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# Women on corporate boards: diversity vs. patriarchal order

## Introduction

Women are increasingly better educated; they also more often hold executive positions in business. Nevertheless, the share of women at the highest levels of management has not changed significantly over the last few decades despite the evident increase in their participation in education at the higher levels, similarly to the share of women with tertiary education in the total number of employed women. Increasingly more studies indicate that diversity in management, including gender diversity, is economically profitable. Nevertheless still not all employers are aware of the results of these studies and they do not make attempts at promoting women to positions on boards or supervisory boards.

The article objective is analysis on the current situation in respect to the women's presence among managers at various levels in Poland in the background of other European countries in the context of profits from diversity. The analysis will be preceded with the recapitulation of advantages for women derived from feminism in the sphere of economic activity; it will be closed with the reflection that acceptance of equality and diversity favours construction of a society free from male domination.

## Feminism vs. employment of women

In the period between the sixties and eighties of the twentieth century, the second wave of feminism swept across the United States and countries of the Western Europe. It was initiated in 1963 with the publication of Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine*

*Mystique* (Friedan 1963) and reinforced with Kate Millett's political manifest *Sexual Politics* (Millett 1971, after Ślęczka 1999:131–140). The second wave of the feminist movement brought forth significant changes in both the law regarding the labour market and private sphere. The range of access to education gained by women was increasing; successive countries were granting them rights to vote that had been won by the feminist movement during the first wave (Ślęczka 1999:159–163).

American feminism of the second wave characterised a division into a few currents, among which liberal and radical movements were most evident. Both aimed at achieving the full participation of women in social, economic and political life, although each one had chosen a different road leading to these goals. While liberal feminists did not demand legal guarantees, including introduction of the provision concerning gender equality into the American Constitution, the radical ones stressed cultural determinants of the women's enslavement and the need to establish the social order alternative to patriarchy. The greatest achievements of the second wave of feminism in the USA were: the law of 1963 guaranteeing equal pay (Equal Pay Act), the law of 1972 ensuring equal chances in employment (Equal Employment Opportunity Act), in the same year – adoption of the amendment to the constitution Equal Rights Amendment by the Senate (eventually it did not obtain the required acceptance of 38 states and it was not adopted in the Constitution<sup>1</sup>), in 1973 – abolition of the ban on abortion, in 1974 – equalisation of women's access to credits on a par with men's (Equal Credit Rights), and launching at tertiary schools new courses primarily connected with women's studies, and then with gender studies, (Ciechomska 1996; Ślęczka 1999).

Feminism of the second wave in Europe was less vivid and diversified than in the USA. It has its source mainly in the socialist movement, which declared opposition to the economic and social exploitation. It embedded into its ideology also the protest against exploitation of women as the immanent element. However, the general slogans were not followed by any actions leading toward abandonment of patriarchy and actual gender equality. In the face of this negative experience, groups of feminists emerged from the socialist movement and created their own organizations in order to act more effectively on behalf of emancipation of women.

Feminism in Europe was inspired with the contemporary affairs in the USA, but also with the situation of women in particular European countries. Among the undoubted achievements of the second feminist wave in European countries belonged legislation forbidding discrimination in employment and guaranteeing equal pay, as well as introduction of contraception and the right to abortion, popularisation of studies on cultural determinants of gender at universities and establishment of numerous organizations supporting women and offering them aid. For example, in the United Kingdom the Equal Pay Act was introduced in 1970, then in 1974, women were allowed to sit in jury, in 1975 British government introduced the antidiscrimination law (Sex Discrimination Act) and appointed the Equal Opportunities Commission, whose task comprises monitoring the observance of law. The law on labour protection, which regulated the issues of maternity leave, was passed in the same year, while in 1976, the law prohibiting domestic violence and rapes was passed (Domestic Violence Act) (Sękalska 1982:154).

The first wave of feminism was also observed in Poland – as the emancipation movement, although it was not so tumultuous as in the United States or Western Europe. Informal groups of women were emerging, e.g. Female-Enthusiasts concentrating around Narcyza Żmichowska, which actively tried to solicit the women's rights for personal freedom, access to education in all fields and at all levels, including universities, and access to paid work. Some more radical feminists, such as Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmidt or Zofia Nałkowska, demanded voting rights for women (Walczevska 1999). Due to those actions, Polish women already in the interwar period gained access to tertiary education and attainment of scientific degrees (Sokół 1995:81–91), they could participate in political life – to vote and be elected. In the interwar period, maternity leave

of 12 weeks duration was introduced (in accordance with the norm of the International Labour Organization), during which salaried female employees received full remuneration, while blue-collar female workers received social welfare benefit for a period of 8 weeks (Kurzynowski 1979:77).

In the Polish People's Republic, the duration of maternity leave for salaried and waged employees was uniformed. In 1972 the leave was extended from 12 to 16 weeks at the birth of the first child and to 18 weeks for births of successive children; in 1968 there was introduced one-year voluntary and unpaid child-care leave, which was extended to 3 years in 1972 (Kurzynowski 1979:79). Nurseries and kindergartens were being opened. A child-care benefit was introduced in 1981; its amount depended on the family income (Journal of Laws, 1981, No. 19, item 97). Women were granted numerous rights, including the right to abortion in 1956, but establishment of equal chances for women in all spheres of social life was not reached, nor were women promoted in the public sphere. In reality, the objective of the contemporary authorities was activation of additional labour force due to the rapid industrialization of the country (Siemieńska 1996). According to K. Slany, “taking up paid work by a woman was somehow a must, a necessity irrespective of her views in this matter” (Slany 2011:232). Implemented solutions only slightly contributed to actual equality. Instead, they rather consolidated patriarchal social order. It was maintained regardless the ratification by Poland of the Convention for elimination of any forms of discrimination against women in 1980, or the appointment of Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men affiliated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy after the Third World Conference held in 1985 in Nairobi (Kenia).

The second wave of feminism could have emerged in Poland only after the systemic transition at the end of the eighties of the twentieth century. Following the political and economic transformations after 1990, there were created numerous feminist organizations, which, i.a. provided legal advice to women, supported occupational and political activation of women, actively participated in works on 1997 Polish constitution. The process of the Poland's accession to the European Union was conducive to listening to the voices of women's organizations and legislative changes that guaranteed equal treatment in the employment sphere. The ruling elites did not have any other choice but to introduce antidiscrimi-

nation provisions into the Polish legislation, as the legal acquisition of the Community (*acquis communautaire*) stated that there are no transitional periods in the area of equal treatment (Lisowska 2008:242–250).

Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004, the Labour Code contains definition of direct and indirect discrimination, definition of remuneration and definition of harassment and sexual harassment as the manifestation of discrimination. Important provisions were adopted concerning the burden of proof, which binds the employer in cases of discrimination based complaints (Art. 18<sup>3a</sup> par. 4 L.C.), sanctions for breaking the equal treatment principle in the amount of no less than minimum remuneration for work (Art. 18<sup>3d</sup> L.C.), protection of female and male employees who sue the employer for discrimination (Art. 18<sup>3e</sup> L.C.). The revised Labour Code also includes the definition of mobbing and imposes on the employer the obligation to prevent this phenomenon in working environment. A person whose health condition worsened because of mobbing may claim adequate financial compensation from the employer. One of the significant responsibilities of the employer, provided for in the Article 941 of the revised Labour Code, is popularisation among employees of the equal treatment of women and men principle. The method may be chosen by the employer: e.g. in a form of the provision in the company internal work regulation or through the announcement board or carrying training within the scope of this issue. Therefore, the Labour Code was harmonized with the Community law, particularly in respect to all directives concerning equal treatment in employment, just before 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 – the date of the accession of Poland to the European Union. It provides legal base for claiming one's rights in court in case of any manifestation of discrimination in the work place, including gender-based discrimination.

The introduction of the equal treatment principle into the law constitute a necessary step toward counteraction of discrimination, but it is not sufficient to cause discrimination *de facto* absent from economic and social life. Cultural determinants, including cultivation of patriarchy, hinder actual equality. Therefore, beside good legislation there are also required actions and solutions which will influence changes in perception and social culture. Pointing out the benefits of diversity may accelerate the changes in thinking about the position of women and men in society.

## From equality to diversity

The idea of equality lies at the core of the European Union policy and includes categories such as: equal treatment, equal chances, lack of discrimination, actions positive actions, full employment of women and appreciation of their work. According to I. Boruta (1996:19), the Community conception of gender equality is to a greater extent the conception of formal equality than the actual one, equality identified with uniformity (sameness), with the exception respective to pregnancy and motherhood as exclusive female attributes, relative equality, i.e. defining the situation of women through its comparison with the situation of men. Women have generally worse than men access to employment, occupations and positions, therefore the actions are needed equalising their chances or correcting inequality, i.e. positive actions – promoting women within these areas of employment where gender related disproportions are most evident. Espousing the actions correcting inequality (quotas and parities, positive actions) signifies attempts at reaching actual equality; they are recommended not obligatory solution, which results in different approach of particular Member States to their implementation (Boruta 1996:127). This concerns also the microeconomic level, i.e. the situation in companies and equalisation of chances policy implemented by them – employers and social partners (employers' organizations and trade unions) are encouraged to promotion and implementation of positive actions, pointed out to economic benefits derived from appliance of equality policy.

In the Community legislation and UN conventions, gender equality is treated as a synonym of non-discrimination both at the stage of the access to employment, as well as working conditions. Women and men have equal right to employment and its worthy performance, however, as their maternal functions are exclusive attributes of women, the working environment should take this into account and adjust to diversified *inter alia* in respect to sex labour resources. Equal treatment based on uniformity and creation of equal chances for all has been evolving towards perception and appreciation of differences and diversity of labour resources. According to R.R. Thomas Jr. (2006:5), and also G. Kirton and A. Grene (2005:124–125), most employers and society mistakenly associate diversity policy with a synonym of affirmative action. This means giving a particular group (e.g. women) privileges that another (e.g. men) do not have, which is justified with

the past discrimination and present inequality, as well as attempts at actual equality.

**Equal treatment** refers to egalitarianism and aims at treating all people in the same way and offering them the same chances (equality of opportunity) or benefits (equality of outcome). Whereas **diversity policy** is based on acceptance of differences and taking full advantage (maximisation) of people's potential and talents without discriminating or preferential treatment of any group, in order to gain the value added by a company or organization (Kirton, Green 2005:116). Comparison of the approach based on equality and diversity contains Table 1. Individual approach to a person in the context of functioning of the entire organizations is essential in case of the approach based on diversity. According to M. Durska, diversity management does not mean: "granting preferences or equalising chances (...), but accepting the fact that broadly understood diversity increases the quality of the whole organization" (Durska 2009:8). Thus, diversity policy constitutes the source of new opportunities in the competitive market.

R.R. Thomas Jr. defines diversity as "the mix of differences, similarities, and tensions that can exist among the elements of collective mixture" (Thomas Jr. 2006:101). R.R. Thomas Jr. (2006) as well as other authors (e.g. D.A. Thomas, R.J. Ely 2005) point out the significant changes in the approach to company management generated by diversity of labour resources, customers, local communities, including

wide-spread economic activity of women and their increasing on a large scale economic independence.

D.A. Thomas and R.J. Ely (2005:142–156) define and describe changes in the approach to equality and diversity in a form of three paradigms. The first one – **fairness paradigm** – is based on the belief that representatives of minorities or groups discriminated against should be allowed in organizations; there should be created conditions for assimilation (adjustment to the norms obligatory in organizations) of disparate employees. Organization should prevent discrimination and aim at establishment of demographic balance through affirmative actions and promoting equal chances for everyone. The appliance of this paradigm increases numerical diversity of the personnel, but not labour efficiency, as it does not create conditions for individual skill development – we are all the same and receive the same treatment irrespective of gender or skin colour, all exceptions from this norm (assimilation) are not comprehended. The second one – **diversity paradigm** – accepts cultural differences between people and appreciates values hidden in them, which was used in the expansion of American companies into the international markets, e.g. in the European branches companies employed Europeans, in Asian ones – Asians, in African ones – Afro-Americans. It facilitated a growth in competitiveness, but also resulted in creation of specified categories of people with particular abilities or talents, i.e. "pigeonholing", which negated assimilation and prevention of discrimination. It also dis-

**Table 1.** Equality vs. diversity

Approach	Principle/Rule	Strategy	Method	Effect
Liberal	Fair treatment	Equal chances	Declarations of law observance and applying equality policy in recruitment	Equal chances
	Positive action	Aiding people from group discriminated against	Monitoring of the situation, special training, equality in management	Equal chances
	Strong positive action	Preferences for particular groups	Policy favouring reconciliation of family and work responsibilities, facilities for the disabled, punishing cases of harassment	Move towards equality of outcome
Radical	Positive discrimination	Proportional representation	Preferential selection process, quotas	Equality of outcome
Diversity policy	Maximisation of the potential of individuals	The use of diversity to create value added	Defining the vision, carrying out audit, formulating business goals, communication and responsibility, changing culture	Equality means profit adequate to the organizational objectives

Source: Own elaboration based on Kirton, Green 2005, p. 116.



turbed the development process of these employees, limited their career chances, and in longer perspective – company development. The third one – **integration paradigm** – promotes equal chances, appreciates values hidden in differences and shows how to use these difference in order to ensure effective company development. Employees have a feeling of belonging to a team and contribution of their own individual and unique skills, life experience or knowledge. According to this paradigm, one of the important elements of diversity management is giving all employees equally high assignments and expecting equally high results. Another significant element of this approach is a broad flow of information, ideas and constructive critique from employees to managerial staff, facilitated by relative egalitarian organizational structure (flattened and non-bureaucratic).

The issues of diversity policy are widely analysed on the European ground. For example R. Kandola and J. Fullerton approach diversity and management of diverse teams in the following way: the diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences which will include factors such as sex, age, background, race, disability and work style. It is founded on the promise that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where their talents are being utilized and in which organizational goals are met (after: Kirton, Green 2005:124).

Since 2003, the European Commission has been promoting diversity policy among employers through studies and publication of good practices (European Commission 2005; 2008). One of the important initiatives of the European Commission is the Diversity Charter – assertion of the intention to implement diversity policy in the place of work by companies operating on the territory of a particular Community Member State. Hitherto, governments of eight countries – France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy,

Spain, Sweden and **Poland – adopted Diversity Charter** promoting it among employers (in Poland – the ceremonial signing of the Charter by 14 companies was celebrated in February 2012 in the presence of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment)<sup>2</sup>.

## Gender in business: Poland in the background of the European Union countries

The analysis on available statistical data indicates that women comprise 45% among the total number of the employed in Poland and this indicator is equal to the European average (LFS 2012:150; Eurostat 2011). Employed women are better educated than employed men (data for Poland are presented in table 2), nevertheless, they evidently less often hold managerial positions, including the ones at the top level.

While among the total number of managers, the share of women is at the level of 39% (LFS 2012:150), than at the top executive levels, on corporate boards, there are usually no women (Lisowska 2010:7). The similar situation is observed in most European Union countries, which is illustrated by Figure 1 worked out on the basis of the data coming from the largest stock market companies. Poland reaches the level similar to the Community average – women constitute 12% of board and supervisory boards of the largest stock market companies, while the European average is 14%. The relatively lowest indicators are observed in the countries such as Malta (3%), Cyprus (4%), Hungary (5%), Portugal (6%), while the relatively highest – in France (22%), Sweden (25%), Finland (27%) and Latvia (26%).

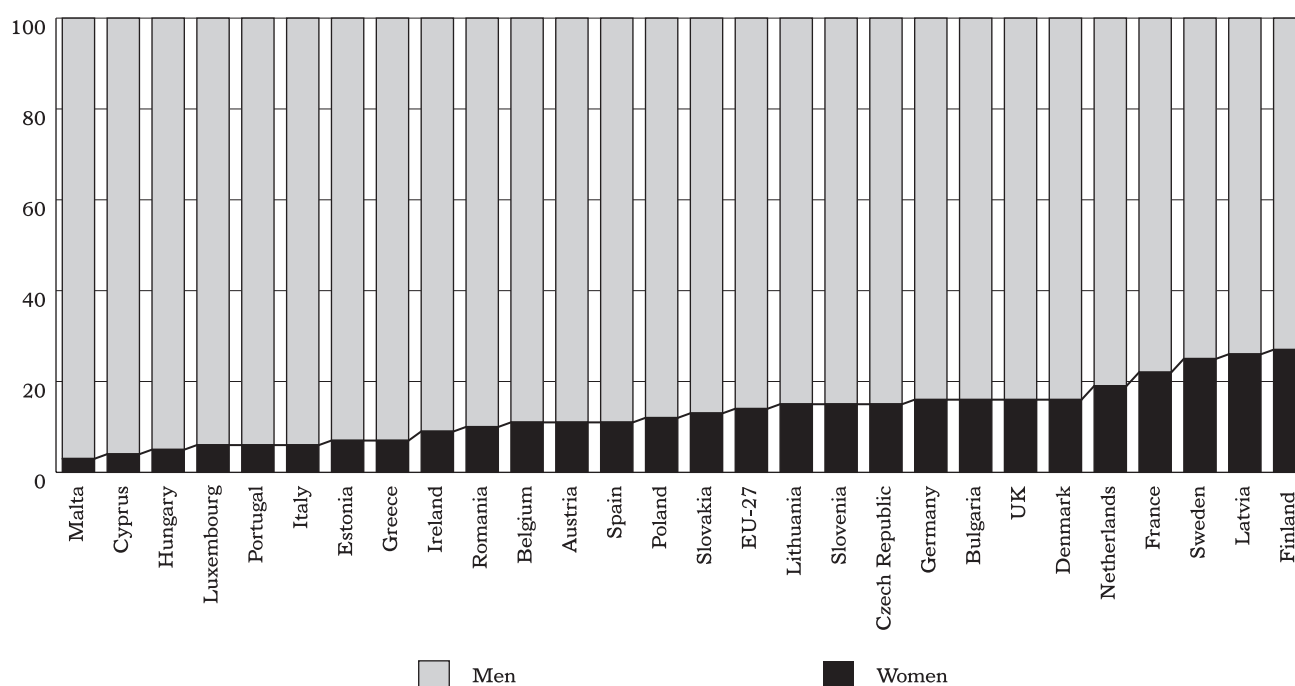
Worth reflection is the example of Norway where quotas were legally introduced into business in 2003, setting the target at 40% women on boards of public

**Table 2.** Structure of employed women and men by level of education, the first quarter of 2012, in %

Level of education	Total	Men	Women
Tertiary	30.1	23.8	37.9
Post-secondary and vocational secondary	27.8	27.9	27.6
General secondary	8.5	7.2	10.1
Basic vocational	26.9	33.6	18.8
Other	6.7	7.5	5.6
Total employment in thous. (N=100)	15 981	8 765	7 216

Source: Own calculation based on the LFS (LFS, 2012:149).

**Figure 1.** The share of women and men on boards of the largest stock market companies, January 2012 (in %)



Source: own elaboration based on: Women in economic decision-making in the EU: Progress report, European Commission, Luxembourg 2012, p. 9.

companies. Initially, the companies were allowed to reach the target on a voluntary basis; however when the assumed goal had not been achieved after a few years, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006, the law became obligatory and imposed penalty in a form of dissolving a company by a court order in case it does not meet the statutory requirements. This step turned out to be very effective and currently Norway has the highest (42%) rate of female participation in the boards of stock market companies (Women... 2012:17).

In Poland, in 2009 the Warsaw Stock Exchange (GPW) initiated studies targeted at recognition of the situation in stock market companies in respect to representation of women on managerial positions, including top executive ones. The research was repeated in 2010 and 2011. Its results indicate the following regularities (Adamska, Jarosz, Lisowska 2009; Lisowska 2010):

- the higher executive positions are the lower percentages of women
- the larger a company is (more employed workers) the lower share of women on top executive positions.
- the company's branch differentiates the share of women in the executive suite (in the finance-banking sector there are more women on top managerial positions than in industrial-construction sector)

- companies with a high share of women among the employed (feminised) characterise higher share of women holding executive positions than masculinised companies.
- if a company to equalisation of chances and promoting women for managerial positions and has implemented respective programmes targeted at achievement of these goals the percentage shares of women among directors of departments and sections are higher, however it does not affect the share of women on Boards and Supervisory Boards.

In 2010, the Supervisory Board of the Warsaw Stock Exchange adopted the resolution recommending balanced participation of women and men on the boards and supervisor boards<sup>3</sup>. The resolution was replaced in 2011 by the recommendation obligating stock market companies to publish annually on their website the information on the number of women and men on the Board and Supervisory Board for the last two years<sup>4</sup>. The actions of the WSE comply with the recommendations of the European Commission and the appeal voiced by the European Commissioner for Justice Viviane Reding for stock market companies to sign voluntarily the document "Women on corporate board – obligation for Europe". It obligates the signatories to increase the share of women on corporate boards to 30% un-

til 2015, then to 40% by 2020. Hitherto, only 24 companies of the Community member States signed this document. At the same time, the data show that only slight progress was observed in respect to gender balance on corporate bodies of the largest stock market companies in the entire EU in the period of 2010–2012 – between 11.8% in 2010 r. do 13.7% in January 2012 r. (in Poland: respectively 11.6 and 11.8%). In addition, the share of women among the company presidents actually decreased – z 3,4% w 2010 r. to 3.2% in 2012. Then, the public opinion survey commissioned by the European Commission in the fourth quarter of 2011<sup>5</sup> shows that 88% of the Europeans (89% of the Poles) fully agree with the opinion that having the same competences women should be equally represented at the top executive positions in business. Most Europeans (75%) and Poles (72%) are in favour of adoption of the regulations obliging companies to balance their Board in respect to gender. Such regulations have already been introduced in a few European countries: Belgium, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Norway and Italy. There are needed further actions encouraging other EU countries to implement the appropriate legislation, therefore the European Commission began social consultations concerning, i.a. quotas in business, which are to be carried out until end of 2012<sup>6</sup>.

It is indicated, that though liquidation of “glass ceiling” in management is facilitated by mentoring programmes, it turns out that although mentoring is necessary, it is not sufficient in promoting women to the top executive positions. The studies of the Catalyst organization (2008) indicate that gifted with high potential women need something more than well-meaning mentors (Carter, Silva 2010). The survey carried out among over 4 thousand full-time employed women and men who in the years 1996–2007 completed the best MBA courses all over the world. The main findings indicate that after graduation women earn 4600 dollars less than men, they hold lower managerial positions and are much less satisfied with the performed work than men in similar situation and with the same education. It is so even though more women than men in the surveyed group were being aided by mentors. The explanation of the reason for this was obtained through in-depth interviews with 40 women and men. It turns out that mentoring is effective when it assumes a form of sponsoring, i.e. it is not limited to advising, but uses the mentor’s position in order to actually promote the mentee’s advance to a higher or the top

executive position. Compared to men, women are rarely sponsored (Ibarra, Carter, Silva 2010). Traditional mentors offer psychological and social support enabling personal and professional development and assistance in career including counselling and coaching; whereas sponsors facilitate the actual advance of their mentees (see table 3).

**Table 3.** Differences between mentoring and sponsoring

Mentors	Sponsors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can hold any level in the hierarchy</li> <li>• Provide emotional support, feedback on how to improve, and other advice</li> <li>• Serve as role models</li> <li>• Help the mentees obtain knowledge concerning company power struggles</li> <li>• Try to increase the sense of competence and self-worth of their mentees</li> <li>• Focus on mentees’ personal and professional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be senior managers with influence</li> <li>• Provide their protégés with links to other managers who may help their career</li> <li>• Make sure that their protégés are considered as candidates for important projects and challenging assignments</li> <li>• Protect their protégés from negative publicity or harmful contacts with senior executives</li> <li>• Fight for promotion of their protégés</li> </ul>

Source: H. Ibarra, N.M. Carter, Ch. Silva, Why Men Still Get More Promotions than Women, “Harvard Business Review”, September 2010: <http://www.mccarthymentoring.com/articles/whymen.pdf> (downloaded on 29.04.2012), p. 6.

## Diversity pays

The figures presented above indicate that women are evidently underrepresented in top executive suites. At the same time, the findings of increasingly more studies indicate that companies where women are strongly represented in management have better financial results. Each year, the research team of the Cranfield University analyse 100 largest companies listed on the London Stock Exchange and publish the female FTSE index, which shows that the companies with women CEOs enjoy better profitability than those with no women on Boards (Gender Index... 2007:32). Then, the pioneering research carried out in the years 1980–1998 by Roy Adler from Pepperdine University, among the largest American companies proves positive correlation between the percentage of women in the executive suite and profitability of companies (Adler 2001:5). The studies conducted in 2010 (Women Matter 2010:6–7) and

studies carried out in Poland among stock market companies (Lisowska 2010) lead to similar conclusions. Companies with at least 30-percent share of women on Board and Supervisory Board more often noted a nominal increase in both net proceeds from sales and value of assets in 2009 as compared to 2008 than companies without women on the board/supervisory board or companies with less than 30% of women on boards.

Economic benefits of equality policy were also confirmed in the research carried out by the European Commission in 2005 among almost 800 companies from 25 countries (European Commission 2005:20–22). In reference to these studies and the report of 2012, the European Commission undertakes actions targeted at increasing the participation of women on Boards and Supervisory Boards.

## **Patriarchy vs. diversity**

According to Adrienne Rich, patriarchy is a system where men by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, language, customs, etiquette, education and the division of labour determine the roles for women; it is a system where a woman is subordinate to a man (Rich 1976:40–41). In this system of male domination, the role of women is limited to responsibilities mainly embraced by the private sphere, whereas access to the public sphere is limited by law and customs, as well as the acceptance of men who wield power and make decisions.

The studies and analyses carried out by G. Hofstede and G.J. Hofstede (2007) lead to conclusion that contemporary world's societies may be divided into masculine and feminine; at the base of this division lie cultural differences. The Authors define masculinity as different expectations and standards for men and women, stating that social roles related to gender are clearly defined, men are expected to be assertive, tough, and focused on achievement of material success, while women are supposed to be modest, tender, considerate of the quality of life. According to their definition, femininity means pursuing maintenance of one standard for all, social roles of both sexes intertwine, modesty, tenderness and consideration of the quality of life is expected from both men and women (Hofstede 2007:133). The mentioned studies lead to conclusion that in the wealthier feminine countries women are more often met among CEOs, whereas inevi-

table ageing process of the wealthier countries not only opens opportunities for broader occupational activation of women, but also results in appreciation of the values connected with femininity (Hofstede 2007:172). Therefore, patriarchy loses to demography and challenges of global capitalism based on knowledge and co-operation, i.e. competition and co-operation (Bengtsson, Kock 2000) and diversity of labour resources regarding sex, age, skin colour, and nationality.

## **Conclusion**

Over the last hundred years, there have been accomplished visible and beneficial to women changes related to equalization of their chances in the labour market. Thanks to feminist movements of the first and second wave women gained access to education and the right to vote, there was accomplished progress in women's access to the labour market, to business and managerial positions.

The data for Poland show that contemporary women are better educated than men and have qualifications adequate for managerial positions at the top executive level – become owners of company or hold positions of presidents and general directors. There are increasingly more studies proving that gender diversity is profitable for companies, as it generates higher effectiveness due to higher efficiency and greater creativity of diversified teams. Facing radical demographic changes resulting with the lower number of successive generations entering the labour market, it is essential to take advantage of the potential of increasingly higher educated women and to treat them as the labour force resource equal to men (and not subordinate).

Patriarchy as a social system where women play inferior roles to men is exhausting its significance and ceases to be justified, i.e. it does not facilitate socio-economic development or welfare of societies. It is being replaced with partnership of women and men both at work and in family. Transformation of patriarchy into partnership is a longstanding process, therefore, in order to accelerate it, there are implemented solutions in a form of quotas in politics and business which are actions of interim character – implemented for a determined period in order to achieve faster the goal which is obtaining gender balance in decision-making bodies.



- <sup>1</sup> Equal Rights Amendment (ERA): „1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article. 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification”. (Ciechomska 1996:185; Ślęczka 1999:151). In 1972, the amendment was passed by the Senate with the majority of votes, but in order to be included in the constitution it needed acceptance of two thirds of states. The struggle for its ratification lasted the whole decade of 1972–1984 and ended in failure, the antifeminist crusade of Phyllis Schlafly “Stop ERA” did this case a great disservice.
- <sup>2</sup> The contents of the Polish Diversity Charter was elaborated by the Forum for Responsible Business. It includes the statement that diversity is a fundamental value of the contemporary society, while equal treatment policy and diversity management brings considerable profits. A company signing the Charter obliges, i.a. to implement equal treatment policy and diversity management in the work place and to monitor and annual reports of the undertaken actions. The full text is available on: [www.kartaroznorodnosci.pl/public/files/TEKST%20Karty\\_A4%20POL-1329400752.pdf](http://www.kartaroznorodnosci.pl/public/files/TEKST%20Karty_A4%20POL-1329400752.pdf).
- <sup>3</sup> Resolution No. 17/1249/2010 of the Supervisory Board of the Warsaw Stock Exchange S.A. of 19 May 2010 on adoption of the changes in “Good Practices of Companies listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange”.
- <sup>4</sup> Resolution No. 20/1287/2011 of the Supervisory Board of the Warsaw Stock Exchange S.A. of 19 October 2011 on adoption of the changes in “Good Practices of Companies listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange ” (chapter II, point 1, sub-point 2a).
- <sup>5</sup> 26856 people were surveyed in the entire EU-27, while in Poland – 1000. The survey was carried out with the use of the face-to-face interview method. Materials were presented at the conference “European Business World – is there a chance for women?” organized by the European Commission Representation in Poland, 9 March 2012 in Warsaw.
- <sup>6</sup> From: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/120305\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/120305_en.htm); [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/opinion/120528\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/opinion/120528_en.htm)

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