



Doing and Undoing Gender in Lithuanian Media Representations of Alcoholism

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Abstract

The aim of my thesis is to perform a media study of how gender is done and undone in Lithuanian news stories regarding women in relationship with alcoholic men and how it reflects and affects the broader marginalization in the Lithuanian society. The research is limited to the time period between October 2016 and October 2018 and the chosen country is Lithuania. In order to find relevant articles and map-out the context within which they are produced, a qualitative content analysis is conducted. Previous research regarding gender, media and codependency are added to broaden the understanding of the mapped-out context. Primary material consists of 16 articles of which four are chosen to be analyzed in further detail by using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as defined by Teun van Dijk. CDA is complemented by a gender perspective based on Judith Butler and Alexandra Bogren's discussion of doing and undoing gender. The combination of method and theory answers the research questions on how gender is done and undone in Lithuanian news stories regarding women in relationship with alcoholic men and why it in turn can further marginalization in Lithuania. The results show that there are limits of doing and undoing gender even when gender roles are reversed. Media frequently uses a codependency approach that if not used carefully can contribute to blaming the victim. Furthermore, by almost always portraying the woman as a married, heterosexual codependent and the man as a married, heterosexual alcoholic, it reinforces gender stereotypes and thus does gender.

Keywords: Media, Gender perspective, Lithuania, Alcoholism, Qualitative content analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Doing gender, Undoing gender, Butler, Bogren, Codependency.

Abstract

Uppsatsens syfte är att analysera hur genus kan göras och ogöras med fokus på kvinnor i relation med alkoholiserade män samt hur det avspeglar och påverkar marginalisering i det litauiska samhället. Undersökningen är avgränsad till en tidsperiod oktober 2016 och oktober 2018 och fokuserar på Litauen. I syfte att hitta relevanta artiklar och kartlägga kontexten i vilken dessa är producerade används kvalitativ innehållsanalys. Tidigare forskning kring genus, media och medberoende i alkoholism används för att få en bredare förståelse för den kartlagda kontexten. Primärmaterialen består av 16 artiklar varav fyra har valts ut för en djupgående kritisk diskursanalys utifrån Teun van Dijk. Den kritiska diskursanalysen kompletteras med ett genusperspektiv om hur genus kan göras och ogöras i text vilka är baserade på Judith Butler och Alexandra Bogrens verk. Metoden kombinerad med teorin hjälper till att besvara frågeställningarna om hur genus kan göras och ogöras i den litauiska medieframställning av kvinnor i relationer med alkoholiserade män och hur det i sin tur kan leda till marginalisering i Litauen. Resultatet visar att det finns gränser för hur mycket genus kan göras och ogöras även när könsroller tycks vara omvända. Media lyfter upp konsekvenserna av medberoendet frekvent vilket kan främja att den medberoende skuldbeläggs. Genom att nästan alltid porträttera heterosexuella kvinnor som medberoende och männen som alkoholister befäster media könstereotyper och på så sätt gör genus.

Nyckelord: Media, Genusperspektiv, Litauen, Alkoholism, Kvalitativ innehållsanalys, Kritisk diskursanalys, Göra genus, Ogöra genus, Butler, Bogren, Medberoende.

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1.Introduction

In this essay the interest lies on how media portrays gender in relation to alcoholism, as it reflects and affects the broader marginalization in a society. According to World Health Organization (WHO), alcohol consumption is a societal issue that has direct negative health consequences for the affected individual and that individual's environment. Lack of initiative to regulate alcohol consumption as well as a shifting of responsibility between various social institutions make it hard to tackle social problems caused by excessive alcohol consumption. In addition to that, there are hidden areas where consequences of excessive alcohol consumption remain invisible such as mental issues and violence within family triggered by alcoholism.¹

Various data reveal that men are heavier drinkers than women. The difference between men's and women's drinking is greater in poorer societies, suggesting the existing gender inequality. People of high socioeconomic status have easier access to alcohol; in general, their alcohol consumption is greater than that of the poor. However, while measuring harmfulness of excessive consumption, it is revealed that the poor are more susceptible to various diseases connected to alcoholism and are in general more socially vulnerable. Hence, one of the goals of WHO is to fight social inequalities caused by alcohol consumption.²

Excessive alcohol consumption is one of the main reasons for poor health globally and is the main factor for deaths between the ages of 15 and 49.³ Alcohol contributes to various digestive, cardiovascular, infectious illnesses and other diseases as well as increases risk of various injuries such as vehicle accidents and physical harms.⁴ For these reasons, the aim of WHO is to reduce alcohol consumption by encouraging states to implement positive measures aimed at restricting drinking. These measures include various regulations of alcohol availability, marketing and pricing.⁵

¹ World Health Organizaton. *Global status report on alcohol and health, 2018*. 2018. p 129, p 63.

² WHO, 2018, p 14, p 16.

³ WHO, 2018, p 126.

⁴ WHO, 2018, p 66, p 77.

⁵ WHO, 2018, p 99-104.

WHO data reveals that Lithuania consumes most alcohol per individual in the world. One of the possible reasons for increased alcohol consumption was the commercialization that happened after the Soviet Union's collapse.⁶ During the election period in 2016, a political party, Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union, ran a campaign against alcohol consumption and won.⁷ Since the party assumed power it has introduced various alcohol restriction reforms such as raising the legal age for alcohol consumption, constraining alcohol advertising and restricting the time when alcohol can be sold.⁸ In addition to regulations, the pricing of alcohol has been increased and continues to be so in 2019.⁹ These actions are seen as a positive political initiative by WHO since they influence the decline of alcohol consumption among people of low socioeconomic status. Regulations, if implemented, combat health inequality between different groups within a society. This in turn also tackles gender inequality since men's drinking is related to violence against women.¹⁰

⁶ WHO, 2018, p 274, p 18.

⁷ Jastramskis. Mazvydas. Nations in Transit 2018: Lithuania Country report. Freedom House. URL: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/lithuania>. Accessed 2019 01 03.

⁸ Narkotikų, tabako ir alkoholio kontrolės departamentas. Pradedamos konsultacijos dėl prekybos alkoholiu tvarkos pasikeitimų nuo sausio 1 d. Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybė. 2017 11 09. URL: <https://ntakd.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/pradedamos-konsultacijos-del-prekybos-alkoholiu-tvarkos-pasikeitimu-nuo-sausio-1-d>. Accessed 2019 01 03.

⁹ Laisvas ir nepriklausomas kanalas. *Žinios: Alkoholio brangimas veja lietuvius apsipirkinėti į Lenkiją*. 2018 12 11. URL: <https://lnk.lt/video/zinios-alkoholio-brangimas-veja-lietuvius-apsipirkineti-i-lenkija/52316>. Accessed 2019 01 03.

¹⁰ WHO, 2018, p 133.

1.1 Aim and Scope of this Thesis

Since Lithuania has been proclaimed as the heaviest drinking country in the world and is also underrepresented in gender media studies, I have a genuine interest to study how media in the country conveys the issue of alcoholism in relation to gender. I choose to focus on the news content published by the three most popular news sites on the internet between October 2016 and October 2018. Using content analysis, I perform a general survey of the dominant themes of the media discourse and afterwards specify and deepen my research by doing a CDA of media's portrayal of women in relationship with alcoholic men. The research is limited to study how women in the relationship with alcoholic men are portrayed by the media. The aim of my thesis is to perform a media study of how gender is done and undone in Lithuanian news stories regarding women in relationship with alcoholic men and how it reflects and affects the broader marginalization in the Lithuanian society.

My research questions are:

How does media do gender in Lithuanian news stories regarding women in a relationship with alcoholic men?

How does media undo gender in Lithuanian news stories regarding women in a relationship with alcoholic men?

How does it reflect and affect the broader marginalization in the Lithuanian society?

1.2 Primary Material

Media as a social institution reproduces and disseminates different discourses to the general public, thus imposing a certain perception of reality.¹¹ The assumption is that the most popular media equates to the most influential one in disseminating and reproducing knowledge. For this reason, the most popular digital news portals for my study were chosen: *delfi*, *15min* and *lrytas*.¹² However, the aim of this research is not to measure the influence of disseminated knowledge but to study what kind of knowledge is produced.

Lrytas is an internet outlet for printed newspaper “Lietuvos Rytas”. Although both operate at the same time, more content is produced in the digital outlet while the print content is cut.¹³ Previous research emphasizes it as being liberal,¹⁴ however, this knowledge needs to be updated. *15min* had a print counterpart “15 minutes” that stopped its print publication in 2013.¹⁵ It is owned by a foreign company, Eesti Meedia Group.¹⁶ *Delfi* is the only online media outlet that did not have a print predecessor.¹⁷ It is also owned by the Estonian company Ekspress Group.¹⁸

The selection of articles is done by performing a general survey using a search key word *alcoholism*. The chosen time period for publication is between October 2016 and October 2018, reflecting the time of the current government since their alcohol reforms caused media coverage. In total, the search gave 445 articles published on the three aforementioned news sites, among which, a selected few are analyzed in further detail. The scope of this essay is made keeping in mind its aim which is to perform a media study of how gender is done and undone in Lithuanian news stories regarding women in relationship with alcoholic men and

¹¹ van Dijk, 1993, Teun A. van Dijk. “Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis.” *Discourse & Society*, no. 2 (1993): 249. p 258.

¹² Gemius URL: <https://www.gemius.com/agencies-news/over-eight-hours-per-month-on-dating-sites-1856.html>. Accessed 2018-11-14; SimilarWeb URL: <https://www.similarweb.com/top-websites/lithuania>. Accessed 2018 11 14.

¹³ Racas Arturas with Ulevicius Liutauras & Parsonis Dziugas. Report Mapping Digital Media: Lithuania September. Independent Journalism. 2011. p 70.

¹⁴ Matonyte, Irmina. From Liberal to Predatory Mass Media in Postcommunist Lithuania. *Journalism research. Žurnalistikos tyrimai*. 2009. 2: 159-178.

¹⁵ Racas et al., 2011, p 70.

¹⁶ Lasas, Ainius. Behind the storefront of democracy: The case of media–politics relations in Lithuania. *Journalism*, 2017, 1464884916688291 p 8.

¹⁷ Racas, 2011, p 42.

¹⁸ Lasas, 2017, p 8.

how it reflects and affects the marginalization in the Lithuanian society. To achieve this aim, the subject about alcoholics and their partners is chosen. More specifically, my primary material consists of articles that discuss partners of alcoholics or their relatives in general. The latter, because they can be used synonymously with partners. News stories involving children of alcoholics are excluded since they are not part of my study.

In total 16 articles regarding this subject were found, out of which six were letters to the editor. Due to the limits of this essay only four articles are analyzed in detail. These articles are representative for the remaining 12, that are also referred to in the analysis. The chosen articles for the analysis differ from one another in content to reflect that there are various contents circulating in the media. Two articles are letters to the editor; one is a story of an abused woman and another one is the story of an abusive woman. These are: “The wife of a rich businessman: at home he turns into an animal”¹⁹ and “A woman’s confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her”²⁰ both published on *lrytas*, 2018 April 2 and 2016 October 17 respectively. The other two chosen articles are written by different journalists and quote different sources. “How women unknowingly support men’s drinking”²¹ published on *delfi*, 2016 November 20, and “Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie”²² published on *15min*, 2017 February 16.

By choosing articles that are in different in content and are written by different people I minimize a subjective bias since articles that are too similar can create a false perception of a wider media discourse. The primary material is written in Lithuanian and all of the translations are done by me given that Lithuanian is my native language. However, this translation may not be completely devoid of errors. This study aims to overcome the language barrier and reveal media’s portrayal of gender in Lithuania, which otherwise would remain unknown

¹⁹ Turtingo verslininko žmona: „Namiė jis virsta žvėrimi“. *Lrytas*. 2 April 2018. My translation: “The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal”. URL: <https://bendraukime.lrytas.lt/isklausykite/2018/04/02/news/turtingo-verslininko-zmona-namie-jis-virsta-zverimi--5487067/>. Accessed 2018 12 07.

²⁰ Moters išpažintis: talžė vyra taip, kad net pačiai skaudėjo. *Lrytas*. 17 October 2016. My translation: “A woman’s confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her”. URL: <https://gyvbudas.lrytas.lt/psichologija/2016/10/17/news/moters-ispazintis-talze-vyra-taip-kad-net-paciai-skaudejo-882285/>. Accessed 2018 12 07.

²¹ Ieva Urbonaitė – Vainienė. Kaip moterys, pačios to nežinodamos, padeda vyrams prasigerti. *Delfi*. 20 November 2016. My translation “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. URL: <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/kaip-moterys-pacios-to-nezinodamos-padeda-vyrams-prasigerti.d?id=72765572>. Accessed 2018 12 07.

²² LRT: Parastes. Norintiems nuo alkoholizmo išgelbėti artimuosius siūlo nemeluoti. *15min*. 16 February 2017. My translation: “Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie”. URL: <https://www.15min.lt/gyvenimas/naujiena/sveikata/norintiems-nuo-alkoholizmo-igelbeti-artimuosius-siulo-nemeluoti-1028-756366>. Accessed 2018 12 07.

1.3 Secondary Material

The secondary material in this essay consists of previous research regarding media in Lithuania, gender studies in relation to alcohol, gender in the Lithuanian context and previous research on codependency. Also, a WHO report on alcoholism is used to introduce the topic of alcoholism in this essay. A more extensive discussion of the secondary material will be covered further in the chapter, “Previous Research and Literature Review” of this paper but first, the theoretical approach and methods used in this thesis are discussed.

2. Theoretical Approach

The theoretical approach consists mostly of theories by Judith Butler, a prominent academic and a professor of philosophy whose gender definition in the 1990s has influenced numerous fields of thought such as queer theory and philosophical feminism.²³ In this thesis, her books, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 1990 and *Undoing Gender*, 2004 are used. Butler undoes gender by questioning conventional understanding of gender as a fixed and a coherent part of our identity that is in accordance with an established gender binary. Undoing gender is important in my research as it shows the complexity behind media's portrayal of gender. Therefore, her perspective is used in order to answer the research questions of how media does and undoes gender.

In her work, Butler criticizes the conventional feminism that supports the idea of universally proclaimed homogeneity of women in their fight against the widespread patriarchy. Instead, she emphasizes the importance of intersectionality as many different factors of identity interlay creating unequal power relations prevalent in different societies. Furthermore, she explains that gender oppression changes since gender itself is contextual and changing throughout history.²⁴ Her approach to gender is suitable in studying different contexts within which gender is produced and this approach is significant in this thesis since it focuses on a particular country at a particular period of time. Thus, the findings are unique and not necessarily applicable in other contexts. Below are the main concepts as defined by Butler and used in this thesis.

Gender

Butler goes against the perception of gender as a fixed part of our identity: something that you simply *are*. Instead she emphasizes gender's performative nature; something that you *do*. In other words, gender is a performance that is repeated by our own actions over and over again. Therefore, there is no subject (male or female) behind gender but rather performances that create an illusion of a subject's existence. Also, the repetition of dominant discourses regarding

²³ [Brian Duignan](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Judith-Butler), *Judith Butler*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Published February 17, 2018
URL:<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Judith-Butler> . Accessed 2018 12 30.

²⁴ Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Thinking Gender. New York : Routledge, 1990, 1990. p 3-4.

gender further contributes to the illusionary perception of gender as fixed and coherent.²⁵ In reality, the perception of gender is dependent upon historical and contextual factors.²⁶

Butler's perception of gender as a performance has led to a suggestion that gender is simply a choice to express ourselves through voluntary performances. They can be either masculine or feminine. This leads to a misunderstanding of Butler's work that gender comes down to a simple choice that can be invalidated by choosing to go against dominant gender norms.²⁷ Although, Butler does question gender as a natural part of our nature, she also emphasizes that one needs gender norms in order to be defined and recognized as a human being.²⁸ Butler adds that in order to live a fulfilling life people need and seek the stability that the coherent gender roles offer. Furthermore, attacks on transgender persons reveal that conforming to gender norms is not only preferable but also necessary for one's survival.²⁹ Thus, the idea of a fixed gender identity is still very necessary in order to live life.³⁰

Gender binary

Gender can also be understood in the terms of a regulatory mechanism that dictates two gender units, masculinity and femininity, thus establishing a gender binary. Gender binary is a division between male and female that is hegemonic as it imposes a restrictive perception of gender that appears to be natural.³¹ In reality, binary is not natural but is simply a fiction that upholds unequal power relationship where masculine and heterosexual pertain dominance.³² Since the gender binary imposes a view on gender as a division between masculine and feminine, it does automatically open for various inconsistencies when the established gender order is not followed. The hegemonic and restrictive discourse on gender binary, thus, also makes possible

²⁵ Butler, 1990, p 25.

²⁶ Butler, 1990, p 10.

²⁷ Gauntlett, David. *Media, Gender and Identity. [Elektronisk Resurs] : An Introduction*. London ; New York : Routledge, 2008., 2008. p 155-158.

²⁸ Butler, Judith. 2004. *Undoing gender*. New York: Routledge. p 32.

²⁹ Butler, 2004, p 8, p 34.

³⁰ Butler, 2004, p 39.

³¹ Butler, 2004, p 42-43.

³² Butler, 1990, p 33.

a disruption against that same hegemony.³³ Butler also adds that an important power regime within which gender norms are reproduced is the hegemony of heterosexuality.³⁴

The heterosexual matrix

The heterosexual matrix is a term coined by Butler that can be understood as a compulsory heterosexuality prevalent in the society that delegitimizes any opposition.³⁵ Within the heterosexual matrix, compulsory heterosexuality imposes binary between masculinity and femininity achieved through the establishment of attraction to the opposite gender.³⁶ The heterosexual matrix promotes an illusionary unity and rationality between one's sex, gender and desire.³⁷ A gender that does not follow the sex ascribed at birth and a desire that does not conform to one's sex or gender is not recognized. Desires and subjects outside the heterosexual matrix are thus automatically rendered as unreal since they exist outside it.³⁸ In this essay I refer to persons who are outside heterosexual matrix as queer.

To be rendered unreal is also related to the concept of kinship, as Butler argues that kinship outside heterosexual relationships is not recognized.³⁹ Heterosexual marriage has been an institution that excluded sexuality and kinship of non-heterosexuals.⁴⁰ Family units that are outside the heterosexual matrix are perceived as threatening the existing norms of the culture. In order to preserve gender identity and sexuality that is in accordance with the heterosexual matrix the children need to be conceived and raised in a heterosexual environment that consists of the two opposites: feminine and masculine.⁴¹ In this thesis the concepts of the heterosexual matrix and the gender binary complement and broaden the understanding of gender.

³³ Butler, 2004, p 42 - 43.

³⁴ Butler, 2004, p 53-55.

³⁵ Butler, 1990, p 73, p 71.

³⁶ Butler, 1990, p 22 - 23.

³⁷ Butler, 1990, p 22-23.

³⁸ Butler, 1990, p 17.

³⁹ Butler, 2004, p 114.

⁴⁰ Butler, 2004, p 5.

⁴¹ Butler, 2004, p 118-120.

Doing & undoing gender

Although, Butler provides an extensive discussion of how gender is done and undone, she has yet to introduce concrete measures on how this can be applied empirically.⁴² Thus, a part of my theoretical approach is based on Alexandra Bogren who uses previous research studies, Butler's works being one of them, to provide an example of how gender can be done and undone in newspapers stories.⁴³ The approach used in this thesis is influenced by Bogren's research as described in "Gender and Alcohol: the Swedish press debate". In summary, Bogren provides the guidelines of how Butler's theory on gender and gender binary can be applied empirically; thus, they complement each other. I, now, discuss how Bogren's approach is interpreted and used in this thesis in further detail.

The approach of doing and undoing gender as done by Bogren has been influenced by the above-mentioned concept of gender binary. Newspapers' stories that support a discourse of gender binary *does* gender. This is done by distinguishing gender differences in newspapers' stories and attaching femininity to women and masculinity to men. At the same time Bogren's research reveals that media also *undoes* gender by embracing gender multiplicity and complexity while portraying gender that does not eloquently fit into gender binary. This is achieved by disregarding gender relevance or attaching feminine qualities to males and vice versa.⁴⁴

In this thesis, an inductive approach is applied to reveal media's gender reproduction without predetermined gender categories, thus giving a more comprehensive and less biased results. The results are presented as they are; interpreted as either doing or undoing gender or both. This approach is inspired by Bogren as she aims to find different gender categories that newspapers stories reproduce.⁴⁵ In this way media's presentation of gender comes forward in all its complexity and contradictions. Bogren correctly notes that the assumption that the text either does or undoes gender is false since there might be implicit meanings and limits of undoing gender.⁴⁶ These limits are possible to study by adopting CDA since it captures the subtle and

⁴² Bogren, Alexandra. "Gender and Alcohol: The Swedish Press Debate." *Journal of Gender Studies* 20, no. 2 (June 2011): 155–69. doi:10.1080/09589236.2011.565196. p 157.

⁴³ Bogren, 2011.

⁴⁴ Bogren, 2011, p 158.

⁴⁵ Bogren, 2011, p 155.

⁴⁶ Bogren, 2011, p 166.

the implicit.⁴⁷ Also, by studying how articles do and undo gender, it is possible not only to reveal gender inequality but also take intersectionality into consideration as other factors than gender might be a reason for social inequality pervading the written text.

3. Method

The method used in this thesis's research, is a combination of a qualitative content analysis and a CDA. The goal with content analysis is to find relevant articles and provide a context in which these articles are produced. First, a general survey of the media alcoholism discourse is done, identifying main themes and finding relevant articles. Second, the chosen four articles are analyzed in further detail using CDA. Below, I present each method separately and discuss their strengths and weaknesses, and relationship to each other.

3.1 Qualitative content analysis

The content analysis is based on discussions provided by Göran Bergström and Kristina Boreus in *Textens Mening och Makt* 2012, and by Alan Bryman in *Social Research Methods* 2012. The aim of my content analysis is to conduct a general survey of the discourse regarding alcoholism as produced by the most influential media news sites and find relevant articles. Although, the general survey does not give much analysis, it does reveal existing patterns and main dispositions in media's discourse regarding alcoholism. It provides me with a context within which the results of the CDA can be placed. Additionally, the content analysis will be discussed in relation to previous research covered in chapters "Media Studies" and "Gender in Lithuanian context" of this essay. Teun van Dijk's assertions will also be utilized where it is relevant.

⁴⁷ van Dijk, 1993, p 261, p 276.

Bryman notes that there are several common deficiencies regarding qualitative content analysis. One of them is subjectivity and the others are difficulty of replicability, generalizability and lack of transparency.⁴⁸ To avoid these deficiencies, an important part of content analysis called coding is used. Coding requires a good knowledge of the primary material and the context in which it is produced.⁴⁹ It is an analytical tool that is used in order to measure a certain phenomenon, categorize different topics in the content or supplement other methods.⁵⁰

In my essay coding is used in order to categorize articles into different themes and identifying a relevant subject. By coding different themes, it is revealed what topics are most discussed and what are not.⁵¹ Thus, medias representation of women in relationship to alcoholics can be put in the wider discourse about alcoholism. As Bryman notes, besides themes subjects are coded as well.⁵² In this thesis themes are coded in order to map out the context while only one subject about alcoholics and their partners is chosen in order to find relevant articles. In total 16 articles regarding this subject were found out of which four are analyzed in further detail. It is important to note, that the used approach was inductive since the different themes and subjects were not decided beforehand but identified while going through the articles for the first time. Since content analysis is used to study manifest content, in this essay, it is supplemented by a CDA that is made to study the complexity behind the implicitness in the text.⁵³

3.2 Critical discourse analysis

The method is based on van Dijks research as presented in “Principles of critical discourse analysis”. The purpose of critical discourse analysis is to understand how discourses reproduce unequal power relations in the society. Van Dijk targets the elites in the society by focusing on top-down dominance reproduction rather than bottom-up reception and defiance of that dominance. Therefore, various discourse strategies that help the elite to maintain their position

⁴⁸ Bryman, Alan. 2012. *Social Research Methods. (Elektronisk resurs)* Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2012 p 405-407.

⁴⁹ Bergström, Göran, and Kristina Boréus. 2012. *Textens Mening Och Makt : Metodbok i Samhällsvetenskaplig Text- Och Diskursanalys*. Lund : Studentlitteratur, 2012, p 54-55.

⁵⁰ Bergström, Boreus, 2012, p 87.

⁵¹ Bryman, 2012, p 291, p 293.

⁵² Bryman, 2012, p 297.

⁵³ Bergström, Boreus, 2012, p 81.

of power are discussed. However, he does also say that power is “jointly produced”, meaning, that even those who are dominated can partake in a reproduction of dominance.⁵⁴ Media plays an important part in shaping public opinion and normalizing dominance of the elite.⁵⁵

Van Dijk stresses that analysts of critical discourse must take a sociopolitical stance if they are researching dominance reproduction through a discourse, since a neutral researcher’s position might contribute to ignoring and normalizing unequal power relations.⁵⁶ Thus, in this essay, the position is taken in favor of groups who are marginalized by media such as women, alcoholic men and queer. In addition, van Dijk stresses that power elites have the easiest access to a discourse.⁵⁷ Taking into consideration the context of Lithuania in this essay, the media elite is regarded as the most powerful to manipulate the public in a certain direction. Media in general has the authority to produce and disseminate knowledge in the society and thus affects the attitudes of the masses.⁵⁸ Van Dijk uses the term hegemony to show how power is accepted by those who are dominated. In accordance with hegemony people out of their own free will act in the best interests of the most powerful elites.⁵⁹ Van Dijk discusses extensively social cognition in order to explain this phenomenon, explaining that people’s attitudes, ideologies, norms and values in society are all manipulated in order to serve the elites.⁶⁰

Van Dijk admits one weakness in his approach: a rather simplistic view of power. He focuses on the elites, thus missing more subtle reproductions of dominance.⁶¹ According to van Dijk searching for subtleties in texts also reveals unequal power relations.⁶² Furthermore, some texts such as letters to the editor can challenge the established dominance.⁶³ However, media holds the ultimate power in choosing what articles to publish which results in sustaining certain attitudes in the society. Therefore, instead of focusing on analyzing articles produced only by professionals, I will also analyze articles by ordinary readers through letters to the editor. In this way, I seek to analyze the reproduction of dominant gender perceptions from both a bottom-

⁵⁴ van Dijk, 1993, p 249-250.

⁵⁵ van Dijk, 1993, p 268.

⁵⁶ van Dijk, 1993, p 252-253.

⁵⁷ van Dijk, 1993, p 255.

⁵⁸ van Dijk, 1993, p 258.

⁵⁹ van Dijk, 1993 p 255.

⁶⁰ van Dijk, 1993, p 280.

⁶¹ van Dijk, 1993, p 280.

⁶² van Dijk, 1993, p 261.

⁶³ van Dijk, 1993 p 256.

up and a top-down perspective. Although media is regarded as a power elite responsible for the production of knowledge regardless of who produces the concrete texts, it is still relevant to include text produced by ordinary persons, particularly women, as they are in general regarded as a discriminated group in the society. Thus, the articles written by them might reproduce dominance that work against their own interests. In this way I aim to prove what dominance is jointly produced and not simply from top-down power imposition.

Van Dijk presents analytical tools to study discourse reproduction of dominance applicable on a concrete text. These tools represent discourse structures that are aimed specifically to establish “othering” by reproducing the elites’ dominance and marginalizing the chosen “other”.⁶⁴ In this thesis, the targets of such dominance are queer, alcoholic men and women. Van Dijk notes that there are many discourse structures used in order to reproduce dominance and they are all dependent on the text studied. Content being the first structure supported by six others: argumentation, rhetorical figures, lexical style, storytelling, structural emphasis of negative actions and quoting.⁶⁵ In the analysis each structure is discussed in general and italicized, making it easier for the reader to follow. Below these structures are discussed in further detail.

Applying the method, the content of an article in general will be studied followed by relevant structures. The rhetorical structure consists of identifying *rhetorical figures* and how they affect the text. The lexical style is analyzed by looking at chosen wordings in “othering”. Van Dijk defines *argumentation* as negative evaluation in “othering”,⁶⁶ however I will look for the purpose behind the text and identify common logical fallacies. *Storytelling* as defined by van Dijk emphasizes retellings as personally experienced⁶⁷ but, in my analysis, general understanding of storytelling will be discussed. *Structural emphasis of negative actions* is studied by focusing on the level of detail used in the stories as is suggested by van Dijk.⁶⁸ *Quoting* will also be studied and its effects on the text.⁶⁹ In addition to these, other structures

⁶⁴ van Dijk, 1993 p 264.

⁶⁵ van Dijk, 1993, p 264 - 265.

⁶⁶ van Dijk, 1993, p 264.

⁶⁷ van Dijk, 1993, p 264.

⁶⁸ van Dijk, 1993, p 264, p 275.

⁶⁹ van Dijk, 1993, p 264.

relevant for this thesis and discussed by van Dijk are: implicitness, vagueness, blaming the victim, perspective, anecdotes, categorizing, positioning, anecdotes and discrediting.⁷⁰

Van Dijk adds that each analysis must start with identifying the context of the written text in order to place it within a broader discourse.⁷¹ One-way power positions are held is through the control of the context. In other words, those in power positions are the ones who can decide what is to be produced in the discourse. Consequently, those who are marginalized are less likely to be seen and heard since they do not have the same access to the discourse as the elite does.⁷² Therefore, content analysis is necessary to get a general idea of what is said within the media discourse on alcoholism in Lithuania. The previous research discussed in the next chapter, also aids in understanding the context.

⁷⁰ van Dijk, 1993.

⁷¹ van Dijk, 1993, p 264, p 270.

⁷² van Dijk ,1993, p 260.

4. Literature Review and Previous Research

This chapter is divided into four different parts: media studies, gender studies in relation to alcohol, gender in Lithuanian context and previous research on codependency. These parts cover the most important fields within this research and give a background for understanding the issues. When deemed relevant, the previous research is used both in qualitative content analysis and CDA. The main search engines used were LUBsearch, Google Scholar and eLABa (Lithuanian academic electronic library). Key concepts used in search were: *media studies*, *media & gender*, *alcoholism & gender Lithuania & gender* and *codependency & gender*. Below I present the results I found and discuss them in relation to my thesis.

4.1 Media Studies

Deimantas Jastramskis, seeks to identify how political system has impacted media in Lithuania. He argues that after the Soviet collapse many libertarian-commercial elements of media developed but due to the economic crisis and a small media market it could not develop freely. Many newspapers in Lithuania are dependent on the elites' financial support and are owned by a few individuals. Although, formally and legally the state's influence on media is very limited this does not encompass politically active persons who can own and be editors of newspapers. He concludes that Lithuania media system reflects polarized-pluralist model, meaning that close attention to politicians' activities is paid.⁷³ Ainius Lasas adds that media elites in Lithuania can also be corrupt subjects on their own, and not necessarily corrupted by others. Moreover, he discusses the sharp contrast between foreign owned private internet media and local media. According to him foreign-owned private internet media has much higher standards of professionalism as it operates outside the clientelism culture prevalent in the country.⁷⁴

⁷³ Jastramskis, Deimantas. "Lietuvos Žiniasklaidos Sistemos Modelio Bruožai." *Informacijos Mokslai / Information Sciences* 55 (March 2011): 52–70.

⁷⁴ Lasas, 2017, p 2, p 15.

Irina Matonyte in turn argues that a decline of the political press party parallelism that started in the second half of the 1990s has led to a partisan and unprofessional journalism. Media seeks to establish itself as the only trustworthy authority by closely following and condemning politicians' actions. On paper, mass media in Lithuania is politically independent due to many legal restrictions that make state intervention impossible. However, the mass media market does resemble an oligopoly. Media elites have the most influence to sway the public by producing news that serve their own business interests, often putting politicians in the worst possible light. It implicitly accuses the population of being incapable to elect competent politicians. In conclusion, media in Lithuania could be described as self-serving and working against strengthening civil society.⁷⁵

Since I perform a media study it is relevant to know the context in which media operates. These findings are used in qualitative content analysis as they give further explanations for media representations of alcoholism.

4.2 Previous research: gender studies related to alcohol

Most of the previous research on gender in relation to alcoholism compares women's and men's drinking. These comparisons reveal some of the existing gender stereotypes that media reproduces. Since previous research is dominated by studies about drinking women, the decision was made to study non-drinking women in a relationship with alcoholic man and thus explore if media reproduces same stereotypes. In this section I present the research that is used in my thesis, specifically in CDA.

Bogren in cooperation with Elinor Månsson discuss how social scientists have previously linked health issues such as alcoholism with the concept of risk. The concept of risk explores whether the issue of alcoholism is portrayed as a societal or personal responsibility, or both. Furthermore, they discuss the concept of "wellbeing" as a much more complex project than

⁷⁵ Matonyte, 2009.

simply staying healthy since, social aspects and outer appearance count as a part of wellbeing. Therefore, how alcohol consumption is regarded depends on if the individual is rich or poor and perceived as beautiful or ugly. Bogren and Månsson argue that both negative and positive images of gender eventually have the same effects: reproducing existing gender stereotypes.⁷⁶

Additionally, Bogren has done another research about newspaper stories in the Swedish media discourse regarding alcohol and psychotropics. The results show that gender differences are emphasized by associating femininity with self-sacrificing motherhood and masculinity with violence. In this way good characters in media are constructed as the ones that conform to their perceived gender roles. Finally, heteronormativity plays a part in this role as well since self-sacrificial mothers always assume a position of heterosexuality.⁷⁷ Rolando, S., G. Taddeo, and F. Beccaria in turn study how drinking women are portrayed as being sexually promiscuous. A double standard is present in the media as women who drink are judged more harshly than men because they deviate from the traditional gender roles, specifically their roles as mothers. Therefore, pregnant drinking women and women in general tend to get more attention from the state and media than men or expectant fathers.⁷⁸

4.3 Gender in the Lithuanian Context

Previous research that is presented here is used in the qualitative content analysis, but first a general account about women's situation in Lithuania by Alina Zvinkliene is discussed.

Women's emancipation in Lithuania was connected to the fight for independence, first from the tsarist Russia and later from the Soviet Union. Therefore, politically active women had to compromise with the national movement leaders in order to get their rights realised. This stressed their roles as protectors of nation and making them more conservative than their Western counterparts. For their efforts to establish national independence women were granted

⁷⁶ Bogren, A., E. Månsson. "Health, Risk, and Pleasure: The Formation of Gendered Discourses on Women's Alcohol Consumption." *Addiction Research and Theory*, no. 1 (2014): 27.

⁷⁷ "Symbolic Gender Boundaries in News Discourse on Psychotropics Use and Drinking: An Analysis of the Swedish Press Debate 2000–2009." *NORA*, no. 1 (2013): 57.

⁷⁸ Rolando, S., G. Taddeo, and F. Beccaria. "New Media and Old Stereotypes. Images and Discourses about Drunk Women and Men on YouTube." *Journal of Gender Studies* 25, no. 5 (October 2016): 492–506.

suffrage in 1918.⁷⁹ During the Soviet period women's emancipation stagnated. Although, they could participate in public sphere, they did not necessarily enjoy their rights in practise. Seeking to erase consequences of Soviet history after its collapse, strong attitudes of nationalism and anti-feminism increased in the country. Women were encouraged to go back to the private sphere and take care of the family, in that way ensuring the survival of the nation. During the democratisation process, in the 1990s, the civil society developed, and women activists lifted up women's issues. In addition, the ambition to become a member of the EU caused gender mainstreaming.⁸⁰

This ambition together with activism lay the groundwork for the first anti-discrimination laws and the first women's party in the Baltic region. Furthermore, Lithuania was one of the first post-Soviet republics to establish gender studies as a respectable academic discipline. Women in high positions such as the Lithuanian president Grybauskaitė who assumed power in 2009 prove women's representation in politics. However, this does not reflect the parliament of which the vast majority are men, thus proving the prevalence of patriarchy.⁸¹ This is still accurate taking into consideration the elections of 2016.

Lilija Kublickienė stresses the difference between *de jure* and *de facto* gender equality maintaining that the implemented laws and propagated norms do not reflect the reality as patriarchy and gender stereotypes remain strong in Lithuania. The tendency among former Soviet republics is to only formally implement antidiscriminatory laws and mechanisms. The author notes that gender equality develops in relation to democratization processes, thus Lithuania as a relatively young democracy needs more time to achieve politics that actively promote gender equality.⁸² Dovaine Buschmann adds how Catholic beliefs and right-wing organizations work together in the production of an anti-genderist discourse. The author concludes that in anti-genderist discourse gender politics are perceived as imposed by the EU upon traditional member states. For many Lithuanians, it equates to communism as both are

⁷⁹ Žvinklienė, Alina. "Lyčių Atotrūkis Ir Patriarchato Raiška Baltijos Valstybėse. Lietuvos Ypatumai." *Sociologija: Mintis Ir Veiksmas* 2009, no. 1 (July 2009): 99–118.

⁸⁰ Žvinklienė, 2009.

⁸¹ Žvinklienė, 2009.

⁸² Kublickienė, Lilija. "Lygios Moterų Ir Vyrų Galimybės Pasaulyje, Europos Sąjungoje Ir Lietuvoje." *Informacijos Mokslai / Information Sciences* 80 (October 2017): p 11-12.

seen as instruments to change the society by dismantling its traditions and promoting secularism.⁸³

Iлона Tamutienė and Laura Sinkevičiūtė conducted an interview of experts regarding gender in Lithuania. These experts identify the lack of professionalism among journalists as a reason for why gender issues are not taken seriously. Moreover, the politicians do not work in achieving *de facto* gender equality.⁸⁴ Instead discussions regarding gender equality are brushed off and confused with feminism or rights of sexual minorities.⁸⁵ The prevalent patriarchy in the society makes it impossible to address men's issues such as higher criminality, alcohol consumption and suicide rates.⁸⁶ These barriers stand in the way of achieving gender equality.

4.4 Previous Research on Codependency

Codependency as defined in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* encompasses people who develop a high level of dependency on those persons who have alcohol abuse problems. It has been particularly associated with Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon who adapt this term in order to recover from alcoholism. It is not an accepted disorder in psychiatry, although psychological literature discusses this “diagnosis” extensively; emphasizing that codependency might develop in childhood and identifying typical characteristics of people who have codependency.⁸⁷ For the purpose of my research I use the definition of codependency regarding partners of alcoholics. The previous research on codependency is included in my essay because it is frequently mentioned in the primary material. The authors discussed below problematize this approach and will be used in CDA, complementing the theoretical approach of doing and undoing gender.

⁸³ Buschmann, Dovainė. “Worse than Communism? Discursive Anti-Gender Mobilizations in Lithuania.” *Informacijos Mokslai / Information Sciences* 80 (October 2017): 31–49.

⁸⁴ Tamutiene, Iлона, and Sinkevičiūtė Laura. “Lyčių Lygybės Normos Sklaidos Patirtys Lietuvoje.” *Political Science Almanac / Politikos Mokslu Almanachas*, no. 17 (June 2015): 9–31. doi:10.7220/2335-7185.17.1. p 18, p 20.

⁸⁵ Tamutiene, Sinkevičiūtė, 2015, p 18-19.

⁸⁶ Tamutiene, Sinkevičiūtė, 2015, p 22, p 25.

⁸⁷ *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Codependency," <https://academic-eb-com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/levels/collegiate/article/codependency/396004>. Accessed 2018 12 11.

K.J. Miller questions the validity of the concept since it developed on impressionistic assertions of people who experienced alcoholism and the dysfunctions associated with it first-hand. The author points out that a lot of literature was written by Al Anon members whose stories are personal and subjective. Personal stories and generalizations, he argues, are not enough if we choose to treat codependency as a sickness since scientific criteria must be met. Many authors who helped to popularize this term throughout the 1980s offered an all-inclusive definition thus anyone could recognize himself/herself upon reading about it. Generalizations take the power from the victim to define themselves.⁸⁸

He emphasizes that by using the term we are pathologizing *women's* normal reaction to their alcoholic spouse's behaviour, thus further oppressing those who already are in a marginalized position. In other words, by assuming that a spouse of an alcoholic is also a sick enabler of the addict we are blaming the victim.⁸⁹ Miller's critique was published in the 1990s however I deem it is still relevant to date, due to the popularity of this term even though it is not recognized as a mental disorder by American Psychiatric Association – APA.

Kimberly A Calderwood and Anne Rajesparam provide an extensive introduction on feminist critique regarding the concept. Codependency developed and was most often associated with wives of alcoholics disregarding other possible enabling forces both inside the family (other family members) and outside of it (in society in general). Also, it ignores that norms in society pathologizing women's behaviour that is culturally indoctrinated. On a more positive note, the concept does give women who share the same experience a sense of unity. Since the term is so broad it can be adapted to suit individual purposes. However, the term does label and stigmatize women's issues. Although the aim of codependency is to free women and emphasize their autonomy, if applied automatically it does imply that women are not free and are ruled by the alcoholic's behaviour. As discussed above, blaming the victim approach releases men from the responsibility of their own actions.⁹⁰

Calderwood and Rajesparam argue that the concept of co-dependency was formed having a traditional family model in mind and is outdated today. For instance, same sex family units are becoming more common and also women in general are more liberated in Western parts of the

⁸⁸ Miller, K.J. "The Co-Dependency Concept: Does It Offer a Solution for the Spouses of Alcoholics?" *Journal Of Substance Abuse Treatment* 11, no. 4 (July 1994): 339–45.

⁸⁹ Miller, 1994.

⁹⁰ Calderwood, Kimberly A., and Anne Rajesparam. "A Critique of the Codependency Concept Considering the Best Interests of the Child." *Families in Society: Journal of Contemporary Social Services* 95, no. 3 (July 2014): 171–78. doi:10.1606/1044-3894.2014.95.22

world, whereas in the past they could not leave their husband for economical, religious, or social reasons which in turn could be confused with codependency. Not only gender roles, religious reasons but also social norms of being supportive in your relationships make it difficult to leave a partner who is sick (alcoholic). The codependency concept establishes that self-sacrifice in relationships is unhealthy, this in turn is not a universal truth as women in general sacrifice all the time for the sake of the children. Indeed, the development of the term also lacks consideration of the best interest of the child. The writers suggest that there are alternative options to treatments for people who have relationships with addicts besides using the term of codependency. They also stress that professionals working with this group of people should know the limitations of the term and be careful to use it, avoiding generalizations and allowing people to reject this term without being blamed for denial.⁹¹

The feminist critique presented above focuses on Western liberated women and not on societies that preserve more traditional gender roles in other parts of the world, as is the case with my own research on Lithuania. In the next section this specific context is discussed by applying a qualitative content analysis.

⁹¹ Calderwood, Rajesparam, 2014.

5. Analysis

5.1 Qualitative content analysis

One purpose of the content analysis is to provide a context. As van Dijk argues the context is controlled by a dominant group who get to decide time, place and participants, thus some voices are heard more than the others.⁹² Bryman points out that by using content analysis significant actors in the context of mass media can be identified. At the same time as medias representation of a phenomenon such as alcoholism is studied.⁹³ Another purpose with content analysis in this essay is a selection of relevant articles which is done by choosing a subject about alcoholics and their partners.

As aforementioned in order to perform a general survey, the key search word used is *alcoholism* in the news stories, published between October 2016 and October 2018, by the three most popular digital news portals: *lrytas*, *15min* and *delfi*. Since the current government's time in office, their alcohol reforms have resulted in an extensive media coverage. *Delfi* search gave 77 articles in total while *15min* and *lrytas* gave 151 and 217 respectively. To map out the context, the articles are then categorized into themes based on reading headlines or introductions in these news articles. Seven themes were identified: celebrities, crimes, foreign countries, irrelevant, health, personal stories and politics. Below is the table that shows these categories.

⁹² van Dijk, 1993, p 260.

⁹³ Bryman, 2012, p 295, p 293.

	DELFI (77)	15MIN (151)	LRYTAS (217)
Celebrities	4	12	20
Crimes	2	15	13
Foreign countries	2	15	8
Health	20	48	34
Irrelevant ⁹⁴	3	11	17
Personal Stories	9	15	45
Politics	37	35	80

The vast majority of the articles circulating belong to the theme of health and politics respectively. This reflects media's reaction to various prohibitions implemented by the new government. As Jastramskis notes the relationship between political and media systems in Lithuania is polarized pluralist. This means that media closely follows everything politicians do.⁹⁵

Furthermore, while going through the articles the re-occurrent disposition could be identified.⁹⁶ The headlines and introductions reveal that government's policies regarding alcohol consumption are regarded critically. Although, these policies restrict alcohol consumption and thus promote public health, media portray them as futile and insufficient. In articles categorized under the theme of health assertions by medics, psychologists or other experts are used in order to show how ineffective these restrictions are in fighting alcoholism. In this way, media conveys a message that only selected scientists are sanctioned to produce knowledge.

This in turn implies that politicians do not have sanction to produce it although they have the authority to make all of the decisions. They are portrayed as powerful but incompetent. Several articles in all of the three news portals under the theme of politics regard health minister's attempts to restrict alcohol consumption futile, at the same time discrediting his background

⁹⁴ Alcoholism and alcohol are not mentioned.

⁹⁵ Jastramaskis, 2011, p 68.

⁹⁶ Bryman, 2012, p 298.

and academic achievements as a psychiatrist and a doctorate in biomedicine. Matonyte suggests that media in Lithuania is partisan in regard to politicians. Instead of producing critical political analysis media often portrays politicians in the worst possible light. This also implies that people who democratically elect these politicians are at fault too. Media aims to portray itself as the only authority of knowledge production and discredit politicians' assertions.⁹⁷

Van Dijk uses Gramsci's concept of hegemony to explain how values in society are established by various forces. Behind these forces lurk the ruling elites who establish values that work against public interest but are perceived as normal and natural by the masses.⁹⁸ Thus commercialized media in Lithuania could be perceived as media elite on its own. An important factor that explains media's interests is commercialism. Several media articles take up how alcoholism restrictions will damage their businesses and cause re-introduction of strong home-made alcohol culture instead. Although these arguments are logical and valid, they are nonetheless in accordance to business interests. Private companies due to restrictions are not able to advertise alcohol any longer, which in turn causes media to lose profits necessary for its survival. Lasas confirms that mass media elites in Lithuania such as those behind *lrytas* are driven by their own economic interests and can abuse their power in order to gain profit. While private foreign-owned internet media such as *delfi* and *15min* in turn are less susceptible to be influenced by local political or economic pressures and thus increases the levels of professionalism.⁹⁹

The negative portrayal of alcohol prohibitions affects the poorest and the most vulnerable in society. It is WHO suggestions that direct alcohol prohibitions and pricing is the most effective way in combating alcoholism among socially vulnerable, since they do not generally have the resources to continue with their consumption.¹⁰⁰ By discrediting politicians' alcohol reforms, media shapes the perception of reality where these reforms are perceived as unfair. In this way media works against the improvement of public health.

⁹⁷ Matonyte, 2009, p 175 - 176.

⁹⁸ Van Dijk, 1993, p 255.

⁹⁹ Lasas, 2017, p13, p15 p 3.

¹⁰⁰ WHO, 2018, p 130.

Above I argue how media can have a negative effect on the best interests of public health. Let us now look how often women in relationship with alcoholics are portrayed. As is shown on the table the third most popular theme is “personal stories”, the majority of which, 45, are published on *Irytas*. Articles regarding this theme cover both men’s and women’s experience of alcoholism but stories of child abuse caused by alcoholic parents are the most frequent. Hence, beside politicians and various health experts, the voices that are most heard are the ones of the abused. Van Dijk argues that voices that do not hold power in the society or do not fit the perception of the reality that is propagated are often excluded.¹⁰¹

In order to find articles that portray women in relationship with alcoholic men, the subject about alcoholics and their partners is chosen. In total 16 articles regarding this subject, out of which six were letters to the editor, were found. In my research I focus on women in relationships with alcoholic men because only one story included a non-alcoholic man in relationship with an alcoholic woman.¹⁰² This can be connected to, as Kublickiene notes, patriarchal stereotypes prevailing in the country.¹⁰³ Tamutiene and Sinkeviciute argue that the patriarchy in Lithuania disallows to discuss men’s issues and portray them as weak. This is partly due to lack of professional journalism that could produce text promoting gender equality.¹⁰⁴ The majority of articles regarding media’s representation of alcoholism show that men are rarely put in a weak position. Comparing to how many articles regarding alcoholism circulate in the media, only one article portrays men as codependent and relatively few give a voice to people behind alcoholics. For this reason, in this essay the focus lays on these voices.

5.2 Critical discourse analysis

The aim of my thesis is not to judge people behind the content of these articles, thus their names are not used in the analysis. The focus lies on the text as a part of a wider discourse reproducing unequal power relations, specifically by doing and undoing gender. In the analysis relevant

¹⁰¹ van Dijk, 1993, p 260.

¹⁰² *Irytas* 28 of July 2018.

¹⁰³ Kublickiene, 2017, p 12.

¹⁰⁴ Tamutiene, Sinkeviciute, 2015, p 22, p 25, p18.

discourse structures as discussed by van Dijk are italicized and gender perspective of doing and undoing gender as well as relevant previous research are applied continuously. First two articles written by the journalists are analyzed, later followed by two letters to the editor written from the perspective of women in relationship with alcoholic men.

“How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”¹⁰⁵

This is an article published on Delfi and is written by a journalist. The *content* is based on an interview of an expert regarding addictions who is both a professor and a psychologist. While the heading aims to capture that women play part in men’s drinking, the picture attached to it is of a person, possibly a man, resting his head on the table with alcohol bottles around. The first paragraph consists of two sentences and elaborates on the heading: “with their unacceptable behaviour” women can “make men drown further in their addiction”¹⁰⁶. The first paragraph in an article sets a tone for the rest of the story and in this case presents the main *argument*: women’s behaviour causes men’s drinking.¹⁰⁷

The article is told from the *perspective* of an expert who gathered the expertise through counselling countless of women affected by alcoholics in their lives. The expert’s assertions are put in quotemarks and are always followed by a reference that emphasizes that expertise such as “psychologist”, “professor” or simply “prof”, followed by the name, with one exception, when the neutral reference “Delfi interlocutress” is used.¹⁰⁸ Repeated references to her expertise are part of an ethos argument since it appeals to authority. However, *rethorical figures* such as metaphors are almost missing, indicating that the language is more formal.¹⁰⁹

The lexical style in this article regarding women’s behaviour uses active verbs such as women “harm” and “force” albeit unknowingly men drink.¹¹⁰ The expert gives an example of the behaviour that women unknowingly do that harms men in a long run “when a wife gets a call from her neighbours about her husband laying drunk in the hall, taking her kids, she rushes home, gets her husband inside the apartment, undresses him, lays him on the bed and washes

¹⁰⁵ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹⁰⁶ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹⁰⁷ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹⁰⁸ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹⁰⁹ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹¹⁰ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

his clothes”¹¹¹. To sum up the interviewee encourages women to stop shielding men from the consequences of their actions by *not* taking care of them while they are drunk, unless these men are endangering themselves. According to the expert, women need to distance themselves from their husbands and focus on their own lives since only by doing so can they help their sick spouses. This contributes to *blaming the victim* since women are held responsible for enabling drinking.¹¹²

Applying the approach to gender described by Butler I look at gender as a performance.¹¹³ It can be noted that the behaviour described above, in relation to women, is typically associated with caregiving. By adopting Miller, it could be argued that women’s gender behaviour is pathologized since they are blamed for being good caregivers. Instead women are encouraged to be more independent and thus adopt masculine qualities. As a result, gender is undone,¹¹⁴ however undoing gender is limited since women’s independence is limited as well.

“Divorce is not recommended” is a heading of a paragraph that is marked in bold and is discussed by the expert.¹¹⁵ The interviewee reveals that she never recommends a divorce for her clients. She mentions how difficult it is for women to leave their husbands; many of whom have double personalities, one while sober and one while drunk. However, she states that leaving dangerous men or men who have hit a rock bottom is easier. Hereby the distinction between two types of alcoholics is made, evaluating that one is easier to leave than the other. The expert does say that if women threaten their husband to leave they should do so. Saying and meaning it however, requires a lot of self-discipline. Consequently, women who do not live up to their threats are *implied* to be undisciplined.¹¹⁶

The interviewee also appeals to emotion by including children as a reason for not recommending a divorce. Stating that “Even abused children need their parents” and *implying* that a husband and a wife is the ultimate model that secures a child’s happiness even when the said child is harmed by a parent’s behaviour. It does also *imply* that women should be ready to

¹¹¹ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹¹² My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹¹³ Butler, 1990, p 25.

¹¹⁴ Bogren, 2011, p 158.

¹¹⁵ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹¹⁶ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

sacrifice for the sake of their children by staying with alcoholic men.¹¹⁷ This is a normative argument as it supports preservation of the traditional family unit instead of emphasizing that each situation involving children should be evaluated in its own right. Calderwood and Rajesparam argue that codependency approach if adapted often excludes the best interest of the child. In this case however, the best interest of the child is identified as having both parents.

Moreover, the interviewee uses inductive reasoning as she generalises and thus *categorizes* all women married to alcoholics. For instance, she states that there is an “universal characteristic” that separates wives of alcoholics from all the other wives.¹¹⁸ Generalising ascribes targeted women a diagnosis of codependency. Indeed, the expert continues to discuss how often she faces the denial of being codependent from her clients. By generalization she in turn denies her clients the freedom to choose not to be identified as codependent, thus *discrediting* their opinion. In the article, an *anecdote* is used in order to exemplify how irrationally the codependent women might think, consequently ridiculing them.¹¹⁹ It can be added that Miller’s assertions about codependency not recognizing people’s right to reject this approach are confirmed in this article.¹²⁰ The article concludes with the expert recommending Al-Anon as a suitable solution for the targeted women’s issues. The journalist of the article states facts about Al-Anon being active in 115 countries *implying* that since organization is widespread it is also valid.¹²¹ The adoption of codependency approach is found in several other articles, however women in these articles are not singled out like in this one.¹²²

Frequent wording of a “husband” and a “wife” used in the text is in accordance with a traditional heterosexual relationship.¹²³ Butler emphasizes existing coherence between a presumed gender identity and sexual desire.¹²⁴ The text reflects this coherence by describing that women are in a marital relationship with the opposite sex; thus confirming gender binary governed by compulsory heterosexuality.¹²⁵ Furthermore, heterosexual kinship is another way to deny the

¹¹⁷ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹¹⁸ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹¹⁹ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹²⁰ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*; Miller, 1994, p 342.

¹²¹ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹²² *Lrytas* 2 July 2018, *delfi* 5 March 2018, *lrytas* 10 February 2017, *lrytas* 28 July 2018, *15min* 7 January 2018.

¹²³ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*.

¹²⁴ Butler, 1990, p 23, p 31.

¹²⁵ My translation: “How women, unknowingly, support men’s drinking”. *Delfi*; Butler, 1990, p 23.

existence of queer since their familial bonds are unrecognized.¹²⁶ Considering that codependency in the primary material is portrayed as an issue that can only exist within traditional heterosexual families it denies the existence of queer. In a nutshell, depiction of codependency between a wife and a husband conforms with the heterosexual matrix, and thus does gender.

Overall, the article conveys a message that women are accountable for their husbands' behaviour; it is their actions or inaction that influences men's drinking. Expressions such as "throw out of the house" reveal that women also have the power to throw the man out of their home.¹²⁷ This *storytelling* puts women in the position of a mother responsible for the home environment and in control of the man-child. In this story there are two kinds of mothers; the ones that spoil their children by always taking care of them and the ones that are stricter and let their man-child face consequences. This storytelling is also a *hyperbole* as it exaggerates women's power and minimizes men's.¹²⁸ Although, gender is undone by encouraging women to be more independent the undoing of gender is limited because women retain their roles as mothers albeit strict ones.

"Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie"¹²⁹

This article was published both on delfi as well as 15min but the one analysed is taken from 15min. The content is based on a radio talk show from LRT.lt that invited two guests for a discussion about alcoholism and codependency: one psychologist who also is a psychotherapist and one member of Al Anon. Assertions made by a professional who is referred to either by name or profession are complemented by a personal example of an Al-Anon member. Consequently, codependency approach is propagated as the right strategy to manage individual situations related to alcoholism. The picture chosen for this article portrays a man drinking,

¹²⁶ Butler, 2004, p 114.

¹²⁷ My translation: "How women, unknowingly, support mens drinking". *Delfi*

¹²⁸ My translation: "How women, unknowingly, support mens drinking". *Delfi*.

¹²⁹ My translation: "Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie". *15min*.

only half-face visible and a blurred figure of a woman kneeling in the corner and trying to protect her front with both hands. Hence the message is: violence against women in an environment affected by alcoholism, reinforcing gender stereotypes by portraying the man as a possible abuser and the woman as a possibly abused.¹³⁰

The disposition is standard for digital articles, using bold types, highlighting, quoting, varying the length of sentences, all of which makes the reading experience easier. Few *metaphors* are used as well to make text more relatable to the reader. However, most words are precise, making the language the same. The explicit main *argument* lies in the first paragraph, where the expert underlines that by lying people shield alcoholics from the consequences, but overall the text is not argumentatively structured. The aim is to inform the reader about codependency and how it can affect one's life. Therefore, *the implicit part of the argument* is that only by adopting codependency people can make the authentic choices suitable for their situation.¹³¹

At the beginning of the article, alcoholism in general is discussed followed by codependency. The order supports the assumption that behind every alcoholic there are people who are codependent. *The Lexical style* reveals that "people", "persons" and "relatives" are the chosen words to describe those in alcoholic's surroundings and the alcoholic himself/herself.¹³² The same pattern continues throughout the text, avoiding references that confirm heterosexual marriage.¹³³ Therefore, the generalization that alcoholism and codependency can only happen to a married heterosexual couple is not reproduced. Gender can be interpreted as undone because it is deemed irrelevant.¹³⁴ In addition, there are a few other articles that do not generalize women by choosing to talk about relatives in general.¹³⁵

However, the traditional codependency *storytelling* is reproduced in other ways. For one thing the quoted Al-Anon member is a wife of a former alcoholic. Her shared story functions as a complementary example for the expert's statements that reproduces stereotypes of a female codependent and a male alcoholic. The interviewed member tells how she started seeking help

¹³⁰ Bogren, 2011, p 163.

¹³¹ My translation: "Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie". 15min.

¹³² My translation: "Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie". 15min.

¹³³ My translation: "Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie". 15min.

¹³⁴ Bogren

¹³⁵ 15min 27 December 2017, Delfi 5 March 2018, 15min 7 January 2018.

from Al-Anon only when she started getting psychosomatic symptoms after her husband stopped drinking. The expert in turn confirms that this is a sign of codependency and refers to “literature” to further explain the concept.¹³⁶ This reference is both *vague* and appealing to authority at the same time since what literature is referred to is unclear. *Rhetorical figure* such as allegory of planets is used in order to explain how a codependency relationship works.¹³⁷

While exemplifying the behavior of a typical codependent person the expert adopts a perspective of a woman focusing on an alcoholic man, stating that a woman who has lived with an alcoholic man has not developed skills to live with the same man if he turns sober. This example, though seemingly innocent, does confirm gender stereotypes as it again places the woman in a codependent position and the man as a drinker. Moreover, it *implies* that codependent women can not live with sober men. The Al Anon- member talks about leaving her husband as being an example of that. “Leaving made me realize, that I have problems within myself, with my convictions, and my sick attitude. It turns out that codependency is exactly like addiction and it has to be dealt with, so I started doing that”¹³⁸. This quote confirms that codependency is a sickness just like alcoholism, the author of this quote explains that she had psychosomatic symptoms which adds another dimension to her sickness. It does encourage readers in the similar situation to reflect and adapt codependency approach, but an example of a *personal experience* is insufficient as an argument.¹³⁹

The *level of details* is unequally divided in the article. All we know about her husband is that he is a former alcoholic who stopped drinking because of some incident in front of her parents. On the other hand, she focuses the majority of her speech on her own faults. This is normal since she is telling her personal story, but at the same time it does recreate a *storytelling* where her actions as a codependent are of bigger importance than her husband’s alcoholism. The Al Anon member reveals that she reunited with her husband not because he stopped drinking, on the contrary she left him when he did, but because she realized that she was at fault, too. This creates an effect of *blaming the victim* since more focus lays on the codependent than the alcoholic.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ My translation: “Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie”. 15min.

¹³⁷ My translation: “Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie”. 15min.

¹³⁸ My translation: “Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie”. 15min.

¹³⁹ My translation: “Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie”. 15min.

¹⁴⁰ My translation: “Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie”. 15min

By temporarily separating herself from her husband she could fall in love with him all over again, thus confirming her heterosexual desire which is in this case related to her being a female and feminine. Butler notes that regardless of gender identity compulsory heterosexuality establishes that the opposites always attract.¹⁴¹ Thereby the article is a part of a wider discourse where codependency and alcoholism are treated as a marital problem bound by heterosexual desire. Butler notes that due to the fact that the culture of the country is reproduced and consolidated at the personal level through heterosexual relationships between the feminine and the masculine, alternative family dynamics are not only unrecognized but also perceived as dangerous.¹⁴² Marriage between same sex partners in the public sphere in Lithuania is not recognized, therefore queer are excluded from being considered relatives affected by alcoholism or as alcoholic partners themselves in the media. The article concludes with the expert recommending each person affected by alcoholics to make a free choice based on what is best for them, emphasizing self-care and not being complicit in alcoholic's sickness.¹⁴³

“The wife of a rich businessman: “At home he turns into an animal”¹⁴⁴

This article is a letter to the editor and as the heading indicates it is written from the *perspective* of a rich wife of a businessman. There is a specific section at Lrytas that is dedicated to such letters, that are clearly visible scrolling down the screen. The sensational heading catches reader's attention as it is unclear what the author means by using the *wording* “animal”.¹⁴⁵ The picture attached to the heading sends a message of an unequal power relationship: a young unsmiling but physically attractive woman in a partly see-through dress, and a young man in a business suit who is laughing.¹⁴⁶

The *content* of the story reveals that this woman is abused by her husband but wants to help him as he clearly is an alcoholic. She also emphasizes how people just assume that her situation is not bad since her husband earns a lot of money. She describes him and his behaviour using

¹⁴¹ Butler, 2004, p 79.

¹⁴² Butler, 2004, p 110.

¹⁴³ My translation: “Those who seek to save their relatives from alcoholism are recommended not to lie”. *15min*.

¹⁴⁴ My translation: “The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal”. *Lrytas*.

¹⁴⁵ My translation: “The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal”. *Lrytas*.

¹⁴⁶ My translation: “The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal”. *Lrytas*.

mainly *negatively loaded words* such as “animal” and in relation to that the verb “howl” that further portrays him as inhumane. Animalistic impulsiveness is elaborated as the author calls him “sadist” in relation to him throwing and destroying things around the house. This however *implies* that she in turn is a masochist by staying by his (sadist’s) side. Other times her husband’s impulses are of a different kind, for instance when he is in a good mood she has to endure his amorous attentions. She also uses *quoting* of negative things he said to her which further puts him in a bad light such as “You torture and snarl at me, that’s why I drink”¹⁴⁷. This statement also puts blame on her instead of him, thus contributes to *blaming the victim*.

She describes how her husband likes to show her off to his other business colleagues and their respective wives. By tapping him on the shoulder and commenting on her beauty these colleagues agree upon her husband’s total success. Not only does he have money but also a beautiful wife and in this regard, he is well respected and adored by his peers.¹⁴⁸ Bogren in cooperation with Månsson would add that his wellbeing is ultimate regardless of alcoholism consumption since he is perceived as rich and successful.¹⁴⁹ However, when they are at home he accuses her of unfaithfulness because of all the positive attention she has been getting by his peers and throws her across the room, causing a head injury.¹⁵⁰ Bogren notes that in the Swedish press debate there is a category of articles that associate men’s alcohol consumption with violent behaviour and also links it to heterosexual relationships.¹⁵¹ This article confirms the stereotype of alcoholic man as abusive found also in two other articles.¹⁵²

At the end of the article the author concludes that she doesn’t want to leave a sick husband even though he abused her. “It is ironic, but I have never been with anyone else. He is my first and only one. I have a strong faith in God that helps me to stay by my husband’s side since he is sick. But how can I help him – I don’t know anymore”¹⁵³. By mentioning how she never has been with anybody else sexually and exposing her deep faith in God the author conveys that she is a good woman and therefore does not deserve his treatment. Her heterosexuality is in

¹⁴⁷ My translation: “The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal”. *Lrytas*.

¹⁴⁸ My translation: “The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal”. *Lrytas*.

¹⁴⁹ Bogren, Månsson, 2014.

¹⁵⁰ My translation: “The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal”. *Lrytas*.

¹⁵¹ Bogren, 2011, p 163.

¹⁵² *Lrytas* 23 February 2018, *lrytas* 4 December 2016.

¹⁵³ My translation: “The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal”. *Lrytas*.

accordance with her gender, thus confirming her femininity through her attraction to the opposite sex. In addition, the expressed sexuality is within constraints of the heterosexual marriage and thus is legitimate.¹⁵⁴ She accesses a discourse through *positioning* within heterosexual matrix.¹⁵⁵ 14 out of chosen 16 articles explicitly confirm heterosexual relationships.¹⁵⁶ In this way, media coverage reinforces the stereotype of the codependent heterosexual woman and the alcoholic man.

From all the above, the personal *storytelling* of the article reproduces stereotypical gender conventions. An alpha male who uses his woman as an object, is active and in complete control, enjoys himself sexually and is the family's breadwinner. A female who is also the storyteller is passive, an object of her husband, naive and loving, self-sacrificing, only enduring marital relations and financially dependent upon him. This *storytelling* emphasizes her martyrdom and subordination, portraying her husband as the one having the power in their relationship. Butler discusses that gender as a regulatory norm influences other social regulations such as women's sexual subordination to men. In her view men's sexual behaviour towards women such as sexual harassment reproduces gender as they put women in a subordinate position.¹⁵⁷ In the article the woman is clearly sexually subordinate to her husband as she is described as passive while he takes an active role.

If gender is to be defined as multiple gender performances that can either confirm or contradict gender binary,¹⁵⁸ the inaction described by the author reproduces a femininity that is associated with passivity. However, this is more nuanced as the author also describes her more active and controlling behaviour such as trying to talk to her husband or locking the doors and hiding the keys. He in turn outmanoeuvres her either by silencing her when she tries to talk to him or getting out through the window when she locks him in.¹⁵⁹ This can be viewed as a behaviour of her trying to unsuccessfully constrain an alpha male, but he is untameable and independent. Since communicating directly to her husband did not work, the author decides to send a letter to a broader audience, in this way sharing something that happens behind closed doors to the

¹⁵⁴ Butler, 2004, p 79, p 106.

¹⁵⁵ Van Dijk, 1993, p 256; Butler, 1990.

¹⁵⁶ *Lrytas* 28 July 2018, *Lrytas* 30 March 2018, *Lrytas* 2 April 2018, *Lrytas* 10 February 2017, *Lrytas* 4 November 2016, *15min* 16 February 2017, *Lrytas* 23 February 2018, *delfi* 20 November 2016, *15min* 7 January 2018, *delfi* 8 June 2017, *delfi* 5 March 2018, *Lrytas* 2 July 2018, *Lrytas* 4 December 2016, *Lrytas* 17 October 2016.

¹⁵⁷ Butler, 2004, p 53-54.

¹⁵⁸ Butler, 2004, p 30.

¹⁵⁹ My translation: "The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal". *Lrytas*.

public, thus opening the doors from the private sphere where she otherwise would be invisible. The article itself could therefore be seen also as an active behaviour to make herself visible.

The *content* of the text is well structured and uses *rhetorical figures* in order to adapt a language for a broad audience. The disposition is adjusted for consumers of digital information: short sentences and highlighted headings of paragraphs, that if read in order sum up the story of the whole article. The used rhetorical figures, common for informal text signals that story is personal.¹⁶⁰ Chosen *metaphors* reflect the writer's feelings and perceptions of reality, which in turn affects how readers understand the story, for instance the used metaphor "keep your legs closed"¹⁶¹ is a common phrase that aims to control women's sex lives. Used in relation to the writer of the story it further emphasizes the connection between female goodness and sexual pureness. In previous media research by Rolando et al., it is noted that there are certain double standards in media that judges women for their sexual promiscuity more harshly than men.¹⁶² Also, the rhetorical question "Or am I not a good enough wife"¹⁶³ at the beginning of the article *implies* that she takes responsibility for her husband's actions and that she might be to blame for his behaviour.¹⁶⁴

This letter is not obviously *argumentative*, and the writer's intention must be read between the lines. The overall message is that alcoholism is wrong and wrecks people's lives regardless who it happens to. She is aware that there are two kinds of alcoholics, the ones who lurk around trash cans and the rich ones like her husband.¹⁶⁵ The same tendency to differentiate between rich/functional and poor/asocial can be traced in other articles as well.¹⁶⁶ By telling her story the author shows that alcoholism should never be condoned regardless of socio-economic status. The author of the article as *implied* is financially dependent on her husband, thus possibly her own socio-economic status depends on her staying in the relationship.¹⁶⁷ Not leaving his side regardless of the abuse the author sends a message that leaving a spouse who is sick is not acceptable. Further reinforcing her femininity associated with martyrdom and his masculinity

¹⁶⁰ My translation: "The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal". *Lrytas*.

¹⁶¹ My translation: "The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal". *Lrytas*.

¹⁶² Rolando et al., 2016.

¹⁶³ My translation: "The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal". *Lrytas*.

¹⁶⁴ My translation: "The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal". *Lrytas*.

¹⁶⁵ My translation: "The wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal". *Lrytas*.

¹⁶⁶ *Delfi* 8 June 2017, *lrytas* 2 July 2018, *lrytas* 17 October 2016, *delfi* 20 November 2016, *delfi* 5 March 2018.

¹⁶⁷ My translation "Wife of a rich businessman: At home he turns into an animal". *Lrytas*.

associated with selfishness. Thus, in accordance with Bogren's theory this article is seen as doing gender.¹⁶⁸

“A woman's confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her “¹⁶⁹

The article is published on Lrytas section “lifestyle” and is also a letter to the editor, told from the *perspective* of an abusive woman who was married to an alcoholic husband. The heading is sensational as it turns gender expectations around; in this story it is a woman who is an abuser. The picture attached to the heading is of a crying dishevelled woman sitting on the edge of her bed in a bra and a blurred picture of a half-naked man sleeping behind her, empty bottles laying around. Though the roles are reversed in this article the chosen picture attached to the heading implies that the seemingly distraught woman who is awake is the one suffering the most, while the man is sleeping unaware of the disturbed surroundings.¹⁷⁰

The text does not consist of structured *arguments* as it is a retelling of her personal story and abusive behaviour. However, the violence is explicitly condemned arguing that it did not solve her problems. Although the explicit message is against violence the *storytelling* is such that it does implicitly condone it. In this text *rhetorical figures* are used frequently such as anaphora a repetition of same words at the beginning of each clause, thus making the language more lyrical and personal. They also signal that the reader is persuaded to adopt the writer's perspective, which in this case focuses on how the abuse affected the said abuser and not the abused. Consequently, the woman who abused her husband is the in position to *define the situation* by sharing a story from her point of view in the media.¹⁷¹

The article begins with a description of the couple's physical appearance and the author confessing to be a potential abuser. She has stopped her abuse since divorcing her husband because it caused her physical pain that she still feels. She also emphasizes her figure, stating that she is of average weight and height while her former husband was much bigger than her and she needed a stool to reach his scalp. This description establishes her physical femininity painting a picture that is almost comical; a much smaller woman reaching for a stool to attack

¹⁶⁸ Bogren, 2011, p 166.

¹⁶⁹ My translation: “A woman's confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her”. *Lrytas*.

¹⁷⁰ My translation: “A woman's confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her”. *Lrytas*.

¹⁷¹ My translation: “A woman's confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her”. *Lrytas*.

a much bigger man.¹⁷² Nonetheless, the story undoes gender as it places the woman in the shoes of a physical abuser. Bogren concludes in her research that in the Swedish press alcohol-related violence is always linked to men, thus implicitly putting drinking men under the same category while women are never portrayed as the abusers.¹⁷³ Therefore, this article subverts gender roles, as no other researched articles portray women's violence against men.

The author recounts how her husband would disappear for days leaving all of the household responsibilities and their two small children on her shoulders. The writer distances herself from asocial families by stating that she and her husband always maintained jobs and that the children were taken care of properly even throughout their father's absence. When he came home late, she felt a strong urge to attack him remaining silent while it happened since loud noises would alarm their children. This reveals that she did have some control even in the moments of anger. She continues giving a detailed account of how she beat him but he in turn never reciprocated and just took it silently. She adds how abuse affected her negatively both physically and emotionally, emphasizing that she does not feel proud of being able to physically beat her husband but is only seeking answers as to why she did it.¹⁷⁴

She recalls how her "emotional" mother might have set an example by raising hands against her own father.¹⁷⁵ *Chosen wording* "emotional" lessens the effects of the abuse since it *implies* that abusive behaviour equates to being emotional. However, she does conclude that she does not blame neither her parents nor her former husband, although she could, stating that "he didn't come home on time, he didn't bring money, he didn't take care of the children, he put all the household responsibilities on my shoulders"¹⁷⁶. This quote confirms that the *level of details* is manipulated as she chooses to describe all the ways his irresponsible behaviour affected the family and avoids to explicitly mention that his alcoholism is a sickness.¹⁷⁷

At the end she concludes that she is at fault, elaborating that she married him on her own free will. However, she also describes that she was young and pregnant when she married *implying*

¹⁷² My translation: "A woman's confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her". *Lrytas*.

¹⁷³ Bogren, 2011, p 164.

¹⁷⁴ My translation: "A woman's confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her". *Lrytas*.

¹⁷⁵ My translation: "A woman's confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her". *Lrytas*.

¹⁷⁶ My translation: "A woman's confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her". *Lrytas*.

¹⁷⁷ My translation: "A woman's confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her". *Lrytas*.

that although nobody forced her to marry she did not have much choice. The portrayal of a young naive pregnant woman who marries an alcoholic husband hoping for a better future but then later gets disillusioned and even turns abusive, is the story she is telling. This portrayal invokes readers emotions as she is portrayed as a victim of her circumstances.¹⁷⁸ The same depiction is used in other articles.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, her story confirms the traditional family unity that is in accordance with heterosexual desire as discussed by Butler, and that kinship and sexuality take place within a marriage.¹⁸⁰

As mentioned above, she is the one always thinking of the children even in the moments of anger. Casually mentioning motherhood several times in the article does also convey that by always thinking of her children first and doing the best she can for their sake, she thus essentially is a good and self-sacrificing mother who gets her frustrations out by beating their irresponsible and absent father. Bogren notes that in some Swedish press articles femininity is connected to sacrificial motherhood while men with violence.¹⁸¹ She also concludes that gender is undone by shared parenting when both male and female genders are regarded as parents equally.¹⁸² In this article the opposite holds true as the woman of the story conveys that she had sole responsibility for her children. Gender is thus done by making a distinction in accordance with gender binary; a responsible mother and an irresponsible father. At the same time, it is also undone since violent behavior is usually associated with men, and not women.

The author does condemn violence in her situation several times emphasizing that it is not a solution to her problems. It left her body in bruises, gave her no pleasure, and left her in a bad emotional state. The author repeats how the abuse affected her twice while not mentioning how it might have affected the abused at all. Hence, by manipulating the level of details in which she describes the abuse the author manages to portray the abuser as a victim even though it is not explicitly mentioned. This is further reinforced by her describing how the abuse left her “powerless”, “weak” and “emotionally drained”.¹⁸³ The message media sends is that women are not set up to do this since it goes against their feminine qualities. In conclusion, the

¹⁷⁸ My translation: “A woman’s confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her”. *Lrytas*.

¹⁷⁹ *Lrytas* 2 July 2018, *lrytas* 23 February 2018, *lrytas* 4 December 2016, *lrytas* 4 November 2016.

¹⁸⁰ Butler, 2004, p 5.

¹⁸¹ Bogren, 2013 p 70 -71.

¹⁸² Bogren, 2011, p 159 – 160.

¹⁸³ My translation: “A woman’s confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her”. *Lrytas*.

protagonist in this article is the abuser and therefore masculine, but at the same time she maintains her femininity because of her self-sacrificing motherhood, bodily stature, inability to enjoy an abusive behaviour, weakness and powerlessness. Undoing gender is thus limited.

In the article it is mentioned that she stopped the abuse for her own sake “How did I stop beating? I thought of myself. I did not pity myself but thought about myself”¹⁸⁴. The quote reveals that the author has neither any regards for her former husband nor feelings of guilt. It is implied that divorce in her case helped her to completely stop abusive behaviour and, in this way, regain her full femininity. Therefore, divorce in this case is acceptable since it does not go against femininity. In the studied material it is more frequent to stay in a heterosexual marriage, and divorce is mentioned in three other articles.¹⁸⁵ She adds that since the divorce she worked hard on making her body healthy. Considering that the other abused body is not discussed, and no feelings of guilt are described the violence is normalised when gender roles are reversed. The article concludes with her stating that all people have addictions triggered by circumstances, thus comparing physical abuse with any other addiction, such as alcoholism.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ My translation: “A woman’s confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her”. *Lrytas*.

¹⁸⁵ *Lrytas* 4 December 2016, *lrytas* 10 February 2017, *Lrytas* 23 February 2018.

¹⁸⁶ My translation: “A woman’s confession: lashed out at her husband so much that it hurt her”. *Lrytas*.

6. Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss my results in further detail, while placing my essay in the relevant previous research: media studies, gender studies in relation to alcohol, gender in the Lithuanian context and previous research on codependency. I further reflect upon my work in general, concluding with a short summary of the whole essay.

In accordance with Bogren, I found that gender is not simply done or undone, since undoing gender by ascribing masculine qualities to females is limited. It is by using CDA that these limits of doing and undoing gender are exposed. By encouraging women to adopt a codependency approach, media undoes gender since the presented solution to help their spouse is to adopt more masculine qualities. However, the primary material reveals that the gained independence is used to help their sick spouse because of which, women preserve their roles as caregivers and stay in the heterosexual marriage. Research made by Bogren shows that women in Swedish media are associated with motherhood and men with violence.¹⁸⁷ One of the studied articles in my essay subverts this association and undoes gender by depicting an abusive woman. However, the discourse structures are used in such a way that an abusive woman is still portrayed as a victim regardless of her own actions. This confirms Butler's assertion that women are often generalized as subjects of oppression.¹⁸⁸

Butler's theory provides a more complex view on gender, particularly by emphasizing heterosexual matrix as normal and natural while homosexuality as not.¹⁸⁹ In almost all studied articles heterosexuality is implied. The story of an alcoholic husband and a codependent wife is reinforced either by gendered use of pronouns, words that confirm marital status or examples that describe a female codependent and a male alcoholic. Heterosexual marriage plays a pivotal role in doing gender in newspapers stories. Butler adds that what familial bonds are legitimized in turn controls what persons are recognized as human beings.¹⁹⁰ Media, thus, by not explicitly

¹⁸⁷ Bogren, 2013, p 70.

¹⁸⁸ Butler, 1990, p 3.

¹⁸⁹ Butler, 1990, p 70 - 71.

¹⁹⁰ Butler, 2004, p 104, p 110.

mentioning alternative gender identities and family dynamics upholds an illusion that these people simply do not exist, in this way marginalizing queer.

Women on the other hand, do have voices that are heard because they fulfill the criterion of heterosexuality. According to van Dijk, the access to a discourse in the form of letters to the editor can be used in order to challenge the established dominance.¹⁹¹ For this reason, letters to the editor written by women were included in the primary material. The findings reveal that these articles contribute in confirming gender stereotypes or condoning violence in the family, therefore working against women's best interests. In this case the dominance upholding unequal gender relations that put women in the subordinate position, is jointly reproduced. At the same it could be argued that media still holds the upper hand on what gets to be published, thus only choosing articles that are in accordance with traditional norms and values. Tamutiene and Sinkeviciute add that *de facto* gender equality will not be achieved until journalists starts promoting gender equality in their news production.¹⁹² Buchmann notes that other formidable forces, such as, Catholic church as well as right-wing organizations work together in portraying sexual minorities and gender issues as perversions imported from the EU and threatening the existing national values.¹⁹³ To conclude, the studied texts reflect the dominance of heterosexuality in Lithuanian society since the public discourse, that is closed for queer, is open for heterosexuals.

Bogren in cooperation with Månsson argues that the portrayal of alcohol consumption depends on physical appearance and social status.¹⁹⁴ This is supported in this research as well since the differentiation between socioeconomic stratification is made. Only when alcoholic men cannot support themselves or their families do they become socially vulnerable. In the Lithuanian context, Kublickiene and others discuss that patriarchy in the country imposes stereotypes of strong men.¹⁹⁵ Masculinity in the primary material is associated with men's ability to provide financially, and fatherhood, alias being the family's head and breadwinner. Men who are unable to do that are in turn feminized because they are portrayed as weak and hopeless and therefore, the issues related to these men are swept under the rug. By undoing gender, media further

¹⁹¹ van Dijk, 1993, p 256.

¹⁹² Tamutiene, Sinkeviciute, 2015 p 18.

¹⁹³ Buschmann, 2017.

¹⁹⁴ Bogren, Månsson, 2014, p 33.

¹⁹⁵ Kublickiene, 2017, p 12; Tamutiene, Sinkeviciute, 2015, p 22.

marginalizes alcoholic men, while strengthening patriarchal stereotypes already existing in the country. Moreover, this confirms that excessive alcohol consumption is regarded as individual failing to live up to gender expectations.

This research shows it is a simplistic view to assume that one factor is a cause of marginalization as these might interlay. Butler emphasizes the importance of intersectionality.¹⁹⁶ A man who is discriminated against because of his socioeconomic status is also discriminated against because he fails to live up to gender expectations. Subsequently, the studied articles imply that women who are more economically independent have more opportunity to influence their life situation by abandoning a relationship with alcoholic men. It is therefore not the gender, exclusively, that is the cause for the oppression but the economy and vice versa. In addition, there are various contextual factors that must be considered while studying how gender is done and undone such as codependency, Catholicism, anti-genderist discourse, patriarchy and media interests.

The results show that codependency approach is used frequently while discussing women in relationship with alcoholic men. It is worth mentioning that when I first began this study I wanted to put a stronger emphasis on how media portray codependent men, but this was not possible since they are in general not portrayed that way by the media. This in turn, reinforces stereotypes that it is always a woman who is a codependent, while making it seem that codependent men do not exist. Codependency approach, when used in the primary material, aims to encourage women's empowerment, but it does also blame women for men's behavior. Rolando et al., adds that there is a double standard in the media that judges women who do not fulfil gender expectations more harshly than men.¹⁹⁷ Codependency approach applied in the media shows that the opposite holds true; women are judged for their typical gender behaviour. Miller emphasizes female behaviour being pathologized if codependency approach is adapted automatically.¹⁹⁸ The studied articles send a message that relatives, among them women in relationships with alcoholic men, are complicit in alcoholic men's behavior by enabling.

¹⁹⁶ Butler, 1990, p 4.

¹⁹⁷ Rolando et al., 2016.

¹⁹⁸ Miller, 1994, p 341-342.

Besides, by describing codependency as a sickness that makes women dependent on alcoholic men's behavior, they are deemed to be powerless.

The general survey of media discourse regarding alcoholism shows that there is ample material that raises further questions. For instance, Calderwood and Rajesparam indicate that the codependency approach disregards the best interest of the child.¹⁹⁹ This holds true in the articles discussed above since children are used to underline sacrificial motherhood or selfish fatherhood but are not discussed thoroughly. Further research that study media's portrayal of the best interest of the child in regard to alcoholism is needed, as it may reveal marginalization of children. At the same time the majority of the articles that encompass personal stories are about the abuse caused by alcoholics, which shows that media portrays them negatively, further contributing to their marginalization. Also, the articles that do give alcoholics a voice should be studied in order to see if marginalization is jointly reproduced. As mentioned earlier, gender studies in relation to alcohol focus on how women who use alcohol are portrayed by the media but, this was not discussed in my thesis as the scope of my paper was limited to women in relationship with alcoholics.

The essay made me also reflect upon the multi-interests that drive media. This in turn reveals the ongoing debate that could be further explored. My results only confirm that media in Lithuania works against politicians and tries to establish itself as the only power elite in producing knowledge, as is argued by Matonyte.²⁰⁰ That it is possibly corrupt, owned by a few owners who work in preserving their own best interests is also emphasized by Jastramskis and Lasas.²⁰¹ This study shows that media imposes a worldview where alcohol reforms are portrayed negatively hence disregarding nurture of the civil society for financial profit. A more concentrated research about how media portray politicians in regard to alcohol reforms can be a subject for future studies. I am also aware that my results are taken from the most popular websites that aim to sensationalize their news. It was a conscious choice on my part to study media that reaches the widest readership. Have I used other news sites that are less dependent on commerce and more focused on producing high quality text my results might have been different.

¹⁹⁹ Calderwood, Rajesparam, 2014, p 171.

²⁰⁰ Matonyte, 2009, p 175.

²⁰¹ Jastramskis, 2011, p 59; Lasas, 2017 p 13.

This thesis made me reevaluate how media text reproduces gender and how it affects different groups of people such as women, alcoholic men, and queer. Doing and undoing gender exposes multilayered traces of dominance that reflect the existing unequal power relations in the society of Lithuania. Despite the fact that it is the Lithuanian society that is studied, the tools applied here can also be applied in any context.

6.1 Summary

The aim of my thesis is to perform a media study of how gender is done and undone in Lithuanian news stories regarding women in the relationship with alcoholic men and how it reflects and affects the broader marginalization in the Lithuanian society. To my aid CDA as defined by van Dijk and qualitative content analysis as discussed by Bryman and Boreus are used. The gender perspective in turn is based on Butler's and Bogren's theories of doing and undoing gender. The research questions discussed in this paper are: How does media do gender in Lithuanian news stories regarding women in a relationship with alcoholic men? How does media undo gender in Lithuanian news stories regarding women in a relationship with alcoholic men? How does it reflect and affect the broader marginalization in the Lithuanian society?

The qualitative content analysis combined with previous research regarding gender in Lithuanian context and media studies, map out the context proving that various factors affect how gender is done and undone by the media. Therefore, the results and findings in this thesis are relevant keeping only Lithuanian society in mind. Nonetheless they are significant since Lithuanian context is relatively unexplored, and this provides the opportunity for further comparative research between countries or between gender media studies.

In the CDA the perspective of doing and undoing gender by Bogren and Butler is complemented by previous research regarding codependency and gender in relation to alcohol. The results show that media can both do and undo gender but there are certain limits identified by using discourse structures. In the primary material media reinforces stereotypes of women's

subordination to men by doing gender, while gender is undone by adopting a codependency approach that promotes women's independence. However, the same approach can also contribute in blaming the victim as women are held responsible for men's behavior. Furthermore, the doing of gender portray alcoholic men as abusers but one article subverts gender roles by depiction of an abusive woman. In that case violence against an alcoholic man is condoned. Gender is also undone when alcoholic men are feminized, this happens if they fail to live up to masculine stereotypes prevalent in the country. Media's depiction then, puts them in a socially vulnerable position. Finally doing of gender while putting emphasis on heterosexuality reveals exclusion of queer from media texts, rendering them as non-existent.

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