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## The Body and Sociology

I walk into one of the first classes on sociology of the body of the semester. The group consists of about twenty people of different genders and cultural backgrounds. I ask the students to do an exercise. They are to tell the other person something they can do that the other person can't. It could be blow-drying their hair with a brush, eating with chopsticks, reverse parking, crocheting, doing a yoga asana, dribbling a ball – anything they feel good at. Before they start talking about the activity, I ask them to immobilize their hands, by, e.g., interlacing them or sitting on them. Soon, interesting things start to happen on a cognitive, emotional, and interactional level. At first, the students start to smile, express surprise, embarrassment, and helplessness. Immediately afterwards, the first attempts to talk about the selected activities begin, often illustrated – instead of with hand gestures – by moving their shoulders and nodding their heads. Sometimes these attempts end in laughter. What do we learn when we discuss this exercise? For example, that it is difficult to talk about what we do without using our bodies; that immobilization of the body causes a lack of access to knowledge that we freely have at our disposal on a daily basis; that every action, whether related to work, art, sports or everyday activities, is rooted in our bodies; that we cannot separate action in a social context (taking care of one's appearance, health, carrying out a profession, eating, hygiene practices, etc.) from the body.

The aim of the book is to present this inseparable relationship between the human body and social processes or phenomena. Just like the students, who, thanks to the aforementioned exercise, have discovered how diverse and omnipresent the aspect of embodiment is in our actions, we are going to discuss the various contexts and spheres of social life of which the human body has always been a key element. We are going to describe in many ways how the body and society are interconnected.

This book is addressed to sociologists, other members of the academia, students, and practitioners of work on and by means of the body. The knowledge contained in its pages can be used in various ways. Since issues related to the body are often unconscious, readers can find in them references to their own practices, which to a greater or lesser extent affect their daily, professional, and private lives. The content of the monograph can be treated as a compendium of knowledge about the achievements of the sociology of the body in the thematic areas we have selected.

The content of individual chapters refers to different types of knowledge – theoretical concepts, practical aspects, empirical issues, and the achievements of related fields.

This monograph can be used by lecturers during classes. This applies to both sociologists – the book was prepared with a course in sociology of the body in mind – and the representatives of other fields of science, e.g., medicine, media studies, economics or political science, who want to enrich the issues discussed during their classes with a corporeal aspect.

The book can also be a source of support for people conducting research in various fields of knowledge, from purely scientific to more practical, like marketing. It presents a wide range of issues, including those related to appearance, health care, the aging process, and gender equality. They refer to many aspects of everyday life, in which issues of the human body translate into specific actions and choices, like consumer decisions.

Undoubtedly, the content of the book may also be useful for practitioners in various fields, e.g., sports, food services or human resources management, because the authors repeatedly refer to research conducted in various social contexts, as well as to their results which may translate into practical solutions to problems encountered by customers and employees.

When preparing this publication, from the very beginning of the work, we focused on such a description of the issues contained in it that would allow readers to look at the widest possible scope of the discussed content. Therefore, it is of a review nature. In it, we present the achievements of various thematic fields within sociology of the body or related fields (psychology, pedagogy, anthropology, philosophy, etc.)

The book is also proof that, despite the growing trend of individualism in the academic world, cooperation between scientists is doing well and is effective. The idea for it arose during a discussion at the Virtual Seminar on the Sociology of the Body, conducted as part of the activities of the Sociology of the Body Section of the Polish Sociological Association. It was during these meetings that the members of the Section, its supporters, and invited guests presented research projects they were preparing or conducting or books they had published. Thanks to the work of the Virtual Seminar, we had the opportunity to learn more about various issues and topics undertaken by researchers, theoreticians, and people dealing with the body in practice. This wide range of topics made us realize how much the Polish publishing market lacks a publication that gathers the research achievements of the sociology of the body, as well as related fields and topics.

I began work on the book by inviting members and supporters of the Sociology of the Body Section of the Polish Sociological Association to submit proposals for thematic chapters. In response, I received many interesting proposals, and although not all of them ultimately became chapters of this book, I would like to thank each and everyone who submitted them at the time. They enabled a review of the issue of the body in sociology and related sciences. The chapters that became part of this publication were prepared by specialists in various issues related to the subject of sociology of the body. The authors of the chapters have been involved in research

on various aspects of the body vs. society relationship for many years, publishing articles and books on the presence of the body in social sciences, and also dealing with the subject of the body in practice.

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## How to read this book

Sociology of the body is interested in everything that happens at the intersection of social phenomena and the human body. The following pages show how many of these places of contact between social processes and the practices of the human body there are.<sup>1</sup> Sociology of the body is not a homogeneous subdiscipline, if only for the reason that the researchers who practice it come from many theoretical and methodological traditions. Different perspectives on the body in sociology include perceiving it as a text or a type of narrative, the living and experiencing body, a means of mediation and experience through the body, the body as a tool for carrying out actions, or the body as a starting (and target) point of social identity. All of the categories mentioned here are discussed in this book as part of the presentation of research or theoretical concepts.

The authors of the chapters in this book represent different methodological and theoretical perspectives. This diversity is proof of the many points of view from which the relations between the human body and social phenomena can be subjected to reflection and research. Such perspectives as the naturalistic, postmodernist, or constructivist can be successfully used by those interested in the issues of sociology of the body.

Bodily phenomena in social contexts are also studied using various qualitative, quantitative, and experimental methods, as well as combinations of these data collection methods. Researchers who work with these issues also use different data analysis strategies. Importantly, the body in the social context is a phenomenon that can potentially escape traditional data collection techniques because they are based on narrative. Therefore, much of the research conducted in this area

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1 It is worth mentioning that the relationship between the human body and culture is not unilateral. Not only does culture affect the human body, but the structure and physiology of the human body allowed our ancestors to create culture. Characteristic features of the human body, such as a developed brain, speech apparatus, bipedal locomotion or the structure of the hand enabled the development of communication processes, the creation of abstract concepts, and the use of tools.

is methodologically challenging and requires flexibility in addition to creativity (Turner, Wainwright 2003: 270; Konecki 2005: 55; Byczkowska 2009).

The book consists of twelve chapters, including an introductory chapter, while the remaining eleven provide a detailed discussion of the subject matter in the context of both classical concepts and notions, as well as the conducted research studies and their results. Each chapter ends with a list of the most important concepts, a few questions to check the assimilation of the subject matter discussed in it, and a bibliography, enabling the reading of subsequent literature items. Each chapter of the book is a separate essay discussing issues of sociology of the body in a thematic area. At the same time, the content of the individual texts is interconnected, based on a thematic division agreed on between the authors. The chapters can, therefore, be read separately if the reader is interested in one or two types of subject matter, e.g., gender and beauty, or illness and medicine.

In the **The Body and Work** chapter, I address the issue of the relationship between the bodies of individuals and the social situation of work. Positions, employment conditions, workplaces, and professional identities are gaining importance in contemporary societies, especially in connection with the changes of recent decades such as the pandemic and the development of technology. Thus, it is worth paying attention to the fact that employees are embodied social actors. Their health and safety depend on their actions at work, be it in the individual, macrosocial or even global dimensions.

In the first part of the chapter, I present issues in relation to the human body in the social situation of work. I discuss the relationship between the body and work in sociology, including research on the industrial period, conducted by Karl Marx and Max Weber, among others, and the achievements of studies on workplace relations. I also present the way in which the subject of the body in the context of work was raised by the classics of sociology: Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Erving Goffman, and Anselm Strauss, in addition to the anthropologist Marcel Mauss, and a researcher of professional work – Richard Sennett.

Later in the chapter, I deal with more detailed issues and present the most important concepts concerning the relationship between the body and work in sociological concepts and research. The first issue is the so-called industrial body, or the phenomenon of adapting the body to the technology of work in the factory on a global scale. It includes industrial solutions, among others, by Henry Ford, and Frederick Taylor, as well as the concept of McDonaldization described by George Ritzer, which was developed as a consequence. In addition, I present the issue of gender and work in the context of sociology of the body, also in a historical perspective, with particular emphasis on male-dominated and female-dominated professions. I also discuss issues related to sex work, reproductive work, emotional work, and the constructivist nature of occupational health and safety regulations. I additionally address the subject of work in professions dealing with the bodies of others (*body work*), including hairdressers, fitness trainers, dentists, care assistants, doctors, nurses, cleaners, and therapists.

The third chapter, entitled **The Body and Sport**, authored by Honorata Jakubowska, presents various perspectives on the body and embodiment that are present in the sociological analyses of sport. The author begins with a presentation of the achievements of the classics of sociology, whose concepts are used within the sociology of sport. She focuses on three authors: Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Norbert Elias. In the case of Foucault, the author discusses the concepts of disciplining, controlling and subjection of the body, the docile body, and discourse. In relation to Bourdieu, she focuses on the concept of habitus, and to a lesser extent, taste, while in relation to Elias – on emotions and controlling the body. This part also includes the phenomenological perspective by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the concept of body techniques by Marcel Mauss. Later in the chapter, the author presents important concepts related to the body/embodiment present in the sociology of sport, such as cyborgization, (body) empowerment, hyperandrogenism, naturalness, supercrip, and embodiment and embodied knowledge. Then, she presents four areas of research on the (gendered) sport body: 1) research on gender differences in the performance of movements by girls and boys, 2) research on the acquisition of the boxing habitus, 3) research focusing on the experience of the body in sport adopting a phenomenological perspective, and 4) research on images of the sports body in the media. The chapter ends with a summary presenting the significance of sport as an area of research for the development of sociology of the body and with some review questions.

The next chapter, **The Body and Beauty** by Mariola Bieńko, is an attempt to reflect on the invasive beautifying bodily practices in contemporary consumer culture. The issues taken up by the author in this chapter refer to several areas. The first concerns physical attractiveness as an individual and socio-cultural project in private and public space. The control of an individual's body image is connected with the symbolic representation of their identity, which is becoming increasingly a matter of choice. Managing body appearance is associated with the tendency towards "creating oneself," as well as with the revaluation of beauty as a social value. The normalized and standardized model of body appearance, susceptible to the influence of the medical and media expert system, is subject to subjugation by disciplining mechanisms, such as plastic surgery. These manifestations of caring for the body are associated with exercising control over oneself, self-discipline, and hard work. The media culture of makeover, by proposing a complete change of appearance, resembling celebrities, places the subject in the position of the entrepreneur of one's own self, who must "invest in the body" in order to compete with others in the wider global market. This is especially true for women, whose "docile bodies" in the regime of physical perfection are more often the subject of discipline than men's bodies.

The second area of the issues presented by the author focuses on aesthetic surgery procedures, which are interpreted in mass culture as a necessity due to the compulsion to have a beautiful body and the phenomenon of the "shame" of old age. The culture of plastic surgery ("nip and tuck") is a consequence of the consumer logic of late capitalism and the neoliberal concept of social life. Surgeons create

“new” bodies, replacing psychotherapists. The threads discussed in the chapter prove that beautifying procedures using surgery imply a multitude of problems of a psychosocial, legal-political, ethical-moral or socio-cultural nature. Among others, the problem of standardization, fragmentation, and pathologization of the human body in addition to the image of objectified femininity in patriarchal culture under the influence of the “male gaze” is exposed.

The author also reviews selected empirical analyses, particularly those adopting intersectional and transnational approaches. Aesthetics are defined by age, place of residence, and affiliation to a specific class, race, and gender, reproducing the structural axes of inequality. Aesthetic body modification practices from a feminist perspective illustrate feminine and masculine beauty technologies in Euro-American culture. “Ethnic cosmetic surgery” in Brazil, China, and the Middle East, by erasing anatomical “markers,” is an attempt at conforming to Western beauty norms.

The theoretical concepts presented by the author in the chapter, as well as the research results, show to what extent the implementation of the project of an “improved” “normalized” human with specific physical parameters is an expression of control and management; to what extent it is an expression of individualism and emancipation of the individual; to what extent plastic surgery is the effect of a subject’s subjugation as a result of the forced disciplining of “docile bodies,” and to what extent it is rather a reflective way of managing one’s own life by the individual.

In the chapter, the author also explains the differences between cosmetology, aesthetic medicine, plastic, reconstructive, and cosmetic surgery, describes the categories of body dysmorphic disorder, aesthetic labor, in addition to the phenomena of body shaming, body policing, body neutrality/body positivity, etc.

According to Sylwia Breczko, the author of chapter five entitled **The Body and Media**, sociology is interested in media messages about the body, assuming that the media constitute one of the basic socializing institutions – it is through them that we learn social norms about the body. As the author claims, the media enable us to go beyond the strict circle of family and local community, confronting us with the global culture and social expectations, very often also gender-based. Social ideals regarding the desired figure have a significant impact, especially on the generation of young women.

In this chapter, the author presents key sociological concepts that can be utilized to analyze the impact of the media on the experience of corporeality. She introduces the concepts of individualization of the body, consumer culture, symbolic violence, and bodily capital, as well as presents concepts by Jean Baudrillard, Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu, and Erving Goffman, among others.

In the section devoted to the most important studies, Breczko focuses on the topics of the representativeness of media images and (self-)surveillance of the body in social media. The author analyzes the symbolic annihilation taking place in the media and presents research on how the media’s underrepresentation of certain social groups (e.g., people with disabilities or sexually non-normative people) can lead to a false image of the world. She also draws attention to the omnipresent

fatphobia and fat-shaming, which affect the body image and self-esteem of groups most susceptible to media messaging, i.e., children and teenagers. The chapter ends with a reconstruction of the development of body self-awareness on the example of Polish media during the transformation period in the 1990s.

The authors of the chapter **The Body and Gender**, Krystyna Dzwonkowska-Godula, Emilia Garncarek and Julita Czernecka, address the issue of the body and corporeality from a gender perspective. In their text, they assume that the body is perceived and functions socially as a gendered body, filled with cultural gender content. By referring to various concepts employed within the sociology of gender, they show what gendering of the body consists in and how it manifests itself, what it means for the individual and what social significance it has.

In the first part of the chapter, the authors introduce the issue of body and embodiment in the gender perspective, then discuss the transformations of gender. Next, they address the issue of the significance of the gendered body for an individual's gender identity, the social role it plays, and the gender division of labor, in addition to gender relations and inequalities. They also draw attention to the issue of intersectionality in embodiment, as well as the concept of body as an aesthetic capital of individuals. In the individual subchapters, they define the most important concepts related to body and corporeality from the perspective of the sociology of gender. The chapter ends with review questions and a list of publications, the reading of which will allow readers to deepen their knowledge of the topics discussed in the chapter.

In the seventh chapter entitled **The Body and Sexuality**, Magdalena Wojciechowska addresses the issue of human sexuality in the context of the body, referring to classical literature on the subject, in addition to more contemporary field research in this area. The author's aim is to present various analytical approaches in the process of problematizing and reflecting on how people give meaning to sexuality, experience it, and act in the sphere of sexuality. She also shows how these phenomena are approached by social sciences, in particular – sociology of the body. In the first part of the chapter, she presents “classic” sociological works in which the issue of sexuality was taken up, in order to outline a general theoretical framework conceptualizing human sexuality as an object of reflection and research. To this end, she briefly discusses the works of John Gagnon and William Simon, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Ariel Levy, Jean Baudrillard, and Anthony Giddens. She also offers a review of the approaches to human sexuality from the perspective of queer theory and symbolic interactionism. In the next part of the chapter, she presents concepts, phenomena through terms that often appear in the literature on the subject in the area of sexuality studies. She then moves on to discuss selected works that address the issue of human sexuality from the perspective of individuals experiencing it. The author's intention is to show different ways of conceptualizing specific substantive areas of human sexuality in addition to how it is experienced and embodied. To this end, she focuses on highlighting specific analytical frameworks that have marked out interpretative paths for the areas of human sexuality that are

being considered. In this context, she discusses: how internalized social norms and values impact human endeavors; how assigning meaning (to sexuality) takes place in relation to specific contexts (e.g., situational or interactional); how “deviance” is socially constructed; how gendered dominance leads to conflictual interactions and affects the lack of a point of reference when (sexual) violence affects the person that is supposedly dominant; and, finally, how the way of social communication shapes sexual socialization. The chapter ends with a summary of the discussed topics and review questions.

The aim of the eighth chapter, entitled **The Body, Food and Eating**, set by its authors – Agnieszka Maj and Anna Wójtewicz – is to present selected connections between the socio-cultural construction of the body and eating, understood as a practice resulting from a biological need and, at the same time, something which is culturally entangled. The consumption of food and beverages is socially regulated. Society influences the form of food, the type and amount of food, as well as the rituals related to eating a meal. Regulations translate into body values such as body size, desired body shape, and weight. Social expectations related to this change depending on the era and culture.

In this chapter, the authors present classic works by authors dealing with eating as a cultural activity, some of which can be included in the achievements of both cultural anthropology and sociology. They include Claude Levi-Strauss’ concept of the “culinary triangle,” and Mary Douglas’ works, which focused on describing the cultural significance of a meal and analyzing dietary exclusions in Judaism, which were based on the distinction between “pure” and “impure.” More contemporary studies include the works of Sidney Mintz (1985), who, by analyzing the history of sugar, described the formation of the global trade system and the beginnings of the world system, as well as studies conducted in the neo-Marxist trend, along with the later critique of this movement, leading to the inclusion of analyses of alternative food distribution networks and consumer behavior studies in food studies.

In the text, the authors also explain the reasons for the long absence of issues related to body and eating in sociology. They also indicate newer directions for the development of reflection on these areas, necessarily focusing only on selected topics. They touch upon, among others, the subject of the body, food, and social inequalities (including those based on gender), referring to the works of such authors as Norbert Elias, Pierre Bourdieu, and Chris Shilling. The authors also describe the issue of the impact of models proposed by the media, both in terms of the ideal body and regimes that are supposed to shape it in accordance with this ideal, among which diet and eating habits occupy an important place. Such messages, influencing the recipients’ awareness of nutrition or the model of the ideal figure, include, among others, advertisements and programs on culinary topics.

In addition, the chapter’s content refers readers to descriptions and analyses of issues that often directly affect people living in the contemporary society. These are primarily issues of dietary regimes and the need for individuals to function in the diet culture, in which how we look, what we eat, and even what exercises we do are treated

as a manifestation of moral virtues. The so-called appropriate appearance symbolizes important values, such as hard work or self-discipline, while an inappropriate appearance is often stigmatized. The content also includes issues related to the fat body and the meanings attributed to this type of body. In this context, the authors discussed the assumptions of the body positive movement. The most important issues raised in the chapter also include the connections between the body, food, and politics (including climate policy). The authors assumed that the body is at the center of the discussions about the changing realities of food cultivation and production, while also drawing attention to the broadly understood consequences of the modern way of producing food for the climate and the role of consumers in this process.

At the end of the chapter, the authors indicate the areas of research related to the body and food in contemporary sociology, and list the most important concepts that may prove helpful in further studies of the subject of the body and food.

In the chapter **The Body and Medicine**, Magdalena Wiczorkowska presents the body as a link between medicine and sociology. She presents sociological concepts of the body, which are based on the consequences of medical achievements. She also indicates that the contemporary model of health and disease would be incomplete without knowledge of the socio-cultural conditions of these states.

The aim of this chapter is to show how medical knowledge influences the perception of the body, its meaning, and transformations. The author discusses theoretical concepts in chronological order, starting from the humoral theory, through the medieval model treating disease as a punishment for sins and imposing bodily regimes, to modern medicine and the biomedical model of health and illness. The culmination of contemporary processes placing the body in the shackles of medicine are the processes of medicalization, which appropriate subsequent areas of human life and body, making them the subject of medical intervention and control. The next concepts discussed by the author concern remedial medicine, preventive medicine, as well as fulfilling desires and their impact on the social construction of bodies. The next thread is a comparison of the assumptions of modern and alternative medicine in relation to the perception and treatment of the human body. In the next subchapter, the author presents medical imaging as a way of looking at the body using various medical devices that strip it of privacy, intimacy, and often also dignity.

The human body is mortal, but before the inevitable happens, medicine subjects the body to life-sustaining and life-saving procedures, often associated with pain and suffering. The body's connection with medicine does not end with death, however, because a person can be an organ donor, and also issue instructions regarding the use of their body e.g., for scientific purposes.

Medical achievements are also modifying the perception of our body in the near future, raising questions about the limits of intervention, the boundaries between repairing the body and improving it, and thus the boundaries of humanity; this is what the last of the discussed theoretical concepts deals with in the context of cyborgization.

In the second part of the chapter, the author presents the most important concepts along with their synthetic discussion, while in the third part readers will find a short description of research on medicalization, geneticization, donations, and transplants.

In the tenth chapter, entitled **The Body, Illness and Partial Disability**, Katarzyna Kowal and Michał Skrzypek take up various theoretical and empirical threads characterizing the relationship between the body and illness and the situation of an individual's partial disability. Looking from a sociological perspective at chronic illness and partial disability, they draw attention to identity-creative activities, which are a consequence of violating the bodily substance of personal identity. The authors present significant works by several scholars. They indicate that Maurice Merleau-Ponty has initiated reflection on this issue by describing the phenomenon of feeling a non-existent limb (imaginary limb syndrome). The non-existent organ remains "on the horizon of life," resisting the transition to the stream of past events. Drew Leder has pointed out that the dysfunction of the body causes it to enter the stream of consciousness; it becomes a felt phenomenon, it emerges from the background of bodily experiences.

The inclusion of the biological aspects of the body in sociomedical research was postulated by Stefan Timmermans and Steven Haas, who proposed building a bodily-anchored sociology of illness. A comprehensive picture of the identity consequences of chronic illness and partial disability was provided by Kathy Charmaz, who described how changes in the body shape the identity goals of an individual. The reflection of Anselm Strauss et al., referred to by the authors of the chapter, in turn brings about an appreciation of the interactional dimension: the body is an inalienable condition of actions and interactions; it represents a person, it is the condition of their agency in the world. Human actions are the material of identity, and when they become impossible in a situation of illness, the "self" is lost and the reconstruction of personal identity (i.e., biographical accommodation) becomes necessary.

The concepts discussed in this chapter emerge from qualitative research conducted in groups of chronically ill people. Kathy Charmaz has argued that these people report their suffering in the "language of loss" concerning those aspects of the "self" that have been altered by changes in the body. Karen Yoshida has provided a description of the work on personal identity performed by people after spinal cord injury. It takes the form of pendular reconstruction: these people move between alternative versions of personal identity – towards the version that integrates disability and towards the one that is based on the situation before the injury. The manifestation of optimal adaptation is the "middle self," which is determined by the awareness of being a person "in a wheelchair" and the acceptance of the situation that the disabled and "able-bodied" aspects of the self have become the material of identity. The situation of surgical mutilation of the body also implies work on personal identity. Michael Kelly, in his studies of people after panproctocolectomy, documented the bodily anchoring of social interactions. The sociological analyses of identity dilemmas initiated by bodily changes discussed in this chapter complement the view of illness and disability from a biomedical perspective with knowledge about the processes taking place in the psychosocial sphere of individuals.

In the eleventh chapter, entitled **The Body and Time**, Monika Dorota Adamczyk compares these concepts that we use so often. We understand them intuitively, like a “wrinkle or a calendar page” and we are convinced that nothing new can be said about them. The **The Body and Time** chapter presents a different, new perspective, placing both phenomena on more and less obvious levels. The considerations presented in the chapter lead readers through thematic areas explaining the mutual connections between the body and time, in the context of social processes and phenomena such as the development of consumer culture and the accompanying “cult of a young body,” the aging of the global population, in addition to the development of science and technology. The author devotes individual parts of the chapter to the characteristics of the most important theories describing both conceptual categories, as well as the most important issues related to their understanding. The concepts of quantitative time, qualitative time, sequences or chain of phenomena, and social time are illustrated with examples linking them to the concept of the body. This approach brings readers closer not only to the meaning of individual concepts, but also indicates the permanent interconnection of both conceptual categories at the individual and social levels.

The **The Body and Religion** chapter by Malwina Krajewska is devoted to the relations and dependencies between the human body and various forms of religious life. She discusses them, taking into account normative, theoretical, and practical aspects. The issues taken up by the author initially refer to the historical perspective, in which the starting point is the contradictory medieval and Renaissance ways of perceiving the human body in Christian Europe. Some of them perceive the human body as a source of sin and ethical corruption, while others interpret it as a tool enabling the experience of eternal happiness. The next narratives referred to by the author concern the reception of the human body in world religions. She refers to Islam, in which the approach promoting care and concern for the body is common; Hinduism, in which the body is a home for the soul, being only a temporary manifestation entangled in the cycle of rebirths; and Buddhism, for which the body is a tool for liberation from the cycle of suffering and achieving a state of enlightenment.

The chapter also deals with methods and techniques of using the body as practiced in various world religions. It discusses bodily regimes that are supposed to tame human drives, facilitate the maintenance of social order, and support productivity. Max Weber’s classic text provides a basis for the considerations of practices, norms, and values encountered in Protestantism. Additionally, the author also refers to other religions in which techniques of disciplining the body are an important element of everyday practice. It presents the philosophical foundations of the yoga practice, and the functions and results of Buddhist fasting meditation. It also discusses the assumptions and principles of preparing and eating meals in Judaism.

In addition to discussing the ways of interpreting human body and the methods of using it, the author devotes a great deal of attention to the role of the body in ceremonies and rituals. It touches on the important, multi-faceted symbolic

dimension referring to the bodies of lay people and saints, as well as the deceased and relics. In addition to numerous examples of interpretation, shaping and engagement in religious practices, readers will also find in this chapter many examples of theoretical narratives by classical and contemporary sociologists and anthropologists. Among them are Arnold van Gennep, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Mary Douglas, Randall Collins, Philip Mellor, Chris Shilling, and Bryan Turner.

### **Classical and contemporary theories in sociology of the body**

Below, allow me to briefly present the achievements of researchers and scholars whose works have had the greatest influence on the development of sociological reflection on human embodiment, as well as on the emergence of the subdiscipline of sociology of the body.<sup>2</sup> Such a theoretical introduction may be important for those who have not yet had contact with the achievements of the scholars described below. It may also be useful in the context of recognizing threads related to sociology of the body in well-known works. Such a discussion enables one to develop a perspective in which the human body is perceived by its researchers. It also provides an opportunity to initially familiarize oneself with the most important concepts or notions used by the authors of individual chapters.

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The name René Descartes appears many times in this book. His figure is a kind of an antihero of the last few centuries, at least when it comes to reflection on the human body in broadly understood humanities. Cartesian dualism, named after him, consists in dividing human existence into two spheres – the physical body and the soul which is a kind of mechanism that sets the former in motion. In this concept, only the human soul is able to doubt, understand, and feel. It can also exist without a body.

Such a strict distinction between body and soul has far-reaching consequences for the scientific treatment of corporeality. The soul, according to the claims of Claudius Galen, an ancient physician who studied the brain and to whose works Descartes referred, is located in the heart and brain (Thornwald 1986). This view has become deeply rooted in Western culture and has shaped our thinking about the human body for many centuries (Jakubowska 2009: 103–104), including health, the relationship between the individual and society, differences between people and animals, and gender issues. The development of this perspective on human corporeality was also supported by Christian thinkers, despite the fact that there were alternative concepts

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2 I also leave aside the consideration of whether and to what extent individual scholars can or should not be considered sociologists of the body. Our interest is focused on their research achievements and theoretical works.

within the Catholic Church. One of them was presented by Saint Hildegard of Bingen, who in the 12th century created a medical-philosophical-spiritual system, where one of the main assumptions was the unity of the human soul and body.

The influence of Descartes' thought was so significant that in the Western tradition it caused a distinction to be made between the sciences dealing with the body and the products of human reason. The former include biology, medicine, pharmacology, while the latter include, for example, psychology, sociology, and philosophy. For centuries, the areas of interest of these sciences were largely separate, and the body "belonged" to biological and medical sciences. Scholars dealing with sociology or philosophy tended not to reflect on the human body. This attitude towards the body in the social sciences dominated until the somatic turn in the 1980s.

Among sociologists interested in the human body as a field of social influence, Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault were certainly among the most important scholars.<sup>3</sup> The former contributed to the development of research on corporeality in the social context, primarily by creating the concept of habitus (often referred to in this book). This is a cognitive perspective acquired in the process of socialization. The phenomenon of habitus also includes body aspects. Through the internalization of different habituses, individuals experience their bodies differently: women, men, homosexuals, able-bodied, and people with disabilities (Bourdieu, Passeron 1990). An element of habitus is physical capital, which is manifested in specific ways of walking, eating, adopted body posture or types of sports practiced in a given group (in: Wainwright, Williams, Turner 2006: 536–537). This capital, like any other type of capital (financial, cultural, etc.), can be used by an individual to create their place in the social structure. Bourdieu therefore connected two phenomena – the physical body and the social structure. This structure was to be inscribed in the body of individuals and to be a kind of a label, equipment, and disposition of the individual assigning them to a specific social class.

Bourdieu (2001) also presented the ways of socially constructing corporeality using gender roles as an example. Masculinity is socially defined as dominant, active, and belonging to the public sphere. This translates into the "publicly" observable body parts: face, forehead, eyes, mouth, and chin. Boys learn how to use their bodies appropriately from an early age, and it is an important element of their identity. The private sphere of the body is covered, shameful, and stereotypically reserved for women (Bourdieu 2001). The penetration of the social structure into the bodies of individuals consists, in this case, primarily in the different perception of the same body parts by representatives of both genders.

The second of the mentioned scholars, Michel Foucault, is best known among social researchers of the body for his description of the process of disciplining bodies in a historical context. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Foucault 1977) he referred to the disciplining of the bodies of soldiers, patients,

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3 Out of necessity I will omit a discussion of the achievements of earlier researchers; this is a topic for a separate, extensive study.

and schoolchildren. In Foucault's concept, power is exercised through control and discipline, and it applies to all spheres of life. Its success lies in the fact that through constant practice and intervention in every sphere of life it is internalized, and to some extent, penetrates the bodies of individuals. Each element of an individual's body: soldier, student, or patient, must correspond to the pattern imposed in the regulations by the hierarchical, disciplinary power. The body is, therefore, an emblem of the values professed by a power. Transforming, training, and disciplining the body in accordance with the requirements and needs of power seems to be one of the key elements of Foucault's concept.

Foucault also undertook a philosophical and historical analysis of human sexuality. In *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1978), he discussed the problem of the absence of sexuality in the discourses of the Western world. He distinguished two procedures for producing the truth about human sexuality: art – *ars erotica* – characteristic of the Eastern world, and science – *scientia sexualis* – practiced in the Western world. This sphere of human existence is discussed in the language of medicine and morality rooted in Christian religion. Two more important concepts are related to these phenomena: biopower and biopolitics. In short, they consist in exercising control over the bodies of individuals and social groups. Biopower is power over biology, over human bodies, and biopolitics is the practice of biopower. Michel Foucault's works are cited on many pages of this book because the processes he has described are used in the analysis of many social phenomena related to corporeality.

Norbert Elias is a researcher whose work is also used by sociologists of the body. His works are philosophical and sociological in nature. They concern the process of civilizing society through individuals, their bodies, and education related to the developing ways of mastering the body. Elias (1994) understood the process of civilizing as related to the growing number of mutual relations and interactions between people, which results in the need to predict the effects of one's actions. This is followed by self-control over emotions, as well as the satisfaction of needs, including physiological ones, by individuals. With the progressing process of civilizing, subsequent aspects of human emotionality and corporeality are withdrawn from the public space to the private one, hidden from the sight (hearing, smell) of others. Elias presented the discussed issues in a historical perspective, discussing the process of civilizing the body, i.e., *de facto* the growing control over it exercised by society, also represented by the individual possessing a body. Self-control over the body is manifested here through the occurrence of feelings of shame and embarrassment, as well as taking action on subsequent body parts, features or functions (such as sweating, sexual arousal, defecation, body hair, etc.)

Among sociologists dealing with issues of the body, Erving Goffman is also often mentioned. For him, the human organism, mainly the face and gestures, is a key instrument for an individual's actions, performance or negotiation of meanings and constructing the order of interaction (Goffman 2005). An individual always puts it on the front line in contacts with others (Turner 2007: 504). Goffman's works focus on interactions, and corporeal threads can be found, for example,

in the concept of stigma. One of its types are physical features, including racial features, able-bodiedness or disability, experienced illness or profession (e.g., cleaner, a person washing corpses). Another topic taken up by Goffman is the concept of role, commonly known in sociology. An important component of it is the way of being, i.e., also the way of “wearing” one’s own body, adapted to the requirements of the role – facial expression, gestures or body posture. Face-work – understood both metaphorically and directly – is of great importance for the concept of social image, including reputation. Goffman was also one of the first mainstream researchers to examine the way people of different genders were presented in the media. In *Gender Advertisements*, he presented how stereotypes were reproduced through the context in which the figures of women and men were presented in advertisements. Nevertheless, as already mentioned, Goffman contributed to the development of sociology of the body primarily by drawing attention to the role of corporeality and its management in interactions that reproduce the social order.

Another researcher whose work is an inspiration for many sociologists of the body is Anthony Giddens (1991, 2006). He has focused his interests on late modernity, i.e., the period from the turn of the 21st century. It is characterized by a multitude of complex technical and social systems, chaos, individualization, and increasing globalization. The body is an element of this social reality—it has, above all, become the subject of reflection by individuals, and as a result, is transformed into a project. Individuals use various types of bodily regimes to enable themselves to create a body that corresponds to their identity, which cannot be provided by changing roles and social statuses.

Zygmunt Bauman (1992, 1995) also worked in the trend of the criticism of the social reality called late modernity. For him, the body was a project, the aim of which was for the individual to maintain control over their own self. Due to changing statuses and social roles (similar to Giddens), the instability of such institutions as family, local community, and profession, individuals seek stability in their own bodies, mainly in taking care of their appearance and counteracting aging.

Human corporeality is also the subject of interest for the representatives of other fields of science, the achievements of which are eagerly used by sociologists of the body. Marcel Mauss, a representative of anthropology, is one of the authors important works on the relationship between culture and the body. His interest focused on the techniques of the body (*techniques du corps*) (Mauss 1973). What is important in Mauss’ concept is the treatment of the body as a tool used by people. It is a tool that is exceptional as it mediates the use of all other tools. The way in which individuals use their bodies depends on gender, age, physical ability, and other characteristics of the individual, but also the culture of their group. Mauss, like the aforementioned Pierre Bourdieu, drew attention to internalization in the process of socialization of the ways in which individuals treat and use the body. Consequently, the body “used” by an individual is always a class body since we learn how to use it in a specific social context – class, group, and national culture. Mauss went further, however, and noted that the ways of using the body acquired in social relations had purely physical consequences for the structure of the body.

The work of the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1974) is important for the sociologists of the body, especially those working in the phenomenological perspective. He drew attention to the individual's experience of their own corporeality as a social phenomenon, independent of the "actual" state of external reality. Corporeality exists mainly in the individual's consciousness; it is a means of the so-called being in the world, through which we interact with other individuals and social groups, and undertake actions (Merleau-Ponty 1974). According to Merleau-Ponty, it is important that the body is given to us constantly, and is, therefore, on the margin of our experiences as long as it does not hinder our functioning, e.g., through illness or disability (Merleau-Ponty 1974). The body is a place of creating meanings; a social phenomenon also because it can be socially shaped in order to experience or perceive oneself in a given way, e.g., dependent on the social situation. For example, a bikini and lingerie cover the same parts of the body but are used in two different social contexts. In one of them, e.g., at the pool or beach, exposing them does not cause embarrassment, in another, e.g., when you are at the doctor's in just your underwear, it can be intimidating (Merleau-Ponty 1974). The phenomenological character of the body is also manifested in the fact that the objects we use are incorporated into our body (e.g., a wheelchair is treated by people with mobility disabilities as part of their bodies) (Merleau-Ponty 1974). The body is not only an objectively existing physical entity but a social phenomenon which we experience in various ways and which we transform in accordance with our own will or social requirements. Through it, we communicate with others and are able to understand their experiences – as embodied subjects.

The work of Helmuth Plessner (1970), a German philosophical anthropologist and sociologist, is also worth mentioning. He created a distinction between the living and experiencing body (*Leib*) and the material physical body (*Körper*). The concept referring to the dual nature of the human body, "being a body" (*Leibsein*) and "having a body" (*Körperhaben*), allows Cartesian dualism to be overcome. The work of this scholar was used by, among others, Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Mary Douglas (2002) is another name worth knowing when dealing with the body in social relations. The researcher was an anthropologist drawing on the work of Norbert Elias, whose work is an inspiration for the researchers of the body from the perspective of social order and disorder, control and regulation of the body, and dirt and purity. According to her research findings, the level of social control affects the level of self-control over the bodies of the members of a society. All natural body fluids (urine, blood, sweat) in societies with high control are treated as objects that exceed the social boundaries of privacy. Natural physiological processes are also treated as undesirable and dangerous to others (cf. Elias 1994). Therefore, people tend to hide natural smells and replace them with perfumes or antiperspirants (in: Jakubowska 2008: 198; 2009: 119–121).

Another researcher of the issue of corporeality – Naomi Wolf – became famous for her publication *The Beauty Myth* (Wolf 2015). She has rejected the popular theory that beauty is the result of evolution and biological adaptation. According to her, the

body is beautiful when it presents important social values (fertility or wealth). The ideal of beauty, therefore, depends on the historical era: agricultural, industrial, and information ages. Some practices applied to the body, such as sunbathing, weight loss, plastic surgery, and teeth and skin whitening, are ways to adapt the body to existing social norms. In a patriarchal culture, it is mainly women who have to adapt to the practices, and they are supported by a developed market of goods and services that help in this.

Pierre Bourdieu's student, Richard Shusterman (2008), also deals with the body from a philosophical perspective. He is the author of the concept of somaesthetics, referring to an interdisciplinary approach to the body, not only as an object possessing specific socially desirable aesthetic values such as beauty or grace. Shusterman draws attention to the subjectivity of the body as an experiencing entity, perceiving these features and somatically experiencing the aesthetics of pleasure that accompany them. He has also postulated going beyond theoretical philosophy and focusing on disciplined work on the body as a type of somatic self-improvement.

Feminist,<sup>4</sup> gender, and queer researchers are also interested in the human body. In particular, scholars who deal with gender distinguish between biological sex and social/cultural gender. They also point out that this dimension of human corporeality is of fundamental importance in constructing hierarchies and social inequalities. We owe to the researchers of these phenomena, among other things, the notion of the importance of the influence of cultural norms on the formation of the identity of women and men rooted in the body, as well as the different ways of using the body, independent of biological equipment.

## Contemporary concepts of sociology of the body

In sociology, as in other sciences, no scholar operates in a vacuum. The emergence of the concepts described above meant that the body existed, albeit on the margins of sociological reflection. The boundary point in the development of interest in the human body in sociology was 1984, when Bryan S. Turner published a book entitled *The Body and Society. Explorations in Social Theory* (Jakubowska 2009). Its publication is considered to be the beginning of the subdiscipline of sociology of the body. The main assumptions presented by Turner regarding the emergence of a new sociological subdiscipline are:

- the need for deep and systematic analysis of the social aspects of corporeality, achieved through methods adapted to its research,
- drawing attention to the issue of corporeality in sociological theory,

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4 Simone de Beauvoir can be considered one of the first feminist researchers. In her classic book *The Second Sex*, she addresses, among others, the issue of the somatic difference in the context of the subordination of women and the elderly, and the different interpretation of the effects of hormones on female and male bodies.

- understanding the group and social nature of embodiment,
- constructing the body as a social phenomenon influenced by history and culture,
- the relationship between body and power, i.e., the so-called corporeal citizenship, implemented, for example, through regulations on abortion, euthanasia, parenthood, etc.

Turner also introduced the concept of somatic society to describe current social phenomena. This term is a generalization referring to the prominence and omnipresence of body images in culture, in addition to the social pressure of pleasure and desire. The author associated their appearance with the development of popular culture, consumerism, post-industrialism, and postmodernism.

Another scholar who has devoted much of his work to the issue of the body in relation to society was Mike Featherstone (1991), co-author of *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*. He was one of the first to point out that the body in post-war consumer culture had ceased to be a source of stable meaning and identity. It began to be treated as if it were a moldable material, an element of personal capital that could be managed and from which cultural and social benefits could be derived. Moreover, in consumer culture the body is the center of pleasure, and as a result of actions the real body comes closer to idealized images of youth and health, which increases its “exchange value.”

Chris Shilling is one of the most well-known sociologists of the body, if only because of his book *The Body and Social Theory* (Shilling 2003), but not limited to it. His work is based on a critique of Cartesian “disembodied” sociological concepts. He draws attention to the corporeal conditions of social action and the consequences of social structures. He has developed sociological concepts that allow a better understanding of the significance of embodiment in the social world by examining a wide range of social, cultural, technological and religious issues. He is also the creator of body pedagogics in which he draws attention to the way cultures and institutions shape embodied subjects. In this regard, his works on “body pedagogics” examine how cultures endure and change over time through the influence of their institutions on the human body.

John O’Neill is a Canadian sociologist whose research interests focus on embodied knowledge, as well as embodiment as a phenomenon shaped by family ties and social policy. Influenced by Merleau-Ponty’s work, he created the concepts of the social body, the productive body, and the political body (Featherstone, Kemple 2020: XVII). O’Neill also described the impact of capitalism, especially corporate capitalism, on the objectification of bodies, their machinization in the production process, and the conversion of their value into money (O’Neill 1972, 1989, 2004).

In *Body/Embodiment: Symbolic Interaction and the Sociology of the Body* (2006), edited by Dennis Waskul and Philip Vannini, the authors of the chapters address sociology of the body in relation to symbolic interactionism and the work of scholars such as John Dewey, William James, Charles Peirce, Charles Cooley, and George Herbert Mead. This work explores the ways in which the body, the self, and social interaction are intimately connected and constantly reconfigured.

Among the English-language publications, the books by Kate Cregan are also worth mentioning: *The Sociology of the Body. Mapping the Abstraction of Embodiment* (Cregan 2006) and *Key Concepts in Body and Society* (Cregan 2012). The former provides the reader with a critical analysis of the works of key theorists that have had the greatest influence on the perception of human embodiment in the social sciences. On their foundation, the author builds her own theoretical framework for the concept of embodiment. The latter defines and explains the basic issues related to the human body, presenting it as a social phenomenon. It is a kind of a guide to the basic concepts, their interconnections, and also provides material for further exploration of the described problems.

The Polish achievements in the field of sociology of the body are also quite impressive, and we have been observing their development in two decades. The growing interest in corporeality in Polish sociology since the mid-1990s (Jakubowska 2009) is evidenced by the emergence of many interesting publications, the organization of conferences and seminars on this subject, as well as research projects submitted to grant competitions. The growing interest in research in the field of sociology of the body in Poland is also evidenced by the development of this subdiscipline in several academic centers, including Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, the universities of Wrocław, Warsaw, and Łódź, and Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun.

The authors of publications on this subject undertake to analyze various aspects of embodiment in social contexts. It is impossible to list here all the works created within this subdiscipline. This is successfully done by, among others, the authors of the individual chapters of this book. At this point, however, I would like to draw attention to early Polish works that approach the body from a sociological perspective, and also list those that have entered the canon of Polish sociology of the body. The selection of texts was also determined by their usefulness for people who are only developing their interest in sociology of the body, which is why my selection is subjective and does not constitute a systematic review.

The first Polish sociological publications dealing with the issue of the body include the works of Zbyszko Melosik and Dariusz Czaja. In the book entitled *Tożsamość, ciało i władza w kulturze instant* [Identity, Body and Power in Instant Culture] (Melosik 1996), Zbyszko Melosik analysed the issues of sexuality, corporeality, and the identities of women and men in the rapidly changing 1990s. In turn, *Metamorfozy ciała. Świadectwa i interpretacje* [Body Metamorphoses. Testimonies and Interpretations] edited by Dariusz Czaja (1999) was a publication that broadly described the experiences of the body from the end of the 20th century, and also asked questions about its status in the social reality of that time.

The middle of the first decade of the 21st century also abounded in interesting publications in the discussed field. *Spoleczne tworzenie ciała. Płeć kulturowa i płeć biologiczna* [The Social Construction of the Body: Gender and Sex] by Adam Buczkowski (2005) was one of the first Polish books on the subject of social influence on the bodies of women and men in the context of medicalization, individualization,

and in a historical perspective. Further, *Praktyki cielesne* [Corporeal Practices] edited by Jacek Kurczewski (2006) was a publication discussing the apparent liberation of the private body, which is subject to social shaping and social interpretation. In 2007 and 2008, two volumes of *Ucieleśnienia* [Embodiments] edited by Joanna Bator and Anna Wieczorkiewicz were published. The first volume, with the subtitle *Ciało w zwierciadle współczesnej humanistyki* [The Body in the Mirror of Contemporary Humanities], analyzed the problems of the relationship between thought and the physical condition of humans. In turn, the second volume, *Płeć między ciałem i tekstem* [Gender between Body and Text], analyzed the issues of gender, its social construction, and its relationship to identity.

The collection entitled *Antropologia ciała* [Anthropology of the Body] edited by Małgorzata Szpakowska, published in 2008, presented in a shortened form the most important works of social researchers, anthropologists, and philosophers dealing with the body. In the same year, a book edited by Marek S. Szczepański, Beata Pawlica, Anna Śliz, and Agnieszka Zarębska-Mazan (2008) entitled *Ciało spieniężone? Szkice antropologiczne i socjologiczne* [The Monetized Body? Anthropological and Sociological Sketches] was published, in which the authors analyzed the contemporary cult of the body, beauty, and slimness as one of the main features of contemporary social reality.

In 2009, Honorata Jakubowska published the groundbreaking *Socjologia ciała* [Sociology of the Body]. It was a kind of summary of the achievements of sociology of the body in the world and in Poland to date. The author discussed in detail the status of the body in contemporary culture, and also thoroughly analyzed the works of classics in addition to philosophical, anthropological, and sociological perspectives in relation to the issues of corporeality. She referred to various sociological reflections on the body: as an element of identity, interactional games, capital, commodity, a place of social control, a recipient of impressions, as well as a source of knowledge and experience. This was certainly the book thanks to which sociology of the body has become a permanent fixture in Polish sociology. For those who want to become more familiar with the issues of gender, sport, and the body in sociology, I recommend her other works, including *Gra ciałem. Praktyki i dyskursy różnicowania płci w sporcie* [Body Play: Practices and Discourses of Gender Differentiation in Sport] (2014).

Another interesting publication is *W stronę socjologii ucieleśnionej* [Towards an Embodied Sociology] by Izabella Bukraba-Rylska (2013), in which the author deals with the dominant theoretical trends in sociology, the cognitive consequences of which have influenced the shape of the discipline, and confronts “pure” cognition with the corporeal-material experience of the world. In 2014, the publication *Etnografie biomedycyny* [Ethnographies of Biomedicine] was published, edited by Magdalena Radkowska-Walkowicz and Hubert Wierciński. Although this book focuses more on medical issues, it takes up in an interesting way various aspects of the human body in the context of culture: reproductive health, disability, cancer, and genes.

Polish books recommendable to readers interested in exploring the subject of sociology of the body certainly include publications by researchers from the Wrocław center. *Moralne obrazy. Społeczne i socjologiczne (de)konstrukcje seksualności* [Moral Images: Social and Sociological (De)Constructions of Sexuality] edited by Ewa Banaszak and Paweł Czajkowski (2008) or *Corpus delicti – rozkoszne ciało. Szkice nie tylko z socjologii ciała* [Corpus Delicti – The Delightful Body. Sketches Not Only from Sociology of the Body] (2010) and *Ciało korporalne* [The Corporeal Body] edited by Katarzyna Konarska (2011) are collections of texts exploring corporeal experiences, perspectives, and images of the body in various contexts. In 2012, the team of Ewa Banaszak, Paweł Czajkowski and Robert Florkowski also published *Fenomeny kontroli ciała* [Phenomena of Body Control], a work in which they described body control viewed from many sides and on many levels. Another interesting publication is *Trickster: społeczno-kulturowe konteksty doświadczania ciała* [Trickster: Sociocultural Contexts of Experiencing the Body] edited by Ewa Banaszak, Paweł Czajkowski, Robert Florkowski, and Dorota Majka-Rostek (2016). The body and embodiment are analyzed in this publication from the perspective of contemporary psychotherapy, psychology, choreography, cognitive science, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, etc. The texts published in the collection analyze various aspects of the body, such as smell, a tool of expression, disability, sexualization, and social control. Another publication prepared in this center is *Ekspierencje nagoci* [Experiences of Nudity] by Ewa Banaszak (2017). It describes the experience of nudity as a phenomenon created socially: through the language of narration about it, ways of dealing with it or expectations, and even hierarchies and classifications of nudity.

The works of researchers from the Łódź center are also worth special attention. In the book *Is the Body the Temple of the Soul? Modern Yoga Practice as a Psychosocial Phenomenon* Krzysztof Konecki (2015) discusses, among others, the status of the body in the practice of yoga as an element of contemporary Western culture. Another publication from this center entitled *Społeczne światy. Teoria – empiria – metody badań. Na przykładzie społecznego świata wspinaczki* [Social Worlds – Theory – Empirics – Research Methods. On the Example of the Social World of Climbing] by Anna Kacperczyk (2016), presents, among others, the ways in which climbers perceive and use the body. It is also worth becoming acquainted with two works discussing women's sexual work: *Agencja towarzyskie – (nie)zwykle miejsce pracy* [Escort Agency – An (Un)Usual Workplace] by Magdalena Wojciechowska (2012), and *Praca kobiet świadczących usługi seksualne w agencjach towarzyskich* [The Work of Women Providing Sexual Services in Escort Agencies] by Izabela Ślęzak (2016). People interested in the issue of the body in the context of gender, parenthood, and intimate relationships may find scientific articles by Julita Czernecka, Emilia Garncarek, and Krystyna Dzwonkowska-Godula interesting.

In addition to collective publications and monographs by individual authors, it is worth reaching for thematic issues of journals in which this research topic was taken up, such as *Ciało w przestrzeni społecznej: współczesne problemy i wyzwania socjologii*

*medycyny* [The Body in Social Space: Contemporary Problems and Challenges of Medical Sociology] edited by Teresa Zbyrad published in volume 7, issue 1 of the journal “*Studia Sociologica*” in 2015, the thematic issue of “Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej” (2012) volume 8, issue 2 edited by Anna Kacperczyk and myself entitled *Ciało w przestrzeni społecznej* [The Body in Social Space], and the thematic issue of “Qualitative Sociology Review” (2018) volume 14, issue 2 entitled *Sociology of the Body – Research Practice in Poland*, which I also had the pleasure of editing.

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This book is a record of the state of sociology of the body, including sociology of the body in Poland, at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century. Its content reflects the interests and areas in which research is conducted. It is also a kind of a guide to the issues of corporeality in the social context, indicating some trodden research paths and new areas of analysis. It shows the omnipresence of corporeal practices in various social contexts, which is proof that the body and society are inextricably linked.

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