, which this study proved that is given by the Cypriot audience in general and students in particular. Common consent secures the gendered cultural pattern and its reproduction.

Habermas believes that knowledge, in the form of self-understanding and reflection, can emancipate persons from forms of domination. From this point of view Lyotard's answer (1984) to binary reproduction is 'dissension' and contest that trace the routes of different discourse and debate of roles and views challenging the stereotyped role of men and women. In the same line Foucault stresses throughout his work the necessity of resistance and disobedience, since consensus and reproduction facilitate the maintenance of asymmetrical power relations.

Conclusion

Local television depicts a number of signifiers, mostly pre-feminist (i.e., patriarchal society, women as housewives). The relationship between cultural production and media production is very complex. Cultural and historical contextualization of those local TV programs explains some aspects of this complex relationship that holds all the mystery of hidden signifiers and veiled oppositions.

The present study shows that there is coherence between the gender stereotypes in students' perceptions and the ones promoted by the Mass Media in public life. The

results show that while men's profile is constructed in the principle of freedom of will and independence due to economic independence, the Cypriot woman is represented to be economically dependent on men. This is related to the fact that she appears to be mainly a housewife with limited professional perspectives. The basic discrimination lies in the fact that the woman does not have her own "centre"; she constructs and readjusts her identity, from her youth to her old age only in relation with her children and spouse and reconstructs herself permanently in order to serve the altered requirements these relations have.

Competing discourses and binary attributed roles in the scenarios of the TV series exhibit an already existing social contract according to which women have no public and professional lives. Thus, Mass media – and in this case TV – become the ideological –cultural apparatus that produces and reproduces the binary hierarchical opposition between men and women in the Cyprus society. The polarized sexual roles constitute a form of oppression in the Foucaultian sense: TV promotes the stereotyped roles and codes of behaviour and it represents the culturally naturalized forms of control as natural and indisputable. What is needed is the Foucaultian (1979) resistance to the norm through a 'reverse discourse' that can deconstruct the binary classification and the essentialist roles.

Deconstruction of TV's ideological and cultural values, norms and hierarchical discourse presupposes the consciousness of its role as a mechanism of construction and reproduction of power relations and control. As Kristeva (1984) points out the subject will always be a subject in process, fixed and refixed, defined in terms of what is rejected and whose interests are supported. Understanding of the impossibility of fixing meaning demonstrates where the stereotypes and values come from and allows change and struggle for deconstruction of given relations.

Given that the relations of power and control are historical and institutional rooted in the establishment and function of the institutions in the society, the emphasis of change must be put on the revelation of their patriarchal role and their contribution to pre-given gendered meaning. Pedagogy of anti-essentialism advocates both deconstruction-comprehension of representational systems and reconstruction-composition of constructive depictions, as these empower individuals to struggle for change in a stereotyped gendered society.

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Short list of publications (indicative list):

A. Books

Koutselini, M. (2010). *Curriculum and Instruction*. Athens: Greek Letters (in Greek).

Koutselini, M. (2007) *Differentiation of Teaching and Learning*. Nicosia. (in Greek).

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B. Articles (in refereed journals- indicative list)

Koutselini, M. (2008). Listening to students' voices for teaching in mixed ability classrooms: Presuppositions and considerations for differentiated instruction. *Learning and teaching*, 1(1), 17-30.

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D. Proceedings of international Conferences

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Koutselini, M., & Agathangelou, S. (2009, November). *Gender, Mass Media and Youth*. Tenth International Conference of the International Academy of Linguistics, Behavioral and Social Sciences, Regal Sun Resort, Orlando, Florida.

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