SUBJECTIVITY, POWER, AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE BELARUSIAN DIGITAL SOCIETY

Natallia Sarakavik

PhD Candidate at European Humanities University
Savičiaus g. 17, Vilnius, Lithuania

Email: natalia.sorokovik@gmail.com
ORCID: 0009-0007-9165-1683

Abstract: This article explores the intricate relationship between women's political activism and power dynamics in patriarchal societies. Using the context of Belarus as a case study, the article delves into the profound impacts of digital media on women's political participation. The first part draws from Foucault's notion of power as tangible, present in relationships, and influencing subject formation. Butler's insights into attachment, submission, and power relationships further elucidate the intricate interplay between power and subjectivity. The second part examines the contrasting models of the internet's effect on protest movements proposed by Tufekci. Through the lens of the Belarusian protests, it becomes evident that digital tools aid in activism but might not always achieve long-term goals. This article, from a scientific perspective, explores the phenomenon of digital activism, referring to the example of its effective use within the context of the Belarusian women's protests in 2020. Additionally, the article draws attention to the transience of this effectiveness and seeks methods of engaging with it.

Keywords: women's political activism, power dynamics, digital media, Belarusian digital society, Belarusian protests, subject formation, online platforms.

Introduction

The phenomenon of power is inseparably intertwined with time. Power doesn't demand "understanding" from humans; rather, it necessitates the eternal study of the forms in which it manifests. Unlike other phenomena that support human existence and its engagement with

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 International License

the world, power never remains in a "fixed" form, never presents itself as "eternal", but maintains an inseparable connection with the subject (Foucault, 1982). In the context of this work, the subject is considered as someone who experiences the impact of power and subsequently exerts this influence on the world around him\her. Subjectivization represents the process of power relations unfolding, within which an individual transforms into a subject of power and its instrument of influence.

Michel Foucault saw in the nature of power something that stems from the foundations of human existence (Foucault, 1982). Noticing that the primary source of fear in human life is the loss of this very life, Foucault observed an interdependence between the desire for "protection" and the willingness to become a subject (Foucault, 1982). Thus, the natural course of human life propels them towards becoming a "subject", towards belonging to something that would make their existence justified and meaningful.

Turning to the philosophical tradition of the 20th century, we notice in power its fluid problematic polarity: on one hand, being "in power" of something is a human life necessity, a support and foundation for their existence (Foucault, 1982). On the other hand, power becomes a source of destruction: of human personality and subsequently human life (Foucault, 1977). The road between "constructive power" and "destructive power" is extremely short, as the act of forming a subject involves the destruction of certain individual foundations (Butler, 1997). To be in the middle of this road, that is, to explore and comprehend one's "subjectivity" and the nature of "power relations", is an eternal responsibility of humans.

The challenges of the modern world, including the pandemic, the protest movement in Belarus, revolutionary movements in many regions of the world, and the war in Ukraine, demands a distinct understanding and the introduction of clarifications into the nature of power and power relations. 20th-century philosophy didn't pay attention to the fact that the "subject", based on their gender, can experience the reality of their subjectivity differently. At the close of the 20th century, feminist writers like Judith Butler and Angela Davis highlighted the necessity of studying the phenomenon of power in conjunction with the concept of gender. Female and male socialization, also seen as a process of forming "subjectivity", initially harbors elements of inequality. Due to the nature of female socialization, women adopt a sense of "basic insecurity" and a natural belief that women are unable to effect any change from society (Eagly, Wood, Diekman, 2000). Therefore, the uniqueness of women's political activism lies in its initiation with a woman's decision to become politically active. The choice of a woman to engage in political activism contradicts the conditions of female socialization and subsequently influences the initiation of an alternative trajectory in which society resides. This scientific article aims to identify and study the tools through which women can feel empowered in their pursuit of political activism, ultimately leading to social change.

By using the example of Belarus, we can observe that the ideas of a patriarchal society constitute the foundation upon which modern authoritarianism is built. In this article, the patriarchal society model in Belarus is examined as a social and ideological construct, the central idea of which is the absolute dominance of men over the lives of women (Walby, 2002). Rooted in the autocratic power of men, patriarchy extends autocratic values throughout the entire social system, excluding the possibility of equal relationships among individuals. In Belarus, the authoritarian state justifies itself through "traditional values". Analyzing the specifics of presidential election campaigns in Belarusian society, researcher Tatiana Shchurko noted the following characteristic: "Thus, only specific "women" may enter the political sphere: white cisgender women who are married, have children, and conform to the norm of "femininity" in their outward representation" (Shchurko, 2015). Within an authoritarian state, a woman is rarely considered a politically active entity. By embracing patriarchal ideals, authoritarianism reinforces the "invisibility" of women. Nevertheless, transcending patriarchy represents a significant stride towards achieving political freedom for the entire civil society. While the objective is formidable, contemporary times equip individuals with novel tools to attain the previously unattainable, including the alteration of social constructs and the political system. Digital media stands as one of these invaluable tools. Furthermore, for women, digital media also offers a platform where they can experience unity and support.

This article will explore several aspects of power and subjectivity: the power that subjugates and the power that shapes; the process of women becoming "subjects" and the process of integrating women into active political life. At first, the expansion of the concept of power from the 20th century to the present day will be examined: from the tradition of Michel Foucault to the works of Judith Butler. Also, the article will turn to the search for tools through which women are capable of unveiling and developing their own leadership and political activity, subsequently altering the overall structure of power relations. The conclusions will be drawn about the effectiveness of these tools, their positive and negative impact factors.

Subjectivity and power in the works of M. Foucault and J. Butler

Before delving into the practical examination of the impact of female political activism on the overall social landscape, I would like to give special attention to the works that explore the phenomenology of power and subject. The legacy of Michel Foucault is indispensable in our context for studying all forms, methodologies, and instruments through which power exists and becomes palpable. The works of Judith Butler are useful in filling the gaps that emerge when looking into

power relations. Her ideas help us perceive the psychological need for individuals in power relations and its simultaneously destructive and creative nature. Who is deconstructed within us as we become subjects, experiencing subjectivization? Who is created within us as we exit power relations, and does such creation occur when we confront the process of disintegration? In this article, I want to construct an analytical framework based on the traditions of Foucault and Butler to examine the transformed form of contemporary power. This perspective will help us find the keys to understanding how relationships between the subject and the source of power operate in its transformed form.

What is power and political action in response to power? Foucault asserts that "power" is tangible; it can be measured, seen, and comprehended by paying attention to the "subject" — the product created by power, its "result" (Foucault, 1982).

Power doesn't solely reign within "politics" (Foucault, 1982). It's naive to assume that we only encounter our "subjectivity" within the "political arena", bureaucracy, and social institutions. Unlike the government, which has limits set by elected individuals, the "polis" extends its boundaries for a person. However, the boundaries of power can't be easily defined; they emerge within relationships with others. This raises the question of the "inevitability" of existing as a "subject". As Foucault observes, even "revolt", "protest", and "resistance" eventually become products of power (Foucault, 1977). The realm between a person and the source of power can be seen as an "emptiness". What does this emptiness signify?

Judith Butler's research sheds light on this "emptiness". In the 20th century, influenced by Michel Foucault's writings, the "will of submission" was seen as a kind of "biological impulse" linked to the fear of death (Foucault, 1977). Butler, in the 21st century, suggests that it's not submission but a "sense of attachment" that forms the basis. This attachment is essential for a person to establish a trusting relationship with the outside world (Butler, 1997). When a person doesn't just submit but becomes attached, it opens the door for rebellion against the "object of attachment". However, this process involves "undermined identity", leading eventually to independence. Michel Foucault considers passion as a component of attachment. He discusses how the subject depends on the experience of "subordination" and "belonging" to the object of power (Foucault, 1982). Butler argues that "attachment" always precedes the formation of the "subject", urging them into power relations. Power influences how attachment manifests, even before the "object" of power comes into play (Butler, 1997). This nuanced experience of attachment is a product of power, previously considered a mere intention for life preservation. Regarding "infant attachment", Butler notes a crucial aspect: the development of attachment in an individual is shaped by multiple influences, including not just parents but also the "politics" or power that affects those holding power over the child (Butler, 1997). Attachment itself is a vital infantile need, but

the forms of its expression are shaped by "power relations" stemming from a more potent "power". The way parents exert power over a child affects how the child expresses their "attachment". The attachment formed in the child's interaction with parents becomes an inherent aspect of their psyche, influencing their interactions (Butler, 1997). Nevertheless, parents are also subject to a stronger "power" and, while raising a child, they transmit this "influence". Consequently, "attachment to submission" shifts from its "natural" form to one shaped by the action of power.

Michel Foucault associates power relations with a state of passion, namely the subject's inclination towards the source of power (Foucault, 1982). Judith Butler's exploration of the sensitive side of power relations reveals that "attachment" and "passionarity" aren't the same experience, although they might cyclically interconnect (attachment might lead to passionarity). She highlights situations where a person feels "split" and "lost", experiencing melancholy when the object of their ideal attachment is lost (Butler, 1997). She draws from Freud, noting that the pain of losing an "object" with influence is directly tied to the loss of the ideal. During melancholy, a person grieves the loss of an "object" while overlooking the pain of losing the "object of power" that crafted the ideal. Thus, the desire for attachment and sensing power on oneself doesn't lead to passionate desire — instead, it leaves one feeling confused and split outside of this influence. After all, we were shaped within the framework of "power relationships". Butler delves into situations where a person denies or feels indignation towards what they were attached to. She observes the "neurotic repetition" of these denials, suggesting that people attempt to "split themselves", abandoning the "subject" formed within power relations (Butler, 1997). Yet, this proves impossible, as the person indignant at exerted power was shaped by it. This emphasizes the inability to "split" the subject within oneself since we have no control over it. The incapability and unwillingness to relinquish power is a psychic trait introduced by Butler (Butler, 1997). This observation also leads to the understanding that the "subject" not only feels weakened by power but also by the loss of power exerted upon them. This perspective underscores the phenomenon of the "subject" and "power relations", reflecting the necessity for human awareness of dependence on shaping power; the inevitability of creating something independently while understanding the situation.

A person doesn't become a subject solely due to the presence of power; rather, it's human nature to have a sense of "power attitude" over oneself. Butler contends that a subject doesn't fully exist without undergoing this "conversion into oneself" and acquiring a "psychic form of power" (Butler, 1997). Each action of the "subject" following entry into power relations becomes a process of their "creation". She invites us to perceive the nature of "power relations" not only when the "subject" confronts power but also when they turn inward, engaging with the "internal aspects of power" embedded within them. She's

interested in the fact that the image to which one appeals is never fully formed and visible; it's perpetually in the process of becoming (Butler, 1997). After Butler, it's clear that this is an inexhaustible "material" that never takes on the final, completed form of a "product". The neuroticism experienced during "turning back to oneself" underscores the sensitive side of human relationships with the "created part". These feelings compel us to seek a "force" that influences us again, despite our yearning to separate our "subjectivity".

Discussing the "internal impacts of power" vividly observed within the context of human "turning toward oneself" and the conflict with one's "subjectivity" embedded within power relations, we must pay attention to the question of the "body" within the "psychic form of power", which Butler considers equivalent to all other considerations. Michel Foucault, while observing the behavior of prison inmates, asserts that the "soul" is a prison from which the "body" seeks to break free (Foucault, 1977). Despite the fact that the concept of the "soul" is not considered by the French thinker from a religious or empirical point of view, it nevertheless takes on contours associated with the "soul" within the "spiritual experience". This contour represents a state of vulnerability and merging with the surrounding whole. The soul perceives itself as "belonging" to something common, "one", and this one seems to it the only "body", while that into which it is "placed" is considered an obstacle, hindering the entry into fusion and breaking boundaries. If the body is a "separateness" striving to protect its "distinctiveness", then the "soul", with its aspiration to "dissolve into the whole", hinders the body. These hindrances occur in parallel because the body also hinders the soul. Their mutual resistance is not "splitting" and "conflict", but a single movement that cannot begin solely by the will of the "body" or "soul" in their separateness. However, Michel Foucault was not interested in this "parallelism", focusing on the "distinctiveness" and independence of the body in contrast to the aspirations of the "single soul". In this case, Butler slightly corrects Foucault's observation, noting that the thinker most likely meant not the "soul" at all, but precisely the psyche experiencing the act of its formation in relation to the "object of power", as if anticipating the body by a few seconds, subsequently also sensing this influence (Butler, 2011).

Power cannot affect the body alone without touching the psyche, nor can it ignore the body, stopping at the "psychic aspect" alone. The "psychic form" becomes simultaneously the beginning and the end of the impact, the "interior" of power that utilizes the "materials" of the found "subject", yet never "completes" the product, as its purpose is not to create for power's sake but to continually shape. A person's life is dependent on power, and it's not primarily a question of power itself, but rather of the body, fearing disappearance, and the psyche, indicating the protection of the body.

The found unity between the equivalence of the "psyche" and the "body" raises the question of presence. Presence, in turn, unveils to

us that “power relations”, as relations of influence and shaping, occur not only within the “polis”, “social institutions”, and not only within interpersonal relationships, but in every point where a “subject” marks its presence. Therefore, it’s impossible to escape power when turning toward oneself — within yourself, you also experience presence amid something, the sensation of which has been lost. Primarily, this is connected with the eventfulness of life, which again directs us to the sensitive side of power, as every event is experienced by a person only when they feel their presence within it. One cannot “psychically” sense an event in yourself if you don’t also experience it physically. Only in a holistic, that is, physical and psychic “presence” before something that “intrudes” into the isolated “bodily” life, does the subject who has experienced the event open up.

Based on this theoretical part in understanding power and power relations, what can the combination of gender optics and understanding of the philosophical aspects of power be applied to in the understanding of protest? And why today in Belarus are women the main protagonists of protest? We observe this not only in Belarus but also in other countries where women’s rights have been regularly violated, and the social structure of states has been aimed at suppressing female participation in civil society. Another example of women’s political resistance to the suppression of their rights is the Women’s Revolution in Iran (2022). Political agency of women is formed in a different way than the political agency of men. By inverting the rationalistic figure of “subject-object” in socio-political and epistemological relations, a woman in such a dichotomy does not receive the status of a subject. This means that she is in the position of an object, that is, in the position of the excluded, the oppressed, whose agency and ability to act not only faces barriers, is deprived of a voice, but also, in order to form political action, she finds herself in a complex network of social, invisible relationships. Women’s “nonviolent protests” aided in curbing the brutality of the Belarusian authorities against protesters. Digital media tools facilitated the rapid mobilization of Belarusian women.

Women’s political activism in the digital society

This section presents the results of an empirical analysis of the peculiarities of women’s political activism conducted in online forms. In today’s world, activism in the digital society has become an integral part of political activities in many civil societies. Using the #MeToo movement as an example, we observe that digital activism can be effective and bring about changes at both the legal and political levels (Noel, 2020). For women, digital activism also provides a sense of safety and freedom since digital platforms, in many countries, may be the only arenas where the female voice can be heard. For my empirical analysis, I turned to case studies in two countries: Iran and Belarus. This choice

is based on two factors: political events occurring in Iran and Belarus that were close in time to each other; women leading political movements in both countries. Employing a comparative scientific method, I explored the effectiveness and long-term results achieved by women in political activism within digital spaces. Studies by Tufekci, examining the phenomenon of internet activism, helped me define the categories of "effectiveness" and "longevity" that are analyzed in this part of the article (Tufekci, 2018).

Women's political activism in the digital society (case: Iran)

There are two opposing models of how the Internet has changed protest movements. The first is that the Internet has made protesters mightier than ever. The second is that it has made them more ineffectual. Important aspects of both models are analyzed by Zeynep Tufekci in her book "Twitter and Tear Gas" (Tufekci, 2018).

The power of the Internet as a tool for protest is obvious: it provides people with newfound abilities to quickly organize and scale. However, according to Tufekci, it's a mistake to judge modern protests using the same criteria we applied to pre-Internet protests (Tufekci, 2018).

Tufekci argues that the Internet enables networked movements to experience significant and rapid growth. However, she emphasizes the importance of establishing formal or informal organizational structures and other collective capacities beforehand. These preparations are crucial for facing inevitable challenges and responding effectively to future developments (Tufekci, 2018). This makes them less capable of responding to government counters, changing their tactics — a phenomenon Tufekci calls "tactical freeze" — making movement-wide decisions, and sustaining their efforts over the long term (Tufekci, 2018).

Tufekci isn't arguing that modern protests are necessarily less effective, but rather that they are different (Tufekci, 2018). Effective movements need to understand these differences, leveraging new advantages while minimizing the disadvantages.

Recalling recent events in Iran is very valuable. Amid critical insecurity and political control, Iranian women managed to unite even under unthinkable threats. The global media's coverage of these events not only gave Iranian women a sense of global support but also a feeling of security.

However, the women's activist movement in Iran commenced long before 2022, with digital media also influencing its effectiveness. For instance, in 2014, there was the digital project "My Stealthy Freedom", created by Iranian journalist Masih Alinjar. Masih disseminated information about violence against women in her native country and helped Iranians express their right to freedom. The campaign on the site constantly shared photos of Iranian women without head coverings,

enabling women in the country to perceive the limits of their own freedom.

The “Girls of Enghelab” movement in Iran in 2017 is also worth remembering. The movement started with an indefinite action organized by activist Alinejad. Under the campaign, Iranian women wore white headscarves on Wednesdays. Images of a protester on Engelab Street, standing on a transformer booth and waving a white handkerchief, went viral. This led to the emergence of the “Girls of Enghelab” movement, with participants replicating the Movahed gesture.

By examining Iranian women’s activism, we notice a dynamic: the foundation of the women’s activist movement in conditions of strict political control lies within the information stored within digital reality. Through media and digital communities, women encounter information that validates their thoughts and experiences, which are often unacceptable in their specific political system. This information boosts their confidence and unity. Subsequently, a small group of women initiates their activist activities. Media and the digital realm cover these events, encouraging other women to gain confidence and join those who share their values. This leads to the formation of a women’s activist movement, resulting in subsequent changes to the overall political system.

Women’s political activism in the digital society (case: Belarus)

In 2020, against the backdrop of the presidential campaign and subsequent election result manipulation, Belarus experienced a widespread protest movement. Leading this movement was the alternative presidential candidate, Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya. Female leadership in Belarus was only increasing its scale. Belarusian women actively organized women’s protests, which later played a crucial role in what became known as the “women’s revolution” in Belarus. Belarusian illegitimate authorities used harsh repressive methods to suppress the protests. Nevertheless, it was the Belarusian women who risked their safety to oppose election fraud, advocate for free presidential elections, and combat the level of political violence in the country. This gave rise to a distinct women’s political movement in Belarus, which will be explored in this section of the article.

During the mass protest movement in Belarus, the digital world had a direct impact on the movement’s outcomes and implementation. Technologies facilitated efficient mobilization, partial security for protesters, and emergency coordination. This effectiveness was also linked to the rupture of “worlds” between protesters and the existing authorities. At first, the existing authorities were unable to influence the movement through technology. Thus, through digital tools, the Belarusian protest movement managed to create an information space

free from government control, which subsequently influenced the conduct of mass actions and protests in the physical world. However, this security and efficiency had a short-term effect.

The essence of authoritarian and violent regimes is to suppress any contemplation of individual rights. However, digital reality remains independent of political pressure. It is also important to mention that the Belarusian IT sector remained independent from the state sector for a long time, providing zones of freedom in the digital space for the Belarusian civil society. If societal reality convinces you of the "justice" of power, the digital world confirms that your thoughts about your freedom are valid. As noted by Belarusian researcher Almira Ousmanova: "Telegram is certainly a great example of a "liquid democracy" tool which challenges the interpassivity of users and allows to connect and mobilize people on the basis of their feedback and mass involvement in the circulation of information" (Ousmanova, 2020). Thus, the women's protests in Belarus in 2020 provide a striking example. Online platforms offer Belarusian women security in their pursuit of political activism.

Describing the Belarusian protests, some critics employ such terms as "soft power" (Shparaga, 2020) and "protest as care" (Vozianov, 2021). However, vulnerability, as analyzed in other protests in Turkey, is considered by Judith Butler as a significant component of political activism: "Resistance requires exposing the abandoned or unsupported dimensions of life, but also mobilizing that vulnerability as a deliberate and active form of political resistance, an exposure of the body to power in the plural action of resistance" (Butler, 2015).

Additionally, it's important to pay special attention to the public discourse during the coverage of the Belarusian protests in global media. Among the headlines were: "Belarus's female revolution: how women rallied against Lukashenko" (*Illustration 1. The Guardian*), "How a women's revolution is testing Belarus dictator" (*Illustration 2. EUobserver*), "In Belarus, Women Led the Protests and Shattered Stereotypes" (*Illustration 3. The New York Times*).

Women's political activity is not merely a response to the actions of the authorities; it's also a struggle for the right to be themselves. The media project "GIRLS POWER BELARUS" was the organizer of the Belarusian women's protests in 2020. However, post-protests, the activity of the media project didn't cease; rather, it intensified. Presently, the project aims to highlight gender issues in Belarus and combat

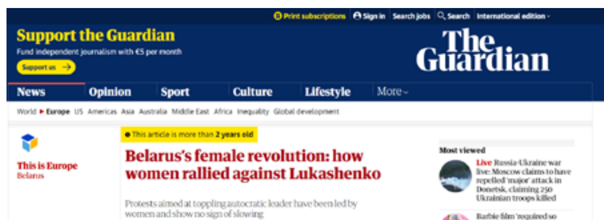

Illustration 1. The Guardian

euobserver

NEWS / EU & THE WORLD

FEATURE

How a women's revolution is testing Belarus dictator

Illustration 2. EUobserver

The New York Times

In Belarus, Women Led the Protests and Shattered Stereotypes

The women who organized the political campaign and the subsequent protests against President Aleksandr G. Lukashenko may ultimately be defeated. But society may never be the same.

Illustration 3. The New York Times

disinformation. For instance, at the end of 2022, "GIRLS POWER BELARUS" launched a project to address the low representation of women in Belarusian media and a flash mob #яеэкспертіза, enabling numerous Belarusian women to discuss themselves and their expertise. According to GPB statistics, major Belarusian media are far from reaching even 30% gender-equal representation of public opinion (*Illustration* 4, *Illustration* 5).

These statistics depict the Belarusian digital reality, in which a woman is deprived of the right to realize her potential. Thus, using the example of Belarus, we notice the dynamics where Belarusian women were prepared for political activity prior to reaching a "tension point". This readiness for leadership and activism became evident upon the emergence of a critical situation. However, the perception of

Illustration 4. Girls Power Belarus. Statistics. Belsat News.

Illustration 5. Girls Power Belarus. Statistics. Euroradio-Live.

this "criticality" was shaped by the media, which covered events hidden by official authorities. Furthermore, digital reality tools assisted women in mobilizing and conducting large-scale activities. Belarusian women took the forefront. As the wave of protests subsided, civil society reverted to the patriarchal notion of "male supremacy". Presently, Belarusian women continue to be politically active and possess their own expertise, yet due to societal structure, their presence in the political sphere is ignored. If the presence of a politically active woman cannot be ignored, a discourse arises in civil society about politically active men being the driving force behind a woman, aiding her in her activities. In other words, the observed peak in the overall political field influences observation, but not the scale of women's activity.

Zeynep Tufekci notes that digital reality tools aid in more effective activism implementation, but may not be as potent in achieving goals (Tufekci, 2018). Political actions facilitated through social networks and other media platforms yield swift impact, yet they also fade quickly. Once a protest organized with digital tools concludes, it might seem that the protesters' objective is closer than ever. However, reality sets in — a reality detached from the digital world. A reality wherein even the most effective protest is suppressed by authorities using traditional instruments of political pressure: violence and brutality. Thus, despite the significant advantages the digital world brings to activism, it's crucial to remember that people are contending with real social reality, not just the digital realm.

Conclusion

Regardless of the time and the ongoing human existence within it, power turns out to be one of those phenomena upon critical understanding of which social transformations depend. The fact that "power" can be not only protective but also destructive for a human drives

us to constantly return to this phenomenon, studying it not only from a "general" perspective but complementing the existing portrait with details that arise in response to changing times.

The psychic form of power, as uncovered by Butler, helps us see that power is not just about "domination" and "submission". First and foremost, there is a "shaping" power, and such a form is closest to the "subject". In the process of shaping, "power" resides within the "subject" but is not yet their personal "power". This realization proves to be highly necessary for the modern individual undergoing the transition to individualization and a "culture of presence". It helps define the emptiness experienced when "turning to oneself", seeing in it one's "eternal formation".

However, one way or another, the very awareness of the psychic form of power cannot help the subject in the process of "rejection" from the source of "power relations", which seems "harmful" and "undermining" to their identity, even though this source is the force that shapes the subject. Despite this, awareness can transform the forms of power emerging from the "emptiness", which are in fact human psyche, perpetually undergoing its formation and never assuming a "final form". Such hope is what Judith Butler reveals in the process of reinterpreting Michel Foucault's tradition. In my view, this hope presents itself as one of the primary emotional needs experienced by the modern individual.

Even liberal and democratic ideas in societies living under dictatorship frequently exhibit intolerance towards women. To engage in political activities, women require a space where they feel secure and confident in their abilities, despite the consequences of female socialization. The social reality of patriarchal societies cannot provide such a space. Therefore, online platforms play a pivotal role in shaping women's political leadership and activism.

References

Butler, J. (2011). *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. London: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2015). *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Butler, J. (1997). *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Eagly, A. H., Wood, W. & Diekman, A. (2000). *Social Role Theory of Sex Differences and Similarities*. Los Angeles: University of Southern California.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1982). *The Subject and Power*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Noel, A. M. (2020). *The Global #MeToo Movement: How Social Media Propelled a Historic Movement and the Law Responded*. New Jersey: Full Court Press.

Ousmanova, A. (2020). Digital Multitude: The Multiple that Takes over the One. *Mystetskyi Arsenal*, May 4, 2021, https://artarsenal.in.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Booklet_Every_Day.pdf (accessed 15 October 2023).

Shparaga, O. (2021). *Die Revolution hat ein weibliches Gesicht*. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Tufekci, Z. (2018). *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*. London: Yale University Press.

Walby, S. (2002). *Towards a theory of patriarchy*. U.K.: Blackwell Publishers.

Voz'yanov, A. (2021). Protest Kak Zabota: Belorusskie Tela Mezhdu Krasotoy i Opasnost'yu. *Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye*, Spring 2021, https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/teoriya_mody/tm_59_1_2021/article/23378/ (accessed 4 September 2023). — In Russ.

[Возьянов А. (2021) Протест как забота: белорусские тела между красотой и опасностью. *Новое литературное обозрение*, Весна 2021, https://www. nlobooks.ru/magazines/teoriya_mody/tm_59_1_2021/article/23378/ (дата обращения: 4 сентября 2023).]

Schmidt, V. & Solomatina, I. (2015). *Women's Activism in Belarus: Invisible and Untouchable*. Kaunas: Taurapolis.

Shchurko, T. (2015). Potentsial Zhenskogo Politicheskogo Uchastiya: Strukturnye i Institutsionalnye Ogranicheniya. *Nashye mneniye*, August 13, 2015, https://nmn.media/articles/5853 (accessed 23 September 2023). — In Russ.

[Щурко Т. (2015). Потенциал женского политического участия: структурные и институциональные ограничения. *Наше мнение*, 13 Августа 2015, https://nmn.media/articles/5853 (Дата обращения: 23 сентября 2023).]