


Iskra de Vries   
University of Amsterdam  
University of Warsaw



## REIMAGINING DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS BEYOND THE COLOUR LINE: A STUDY ON THE POLISH LGBT-FREE Z\*NES USING ONLINE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND MENTAL MAPPING

Drawing on online semi-structured interviews and mental mapping, this article examines the so-called LGBT-Free Z\*nes in Poland. It offers two main contributions. First, it shows how LGBTQ+ participants interpret these zones and how their subjectivities enable them to negotiate the workings of state-sanctioned LGBTQ+phobia. Second, by mobilizing the Du Boisian notion of double consciousness, the article elucidates the dynamic of this negotiation and demonstrates how Du Bois' work on marginal subjectivities can inform future sociological research in Central and Eastern Europe by considering the region's historically subordinate position within Europe's racialised order. In addition, the article reflects on the methodological potential of mental mapping, highlighting its usefulness for capturing more vulnerable subjectivities of those living under conditions of institutionalised exclusion.

**Key words:** Poland, LGBT-Free Z\*nes; mental mapping; W. E. B. Du Bois; double-consciousness

### Introduction

In 2019, numerous units of local self-governments (municipalities, cities, counties, and voivodeships) started issuing declarations and resolutions “in support of traditional Polish families,” effectively establishing the so-called ‘LGBT-Free Z\*nes’ (hereafter referred to as the Z\*nes),<sup>1</sup> thereby proclaiming

---

University of Amsterdam, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Warsaw, Faculty of Sociology, k.s.devries@uva.nl, ORCID 0009-0001-2371-9793. This text is licensed under Creative Commons Uznanie autorstwa-Użycie niekomercyjne-Bez utworów zależnych 3.0 Polska (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 PL).

<sup>1</sup> I consider the commonly used ‘LGBT-Free Zones’ to be a label that is contested and politically constructed. Throughout this article, I use sanitised asterisk styling – Z\*nes instead of Zones – to create discursive distancing from the term. By styling the Z\*nes this way, I do so not to minimise the severity of LGBTQ+phobia in Poland, but to underscore that these designations

“freedom from the LGBT ideology” or the intention to “stop the LGBT ideology” (see Bucholc, 2020, 2022; Chojnicka, 2025; Herbert, 2019; Korolczuk, 2020b, 2020c; Ploszka, 2023; Rafałowski, 2023; Żuk et al., 2021). Drawing on online semi-structured interviews and mental mapping,<sup>2</sup> this article explores how LGBTQ+ people in Poland interpret and negotiate the socio-political realities shaped by this phenomenon.

Framed around two main contributions, my argumentation unfolds as follows. First, I demonstrate how the embodiment of distinct yet entangled subjectivities, being both LGBTQ+ *and* Polish, reveals participants’ resourceful negotiation of state-sanctioned LGBTQ+phobia. To elucidate this dynamic, I rely on W. E. B. Du Bois’ notion of ‘double consciousness.’ Second, I explore the theoretical possibilities of Du Bois’ thinking beyond the empirical scope of this study. By briefly engaging with Du Bois’ conception of race as central to double consciousness, I articulate a puzzle: how might we think with and beyond Du Bois to situate Polish subjectivity as not divorced from Europe’s racialised order and Central and Eastern Europe’s (CEE) historically subordinate position? (e.g., Jaworska, 2011; Nowicka, 2024; Lewicki, 2023; Szumski and Zarycki, 2025; Ureña Valerio, 2019). Although the category of race has often been deemed inapplicable to Slavic-speaking Europe, effectively producing a discourse of ‘racelessness’ (Böröcz, 2021; Rucker-Chang and West Ohueri, 2021), I seek to sketch a possible path for theorising Polish subjectivity in relation to Du Bois’s Pan-Africanist aspirations and global anti-racist solidarities. Apart from these two contributions, I also reflect on the methodological potential of mental mapping in qualitative research.

The article proceeds as follows: The first section offers a brief introduction to the phenomenon of the Z\*nes. The second section outlines the methodological framework, discussing the potential of mental mapping as a research tool and detailing the study’s specific approach. The third section engages with Du Bois, focusing on the notion of double consciousness and his understanding of race. The fourth section examines the meanings participants attach to the Z\*nes, demonstrating how these interpretations frequently exceed the spatial segregation that the term might initially imply. The second part of this analysis then explores the negotiation through which participants seem to negotiate state-sanctioned LGBTQ+phobia. In the fifth section, I return to the notion of double

---

do not reflect any legally enforceable reality, and rather operate as symbolic tools within broader ideological struggles. In addition, I refer consistently to LGBTQ+ people and, for example, LGBTQ+phobia, as this acronym most accurately reflects the participants of this study.

<sup>2</sup> This article is based on my MA thesis, titled ‘Polish Hetero-Domination, State Violence and Queer Dissent: Deconstructing the Political Project of LGBT-Free Zones,’ submitted at the University of Amsterdam in 2021. Importantly, the research design, theoretical concepts, and core findings presented here correspond to those developed in the thesis. However, in this article, I substantially extend the theoretical scope of double consciousness.

consciousness, this time considering the empirical findings. I reflect on how the Du Boisian scholarship might be productively extended to the study of Polish and CEE subjectivities, outlining avenues for future research that attend to the region's specific historical trajectories, geopolitical positioning, and regimes of belonging. The final section briefly summarises the study and reflects on the insights gained from combining mental mapping with online semi-structured interviews.

### **LGBT-Free Z\*nes: a political attack subsumed into an activist project**

In February 2019, the mayor of Warsaw, Rafał Trzaskowski, proposed a 12-point declaration aiming for “the creation of a municipal mechanism for reporting and monitoring homophobic and transphobic hate crimes, supporting the reinforcement of anti-violence and sexuality education in schools,” titled “LGBT+ Declaration for Warsaw” (CoE, 2020, p. 5). The aftermath of this declaration quickly escalated as over a hundred local self-governments began adopting “simple resolutions” to oppose Trzaskowski’s emancipatory concerns (for a detailed description of these documents, see e.g., Bucholc, 2022; Chojnicka, 2025). The adoption of these anti-LGBTQ+ resolutions subsequently came to be understood as establishing such Z\*nes.

In fact, the framing of particular territories as “LGBT-Free” has its own short history, as the geographical demarcation of the Z\*nes was preceded by LGBTQ+phobic propaganda by the conservative national newspaper *Gazeta Polska* in July 2019, which distributed stickers bearing the caption *Strefa Wolna od LGBT* (meaning: “LGBT-Free Zone”). These stickers were intended to mark privately owned places and objects. However, the distribution of the stickers was quickly halted by a court order, which ruled it as discriminatory. Later, activist Bart Staszewski initiated an art project for which he photographed cities’ signage that accorded with the anti-LGBTQ+ resolutions. Staszewski combined typical traffic signage with the inscription of “LGBT-Free Zones” to call out and provoke local self-government that had adopted the resolutions (see Staszewski, 2021).

The Z\*nes have been analysed from multiple perspectives. Not only have the anti-LGBTQ+ resolutions been closely scrutinised (e.g., Chojnicka, 2025), but the Z\*nes have also been linked to a “wider war on gender,” situating the project within a transnational movement commonly referred to as anti-gender politics (Korolczuk, 2020b). In the case of Poland, it is well established that the Catholic Church functions as a significant political actor (Bucholc and de Vries, 2025; Korolczuk, 2020b; Wrześniewska, 2017), leveraging its moral authority to

influence public discourse and policy in ways that reinforce exclusionary norms and practices. This is possible due to the religious and political alliance referred to as the “throne and altar” (Żuk and Żuk, 2019). Furthermore, scholars have also drawn attention to the historical similarities the *Z\*nes* portray with the discourse of anti-Semitic ghettoisation and the neoliberal “geographies of exclusion” that have characterised Poland since the 1990s. From this angle, it has been argued that the *Z\*nes* should be understood as the continuation of spatial segregation rooted in neoliberal economic deprivation, where social frustrations produced by economic marginalisation are redirected into cultural and sexual exclusion (Żuk et al., 2021; see also Korolczuk, 2020c).

In response to the *Z\*nes*, an activist collective consisting of Jakub Gawron, Paulina Pająk, Paweł Preneta, and Kamil Maczuga initiated an interactive website mapping the adopted resolutions under the name *Atlas Nienawiści* (Atlas of Hate). At the time of conducting the online interviews, one-third of the Polish territory was referred to as a *Z\*ne*, which corresponded to inhabited areas of over 12 million citizens (CoE, 2020, p. 5). The Atlas of Hate makes a coloured distinction between spaces that have and have not enacted the anti-LGBTQ+ resolutions. Today, the map appears entirely different, with no red dots visible. In 2025, the council in south-eastern Poland officially abolished the country’s remaining “LGBT-Free” resolution (Knight, 2025).

## Methods

### Online semi-structured interviews and mental mapping

This study employs online semi-structured interviews and mental mapping combined. The interview format was deemed appropriate for two primary reasons. First, and in line with the work of Michèle Lamont and Ann Swidler (2014, p. 159), “interviews can reveal emotional dimensions of social experience that are not often evident in behaviour.” Second, verbal accounts allow investigating the meaning-making of a variety of interactional settings in which the participants can be actively encouraged to describe their embodied experiences (Lamont and Swidler, p. 160).

Scholars have also drawn attention to the difficulties of articulating one’s experiences or emotions (Bosman et al., 2019; Giesecking, 2013; Kaisto and Wells, 2020). Oral communication is not always the best instrument for expressing complex or sensitive feelings, especially in an online interview setting, without time to build rapport or when addressing stigmatised topics. Additionally, oral communication may also be hindered by low language proficiency (Jung, 2014). Yet a different angle of criticism concerns the methodologically troubled distinction between emotions and social actions, since “from interviews

alone, we cannot know what actually happens in interactions, but only what people think about situations and how they feel about them” (Jerolmack and Khan, 2014, p. 184).

In light of these considerations, I supplemented the online interviews with a visual research method that enables the participants to express themselves non-verbally. Mental mapping is a visual method often used in urban or geographical studies, evoking “the lived experiences of social, cultural, and political issues related to a place” (Powell, 2010, p. 529). This “multisensory” method (see Powell, 2010) offers thus tools to explore human dynamics, socio-spatial inequalities, and movement without depending on verbal abilities (Giesecking, 2013; Paasi, 1996; 2016, cited in Kaisto and Wells, 2020). In view of this, the territorial aspect of the Z\*nes lends itself as an object of study.

In a feminist review of mental mapping, Hyunjoo Jung (2014) re-evaluates mental mapping by addressing some of the pitfalls of more traditional approaches. In this interrogation, Jung challenges the perception of objective representations, emphasising their subjective, context-rich, and power-laden quality. Moreover, to avoid misinterpretation and misrepresentation within research, ethical concerns address the role of research participants as “passive information givers,” urging researchers to enable participatory research, in which research participants are co-producers of knowledge (see also Giesecking, 2013).

In addition to combining the two research methods, the analysis was informed by methodological insights on the co-construction of knowledge with already vulnerable participants. Therefore, I adopt a stance of categorical ambivalence toward social categories (Pascoe, 2018). Accordingly, I do not take the categories invoked in this study for granted, and given the limited sample, I make no claims about the social groups to which the participants belong more broadly. Rather than treating social categories as fixed analytical units, this study focuses on how subjectivities rendered “dangerous” by the anti-LGBTQ+ resolutions interpret and negotiate the existence of the Z\*nes.

Lastly, by recognising the “messiness of human social life” (O’Brien, 2009), I embraced sociology as an epistemology of contradiction. This means that instead of presenting a solid and polished analysis of the data, I do not shy away from the encountered “messiness” or “ambiguities” that, most likely, are the product of our own positionalities and interpretive frames (see also O’Brien, 2010). I therefore, I position these contradictions as analytically productive.

## **Data collection**

A total of 12 online semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom with participants who identify with any of the identities under the LGBTQ+ acronym. The selection of the participants’ places of residence was based on the

Atlas of Hate. Due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, the selection of participants, as well as conducting interviews, was done entirely online. The interviews were conducted between April 1 and May 15, 2021. Participants were initially found and selected using Instagram. By combining gender/sex and sexuality terms with the names of specific cities in Instagram's hashtag search tool (e.g., #lgbtwarszawa, #lgbtkraków, #queerlublin), several accounts were identified for potential contact. In addition to Kraków and Łódź, both cities marked red on the Atlas of Hate, Warsaw was included for comparative purposes.

My relative proximity to the participants in terms of, for example, age, urban place of residence, nationality, and queerness may have fostered a sense of familiarity and openness, but it also introduced specific blind spots and interpretive biases. This positionality, rather than being a liability, has become a resource for reflecting on the contingent and situated character of my findings (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1988). Moreover, having been raised first in Poland and then in the Netherlands, I grew up in a context in which Polish subjectivity was often positioned as marginal, marked as different within dominant cultural narratives. This experience continues to shape my academic perspectives, attuning me to the hierarchies, exclusions, and power dynamics that inform how Polishness is constructed and perceived.

The interviews were organised around four general themes: (a) the current Polish political landscape, (b) LGBT-Free Z\*nes, (c) everyday life practices and experiences, and (d) notions of coping and resistance. Participants were asked to prepare three mental maps for the interview. Most interviews lasted for approximately two hours. In the first part of the interview, the participants were asked about their general views on Poland, its political state, and the Z\*nes. In the second part of the interview, where the mental maps were discussed, the questions were more focused on the drawings, personal experiences, and acts of coping and resistance. Follow-up questions were posed to facilitate a shared understanding of the drawings. To embed the participants as co-producers of knowledge (Jung, 2014), the visual materials were used as input for the interviews, through which their attached meanings were scrutinised together through oral communication (Götz and Holmén, 2018).

In this article, I include two assignments of the prepared mental maps. For the first assignment, the participants were asked to draw the silhouette of Poland to illustrate their emotions related to the previously mentioned Atlas of Hate. In the second, the participants were asked to draw themselves in a crowded public space in their place of residence. Ten out of twelve participants agreed to take part in the mental mapping exercise. Since the interviews were conducted in Polish, all translations of the conversational data cited in this article are my own.

To guarantee the privacy and safety of the participants, I used pseudonyms from the very beginning of the transcription process. Table 1 presents relevant background information on the participants.

**Table 1.** Participant population (N=12)

Name, pronounce	Age	Gender/sex	Residential city
Agnieszka, she/her	21	Trans woman	Łódź, Piotrków Trybunalski
Damian, he/his	33	Male	Kraków
Dominika, she/her	22	Female	Łódź
Hania, she/her	24	Female	Kraków
Ilona, she/her	26	Trans woman	Warsaw
Justyna, she/her	23	Trans woman	Kraków, Dębniki
Karol, they/them	23	Non-binary	Łódź
Lee, they/them	22	Non-binary	Lublin, Urzędów
Marek, he/his	19	Male	Warsaw
Max, they/them	20	Non-binary	Warsaw
Radek, he/his	19	Trans man	Kraków
Tomek, he/his	25	Male	Warsaw

Source: own elaboration

I coded the data inductively. The analysis was conducted using ATLAS.ti software and was guided by the thematic analysis framework (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Lastly, an important limitation concerns the composition of the participant pool, mainly their (urban) place of residence and age. As a result, the relatively small sample reflects the attitudes and experiences of predominantly young and urban individuals.

### Theoretical Framework: Double Consciousness

This section is anchored in Du Bois' notion of double consciousness, which initially sought to explain the internalisation of a white American gaze by African Americans. The idea was first introduced in the essay "Strivings of the Negro People" (Du Bois, 1897) and later revised in *The Souls of Black Folk* (Du Bois, p. 1990 [1903]). In the former, Du Bois (1897, p. 194) famously describes the experience of "always looking at one's self through the eyes of others," measuring one's soul "by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity," and thus coming to inhabit a fractured self, a sense of twoness. This

condition of “two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings” (Du Bois, 1897) captures a dialogue between minority and majority subjectivities and by that also a structural relation of power: the subordinated subject is compelled to see themselves through the dominant gaze. Importantly, this twoness can also function as a ‘gifted second sight,’ offering an additional perspective (see Meer, 2019).

The notion of double consciousness has travelled widely across disciplines and historical contexts. It has been mobilised in critical race studies and decolonial theory (Fanon, 1967; Owens Moore, 2005), in scholarship on multiracial identities (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Layne and Miles 2022), as well as in analyses of gender (Lynne, 2021) and class (Ciriza and Marrin, 2024). These diverse engagements have generated a range of new articulations of the notion, such as ‘gender double consciousness’ (Lynne, 2021), ‘kaleidoscopic consciousness’ (Medina, 2013), or ‘triple consciousness’ (Bonilla-Silva, 2010), among others I discuss below. My aim in this section is not to recapitulate these debates but to clarify the analytical workings of double consciousness in the context of this study and to briefly discuss how the previously mentioned puzzle concerning Polish subjectivity might be further expanded upon through the work of Du Bois.

To begin, next to the earlier passages of Du Bois himself concerning double consciousness, another relevant rearticulation is that of ‘queer double consciousness,’ which is conceptualised as a form of cultural orientation and social psychological lens that draws attention to how the split gaze may also be used as a resource by which LGBTQ+ people can “anticipate the reactions of others by viewing a situation through the lens of the privileged while remaining stigma resistant” (Orne, 2013, p. 249). Put differently, queer double consciousness explores various strategies by which subjects can manage hostile situations. To grasp this mechanism, Orne offers a particularly vivid metaphor: “Double consciousness is like a pair of bifocals, allowing the wearer to simultaneously look through the top—seeing the situation as the powerful likely see it—or through the bottom—seeing the situation through the eyes of the marginalised” (Orne, 2013, p. 235). On this basis, the individual may modify their conduct to conform more closely to prevailing normative expectations.

Whereas queerness functions here as a relatively more legible analytic category, the second subjectivity, that of being Polish, requires greater conceptual care. Du Bois did not theorise national consciousness in a narrow sense; rather, his reflections were oriented toward broader Pan-Africanist aspirations that exceeded the confines of the nation-state, championing solidarity among people of African descent to fight colonialism, racism, and imperialism. In the year 1897, when Du Bois first wrote about double consciousness, he still treated race as a relatively stable and objective social division. This early formulation is closely associated with what he famously termed the ‘colour line.’ Ultimately,

he argued, most clearly in *Dusk of Dawn* (1940), that race is a socially constructed and historically contingent category rather than a fixed scientific fact, predominantly constituted through a common history of horrors of slavery and Jim Crow rule (see Olson, 2005 for a more detailed description of Du Bois' evolving conception of race; Gilroy, 1993).<sup>3</sup> "Despite everything," Du Bois wrote (1940, p. 51), "race lines were not fixed and fast," revealing how his own conception of race was rooted in specific socio-historical conditions of the nineteenth-century United States. One passage from Du Bois (1940, 59) vividly evokes this affective dimension of historical belonging:

*as I face Africa, I ask myself: what is it between us that constitutes a tie that I can feel better than I can explain? Africa is, of course, my fatherland. Yet neither my father nor my father's father ever saw Africa or knew its meaning or cared overmuch for it. My mother's folk were closer and yet their direct connection, in culture and race, became tenuous; still my tie to Africa is strong. (...) But one thing is sure and that is the fact that since the fifteenth century these ancestors of mine have had a common history; have suffered a common disaster, and have one long memory. (...) The real essence of this kinship is its social heritage of slavery; the discrimination and insult; and this heritage binds together not simply the children of Africa, but extends through yellow Asia and the South Seas. It is this unity that draws me to Africa.*

In a markedly different register, I recognise a comparable affective pull in myself: as somebody who was raised first in post-communist Poland and later in Western Europe (WE), I experience a persistent, if difficult to theorise, sense of proximity to those from CEE: a connection shaped less by direct continuity than by sedimented histories, shared marginalisations, and a lingering consciousness of Europe's internal hierarchies.

Following Du Bois' later thinking, race can thus be understood as a 'badge' (1940, p. 59) signifying a shared historical consciousness formed through collective experiences or inherited memories. While Du Bois had slavery in mind as the paradigmatic case, he argues that racism in various contexts generates comparable forms of solidarity. If racial signification is thus unstable and contingent, and "colour relatively unimportant" (1940, p. 59), what follows is that forms of consciousness organised around such categories are likewise dynamic and relational. An illustrative example of this dynamic can be found in what Alyssa Lynne (2021) terms 'transnational double consciousness,' capturing the multiplicity of dialogues that unfold not only between subject positions within a single location, but also across global spheres. Within this argument, transnational double consciousness is developed to account for the experiences of

<sup>3</sup> In Du Bois' writing, occasional paradoxes appear in his conceptualisation of race, particularly where the notion of "common blood" is repeatedly invoked despite race's socially constructed nature. For further reading, I recommend Stuart Hall (2017) and Joel Olson (2005).

a Thai gender-nonconforming community negotiating a hegemonic model of trans identity produced in and disseminated from the Global North. Accordingly, double consciousness operates along at least two axes: first, as a twoness structured by the community's positioning vis-à-vis dominant cisnormative Thai culture; and second, as a reflexive engagement with globally circulating, normative constructions of trans identities.

Another significant reworking of double consciousness emerges in attempts to extend the concept to white and other structurally privileged subjects. Linda Martín Alcoff (2015, p. 89) advances the notion of 'white double consciousness,' urging dominant subjects to cultivate the capacity to see themselves through both dominant and non-dominant lenses, and to recognise the latter as a critical corrective truth. Such a stance, she argues, can help render whiteness visible as a historically constituted position of power rather than an unmarked norm (for a more in-depth discussion, see Hawkins and Davis, 2024). Elsewhere, Alcoff (2006, p. 223) also describes a bifurcated white standpoint that does not simply adopt a non-dominant perspective, but instead involves an "ever-present acknowledgement of the historical legacy of white identity construction in the persistent structures of inequality and exploitation." In this formulation, double consciousness becomes more of an ongoing critical awareness of one's structural location within racialised systems of power (see also Medina, 2013, p. 57).

This brings me back to the puzzle: how might we think with and beyond Du Bois to situate Polish subjectivity as not divorced from Europe's racialised order and CEE's historically subordinate position? Recent scholarship proposes notions such as 'peripheral whiteness' (Blachnicka-Ciacek and Urbańska, 2025; Safuta, 2018), 'other whites' (Blachnicka-Ciacek and Budginaite-Mackine, 2022), or 'dirty whiteness' (Böröcz, 2021) to capture CEE's ambiguous location within Europe's racialised order. While these studies offer crucial perspectives, I believe that relying on such terms also risks reifying whiteness as a fixed racial category, thereby reproducing the hierarchies they seek to unsettle and reproducing a rigid understanding of the colour line that Du Bois himself complicated.

Considering these descriptive qualifiers of whiteness, I find myself repeatedly asking: in what ways is my own Polish heritage warrantably implicated in and entangled with WE colonialism and the global architecture of white supremacy? How might one reconcile the suggested continuity of anti-Slavic racism (Nowicka, 2024) with the widely presumed ontological superiority historically attributed to whiteness? Although this is not the place to elaborate on the point in full, I do not advance 'the Slavic' as homogeneous or internally equal (see e.g., Wrzesińska, 2025), nor do I intend to reproduce the narratives of populist victimhood (e.g., Barton Hronešová, 2024; Cianciara, 2025). Rather, I aim to account for CEE's shared yet uneven histories, cultural formations, and geopolitical struggles.

To return to Du Bois (1952, p. 15), who, after having visited Warsaw for the third time in 1949, expressed once more that the colour line was but a certain social provincialism:

*No, the race problem in which I was interested cut across lines of colour and physique and belief and status and was a matter of cultural patterns, perverted teaching and human hate and prejudice, which reached all sorts of people and caused endless evil to all men. So that the ghetto of Warsaw helped me to emerge from a certain social provincialism into a broader conception of what the fight against race segregation, religious discrimination and the oppression by wealth had to become if civilisation was going to triumph and broaden the world.*

Kacper Pobłocki (2015, p. 108) notes that the “Polish history is also race-washed into one of being uninterruptedly ‘white’ [after 1945].” Arguably, once the Nazi regime came to be recognised as catastrophic, race itself became indelibly associated with genocide and fascism—an unacceptable historical remnant, much like Europe’s colonial past. Józef Böröcz (2021, p. 1131), for instance, argues that the discursive strategy of ‘eurowhiteness’ seeks to erase open discussions of race while simultaneously preserving Europe’s position within structures of global white privilege. In this sense, race is not dismantled but rendered unspeakable.

My question, then, is not whether Poles are “truly” white or not, but what analytical work the category of whiteness performs. I raise this because it prompts a critical reflection: “What could transpire if we were to regard whiteness less as a matter of skin pigmentation and more as an organising principle in late modernity?” (Nayak, 2007, p. 738; see also Böröcz, 2021). A critical sociological task, then, is to unpack this normative prerogative: why is being categorised as white so valuable, and for whom? A possible answer to this question can be found in the work of Böröcz and Mahua Sarkar (2017, p. 314):

*What is somewhat unique about the position of eastern Europe in the world today is that, as citizens of EU-member states, many inhabitants of the region perceive the European Union, rightly or wrongly, as a resource that offers them an opportunity to boost their “racial” credentials, that is, a chance to proceed “upward” on the scale of privilege in an obviously unequal, oppressive and discriminatory system.*

Such a recourse, however, often entails a disavowal of the region’s own racialised positioning. By aspiring to proximity with WE normativity and whiteness, this orientation can obscure the persistent marginalisation of CEE within European hierarchies, reproducing the very logics of racial stratification it seeks to escape rather than critically confronting them.

To conclude, a range of scholarly reinterpretations of double consciousness have emerged across different disciplinary contexts. In the present study, where

I trace a dialogical relationship between two subjectivities, that of being both LGBTQ+ and Polish, I have chosen to retain the framework of double consciousness rather than adopt, for example, its queer rearticulation (Orne 2013). This decision reflects the centrality of a Polish subjectivity to my analysis, which cannot be subsumed under queerness alone. I return to these theoretical considerations in the discussion section, where the implications of the findings are examined in greater detail.

## Findings

The findings presented in this section are organised into two subsections. The first explores the interpretations of the Z\*nes, while the second examines the participants' split gaze, which reveals resourceful negotiation of state-sanctioned LGBTQ+phobia.

### Symbolic boundaries as a form of absolute state control

Most interviews started with rather neutral dynamics, in which the participants tended to assume a somewhat valiant and stoically informed posture. For example, in the exchange on the meaning of the Z\*nes, most participants initially referred to the non-existent legal consequences of the resolutions. As expressed by Agnieszka: "The LGBT-Free Zones are really an absurd project. It is not only disgusting, but it also lacks any legal consequences. There is no real effect." Lee, in turn, describes the Z\*nes as if "living in the Matrix," pointing to the fact that the implementation of the Z\*nes is carried out by various units of local self-governments that do not always correspond with the status of other administrative divisions and thus challenge their actual existence and persuasiveness.

Still, and I recognise this as an important contribution to the scholarship on mental mapping, the conducted interviews reached a different layer of consciousness when discussing the visual materials.<sup>4</sup> This means that while the verbal descriptions of the Z\*nes at the beginning of the interviews were often reduced to something merely "symbolic" and mainly "absurd," the mental maps of Poland's silhouette invoked other registers of emotions by simultaneously

---

<sup>4</sup>As suggested by an anonymous reviewer, I do not claim that mental mapping is the only method capable of eliciting a more emotive consciousness. It is possible that, had the interviews been conducted in person and with more time to establish rapport, oral communication alone might have produced similar outcomes. However, under the circumstances of this study, the marked shift in the depth and character of the conversation before and during the discussion of the mental maps was significant.

transgressing the boundaries of the Z\*nes as presented by the Atlas of Hate. Here, the “symbolic” and “absurd” were now accompanied by “hate,” “violence,” “fear,” and a “witch-hunt.” I therefore draw attention to the more absolute constitution of the Z\*nes, as these experiences come to stand in for Poland as a totality. Put differently, the depictions of Poland, often visualised in a state of collapse, challenge the territoriality of the Z\*nes and their geographical representations. The following three mental maps and their descriptions further illustrate this point:

*The drawing shows Poland as a figure, trying to hang itself on the gallows. We are killing ourselves. (...) You can see the LGBT- Free Zones bleeding, the drops of blood are people. But in effect, it is really the whole of Poland that is going down. [Ilona]*

*The hatred we face is everywhere in Poland. Maybe it looks like there is more hatred within the Zones, but that is not really the case. To be honest, hate is spreading all over Poland. [Karol]*

*Politics are a mess in general. But Polish politics is a swamp dangerously stretching across the country. (...) There is no such thing as a ‘good Zone’ and a ‘bad Zone’ in Poland. Such a thought is really naive. Poland really is one Zone. [Lee]*

**Figure 1.** Drawn by Ilona, assignment 1

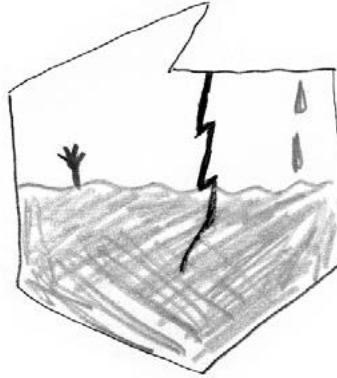


Source: own elaboration

**Figure 2.** Drawn by Karol, 1



Source: own elaboration

**Figure 3.** Drawn by Lee, 1

Source: own elaboration

Next to the depiction of a succumbing Poland, other participants (see Figure 4) have approached this assignment in ways more aligned with an activist vocabulary, emphasising that LGBTQ+ people are Polish too, living everywhere in Poland, including the Z\*nes. This is illustrated by drawing a rainbow all over Poland. By unpacking the mental maps together with each participant – asking questions such as “Why the use of colour red?” or “Why is the map set on fire?” – the descriptions of the Z\*nes started becoming more political and powerful depictions of yet another state instrument fuelling LGBTQ+phobia. As expressed by the participants, the Z\*nes are part of a larger “political attack” or “another nail in the coffin.”

**Figure 4.** Drawn by Marek, 1

Source: own elaboration

As previously mentioned, the influence of the Catholic Church and its hegemony have also been pinpointed by the participants as a key factor in the process of conservative homogenising, the Z\*nes being yet another instrument to do so. The existence of the anti-LGBTQ+ resolutions and the language that they allow for is primarily seen as a tool for justifying hatred and exclusion. Lee and Marek describe this process as follows:

*The public declaration of such ideas has shown to every crypto homophobe out there that their hatred is not wrong; that they can act upon their hatred in public, and that it is deemed acceptable. It provides certain people with verification of their hatred. I refuse to frame such hatred as beliefs because homophobia or transphobia are not beliefs. [Lee]*

*Before all of this, people did not have such strong hate in them towards us, or perhaps they were restraining it more. Now that they are receiving political permission to express their discriminatory thoughts without any impunity, the hate is becoming increasingly visible. [Marek]*

Both excerpts recognise here the power of the Z\*nes to reshape the boundaries of what can be publicly said and done. In Lee's account, the resolutions function as a form of moral authorisation: by elevating anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric into official discourse, they transform previously stigmatised hostility into a position that appears socially and politically validated. The emphasis on "verification" underscores the idea that institutional language does not simply reflect existing prejudice but actively legitimises it. Marek similarly highlights the normalising effect of political discourse, suggesting that the resolutions create a sense of impunity. Whether prejudice has increased or merely become more visible, the key point is that institutional endorsement reduces social costs for expressing hostility.

For the second mental map, the participants were asked to draw themselves situated in a crowded public space in their place of residence. On these drawings (see Figure 5), it is noteworthy that the majority adhere to a broadly similar compositional structure. First, the participants demonstrate an isolated self, often visualised with a clear (dashed) line suggesting a barrier between the self and society. Second, the drawings portray some kind of social pressure in the form of being stared at or being surrounded. This feeling appears intensified by participants' uncertainty about who surrounds them in public, as indicated by question marks and glaring eyes. Lastly, some of the drawings illustrate a certain consciousness of semiotics, such as rainbow flags and catholic crucifixes. Such symbols have been described as fundamental markers of either social safety or danger, shaping how participants actively navigate their environment. In conclusion, the mental maps extend beyond expressions of isolation and strategies of everyday negotiation, illustrating how LGBTQ+phobia operates as a pervasive

and structuring force that shapes participants' spatial perceptions, social interactions, and embodied experiences.

**Figure 5.** From top left to bottom right: drawn by Lee, Tomek, Marek and Justyna. Assignment 2.



Source: own elaboration

### From Blame to Reflexivity and a Resource

Now that we are familiar with the interpretations of the Z\*nes, I turn to the participants' ability to negotiate the workings of state-sanctioned LGBTQ+phobia. The previous subsection demonstrates the anxious and disenchanting emotions that foster a reflexive sense of otherness and exclusion, often described as being placed in the line of fire against the untouchable political elite. One notable yet ambivalent finding of this study is that experiences of exclusion appear to foster forms of reflexive self-awareness and empathetic attunement, suggesting that marginalisation may simultaneously constrain and deepen participants' relational and interpretive capacities. Rather than directing their frustration toward

fellow citizens, most participants acknowledge the widespread socio-economic struggles and geographical marginalisation experienced by many Poles, thereby recognising the structural limits of individual accountability.

A telling observation was made by Max, who mentioned how “terrible” it is to see how people are being taken advantage of: “These people do not have any higher education: they live in Poland and are basically trying to survive. I would never blame these individuals.” According to many participants, impoverishment and restricted access to knowledge constitute the two key factors that make people especially vulnerable to political manipulation. Consequently, responsibility for the proliferation of LGBTQ+phobia is attributed chiefly to political actors, who are perceived as deliberately instrumentalising social grievances for electoral or strategic gain. Two illustrative examples are presented below:

*Most people do not even care. They live in their small villages and have no knowledge about gender and sexuality: they have never met someone who is queer. They really do not care. We need to blame the politicians.* [Ilona]

*There is simply no awareness. I have the impression that, especially in smaller cities and towns, there is a huge lack of knowledge. People are really manipulated by Polish television. It is horrifying to watch, really.* [Karol]

Taken together, these reflections suggest two interrelated insights. First, the participants explicitly situate these dynamics within broader classed and spatial inequalities, reflecting on the differences between urban and rural living conditions. By doing so, they often recognise their own urban privilege, particularly in terms of access to education and information. As explicitly stated by Agnieszka, she feels “lucky to be born in a more liberal family,” thereby underlining her relatively privileged position in processes of opinion formation. Second, participants demonstrate an awareness of how their lives and identities are politicised and instrumentalised by state actors seeking power. When they explain that “most people do not even care,” they reframe state-sanctioned LGBTQ+phobia as the outcome of a top-down political strategy designed to manufacture new lines of social conflict for political gain.

Importantly, this sense of reflexivity does not erase or diminish the pervasive reality of LGBTQ+phobia. Participants consistently report exposure to various forms of discrimination and violence, framing their everyday existence as an act of resistance. As Lee articulated: “The regular life, getting up in the morning, breathing, being queer in Poland—is already an act of everyday dissent.” Moreover, cutting ties with peers whose ideas are perceived as harmful emerges as a frequent strategy of self-preservation, allowing participants to maintain emotional well-being in hostile socio-political environments (see also Orne, 2013). While such acts of boundary-setting may involve social loss, they are

accompanied by a strong sense of empathy: participants redirect their anger towards politicians rather than fellow Poles. This capacity for reorientation reveals how the participants are acutely aware of everyday impacts of stigmatising views against them, while negotiating the workings of state-sanctioned LGBTQ+phobia (see Chowaniec et al., 2021; Kościańska, 2024).

### **Discussion on Double Consciousness: Empathy, Resource, and Future Possibilities**

As previously explained, the notion of double consciousness unfolds “a dialogue or interaction between minority and majority subjectivities; as two separate but entwined forms of consciousness” (Meer, 2019, 6). From an empirical perspective, the participants have shown an awareness of how LGBTQ+ subjectivities are politicised and instrumentalised within the dominant heteronormative political discourse. Much like Du Bois’ insights, they appear to maintain a reflexive gaze: (1a) the understanding of the contempt of LGBTQ+ people by the Polish state, and (1b) the awareness of the broader socioeconomic struggles of Poles as a second sight due to which a negotiation of the state-sanctioned LGBTQ+phobia emerges.

This Polish consciousness can be further understood in view of what Paweł Bagiński (2024) calls ‘Polish rainbow patriotism,’ which refers to the various LGBTQ+ initiatives aiming to raise critical consciousness and destabilise the heteronormative construction of Polish national identity (for a further discussion on Polish patriotism, see also de Vries and Gospodarczyk, 2025). While Bagiński offers more tangible examples to demonstrate the concept in practice, such as the polonaise dance and patriotic clothing, I rely on the notion more loosely to draw attention to the transformative politics present in the encountered empathy. In this sense, I suggest that rainbow patriotism becomes legible not only through visible activist practices but also through the subtle, relational processes by which participants contest exclusionary discourses and assert their capacity to inhabit the nation on their own terms—not in opposition to national identity, but through its rearticulation.

In the footsteps of Orne’s queer double consciousness (2013, p. 249), I argue that this reflexivity functions as a resource that enables the participants to negotiate the workings of state-sanctioned LGBTQ+phobia. However, whereas Orne mainly explores identity management of queer people in situations of outright hostility, hence action taken in awareness of how others in the dominant group will react, this study explored a more all-encompassing configuration of LGBTQ+phobia, which the participants appear to negotiate or even minimise based on their awareness of the struggles of fellow Poles.

An issue that has so far remained unaddressed concerns the conceptualisation of minority and majority consciousness, which is difficult to delineate in the context of this study. Does the consciousness of a struggling Pole genuinely reflect a majority perspective, or does this case instead illustrate an interaction between multiple minority consciousnesses? As this question cannot be answered based on the data in this study, it points to important avenues for further research.

The second part of the discussion turns to the potential of thinking with and beyond Du Bois to situate Polish subjectivity by considering the ambiguous racialisation of Poles and people from CEE more broadly. The central question guiding this formulation is whether the expressions of empathy and Polish consciousness are confined within national borders, or whether they may circulate beyond Poland as well—particularly given the peripheral status of CEE within broader geopolitical histories and current struggles.

Although I draw on the notion of double consciousness in view of both LGBTQ+ and Polish subjectivities, my final theoretical contribution addresses the possibility of extending this framework by taking into account the plural and heterogeneous nature of the social fabric. For example, one could alternatively draw on Pan-Slavism, as this resonates more closely with Du Bois's Africanist aspirations, precisely because it transcends the limits of national identity and gestures toward the broader historical, geopolitical discursive configurations of CEE.

Although Pan-Slavism has been extensively appropriated by far-right actors, which cannot be ignored (see e.g., Witkowski, 2023), the invocation of a Slavic past and shared cultural customs or language does not need to be inherently nationalist or restrictive. I especially value the work of Maria Janion (2006), who mobilises politics of memory and Slavic cultural imaginaries to enable alternative articulations of national identity, rather than its continued fixation on religious or ethnonationalist frameworks. Moreover, given the growing popularity of vibrant cultural expressions of Slavism (Đorđević et al., 2023), it would constitute an epistemic failure to dismiss this terrain merely because it has also been instrumentalised for conservative-identitarian political purposes. To do so would not only concede this symbolic repertoire entirely to far-right actors but would also foreclose the possibility of critically reclaiming and reinterpreting Slavic imaginaries in more inclusive and plural ways. Engaging with these narratives, rather than abandoning them, opens space for counter-hegemonic articulations of subjecthood that challenge both ethnonationalist appropriations and Western-centric assumptions about CEE.

Arguably, one possible resolution to the puzzle lies in what could be called 'Slavic double consciousness,' which may serve as a framework for intellectual reclamation. In this study, this gaze may have been further fragmented by a queer subjectivity. To continue, rather than essentialising cultural artefacts as fixed

expressions of identity, this approach could interpret them as manifestations of a historically mediated and collectively shared mode of consciousness that has developed across CEE. In this sense, such artefacts do not reify an immutable “Slavic essence,” but instead articulate a reflexive awareness shaped by overlapping imperial legacies, geopolitical marginality, and cultural hybridity. Here, double consciousness does not suggest a new form of identity category, but a dynamic and critical orientation that has persisted across the region’s diverse societies. This might, perhaps, not only improve awareness of Europe’s racialised order but also contribute to a better understanding of how racist structures function and are reproduced.

That being said, I mobilise Du Bois’ theory not to minimise or downplay the xenophobia and racism present in contemporary Poland and CEE against BIPOC people, which must be taken seriously and situated within broader structural dynamics. Rather, I aim to account for the power differentials embedded in a hierarchical global system that produces difference. Ontologically fixing pale skin colour to race, or to an assumed form of white superiority, collapses these distinctions and obscures the region’s historically subordinate position within Europe’s racialised order. To offer an anecdotal illustration: when I recently showed Warsaw to a Dutch friend, their immediate remark was that the city felt “too white” for their liking. I responded, “You mean its history of being insufficiently colonising?” This simple example, I believe, illustrates how the absence of a vocabulary capable of adequately capturing these power differentials contributes to the perpetuation of injustices. Without such conceptual precision, the complex historical racialisation of Poles becomes flattened, reinforcing rather than challenging the hierarchies it seeks to describe.

## Conclusion

This article has examined how Poland’s LGBT-Free Z\*nes are interpreted and negotiated by LGBTQ+ Poles, drawing on online semi-structured interviews and mental mapping. I have shown that participants understand the Z\*nes as a form of state-sanctioned control that facilitates the dissemination of LGBTQ+phobia. Hence, while the participants encounter LGBTQ+phobia daily, they mainly blame the political elite for it, rather than their fellow Poles. This awareness, I argue, can be understood through the double consciousness the participants inhabit, in which marginalised LGBTQ+ subjectivities are in dialogue with their Polishness. This ongoing negotiation can be understood as a form of resourcefulness, enabling individuals to navigate a socio-political landscape marked by exclusion, discrimination, and surveillance. By mobilising Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness, the analysis demonstrated how

LGBTQ+ and Polish consciousnesses together make such negotiation possible.

Methodologically, the article has demonstrated how mental mapping, when combined with online semi-structured interviews, can surface different emotional subjectivities that may remain unarticulated through oral communication alone. The discussions surrounding the drawings elicited more vulnerable modes of being and expression when participants were invited to elaborate on their mental maps. By relying on an ‘epistemology of contradiction’ (O’Brien, 2009; 2010), I argue that this finding should not be treated as a limitation of the study but rather as analytically productive, illuminating the complexity and richness of marginalised subjectivities.

In alignment with Du Bois’ theoretical commitments, this study opens onto a broader research agenda: a sustained investigation into the boundaries of Polish consciousness, a domain that remains empirically unexplored here but is crucial for advancing the argument. It remains an open question to what extent this awareness translates into transformative political or epistemic practice, and whether articulations of CEE difference might carry emancipatory potential by moving beyond the imperative to emulate or uncritically “catch up” with the West, instead situating Polish subjectivity more reflexively within Europe’s racialised order (e.g., Lewicki, 2023; Nowicka, 2024). The article concludes by calling for further theoretical and empirical investigation into how geopolitical pasts and presents shape Poland’s shifting location within the global hierarchies of modernity, and how this positionality, in turn, informs the production of belonging, exclusion, and prejudice.

### **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank Dr. Kristina Kolbe and Dr. Olga Sezneva, who supervised me during my MA thesis. I am also grateful to Prof. Marta Bucholc, Marta Gospodarzyk, and the anonymous reviewers whose insightful feedback and thoughtful suggestions enhanced the structure and depth of this article. Most of all, I want to express my gratitude to the participants for their time and willingness to share their experiences and reflections.

## References

- Alcoff, L. (2006). *Visible Identities: Race, Gender and the Self*. Oxford University Press.
- Alcoff, L. (2015). *The Future of Whiteness*. Policy Press.
- Bagiński, P. (2024). Rainbow Patriotism: Sexual and Gender Minority Struggle for the Representation and Reproduction of Polishness. In: M. Bucholc (ed.), *Established-Outsiders Relations in Poland* (pp. 27–52). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Barton Hronešová, J. (2024). The Uses of Victimhood as a Hegemonic Meta-Narrative in Eastern Europe. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 32(2), 442–458. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2022.2110456>
- Blachnicka-Ciacek, D., Budginaite-Mackine, I. (2022). The Ambiguous Lives of “The Other Whites”: Class and Racialisation of Eastern European Migrants in the UK. *The Sociological Review*, 70(6), 1081–1099. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261221121218>
- Blachnicka-Ciacek, D., Urbańska, S. (2025). Eastern Europe’s “Peripheral Whiteness”: Class and Gender Racialisation among Polish Migrants and Returnees. *Identities*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2025.2510776>
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2010). Reflections about Race by a Negrito Acomplejao. In: M. Jiménez Román, J. Flores (eds.), *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States* (pp. 445–452). Duke University Press.
- Böröcz, J. (2021). “Eurowhite” Conceit, “Dirty White” Resentment: “Race” in Europe. *Sociological Forum*, 36(4), 1116–1133. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sof.12752>
- Böröcz, J., Sarkar, M. (2017). The Unbearable Whiteness of the Polish Plumber and the Hungarian Peacock Dance Around “Race”. *Slavic Review*, 76(2), 307–314. <https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2017.79>
- Bosman, M., Spronk, R., Giselinde, K. (2019). Verbalising Sensations: Making Sense of Embodied Sexual Experiences. *Qualitative Sociology*, 42, 411–430.
- Braun, V., Clark, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Bucholc, M. (2020). *Fencing Off the Difference. On LGBT-Free Zones: In Poland*. VerfBlog. <https://verfassungsblog.de/fencing-off-the-difference/>
- Bucholc, M. (2022). The Anti-LGBTIQ Campaign in Poland: The Established, the Outsiders, and the Legal Performance of Exclusion. *Law and Policy*, 44(1), 4–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lapo.12183>
- Bucholc, M., de Vries, I. (2025). The Back-and-Forth of Abortion Debates in Poland: Towards a Historical Understanding of the Misrecognition Gambit by the National Catholic Right. *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften*, 36(1), 149–169. <https://doi.org/10.25365/oezg-2025-36-1-8>
- Cianciara, A. K. (2025). Victimhood as a Legitimation Strategy of Populism in Power: The Case of Poland. *Contemporary European Politics*, 3, e70017. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cep4.70017>
- Council of Europe (CoE). (2020). *Memorandum on the Stigmatisation of LGBTI People in Poland*, CommDH(2020)27. Strasbourg: European Commission for Human

- Rights. <https://rm.coe.int/memorandum-on-the-stigmatisation-of-lgbti-people-in-poland/1680a08b8e/>
- Chojnicka, J. (2025). The Language of Anti-Gender Takeover of Space: The Case of “LGBT-Free” Zones in Poland. In: K. Bogetić (ed.), *Language, Gender and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 209–238). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chowaniec, U., Mazierska, E., Mole, R. (2021). Queer(in)g Poland in the 21st Century: How Was It at the Beginning of the Millennium? Introduction to This Special Issue on Queer Culture and the LGBTQ+ Movement in Poland. *Central Europe*, 19(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790963.2021.1920131>
- Ciriza, M. D. P., Marrin, I. A. (2024). Resistance to Critical Language Awareness: Understanding the Role of Social Class and Double Consciousness. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2024.2420081>
- Đorđević, V., Suslov, M., Čejka, M., Mocek, O., Hrabálek, M. (2023). Revisiting Pan-Slavism in the Contemporary Perspective. *Nationalities Papers*, 51(1), 3–13. <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.75>
- De Vries, I., Gospodarczyk, M. (2025). Polemics on Polish Progressiveness and Patriotism: a Fanonian Reading of National Consciousness. *East European Politics and Societies*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08883254251381837>
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1897, August). *Strivings of the Negro People*. The Atlantic Monthly. <https://cdn.theatlantic.com/media/archives/1897/08/80-478/131953250.pdf>
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1990 [1903]). *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford University Press.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (2007 [1940]). *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*. Oxford University Press.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1952). The Negro and the Warsaw Ghetto. *Jewish Life*, 6(10), 14–15.
- Fanon, F. (1967 [1952]). *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press.
- Giesecking, J. J. (2013). Where We Go From Here: The Mental Sketch Mapping Method and Its Analytic Components. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 19(9), 712–724.
- Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Verso.
- Götz, N., Holmén, J. (2018). Introduction to the Theme Issue: “Mental Maps: Geographical and Historical Perspectives. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 35(2), 157–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873631.2018.1426953>
- Grabowska, M. (2017). Religiosity, the Catholic Church, and Politics in Poland. In S. Ramet, I. Borowik (eds.), *Religion, Politics, and Values in Poland* (pp. 257–288). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hall, S. (2017). *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation*. Harvard University Press.
- Harding, S. (1988). The Science Question in Feminism. *Hypatia*, 3(1), 157–168.
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14, 575–599.
- Hawkins, O., Davis, E. (2024). The Future of Double Consciousness: Epistemic Virtue, Identity, and Structural Anti-Blackness. *Ergo an Open Access Journal of Philosophy*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.3998/ergo.5708>
- Herbert, D. (2019). Religion and Right Wing Populism in Poland: Impacts, Causes, Prospects. *Religion and Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, 12(1), 23–37.

- Janion, M. (2006). *Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna*. Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Jaworska, S. (2011). Anti-Slavic imagery in German Radical Nationalist Discourse at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: A Prelude to Nazi Ideology? *Patterns of Prejudice*, 45(5), 435–452. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2011.624762>
- Jerolmack, C., Khan, S. (2014). “Talk is Cheap”: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 43(2), 178–209. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124114523396>
- Jung, H. (2014). Let Their Voices Be Seen: Exploring Mental Mapping as a Feminist Visual Methodology for the Study of Migrant Women. *Int J Urban Reg Res*, 38(3), 985–1002. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12004>
- Kaisto, V., Wells, C. (2020). Mental Mapping as a Method for Studying Borders and Bordering in Young People’s Territorial Identifications. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 36, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2020.1719864>
- Knight, K. (2025, May 15). *Poland Ends ‘LGBT Free’ Zones, ‘Gender Ideology’ Panic Should Become a Relic of the Past*. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/16/poland-ends-lgbt-free-zones/>
- Korolczuk, E. (2020a). Counteracting Challenges to Gender Equality in the Era of Anti-Gender Campaigns: Competing Gender Knowledges and Affective Solidarity. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 27(4), 694–71. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxaa021>
- Korolczuk, E. (2020b). “Poland’s LGBT-Free Zones and Global Anti-Gender Campaigns.” ZOIS Spotlight 13/2020, Centre for East European and International Studies. <https://www.zois-berlin.de/en/publications/polands-lgbt-free-zones-and-global-anti-gender-campaigns>
- Korolczuk, E. (2020c). The Fight Against “Gender” and “LGBT Ideology”: New Developments in Poland. *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, 3(1), 165–167. <https://doi.org/10.1332/251510819X15744244471843>
- Kościńska, A. (2024) “There’s a Lot of Talk About Tolerance, but That’s Just Words”: Being Gay in Postsocialist Poland. In: J. Massino, M. Wien (eds.), *Everyday Post-socialism in Eastern Europe* (pp. 81–100). Purdue University Press.
- Kuźma-Markowska, W. (2025). The Anti-Abortion Movement, Catholic Church, and Communist State: Poland in the 1970s and 1980s. *The History of the Family*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1081602X.2025.2557550>
- Layne, A., Miles, E. (2022). Racial Identity and Language: Exploring the Afro-Brazilian Experience through the Lens of Du Bois’ Double Consciousness Theory. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(6), 2039–2047.
- Lamont, M., Swidler, A. (2014). Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing. *Qualitative Sociology*, 37(2), 153–71.
- Lewicki, A. (2023) East-West Inequalities and the Ambiguous Racialisation of “Eastern Europeans.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49(6), 1481–1499. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2022.2154910>
- Lynne, A. (2021). Paired Double Consciousness: A Du Boisian Approach to Gender and Transnational Double Consciousness in Thai Kathoey Self-Formation. *Social Problems*, 68, 250–266. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spaa073>

- Medina, J. (2013). Color Blindness, Meta-Ignorance, and the Racial Imagination. *Critical Philosophy of Race*, 1(1), 38–67. <https://doi.org/10.5325/critphilrace.1.1.0038>
- Meer, N. (2019). W. E. B. Du Bois, Double Consciousness and the “Spirit” of Recognition. *The Sociological Review*, 67(1), 47–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026118765370>
- Nayak, A. (2007). Critical Whiteness Studies. *Sociology Compass*, 1(2), 737–755. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00045.x>
- Nowicka, M. (2024). It is Antislavic Racism, or how to Speak about Liminality, Stigma, and Racism in Europe. *Sociology Compass*, e13190. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.13190>
- O’Brien, J. (2009). Sociology as an Epistemology of Contradiction. *Sociological Perspectives*, 52(1), 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2009.52.1.5>
- O’Brien, J. (2010). Seldom Told Tales from the Field: Guest Editor’s Introduction to the Special Issue. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 39(5), 471–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241613496702>
- Oliffe, J. L., Kelly, M.T., Gonzalez Montaner, G., Yu Ko, W.F. (2021). Zoom Interviews: Benefits and Concessions. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211053522>
- Olson, J. (2005). W.E.B. Du Bois and the Race Concept. *Souls*, 7(3–4), 118–128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999940500265532>
- Orne, J. (2013). Queers in the Line of Fire: Goffman’s Stigma Revisited. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 54, 229–253. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24581908>
- Owens Moore, T. (2005). A Fanonian Perspective on Double Consciousness. *Journal of Black Studies*, 35(6), 751–762. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934704263839>
- Pascoe, C. (2018). What to Do with Actual People? Thinking Through a Queer Social Science Method. In D. Compton, T. Meadow, K. Schilt (eds.), *Other, Please Specify: Queer Methods in Sociology* (pp. 291–303). University of California Press.
- Ploszka, A. (2023). From Human Rights to Human Wrongs. How Local Government Can Negatively Influence the Situation of an Individual. The Case of Polish LGBT Ideology-Free Zones\*. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 27, 359–379. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2022.2121708>
- Poblocki, K. (2015). How Poles Became White. In: M. Moskalewicz (ed.), *Halka/Haiti 18°48’05’’N 72°23’01’’W: C.T. Jasper & Joanna Malinowska* (pp. 107–119). Zachęta–National Gallery of Art and Inventory Press.
- Powell, K. (2010). Making Sense of Place: Mapping as a Multisensory Research Method. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16, 539–555. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410372600>
- Rafałowski, W. (2023). Proposing Anti-LGBTQIAP Resolutions at the Municipal Level in Poland: Meeting the Social Demand or Making Use of the Available Resources? *East European Politics and Societies*, 37(2), 627–655. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08883254221082133>
- Rucker-Chang, S., West Ohueri, C. (2021). A Moment of Reckoning: Transcending Bias, Engaging Race and Racial Formations in Slavic and East European Studies. *Slavic Review*, 80(2), 216–223. <https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2021.75>
- Safuta, A. (2018). Fifty Shades of White: Eastern Europeans’ ‘Peripheral Whiteness’ in the Context of Domestic Services Provided by Migrant Women. *Tijdschrift Voor Genderstudies*, 21(3), 217–231. <https://doi.org/10.5117/TVGN2018.3.002.SAFU>

- Staszewski, B. (2021, February 27). *How did it all begin? Here is a summery!* <https://lgbtfreezones.pl/2021/02/27/how-did-it-all-begin-here-is-a-summary/>
- Szumski, J., & Zarycki, T. (2025). The First “Unmodern” Nation: Germany and Poland’s Imperial Exclusion from Modernity. *European Journal of Social Theory*, Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310251367365>
- Ureña Valerio, L. A. (2019). *Colonial Fantasies. Imperial Realities. Race Science and the Making of Polishness on the Fringes of the German Empire, 1840–1920*. Ohio University Press.
- Witkowski, P. (2023). Intermarium or Hyperborea? Pan-Slavism in Poland After 1989. In: M. Suslov, M. Čejka, V. Đorđević (eds.), *Pan-Slavism and Slavophilia in Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 155–184). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wrześnińska, K. M. (2025). Aryans, Slavs, Poles: Racial Myths in the Polish Periodical Press at the Turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. *Historia Slavorum Occidentis*, 3(46), 153–175.
- Wrześniewska, M. (2017). Polityka w prasie – analiza prasoznawcza czasopisma „Niedziela” za rok 2016. In: M. Dajnowicz, A. Miodowski (eds.). *Polityka i politycy w prasie XX i XXI wieku. Prasa organizacji politycznych* (pp. 337–349). HUMANICA.
- Żuk, P., Pluciński, P., Żuk, P. (2021). The Dialectic of Neoliberal Exploitation and Cultural Sexual Exclusion: From Specific Economic Zones to LGBT Free Zones in Poland. *Antipode*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12721>
- Żuk, P., Żuk, P. (2019). Dangerous Liaisons Between the Catholic Church and State: The Religious and Political Alliance of the Nationalist Right with the Conservative Church in Poland. *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, 27(2–3), 191–212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25739638.2019.1692519>