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# One of the boys?

doing gender in Scouting

by: Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen



World Organization of the Scout Movement  
Organisation Mondiale du Mouvement Scout

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## PREFACE

This research report was commissioned by the *World Organization of the Scout Movement* (WOSM). I would like to thank WOSM for entrusting me with this very interesting and challenging research task, in particular the Director and Deputy Director of Youth Programme, *Dominique Bénard* and *Jacqueline Collier*, at the World Scout Bureau in Geneva for all their support and cooperation. I would also like to thank the *Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research* at the *University of Oslo* for providing me with workspace and an inspiring scholarly environment.

The project was carried out in collaboration with Scout leaders from different countries. They played an essential role in making this research project a reality, and most of their work in terms of data gathering and organising transcriptions and translations was done on a purely voluntary basis. My warm thanks to *Martin Kristensen*, *Jesper Schaumburg-Muller* and *Ulla Voelker* from Denmark, *Fernando Fradique* and *Lídia da Conceição dos Santos Pedro* from Portugal, *Yulia Bulanova*, *Egor Sergeev* and *Evgeniya Shamis* from Russia, and *Sona Figedyova* and *Zuzana Mazancova* from Slovakia. I would certainly also like to thank the leaders and young people in the troops studied in Denmark, Portugal, Slovakia and the Russian Federation (Bashkortostan and the Moscow region) for their hospitality and willingness to let their beloved Scout life be an object of study.

Several of my research colleagues in - and beyond - Norway took time to read various chapters of the report. This was an invaluable help, especially in terms of understanding the different national cultures. I am gratefully indebted to *Ann-Dorte Christensen*, *Ning De Coninck-Smith*, *Haldis Haukanes*, *Alexandra Leontieva* and *Sverre Varvin*. *Alexandra Leontieva* also helped me find statistics on Russia, and *Stein Terje Vikan* at UNECE (the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) in Geneva kindly checked other parts of the statistics. I thank them all!

The title of this report refers to "doing gender". Although this may seem to be an unusual expression, it is used consciously and you will soon understand what it means.

Oslo, October 1<sup>st</sup> 2002

Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen





# 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE GENDER PROJECT

## 1. Different, equal or one of the boys?

*One misty September morning in the year 1909 a little party of girls might have been seen arraying themselves in khaki shirts and wideawake hats, and setting forth with feverish excitement for the Crystal Palace, where they had heard there was to be a rally of Boy Scouts. The Chief himself was coming to inspect the boys – why should he not cast an eye on the Girls' Corps, which was prepared to render service in any conceivable emergency, and which surely deserved an approving glance?*

This depiction of the moment when girls officially entered the Scouting scene is taken from the opening words of Rose Kerr's book on the story of Girl Guides<sup>1</sup>. It was said that the founder, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, was taken by surprise when the girls showed up at the rally, but as Laszlo Nagy wrote: *'the girls stood their ground, and B.P. resigned himself to the inevitable'*.<sup>2</sup> However, the Founder had known about 'the girl problem' before the Crystal Palace rally. In 1908, he wrote about girls and Scouting in several issues of *The Scout*:

*I have had several quite pathetic letters from little girls asking me if they may share the delights of a Scouting life with the boys. But of course they may! I am always glad to hear of girls' patrols being formed.*<sup>3</sup>

Baden-Powell's initial reaction to the idea of girls as Scouts was, indeed, very modern for his time. He was critical of the contemporary ideal of women as mollycoddled dolls and preferred the ideal of women as men's partners and comrades. So why should the sporting and outdoor life of Scouting not be as healthy for girls as for boys, and why could they not receive the same training?

His Victorian mother talked him out of such an improper idea. She and other contemporary critics made him understand that girls were not boys, and strongly discouraged him from making toughness a central feature of Scouting for girls.<sup>4</sup> When the first guidelines for girls were published in the autumn of 1909 (in response to the fact that 6,000 girls had already enrolled as Boy Scouts), the difference between the genders was firmly reinstated. Girls should not be Scouts like the boys, but 'Guides'. They should be allowed to take part in Scouting activities (with some modifications), but their character training should be directed towards making them good mothers and moral guides for men:

*If we want the future manhood of the country to be men of character – which is the only guarantee of safety for the nation – it is essential in the first place that the mothers, and the future wives (the guides of those men), should also be women of character (...) With girls it has to be administered with great discrimination; you do not want to make tomboys of refined girls, yet you want to attract, and thus raise the slum-girl from the gutter. The main object is to give them all the ability to be better mothers and Guides to the next generation*<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to the somewhat reduced versions of the boys' activities, the recommended activities and badges for girls were homemaking and social work, such as cooking and nursing. In accordance with the spirit of the times, and also with the initial idea of the Scout Movement (which was to improve men and boys in order to save the crumbling British empire), the healthy, courageous and patriotic soldier was the model for a man of character; the healthy, competent and patriotic nurse and mother was the model for a woman of character.

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<sup>1</sup> Kerr, R. (1932). *The Story of The Girls Guides*. London, The Girl Guides Association. p.11.

<sup>2</sup> Nagy, L. (1985). *250 Million Scouts*. Chicago, Boston, London, Dartnell. p.64.

<sup>3</sup> Baden Powell in *The Scout* September 1908, qtd. in Jeal, T. (1989). *Baden-Powell*. London, Hutchinson. p.469.

<sup>4</sup> Jeal (1989):470.

<sup>5</sup> Headquarters Gazette, November 1909, as quoted in Kerr (1932):29.

Baden-Powell asked his sister Agnes to develop a separate movement for girls. As Agnes possessed a true Victorian outlook nobody '...would scoff at the idea of her being the President of a sort of Amazon Cadet Corps'<sup>6</sup>. Recollections of some of the first female Scouts testify to the girls' disappointment at this domestication<sup>7</sup>. As we shall see later, this narrow framework certainly had its contradictions and was also contested in practice. The model, however, was clear. Educating young people to assume proper gender roles became an explicit goal of Scouting, as in society at large. The first handbook for Girl Guides, which appeared in 1912, states that '*Its aim is to get girls to learn how to be women*'. And to the girls themselves, it is explained that:

*Girls will do no good imitating boys. Do not be a bad imitation. It is far finer to be a real girl, such as no boy can be. One loves a girl who is sweet and tender, and who can gently soothe when wearied with pain. Some girls like to do Scouting, but Scouting for girls is not the same as for boys. The chief difference in the training (...) is that Scouting for boys makes for MANLINESS, but the training for Guides makes for WOMANLINESS (...)*<sup>8</sup>

Using modern concepts, Baden-Powell's first response to 'the girl problem' could be said to be one of *gender equality*, while the second -and implemented - response was one of *gender complementarity*. While presenting a modern view of his times, he nevertheless incorporates a problem we still struggle with today when women enter male-dominated organisations: the implicit *gender hierarchy* that comes with formal gender equality. Manliness becomes the universal norm that women should also be allowed to strive towards, while the corresponding idea (i.e. that men should be allowed to be womanly), appears odd and almost unthinkable. In the essay '*Can Girls Be Scouts?*' B.P. writes:

*I think girls can get as much healthy fun and as much value out of Scouting as boys can (...) As to pluck women and girls can be just as brave as men and have over and over again proved it in times of danger. But for some reason it is not expected of them and consequently it is seldom made part of their education, although it ought to be, for courage is not always born in people, but can generally be made by instruction (...) Hundreds of examples could be produced to show that women and girls can be as brave as men, especially if, like Scouts, they prepare themselves for it beforehand, and make up their minds that they will see the danger through and not lose their heads and squeal and faint.*<sup>9</sup>

Women can be *as brave as men*. Squealing and fainting dolls can benefit by learning from men, while the idea that the norm of manliness could itself be changed and improved never comes to the mind. This also implies that womanliness per se represents a threat to manliness. In the USA where separate organisations for girls and boys still prevail, the arguments against coeducation have explicitly been that the standards of manliness could be endangered by admitting women.<sup>10</sup> However, in coeducated organisations, manliness is most often held to be a universal norm for both genders. When a hidden gender hierarchy is present, as well as the principle of gender equality, the result is a situation in which girls are allowed to become 'one of the boys', while boys can remain boys.

Mixed-gender settings became the dominant model in European Scouting during the 1970s. In some cases, associations for girls and associations for boys merged. In other cases, associations for girls chose to stay female-only, because they feared that merging would be on the boys' premises. In such cases, many associations for boys decided, of their own accord, to open membership to girls. The object of this project is to study some of the current effects of the situation in which girls have been admitted into previously boy-only associations. Was it an invitation to become 'one of the boys', with traditional masculine values as a universal norm, or an effort to create true equity in the organisation? Was the change of the word 'boys' to the

<sup>6</sup> Kerr (1932):37. See also Voeltz, R. A. (1988). Adam's Rib: The Girl Guides and an Imperial Race. [San Jose Studies, California](#).

<sup>7</sup> See for instance Romme, H. (1985). Pigespejderliv: En ungdomstilværelse i historisk belysning. [Ungdommens historie](#). C. Clausen. København, Tiderne Skifter., and Tedesco, L. (1998). Making a Girl into a Scout: Americanizing Scouting for Girls. [Delinquents & Debutantes: Twentieth-Century American Girls' Cultures](#). S. A. Inness. New York and London, New York University Press: 19-39., and Summers, A. (1987). "Scouts, Guides and VADs: a note in reply to Allen Warren." [English Historical Review](#) **102**: 943-947.

<sup>8</sup> Baden-Powell, A. and R. Baden-Powell (1912). [The Handbook for Girl Guides or How Girls Can Help Build the Empire](#). London, Thomas Nelson and Sons. (Capitalised words are as they appear in the original texts.)

<sup>9</sup> Baden-Powell, R. (1908). Can Girls Be Scouts? [The Scout](#).

<sup>10</sup> Tedesco (1998):24.

word 'young people' in the constitution of the World Organization of the Scout Movement in 1977 a cosmetic or a real change in the practice of Scouting? These questions inform the present project. So does the dilemma between equality or difference *within* the framework of coeducation: are boys and girls different kinds of human beings who should learn to complement and respect each other, or are they basically equal individuals, with the same potentials, duties and rights?

## 2. The Research Project on Gender and Education in Scouting

### 2.1 Background

Although, from early on, a large number of women have been involved in Scouting as leaders of the youngest age section (Cub Scouts), the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) officially became open to both genders in 1977.<sup>11</sup> However, the tensions between equality and difference prevailed until 1999: up until this time, the goal of coeducation was described as ensuring that '*the relationship between males and females is one of equality and complementarity*'.<sup>12</sup> In 1999, an official policy on girls and boys, women and men within the Scout Movement, adopted by the World Scout Conference in Durban, South Africa, gave a clearer priority to the equality perspective. The point was no longer that men and women are different, but that both are individuals to be respected. The Scout Movement now declared its commitment:

- *to the fulfilment of its educational purpose: to contribute to the education of young people, females and males, as equals and on the basis of the needs and aspirations of each individual*
- *to the principles of equal opportunities and equal partnership*
- *to reach, in societies where mixed gender relations are the norm, a situation where gender equality is a reality in terms of youth programme, adult resources, management and all other aspects of the Movement at all its levels*<sup>13</sup>

Also, in the new youth programme documents published by the European Scout Region in 1998, it was recognised that traditional and complementary gender roles were being brought into question in Europe. Thus, from an educational perspective, it is seen as important to enable each individual to develop his or her full potential without being restricted to traditional male or female roles. This also implies a need to counterbalance traditional learning processes for both boys and girls:

*This means that boys should be given opportunities to develop their relationship and communication skills, and girls should be given opportunities to develop their assertiveness, competitive spirit and ability to deal with conflicts. There is, therefore, no need to define different educational objectives for girls and boys, but the educational objectives should be adapted according to individual needs.*<sup>14</sup>

Thus, here we have, for the first time, a clear awareness and dismissal of the hidden gender hierarchy. What was also acknowledged in the 1999 policy on gender was that coeducation requires more than simply bringing both genders together. Equal opportunities for boys and girls, men and women have therefore become one of the priorities in WOSM's strategic plan for the first decade of the new millennium:

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<sup>11</sup> Originally, WOSM was an organisation for boys, and the corresponding organisation for girls was WAGGGS. WOSM's decision to officially open membership to both genders, crystallised by a constitutional amendment in 1977, was not initiated by the world leadership, but was the result of strong pressure from the field where girls had already joined. WAGGGS did not want to give up their own identity and thus remained a girls-only organisation, whereas WOSM today comprises mixed-gender organisations, as well as a few boys-only organisations.

<sup>12</sup> Cited from the pamphlet *Coeducation*, WOSM 1992. The underlining is mine.

<sup>13</sup> Policy on girls and boys, women and men within the Scout Movement. Document 9, 35<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference, South Africa, 1999. WOSM.

<sup>14</sup> Renewed Approach to Programme (RAP), p.64. European Scout Region, WOSM 1998.

*Scouting in most associations has developed from a male organization. Although girls and women may have been members for many years, often not enough consideration has been given to their needs, the programme, leadership opportunities and structures to enable girls and women to participate fully. This can often be clearly seen in membership statistics in National Scout Organizations.*<sup>15</sup>

The present study is part of the implementation of the 1999 policy, and is a pilot study for possible educational follow-up of the strategic priority established in 2002. In cooperation with the European Scout Region, WOSM's Educational Methods Group launched the *Research Project on Gender and Education in Scouting* in 2001 in order to gain information about such questions as:

- Does the Movement take the needs and aspirations of both girls and boys into account when designing the educational programmes?
- Are adult leaders able to carefully observe and analyse what is really happening in the field?
- Are they keen to improve their current practices to ensure that each individual girl and boy is given opportunities to develop him/herself fully?

The intention was that the long-term impact of the project would be an increased awareness of the importance of gender at all levels of the Scout Movement, stronger motivation to change current practices, and improved youth programmes.<sup>16</sup>

The project was conceived as having two successive parts. *Part one* should contribute to understanding more about current gender practices in Scouting. *Part two* should find methods to change these into a more a conscious practice of gender equity, which includes:

- ensuring that each individual is given opportunities to develop his or her personal identity and full potential despite gender role conventions;
- assisting each individual to free him/herself from gender stereotypes both in his or her self-conception and in the conception of others, and teaching them to cooperate on the basis of respect and equity.

The study presented in this report is *Part one* of the *Research Project on Gender and Education in Scouting*. It was conducted by Professor Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen, from the Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research at the University of Oslo, in collaboration with Scout leaders from different countries, who worked as research assistants:

*Martin Kristensen, Jesper Schaumburg-Muller and Ulla Voelker* from Denmark, *Fernando Fradique and Lídia da Conceição dos Santos Pedro* from Portugal, *Yulia Bulanova, Egor Sergeev and Evgeniya Shamis* from Russia, and *Sona Figedyova and Zuzana Mazancova* from Slovakia.

From each country the research assistants included at least one local participant (a member of the group to which the studied troop belonged), and one national representative (who was not a member of the group). The research assistants contributed to the collection of data and ensured their translation into English. Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen was scientifically responsible for the project, including the analysis of data and the writing of the report. Coordination and practical support were provided by the World Scout Bureau in Geneva, in particular by Jacqueline Collier, Deputy Director, Youth Programme. The project was designed through a collaborative process between Jacqueline Collier and Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen to ensure that essential aspects of Scouting, as well as essential aspects of gender and methodological considerations were included.

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<sup>15</sup> Towards 2007 and beyond: A Strategy for World Scouting. WOSM, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> WONDERnews, issue 6, July/August 2001.

## 2.2 Project design

### **Sample and methods**

The *aim* of this part of the project was to *gain knowledge about the implicit and explicit understanding of gender underlying youth programme implementation in local Scout units*. The focus was on the *Scout age section*, aged 11-15 years. This section comprises different constellations of age and gender (latency, prepuberty, puberty, and early adolescence), and is also an age section during which many young people decide to leave Scouting.

Four different *countries* were involved in the study: *Denmark, Portugal, Russia and Slovakia*. From the Russian Federation, a Russian region and an independent republic were included. The countries/regions were chosen to provide a contrast with regard to gender culture and religion, but pragmatic considerations also played a part. These included the interest expressed by the national Scout organisation and the availability of appropriate research assistants. As regards religion, *Protestant, Catholic, Russian Orthodox and Muslim* creeds are dominant in the respective countries/regions selected. The sample covers a *Nordic, a South European, and an Eastern European gender culture*. While a model of gender equality is hegemonic in the Nordic countries today, a model of gender difference has prevailed in Southern Europe (although the situation is changing). In different ways, Russia and Eastern Europe combine traits of both models. This is due both to the gender politics of the Communist states and to the fact that these societies are also undergoing processes of rapid change. An imbalance in the sample may be that three of the four countries are new democracies. On the other hand, the gender regimes installed by the Communists and by Portugal's Salazar respectively were very different, and so were the consequences for Scouting during these periods.

A *qualitative approach* to data collection and data analysis was chosen. Qualitative research works with small-scale samples with the aim of identifying social processes and patterns of meaning in specific contexts. In order to assure contextual knowledge, we chose to do a *case study of one troop in each country* (two in Russia). The troops were basically selected according to pragmatic considerations, as we needed one research assistant from each troop. Nonetheless, we also tried to establish a varied sample with regard to religious affiliation, ethnic composition and community. Other differences were more coincidental. In qualitative research it is usually better to obtain a varied sample (or even to maximise contrast) than to try to match the different dimensions of the cases. The reasons for this are that the sample is too small to take into account all the relevant dimensions in a systematic way and that statistical generalisation is neither possible nor relevant in qualitative research. A comparison of individual items makes little sense when the point is to identify context-dependent meaning. The patterns of meaning discovered can, of course, be discussed and compared, but never independently of the context. Thus, reducing the numbers of controlled independent variables in favour of more multifarious variations often proves to be a better choice. However, it requires a careful description of the sample to enable the reader to judge the conclusions.

In addition to the context of Scouting and the chosen arenas of observation (summer camps and other troop activities), there were broad similarities in our cases. These included the chosen age section (11-15 years) and the young people's social background (mainly middle class). At the same time, there were differences in a number of dimensions such as national context, community, religious affiliation, ethnic composition, size, gender distribution and organisation of the troop. Thus, two troops were located in *big cities*, two in *medium size towns*, and one in a *small town/village*. Three of the troops belonged to *open organisations*, two were *confessional*. Ethnically, only one troop was of a *heterogeneous composition*, while the others were very *homogeneous* (all the members belonged to the country's dominant ethnic group). One of the troops, however, included two *disabled* children.<sup>17</sup> Four of the troops were *mixed*, while the Slovak case consisted of two *gender-segregated* troops, as this is still the dominant form of organisation in this country. Finally, the *size and gender distribution* varied, and there was some variation in the range of ages within the chosen age section:

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<sup>17</sup> These children were not included in the observations and interviews. However, their presence in the troop seemed to influence how the leaders' thought about Scouting (see Chapter 6).

<b>Selected troops</b>	<i>Population in the country (in millions)</i>	<i>Local community</i>	<i>Dominant religion</i>	<i>Open or confessional</i>	<i>Female participation in the national association</i>	<i>Gender composition and age range in the troop<sup>18</sup></i>	<i>Other diversities in the troop</i>
<i>Russia I Moscow region</i>	144	Medium town	Russian Orthodox	Open	50% <sup>19</sup>	Mixed, 14-15 years, 6 girls and 8 boys	Homogeneous
<i>Russia II Rep. of Bashkortostan</i>	144	Big city	Muslim	Open	43%	Mixed, 8-14 years, 18 girls and 24 boys	Heterogeneous as to religion (Islam and Orthodox) and ethnicity (Russians, Tatars, and Baskirians)
<i>Slovakia</i>	5.4	Medium town	Catholic	Open	43%	Segregated, 12-15 years, 23 girls, 13 boys	Homogeneous
<i>Portugal</i>	10	Small town/village	Catholic	Roman Catholic Church	42%	Mixed, 11-15 years, 10 girls and 12 boys	Homogeneous, two disabled members
<i>Denmark</i>	5.3	Big city	Protestant	Protestant State Church	41%	Mixed, 11-15 years, 3 girls and 15 boys	Homogeneous

The specific dimensions in the sample are important to keep in mind when assessing and comparing patterns. For instance, the relatively friendly relations I found between boys and girls in the Russian troops may have to do with the dominance of either somewhat younger (Bashkortostan) or somewhat older (Moscow region) children, and the strong dominance of boys that I found in the Danish troop may be related to the uneven balance of boys and girls. However, in some ways, these differences make sense in terms of the general traits of the gender culture in these countries. Thus, patterns can be influenced by several contexts. It is also important to be aware of cases in which the dimensions have led to maximised contrasts. Such a maximised contrast can be seen in the case of Denmark vs. Portugal: the Danish troop comes from the most modernised and individualised culture and from a big city, while the Portuguese troop comes from a small town and the least modernised/individualised culture. Perhaps the difference would have been somewhat reduced if we had studied a Danish troop from a small town and a Portuguese troop from Lisbon or Porto. The point is not that this would have been better, but that it would have been different.

Finally, differences in the size of the troops had an impact on the kind of data obtained with the methods chosen. Participatory observation of the big groups in Bashkortostan and Slovakia necessarily led to much more superficial or selective information, whereas a closer follow-up was possible in the three other camps in which only approximately 10 young people were present. The girls and boys interviewed also constituted a more selective sample in the big troops than in the small ones. For instance, in the Danish troop (which only had three girls), it was possible to interview all of the girls, while in Slovakia, the three girls interviewed only constituted a small sample of the 23 girls in the troop. These imbalances could partly have been compensated by longer periods of observation in two of the camps and more interviews, but this was not feasible within the time frame of the project.

<sup>18</sup> There may be some minor inaccuracies in the numbers, as they changed during the year of the study. As this was of little general importance, I have not checked that all numbers are from the same date. During the year that passed between the summer camp observations and the interviews, the age and leader status of some young people also changed. I have only been specific on this point when it was significant for the interpretation.

<sup>19</sup> The figures from Russia are for the regions, not the associations, and only for the age group 12-15.

## Data

I visited the summer camp of each troop during July and August 2001, and did a *two-day ethnographic observation*, which was subsequently written up as a field report.<sup>20</sup> Concerning the two Russian summer camps, the national research assistant, Evgeniya Shamis, who has an academic research background, also wrote field reports. The research assistants conducted *observations of a minimum of four troop or patrol meetings* in the spring of 2002 and sent me their field reports translated into English.

*Interviews* were conducted with a *group of adult leaders of both genders, a group of girls and a group of boys*, also in the spring of 2002. As far as possible, the persons observed during the summer camps were also the ones interviewed. The interview guides (see Appendix II) focused on what it meant to be a Scout for the interviewees, what they enjoyed most and least in Scouting, what they believed characterised a Scout, and what their experiences and opinions were regarding girls and boys in general, in Scouting and in terms of leadership. The research assistants conducted these interviews and were also responsible for ensuring that the tapes from the interviews were transcribed and translated into English.<sup>21</sup> The adult leaders were interviewed by someone who did not belong to their group.

In addition to this, the research assistants completed *four desk tasks* for each case (see Appendix I) with information on:

- 1) the national Scouting system (history, organisation, membership, educational system and principles, special features);
- 2) the troop selected for the study (community, membership profile, organisation, leadership, special features);
- 3) the troop's programme in 2001/2002; and
- 4) gender structures in the country and the research assistant's personal impressions of gender cultures and norms of child rearing.

The names of the troops, their communities and the names of individuals have been deleted or changed in order to protect personal identity.

## 2.3 Evaluation of the research process

A two-day observation study in each camp is not much, but as I have many years of experience in observing gender relations at this age level, I believe these intense days gave me a fairly good picture of the main features of the interaction with regard to gender. This was also confirmed when compared to other parts of the data, collected by others. In general, the validity of the data relies partly on the combination of many different perspectives and sources of information concerning the particular troop and country. Comparative cultural research, however, represents many - partly unsolvable - methodological problems. In this research project, in which the project leader was not familiar with the language or culture of four of the five cases and as only a few of the research assistants had adequate knowledge of research and research methodology, these problems are amplified. Further on in this chapter, I will discuss some general methodological aspects of the study and my position as an outsider and a foreigner. In this section, I would like to provide further details concerning the process of collaboration between the research assistants and myself, including their comments.

The research assistants played a vital role in making this project a reality. Not only because of the language problem (the use of translators could have solved that), but they also facilitated access to the field, and were an enormous help in view of the very tight time schedule for the project. Less than 16 months (of which I, as project leader, was engaged totally for 7 months) passed from the first training session of the research assistants to the completion of the final report. It would have been impossible for me to gather all the data by myself. In addition, the research assistants took care of many important practical matters such as making appointments and arranging my camp visits. The days I spent with the research assistants in the summer camps were wonderful experiences that gave me essential first-hand knowledge about Scouting and gender – which I could not have obtained without them. They explained everything to me and answered my endless questions both at this point and later in the process. They also

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<sup>20</sup> In most cases from the afternoon of Day 1, to noon of Day 3, i.e. one full day plus one afternoon and morning.

<sup>21</sup> In the Danish case study, I conducted the interviews with the adult leaders and the group of girls myself. As Danish is my mother tongue, it was not necessary to translate either the interviews or the observations into English.



functioned as important informants concerning the local and national cultures. I am very grateful for their helpfulness, openness, sincerity and hospitality!

At the same time, this model of cooperation was not without problems. One was that the time schedule for the project was too much of a strain on the research assistants who did the job entirely on a voluntary basis. The only paid work was for the transcriptions and translations of interviews. The number of desk tasks, in combination with attending training courses, conducting observations and interviews, was simply too much. This led to some serious problems in terms of meeting deadlines, delayed answers to urgent e-mails, etc. In some cases, the situation created a somewhat strained relationship, especially as I was approaching the deadline for the report. If WOSM were to consider undertaking a similar project on another occasion, the time schedule and the work load on volunteer research assistants must be balanced better.

I invited the research assistants to express their views on their involvement in the project. Five of them took the opportunity to do so.<sup>22</sup> They agreed that the project represented more work and time than they had foreseen, especially concerning conducting interviews, transcribing and translating them. Other problems included the extent of their knowledge of English, different cultural mentalities (for instance, in relation to interpreting the task, difficulties in finding valid and updated statistics, and the fact that the research assistants themselves were dependent on other people who could not always produce what they had promised). As one of the assistants wrote, the time schedule was too short in view of the inevitable problems related to 'the human factor'.

Another problem was the general lack of research training and relatively low awareness of gender questions. Only two of the research assistants had research experience and few had seriously considered the question of gender equality prior to this project. During the camp visits, at times I had the impression that some of the research assistants were most content with the situation, and even wanted to demonstrate to me how cleverly gender relations were handled in their country! The reason for this approach may, of course, have been that they wanted me (as an outsider) to gain a positive impression of their culture and of Scouting, but it may also be related to some traditions in Scouting: a competitive spirit, or wanting to present positive, albeit rather stereotypical, images of one's culture to others (as in, for instance, the frequently held 'international evenings'). In most cases, however, the research assistants were eager to grasp the new perspective offered.

To prepare and qualify the research assistants for the tasks, two two-day training courses in Geneva and Denmark were arranged prior to the collection of data, and relevant literature on gender was distributed for reading. The first training course gave an introduction to key concepts in gender studies, while the second focused on research methodology and ethical issues related to qualitative research. Generally speaking, my impression was that this training was of limited value. One reason for this was, no doubt, that my approach was far too academic, with heavy loads of rather abstract information. Another was the varied levels of English. In addition, four of the ten assistants attended only one or none of the training sessions.

Nonetheless, four out of five of the research assistants who provided me with their comments expressed their satisfaction with the training. They found it gave them an entirely new view on gender and equal opportunities and introduced them to many useful concepts and perspectives. Those who had not conducted interviews before found this to be a challenging and instructive experience. These four, however, all have university degrees, so this may well explain the fact that they were not overwhelmed by the academic approach. The fifth research assistant was somewhat less satisfied. He believed that the whole project was strongly biased towards girls' problems from the very start, and that a joint leadership including both genders would have given a more balanced view. All five, however, enjoyed being part of an international and cross-cultural project, and found learning about other countries' experiences very useful for the development of their national organisations. Four research assistants were eager to continue the project and put the conclusions into practice, while the fifth was sceptical about the idea of the Scout Movement addressing gender questions in society.

All these circumstances have, of course, had consequences on the data collected by the research assistants. The quality is uneven, even within the individual case studies - some tasks were managed excellently, others rather poorly. Field observations, in particular, proved to be a difficult task. Conducting observation studies of gender depends on technical skills, conceptual knowledge, and a critical awareness of gender. Conducting appropriate interviews requires the same knowledge and skills, but also requires interview skills such as knowing when to expand

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<sup>22</sup> One from each country, two from Russia.

questions and how to ask for further information. These abilities were not always present. In some cases, the interviewer found it difficult to get the young people to express themselves. Others had difficulties in distinguishing between their role as a researcher and their role as an educator (for instance, by being more preoccupied with the need for the young people to give 'the correct Scout answer' than with exploring their views). When data was judged to be of dubious quality, the information was mainly used to look for items that would disconfirm the patterns found in better parts of the data. As far as possible, within the limited time available, I also checked the factual information provided as a result of the desk tasks.

A further problem was connected to language. English is not my mother tongue, nor is it that of the research assistants. However, it was the only possible working language common to us, and it was also the language in which the data needed to be provided. I was not able to control the quality of the translations. The parts of the interviews that appeared unclear were discussed with the research assistants, who then improved the clarity of the text. I also found it necessary to correct the language in quotes from interviews, observations and desk tasks, in order to make them comprehensible for the readers, and I asked the research assistants to be careful to check that the meaning remained intact. However, I have no guarantee that this was actually done. The fact that the project involved several languages (and the fact that numerous people were involved in translating the data) is a general methodological weakness of the report that must be kept in mind.

### **3. Analytical approaches**

#### **3.1 Making everyday life visible**

Quantitative and qualitative methods of research aim at producing different *kinds* of knowledge. In qualitative methods, the focus is on meaning in context, and meaning as something that arises in interaction among people. When the topic is gender in Scouting we may ask such questions as: In what ways may it be different to be a 14-year-old girl and a 14-year-old boy in a Russian summer camp? How may a Danish Scout leader's concepts of gender influence his planning and his assessment of boys and girls as Scouts? How may Slovak boys' behaviour in a camp affect a Slovak girl's opportunities for development? Why is it so difficult for a Portuguese girl patrol leader to gain control over the younger boys in her patrol? The point is to identify and describe processes and patterns of meaning, and to understand them by locating them in relevant contexts and by comparing them to other patterns in other contexts. Validity is not assessed by representativeness, but by the extent to which the analysis offers new ways of looking at things and new ideas concerning how to interpret and understand what goes on around us.

In the present study, the aim is *to suggest how gender may function* in different contexts and on different levels. The approach is exploratory, as one does not know exactly what one is looking for in advance. The categories of understanding are the result of the research, not the starting point. Thus, qualitative research may lead to rich knowledge about how things work in certain contexts, but it is very dependent on the researcher's interpretations, and the question of generalisation cannot be given any definitive answer. It is very likely that the patterns described will also be found in other contexts, but this is up to the readers to judge from their knowledge of other specific contexts. Will some readers recognise the Portuguese girl patrol leader's problem in gaining authority, not only as a phenomenon in other troops in Portugal, but also in troops in other countries? Is it only the Danish Scout leader whose concepts of gender influence his programme planning? There will be similarities and differences across contexts, but the findings of qualitative research basically offer a way of looking at known situations with new glasses.

Quantitative research works according to another logic. Here one assumes the relevant categories of meaning in advance and investigates their prevalence and possible relationships. By using surveys, for instance, we can answer such questions as how many girls are already - or would like to become - patrol leaders compared to boys, or whether boys and girls prefer different activities in Scouting. Such a formalised and more context-free approach makes it possible to work with large samples. The findings can give us valuable points of orientation, but only on a very general level. The focus is not on context, process and meaning (as in qualitative research), but on numbers, average measures and correlations. It may be a starting point to know whether girls want to be patrol leaders to the same extent as boys, but we would not learn much about gender and Scouting from this alone. It would not enable us to discover why they would like it, why the others would not like it, or whether they like it or dislike it for the

same or different reasons. In order to answer such questions, we have to understand people's perspectives about the world in a broader sense, and how different people's perspectives and behaviour interfere with each other. The questions asked are of a different kind, not 'How many...?', but 'What does it mean?' and 'How is it done?'.

Obtaining such information requires asking people not just about their attitudes, but also about the reasons and thoughts behind such attitudes, and studying what they do in practice. What *we say* and what *we do* often tell very different stories. This is why it may be useful to combine interviews and observations as well as consulting published sources that can help us to understand the reference framework. The reason for the discrepancy between what we say and what we do has to do with the context. In an interview, you are asked to make general statements and the concrete examples you may choose to illustrate these statements will be either hypothetical or highly selective. In an actual situation, the context for your acts become specific, it may elicit behaviour that you did not foresee when talking generally. You may do things that you had not planned to do, are not aware that you are doing, and you may even do things that actually go against your best intentions.

The concept that meaning is tied to context and to interaction applies both to what people say and what they do. Social life and shared cultural meanings are more than the sum of individual perspectives, however important they may be. The focus of our project is to understand what gender means and how it is expressed within the shared cultural context of Scouting. By combining many perspectives we may paint a picture that transcends the knowledge of the individual participant. The meaning of gender in Scouting cannot be understood by examining all of the participants as individuals. It arises from the interaction between them – adult leaders, boys and girls – in interplay with the institutional frameworks and values. Thus, it is necessary to interview participants with different positions in the field, observe what they do when they interact, study written material from organisations, but also to continuously see all these things in relation to each other. It is not the individual item, but the combination of them that gives rise to the meaning patterns of the specific culture. It is like collecting a jigsaw puzzle, where each piece contributes to a pattern that nobody is fully aware of.

Participating in social patterns that one does not fully understand can be compared to what we do when we speak our mother tongue: we can do it to perfection, without knowing a single grammatical rule. Social life and cultural meaning are what arise out of myriads of small, everyday, interactions and episodes in which, together, we repeat, negotiate and revise the 'social grammar' of our culture. *Ethnographic observation*<sup>23</sup> is a suitable method to make such patterns of everyday life visible. It does not work with predefined categories, but it describes, in a way that is as concrete and as detailed as possible, the social interaction in a group of people during a period of time. While, of course, the research questions will guide attention, the patterns in the interaction will often only reveal themselves afterwards. For instance, the following little insignificant episode from the Danish camp gained its full meaning for me only when I later realised the recurrent patterns in this troop of girls who were eager to serve the boys, and of boys and girls who found girlishness ridiculous:

*One of the leaders says they should wash their hands before they prepare the meat. Henrik asks if anyone has any soap. Camilla fetches her soapbox, gives it to him, and is teased because it is pink.*

The limit of the observational method, however, is that we do not know what significance this episode has for Henrik or Camilla, or whether the adult leader even noticed it. Did Henrik expect Camilla to fetch what he needed? Was Camilla hurt by the teasing or did she enjoy the attention? Why did she bring a pink soapbox and not a blue or green one? Does she agree that girlishness is ridiculous? Did any of them notice the episode at all? The observer can certainly ask questions at the time, but too many of them will quickly ruin the interaction she came to see. Thus, a better choice is to interview Camilla, Henrik and the leader on a later occasion, encourage them to talk about how they perceive differences between boys and girls at summer camp, and try to relate this information to the observations. Because the focus lies in the way gender expresses itself in a shared social setting, we chose to do group interviews instead of individual interviews. By interviewing groups of adult leaders, boys and girls, we may better discern - and distinguish between - the common norms in the particular group and individual opinions.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Hammersley, M. and P. Atkinson (1983). *Ethnography. Principles in Practice*. London, Tavistock., gives a good introduction to the methodology of ethnographic observation.

<sup>24</sup> For practical reasons, however, some of the interviews were conducted individually (the Portuguese girls, the adult leaders in Slovakia and Bashkortostan). Compared with the group interviews, it is evident that some of the social information was lost as a result.

### 3.2 Levels of meaning

Qualitative research analyses meaning in context. But what does 'meaning' mean?

When we see, do, think or say something we always do so within certain cultural frameworks of understanding and on the basis of certain presuppositions about what we consider to be normal or abnormal, wanted or unwanted, expected or unexpected. From this perspective, when we talk about our experiences and make up our opinions, we are not only interpreting the world, but we are also constructing it through our mental models. The human mind constructs the world it inhabits, and our different ways of doing this say something about how we see ourselves and where we come from. When we speak and act, the implicit frameworks of understanding speak and act through us, just as much as we speak and act through them. In cultural studies today, concepts such as 'discourse' or 'figured worlds' try to grasp this situation. Similarly to the concept of 'social grammar' (which refers to the implicit rules for social interaction), they address the unspoken assumptions behind what we say and do. The concept of *figured worlds* refers to the kind of implicit knowledge that indicates what a normal, sensible and possible course of action would be, and thus makes it possible for people to recognise social situations and act more or less spontaneously. *Discourses* are linguistic constructions (ways of talking about specific topics) that make some things appear self-evident and natural, and make other things seem deviant and unnatural. In this way, discourses also contribute to maintaining hegemonies and thus legitimising power and authority.<sup>25</sup> Ideas concerning child development, gender or Scouting make up such discursive formations - of which some are hegemonic and give implicit standards for what is wanted and unwanted. This is also why history has to be written anew for each new generation or from different perspectives. The historical sources can be extended or remain the same, but the interpretation may differ. Historical accounts of Scouting, for instance, are a good example of how inside and outside perspectives may inform the constructions of the historical facts. Nobody is lying, but information can be selected, arranged and interpreted in different ways, and, of course, the perspective can have been more or less tested against reliable historical sources.<sup>26</sup>

When we express our opinions about something or act in certain ways, we take up a position that is made possible by a discursive formation. Within a discourse of gender difference, for instance, the idea of gender equality appears as something that goes against the natural order of things. To fuss about who is doing the talking or the dishes appears to be a highly constructed problem. Within a discourse of gender equality, on the other hand, it becomes visible that the concept of nature that lies behind the gender difference discourse is in itself a construction and that the reduction of the dish washing to 'fuss' is a way of exercising hegemonic power. Neither party has a privileged access to the truth, both rely on different constructions of the world. Views and actions that are thinkable and desirable in concrete situations are dependent on such constructions. As we saw earlier, Baden-Powell's initial idea of training girls in the same ways as boys was not only improper, but close to being unthinkable within a Victorian discourse on fundamental gender differences. And his own efforts to formulate a different view were implicitly tied to a discourse of gender hierarchy in which the superiority of masculine values was taken for granted. Today a programme for girls explicitly aimed at making them good mothers and moral guides for men is close to being an unthinkable position within most European discourses on gender, while an implicit discourse of gender hierarchy still fuels meaning into many contemporary opinions on gender.

A further point is that people inhabit several - often quite contradictory - discourses. We are able to take different positions within different discourses, or make some discourses relevant in some situations, but not in others. Sometimes we think girls and boys are just individuals, sometimes we think they are fundamentally different, and we are all able to make such discursive switches within the same utterance. Some years ago I met a Scout leader who was very much in favour of coeducation and gender equality in Scouting. She herself, however, only had boys in her troop because there was a long waiting list, and she thought it unjust to start to take in girls when there was not yet enough room for all the boys. Here we see a smooth shift from an explicit gender equality discourse, to an implicit discourse on gender difference and gender hierarchy. Her explicit belief in gender equality and her quite different practice did not seem contradictory to her, because the switched discourse made both positions sensible. She also admitted to me that she had been a tomboy all her life and personally felt most at ease

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<sup>25</sup> Gullestad, M. (2002). *Det norske sett med nye øyne*. Oslo, Universitetsforlaget. p.68-70.

<sup>26</sup> For an inside account, see for instance Nagy, 1985. For two different outside accounts, see Rosenthal, M. (1986). *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement*. London, Collins., and Jeal, T. (1989). *Baden-Powell*. London, Hutchinson.

with boys. Thus, it is likely that the function of the discursive switch was to resolve a contradiction between rational and emotional wishes. This example also shows why, when we want to initiate change, it is important to address not only the level of expressed opinions, intentions or acts, but also the discursive levels that make such opinions, intentions and acts meaningful and sensible. We must become conscious of the discourses and emotions that lend meaning to what we say and do in order to accomplish real change.

Thus, in addition to listening to what is said in an interview and observing what is done in practice, we should also observe what is *not* said or *not* done, or what is conveyed *implicitly* by the way we do and say things. Analysing gender in Scouting includes different levels of meaning:

- *The level of intentions:* aims, intentions and opinions in relation to gender, education and development as they are expressed in written guidelines, or by adult leaders and young people;
- *The level of practice:* how such aims, intentions and opinions in relation to gender, education and development are expressed through social interaction of adult leaders and young people;
- *The level of discourse:* the mental models, the implicit values and presumptions about gender, education and development as they appear in interaction, written guidelines, and opinions of adult leaders and young people.

Interviews, observations and texts may give access to the discursive level. We ask: what are the necessary presuppositions for this utterance or this act to be meaningful? In interviews, the level of intended meaning and the level of discourse serve to reveal the interviewees both as 'informants' and as 'representatives'. When taken as an informant, the interviewee is seen as a stand-in observer. We listen to the face value of the information that is conveyed. When taken as a representative of a cultural group, we are more interested in the perspective from which the information is given. This double approach was also used when analysing the data collected by the research assistants. As members of the different cultures under study, they also revealed something about their cultures through the way they looked at things. This was obvious especially in the desk task where the research assistants were asked to describe the cultures of gender and child rearing in their country. In addition, the perspective of the interviewer or observer in the field tasks was sometimes as informative in terms of understanding the specific culture's discursive formation on gender as the answers from the interviewees or the observed episode in themselves. Thus, sometimes I used the factual information, sometimes I used the implicit information.

### 3.3 Distance and closeness

What about the researcher? Is she the only one who is not entangled in figured worlds and discursive formations? Certainly not! More than anything, research is a process of constructing meaning, and one that even borrows a special authority from the image of objectivity connected to the scientific endeavour. Objectivity, however, is not a relevant concept in interpretative research, and as all research has elements of interpretation, no research can claim full objectivity. What ought to distinguish the meaning construction in research from the meaning constructions of everyday life is a higher degree of reflexivity, systematism, argumentation and training.<sup>27</sup> Even though an ethnographic observation or an interpretative process cannot be formalised, the obligation to argue and make your interpretations explicit are good guards against personal bias and fortuitous interpretations.

There is no way of escaping the fact that the researcher is herself a part of the research process. In qualitative research one may even say that this is an asset: the researcher is the primary instrument of the research. Only a socialised human mind can understand and interpret social meaning. This inevitably means that the researcher's culturally embedded perspectives, experiences, knowledge, and values are activated in the processes of interpretation, just as her personal desires and emotions are. The only way to keep some control over this is by a reflexive attitude: to keep one eye on yourself and one eye on the world. Within a reflexive space, the emotional reactions of the researcher, for instance, do not necessarily distort the view, but can, the contrary, help to detect what is going on. They may help the researcher to understand the emotional state of the persons under study, or they may reveal the researcher's own hidden discourses and how they frame what she sees. For instance, when I could not resist being

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<sup>27</sup> Reflexivity means that you are critically aware of your own interpretations; systematism means that you work with your data in a systematic way, for instance by checking interpretations against all relevant parts of the data instead of just picking and choosing episodes that confirm them.

charmed by the courteous Russian and dramatic Portuguese boys, it helped me to see some of the attractions of a gender model to which I otherwise do not personally adhere. And when I felt a little uneasy with the rough masculinity in the Slovak camp, I realised that my strong belief in gender equality also hosts an element of fear of certain types of masculinity, and that this might have made me exaggerate the negative interpretation of Slovak gender relations. The point is not to try to exclude emotional reactions, but to make them explicit to yourself and analyse them, to see what belongs to you, and what belongs to the other.<sup>28</sup>

In order to see what is going on both in yourself and around you, a balance between closeness and distance is required. One must have sufficient knowledge of the culture and the context to get an idea of what is going on, and one must have sufficient distance in order not to 'go native', which means that you identify so much with the culture you are studying that you lose your analytical perspective. We easily become blind to important aspects of cultures we ourselves participate in. We know how to do the 'social grammar', but we are seldom able to formulate it and we hardly notice it – just like the fish is the last to discover the water. Anthropologists use the concept of 'anthropological alienation' as a condition for studying cultures. One must make the cultures alien in order to see them. In this study I had ample anthropological alienation! As an outsider in many respects, it was striking to me how the 'social grammar' of the national culture and of Scouting culture were so self-evident to the research assistants and the adult leaders that it often became invisible for them. Things were 'business as usual', nothing to write home about, while for me everything was rather exotic. And while gender meanings jumped out at me every second, few others noticed them, or thought them to be coincidental or just normal. The closeness, however (which is also an essential part of an interpretative process), was the most problematic dimension of this project, and may have given rise to more misinterpretations that I am aware of.

Language was less of a problem during the observations than I had expected it to be, however. It was, of course, a very different situation to observe the Danish camp, as I understood the language and the culture. Here I understood the details in conversations and was able to communicate verbally with the young people. This is clearly seen in the much more detailed accounts I have in the chapter about Denmark. For instance, the analysis I did of symbolic gender in the Danish camp (see Chapter 7, section 3.2) is dependent on this fact, and I cannot know whether this kind of analysis could not also have been relevant for the other camps, as I did not understand what was said. However, not being able to understand the language proved to have some other advantages: the facial expressions, the body language and the movement in space became much more visible for me. In some ways I experienced that this increased my empathy with people, their emotional state came more to the foreground and aroused a corresponding emotional response in me. A part of this, I believe, was also that in many ways I 'recognized' the young people from my previous studies of girls and boys of their age in Scandinavia. When I saw a pair of 12-year-old Bashkirian girl friends, dressed in exactly the same green bikinis with little flowers on them, and who were immensely interested in making social contact with me; or when I saw a 13-year-old Slovak boy striving to demonstrate his masculinity to other boys, I felt I knew them, and it became easy to communicate through body language mixed with a few English words. Together with the small cues as to the ongoing conversations, discreetly transmitted by the research assistants, the language barrier was not totally insurmountable. When I think back on these episodes it is hard to believe that I did not actually hear what was said. I have as vivid a recollection of the episodes with these young people as I have of the Danish ones.

It is still necessary, however, to discuss the experiences of the triple outsider position I had in this project: as a foreigner to three of the four cultures under study, as a Nordic feminist, and as a non-Scout.

### **3.4 Constructing 'gender in Scouting' from an outsider's position**

I had never been to Russia or Slovakia before this project and only had superficial knowledge about the culture and everyday life there and in Portugal. The interaction with the research assistants proved to be invaluable here. Not only because they could translate and explain many things to me, but because the course of our interaction in itself was revealing. The small misunderstandings that would arise between us because of different 'social grammars', and the subsequent rounds of clarification, were instructive indeed. Even more so was the opportunity I had to discuss my observations in the camps on the spot with them, as well as their observations on things I had seen. Both the local and the national research assistants accompanied me

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<sup>28</sup> In psychoanalysis such processes are conceptualised as transference and counter-transference, and are seen as the main vehicle for analytical and clinical insights.

on the camp visits and their different degrees of distance towards the case were also quite revealing. Sometimes I made the research assistants realise things they had not noticed before – and their interpretation of these things taught me a lot. When our interpretations differed, sometimes it appeared to be due to the lack of closeness on my part, sometimes to the lack of distance (or low awareness of gender) on their part, and sometimes to two different, but equally possible, interpretations. I have tried to keep some of these occasions visible in the analysis. Thus, some important processes of dialogue have informed the interpretations, but this should not conceal the fact that I was the one who ultimately brought things together and wrote the report - and thus had the last word about how to interpret things. For this reason I have also kept visible my voice and perspective.

After the camp visits, and alongside the data analysis, I extensively read research literature on these countries and tried to link it with my observations and the statements in the interviews. By putting together all these bits and pieces I think I have obtained a reasonably valid picture of the cultures as regards gender in Scouting. The national research assistants from Russia, Slovakia and Portugal who read drafts of the empirical chapters confirm this.<sup>29</sup> They wrote that the analyses made them better able to see their own culture. Although they notice my outside perspective, they agree with most of the interpretations and conclusions. To further ensure this, I also asked colleagues with academic competence on the gender cultures in each of the four countries to read the relevant chapters, and this gave me very valuable feedback on the general validity, as well as some important corrections of details.<sup>30</sup> My own overall assessment is that the analyses of Russia and Denmark may have a somewhat greater validity than the analyses of Slovakia and Portugal. This is due to a combination of factors: the generally better quality of the data from the Danish troop and the Russian troop in the Moscow region, my own knowledge of Danish culture, the fine introduction to Russian culture that was provided by the national research assistant, and the fact that much more academic work is available on gender cultures in the Nordic countries and Russia than on the other two countries. Portugal proved to be a particularly difficult country about which to find relevant research literature.

The research assistants helped me to become more aware of my taken-for-granted Western perspective on many things, how I sometimes automatically found the hegemonic perspective - or was expected to do it - and how the sheer thought of this was offensive to people in Eastern Europe, especially in Russia. As one adult leader told me, in a sarcastic tone of voice, during a conversation about the many Russian scientists who must take jobs abroad for economic reasons: *'They have the money, we have the brains'*. While I had no problem, in general, sharing a criticism of Western cultures that judge themselves superior just because they are rich and modernised, I felt more attached (personally, politically and academically) to my Western views on gender questions. My perspective as a Nordic gender-equality feminist became very apparent to me, yet, at the same time, I could not ignore it. The present report is undoubtedly informed by this perspective, which, as mentioned above, also informs the new policy of WOSM as the commissioning body. However, I had to acknowledge that this perspective is only one of several possible and legitimate perspectives on gender, and that, just like the Russian ideal of gender complementarity, it is based on certain values and historical and cultural embeddings. Not easy for a Nordic feminist, who is used to receiving the world's admiration for coming from *'the paradise of women'*! I think it proved very important to include a Nordic case study, as it forced me to distance myself from my own culture. And I might, in my effort to be 'fair', have counteracted my attachment to the gender equality model by being the most merciless in the detection of contradictions and 'dark sides' in the Danish case study (another reason may be that I understood much more of what was said here). In my opinion, working in a cross-cultural field demands a balance whereby one should beware of tendencies to universalise one's own culture, as well as of tendencies to overdo and 'exoticise' the ways in which others are different. Dialogues and arguments are possible, including between people from different cultures. Thus, I have tried to take into account that recommendations for more gender equity in Scouting must be based on the fact that not all cultures are equally enthusiastic about the visions of Nordic gender equality, and sometimes for good reasons.

My third, and perhaps most important, outsider status was connected to the fact that I am not a Scout myself – although I was perceived as a World Scout Bureau delegate. I was a Girl Scout from 12-16 years of age and enjoyed it immensely. However, I left the Movement as other things caught my interest when I entered high school. I definitely belonged to the category that, in the Danish leader's words, just *'attended Scouting'* instead of *'being a Scout'*. Even though my four years of Scouting did not make me a Scout in mind and spirit, the experience gave me

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<sup>29</sup> The Danish research assistants did not comment on the draft sent to them.

<sup>30</sup> That applied to Russia, Slovakia and Denmark. Unfortunately, I was not able to find anyone to check the chapter on Portugal.



a lasting fondness for walking and hiking, and also reasonable competence in such skills as making a fire, carrying a backpack and sleeping in tents. Without these qualifications I would probably never have become involved in a research process which, within a period of one month, included such experiences as eating my dinner in pouring Danish rain at a makeshift dining table 3 metres up in a tree, taking part in an all-day hike under the mercilessly hot Portuguese sun, sleeping in my own 'podsada' and washing my body in a freezing cold river in Slovakia, swimming across Russian rivers and camping in a hot, humid, area together with millions of Russian mosquitoes. A bit strenuous for a middle-aged academic, but great fun! And it certainly revived my old sense of what it is to be at a Scout camp. These camp visits were very important for me, and it would have been difficult to understand and analyse the other data without this first-hand experience of Scout life in practice.

This said, the fact that I am not a Scout today made me an outsider in their universe. It was apparent that such outsiders were seldom seen in these contexts. Everyone thought I was some kind of research Scout. I was offered the left hand handshake and was expected to talk about Scout experiences from my home country. This position gave me much insight into what is taken for granted in Scouting. For the adult leaders, being a Scout is a strong personal identity, and they are eager to awaken this feeling in the young people as well. As we shall see later in the interviews, many of them formulated it as an identity that had had a decisive impact on their lives. It is also connected to a strong group identity, which is externalised in many visible signs, rules and rituals. The feeling of being an outsider is emphasised when meeting with this kind of personally invested group culture and, of course, it also fosters some ambivalent feelings. In my case, the collision between the academic discourse and the Scouting discourse put fuel to this fire. While the central principles and values in Scouting are connected to doing things in practice, positive attitudes under all circumstances, group identity, romanticism and spirituality, the central principles and values in research are theoretical understanding, critical attitude, individualism, scepticism and rational thinking. I am still not sure whether I, on an emotional level, have really understood what made the adult leaders feel so attached to this world. It was much easier for me to understand why the young people enjoyed it and, in combination with my professional experience as a child and youth researcher, it is beyond doubt (and also very clear throughout this report), that my primary identification in the field of Scouting was with the young people, especially the girls.

In this respect I also have great admiration for the openness of mind and sincere quest for new knowledge that made WOSM take the risk of asking an outsider to tell them something about their own gender culture – and this also adds important nuances to the dichotomy I made above between Scouting and academic culture. While my outsider status may have led to a more critical gaze than they asked for, I also hope that these critical comments will, in the long run, prove to be beneficial for the development of Scouting. Twenty-eight million young people in the world are enrolled in WOSM as Scouts and it is of great importance that the organisation's fine principles of self-education and equal opportunities for girls and boys are carried out in practice in the best possible ways.

#### **4. How to read this report**

However much one could say about the advantages and disadvantages of my specific position as a researcher in this field, nothing can change the fact that the result is only one of several possible constructions. What I present here are not indisputable facts, but possible interpretations. The four pictures of gender in Scouting are painted from my perspective and with my brush. The research was conducted with due consideration of research methodology (for instance, making sure that nothing in the data disconfirmed the patterns I present, and sincere efforts of self-reflection), but this does not lend it any definitive objectivity.

The elements of information I collected about Scouting and gender in the four countries were collated in order to make patterns visible as to how gender may work in this context. Even though some individual elements may be frail, taken together, their diversity and multiplicity have made it possible to discern some patterns on which I invite others to reflect. I have made extensive use of quotes both from interviews, desk tasks and my own observations during the camps in order to make the process of interpretation more visible to the reader. The message is not the interpretation of the individual episodes, which can always be contested, but the overall pattern I suggest they form.

It is important to remember that this is about patterns in context, and that the context is not only made up of the national culture and the general framework of Scouting, but also of local

and individual features. Thus, one cannot deduce that all girls and boys in the countries under study behave like the ones I have described. But one can, hopefully, see how these described patterns of doing gender gain meaning both from the local and the national context in which they are embedded. There are no 'typical' or 'representative' Scout troops in any country. In any troop the gender patterns will in some ways be particular, but, even so, part of the discourses and institutional frameworks will transcend the individual troop. Along the same line of thinking, a comparison across the countries of the particular gender patterns may reveal common features and overriding discourses of gender within European culture, in spite of all the differences.

This report suggests a way of thinking about gender, and the findings should be read as suggestions concerning a number of possible ways gender may be at work in Scouting. Adult leaders may use them to enquire whether some of these patterns also inform the situation in their troop, and what could or should be done if this is the case.

Let me emphasise that the report is *not* about Scouting in general. I have great respect for the educational work and the untiring voluntary effort adult leaders make in order to offer the young people such great and unusual experiences. The leaders in the troops studied may especially be disappointed that these aspects of the summer camps and programmes received so little attention in the report, and may well feel that I (in view of their overall efforts), have exaggerated some minor imperfections related to gender. However, making gender visible was the whole point of this project, so please keep this in mind if you sometimes feel that I have interpreted things like a devil's advocate!

I also want to emphasise that, in my experience, gender practices in Scouting are neither better nor worse than those described in schools and other coeducational institutions. Each has its specific characteristics due to its specific context. The main goal of the report is to make Scout leaders able to reflect differently on gender and the challenges inherent in coeducation, not to offer a recipe for how things should be done. The intention is also to help them understand that questions about gender are deeply interwoven with cultural and educational assumptions and are maintained by ongoing interactions in our everyday life, including Scouting. Are there other approaches? Does the Scout Movement have more to offer girls than just becoming one of the boys? Does it want to offer more? And what would that take? Perhaps the fact of exploring these questions will also broaden the scope of enquiry: what does it mean to different *boys* to become 'one of the boys'? Do they all succeed? The first step towards answering such questions is to become aware of how gender is established - often in contradictory ways - in our own heads.

The central part of the report is the analysis of young people's opinions and opportunities in Scouting. This is seen through a prism with three sides: gender, culture, and Scouting. The different chapters are intended to elucidate these contextual perspectives. In *Chapter 1* (this one), this was approached by positioning the project, the analytical approach and the researcher.

*Chapter 2* and *Chapter 3* introduce the theoretical context that informs my perspectives on gender. This concerns key concepts in gender studies and a brief historical outline of dominant gender models in our part of the world. Chapter 2 concludes with an outline of the analytical model used in the analysis, and Chapter 3 with a description of how the empirical chapters are organised.

In the four central chapters (*Chapters 4-7* - in which the data from each country are analysed), several contexts are activated in order to understand the young people's situation: the gender structure and gender culture of the country, and the national and local Scouting frameworks. In the two concluding chapters, the patterns discovered are correlated to some transverse perspectives.

In *Chapter 8*, similarities and differences related to age and gender across the countries are considered and compared with other research.

In *Chapter 9*, the findings are discussed in the light of the gender discourses and practices of Scouting, and of central educational concerns.

The final section contains an analytical 'tool box', which may be of use in the second, 'implementation', part of the project. It is my sincere hope that this tool box, as well as the report as a whole, will contribute to the important work of improving gender relations in practice within Scouting undertaken by the World Organization of the Scout Movement for the next decade.

## 2. WHAT IS GENDER?

### 1. Gender in the world, gender in the head

What is gender? From an everyday perspective, the question may seem odd. Gender means men and women, girls and boys, and whatever differences there may be between them, of course! It is not so simple, however, as we not only assign gender to people, but also to non-human things such as colours, nations, ships, bombs and tornados! Remember Camilla who was teased in the Danish Scout camp because she had a pink soapbox? Can a soapbox also contain gender, together with the soap?! And why was pink a colour that led to teasing? Would this have happened if the soapbox had been blue or green? Is pink not appropriate at a Scout camp?

The questions indicate some of the complexities of gender. A first point to realise is that the human mind is capable of associating gender with all sorts of things. Gender exists both in the world and in our heads as mental models, and it is not always easy to decide what belongs where.

As it was argued in Chapter 1, the human mind constructs the world as much as it observes it. This also applies to gender. There is nothing 'female' in the light waves that make up the colour pink. Actually, if we go back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (a time when people in the Western world became very occupied with the idea that boyhood and girlhood should be clearly distinguished from each other), the tradition of signalling the child's gender by the colours of its clothing arose. The suggestion was that a pale blue colour was perfect to signal the delicacy and flightiness of little girls, while a fierce red or pink colour would suit the strong and determined little boys.<sup>31</sup> At some point in the first decades of the following century these colours had a sex change, and pink then came to indicate feminine daintiness and affectation, and blue masculine strength and straightforwardness. Thus, in this part of the world today, the colour pink is perceived as 'feminine'. The impropriety of a pink soapbox in a Scout camp may indicate that it is 'femininity' that does not fit in.

A second point to acknowledge is the often unnoticed pattern of thinking, whereby everything seen as feminine is at the same time seen as secondary or even inferior to things seen as masculine. When pink and blue changed places, so did the evaluation of them: it is more valuable to be strong than to be weak, wiser to be strong-minded than flighty, more honourable to be straightforward than dainty, and quite simply better to have a blue soapbox than a pink soapbox when at a Scout camp. Why must such a tight line be drawn between feminine and masculine, and why do they make up a hierarchy?

A further point is that the male side appears to be more neutral than the female side. Whereas only girls should wear pink, everyone (including girls) can wear blue. Pink is feminine, blue is neutral. Why is that? Camilla is a girl at a Scout camp, Henrik is a Scout at a Scout camp. Why this asymmetry?

Finally, we must realise that when our minds put gender into things, it has consequences: gender becomes more salient in the world. For instance, when pink is perceived as a girlish colour, many girls will choose clothes, curtains and soapboxes of this colour. The girlishness of the colour thus also reflects our experience, and it will appear quite natural for girls to love pink. Thus, what we perceive as gender is always a product of an ongoing interaction between 'gender in the head' and 'gender in the world'.

#### 1.1 Structural and symbolic gender

Gender is expressed both in *structural* and *symbolic* ways. When we look at a photo in our daily newspaper of a meeting, for instance of European prime ministers, we immediately see that gender constitutes a social structure: many men and very few women are in the photo. The few women may have difficulty in making themselves seen behind the tall men, but they also try to blend in by dressing in a way that does not make them stick out too much (while still signalling their gender). We immediately understand that femininity is a problematic symbolic category in this world, and yet it is also a personal and cultural identity that cannot just disappear.

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<sup>31</sup> Kimmel, M. (1996). *Manhood in America*. New York, The Free Press. p.160.

Other *gender structures* may be that men and women are unevenly distributed in terms of education and occupations, that women earn less than men, that they hold fewer leading positions in the workplace, that they do more housework than men in most families, or that (in most cases) acts of physical violence in the family are carried out by men against women. Girls serving boys in Scout camps could also be described as a social gender structure, if it happens more often than boys serving girls. Even if the situation is changing (and has, indeed, changed considerably over the last few decades in Europe), a certain gender structure so far seems to reproduce itself in new costumes: the more money, status or power, the more men we see, and the fewer women. The Norwegian feminist, Hanne Haavind, once expressed this persistent structural gender pattern in these words: *'When women do the same as men, they are paid less, and what women do more frequently is paid less than what men do more frequently, no matter who does it.'*<sup>32</sup>

The prevalence of such gender structures will, of course, also gradually form the *gender symbols* and the gender discourses in our heads. When almost every prime minister we see appears to be a middle-aged man in a dark suit and a serious expression on his face, these meanings are attached to the idea of what it takes to become and be a prime minister.<sup>33</sup> It becomes normal and natural that men hold the leading positions in our society, while women work part-time in order to take care of the home and family. The social conventions and culture of political and public life become 'masculinised', but this is perceived as neutral and necessary for such jobs (just as we noticed the neutrality of blue but not of pink). It becomes a part of our 'figured world'. Thus, symbolic gender will have consequences for the further development of structural gender, and vice versa.

The former Norwegian prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland once told the story about a little four-year-old girl who asked her father while they were watching the news on TV together: *'Daddy, can men be prime ministers, too?'* The anecdote demonstrates how structural gender gains symbolic meaning in the human mind, but also the fact that such symbolic meaning can change. Perhaps more little Norwegian girls added the fantasy of becoming prime minister to their fantasies of becoming nurses or secretaries in this period of the country's history. When we adults find the anecdote 'cute', however, it is because we know that being a prime minister is still a quite unusual way to symbolise female gender, even in Norway.

## 1.2 Gender as a framework of interpretation

Structural and symbolic gender tell us what is normal and deviant for men and women, girls and boys (whether we personally consent to these norms or not). They constitute discourses on gender. Gender becomes a framework of interpretation of which we are often not aware, even though we use it all the time. We interpret things differently according to the gender of the people involved. For instance, the appearance of women in leading positions receives much more comment than the appearance of men in power, and the authority of a woman may be much more dependent on how she dresses than for a man. Other examples may be that a mother who leaves custody of the children to her husband following a divorce is seen as a cold and cruel parent, while a father who leaves the custody to the mother is a poor divorced parent. A father who is a single parent is a hero, but a mother in the same situation is not necessarily considered in the same way. When boys do well at school, it is considered to be the result of intelligence. If they do poorly, then it is because they are just lazy, "as boys are", or perhaps bored. When a girl does well at school, it will be more often considered to be the result of her dutifulness and hard work. If she does poorly, it is because she is just sweet and not very bright. Unruly girls get more on our nerves than unruly boys, because we presuppose that boys will be boys, while a girl can behave herself if she really wants to. The idea of a boy being afraid of mice or crabs seems ridiculous, whereas if a girl is afraid it is because she is a girl. Had it been a boy who had revealed his possession of a pink soapbox, Henrik would probably not have limited himself to a little friendly teasing.

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<sup>32</sup> Haavind, H. (1981). Kvinnelighet. *Pax Leksikon*. Oslo, Pax. p.80.

<sup>33</sup> While writing this chapter, I heard a programme on the Danish radio (Koplevs krydsfelt, DR P1, 8.8.02), during which a former Danish minister of development issues (Anita Bay Bundegaard) was interviewed. She had been appointed as a relatively young woman and had encountered difficulties in being taken seriously. For instance, a Danish newspaper commented on the appointment (which took place just before Christmas), with a photo of the prime minister flanked by the two new young women in the government, accompanied by the text: *'The prime minister's Christmas decorations'* (Nyruks julepynt). When she later met with ministers from other countries, everyone assumed she was a secretary, and one even laughed and wanted a photo taken when he learned that the young woman was, in fact, the minister. The woman said that, in such situations, she felt that she had to assume a stricter, more businesslike, attitude than she really wanted.

Processes such as these, in which we apply *double standards*, are called *gender attribution*. We use different standards for girls and boys, and this leads to different interpretations when they exhibit the same behaviour. This is seldom recognised by adults, who may even have the same intentional standards for boys and girls. One mechanism is that ideals of equal treatment may go hand in hand with actual perceptions of what is normal for boys and girls. If a girl is shy and modest we explain this in terms of her gender, and thus it is nothing to worry about. If a boy exhibits the same behaviour, we may think that something is wrong and that perhaps we should play a bit more football with him.

Another mechanism is inconsequential behaviour. Countless modern parents have tried to give toy cars to their little daughters and doll's prams to their little sons, only to experience that the toys are either not used or are used for a different purpose. There may be several explanations for this, but one is that - as researchers have shown - the non-stereotypical toys tend to be of a cheaper kind than the stereotypical ones. Why invest in an expensive doll's pram if you suspect that he will never play with it anyway? If we add the perspective that unconscious and emotional meanings also inform interactional processes (not least with our children), one should not jump to conclusions.

What becomes 'feminine' and 'masculine' to our minds is a relative question, and depends on the possibility of applying a gendered framework of interpretation. When a woman walks alone she can be strong and carry a heavy suitcase. If she meets a male friend she suddenly becomes weak and he takes over. This may be an explicit gender play between them, but it is often experienced as quite real. For instance, when I am alone or with female friends who don't have a driving licence, I can quite happily drive my car all day. However, when my husband is present I feel exhausted after driving for only two hours. So he takes over and drives for four hours, then I'll drive for another two. While cooking and wood-chopping are neutral tasks in same-sex groups, they become respectively 'feminine' and 'masculine' in a mixed group. Women who do not cook in such a setting may risk being seen as unfeminine or self-conceited, while a man who cooks may risk being ridiculed. If the woman chops the wood, she may be seen as an Amazon, while the man who does not chop wood is either a sissy or rude. As we shall see later, single-gendered groups may reproduce gender in other ways, but as a framework of interpretation gender is made more relevant in mixed groups.

### 1.3 Separation and hierarchy

Gender creates a *dichotomy* (oppositional pairs) in our thinking: male or female, masculine or feminine. It lends its meaning to the many other dichotomies in Western languages. Few of us would have difficulty in assigning gender to dichotomies such as active/passive, strong/weak, soft/hard, emotional/rational, dependent/independent, dark/light, moon/sun. Although different cultures may disagree about which side is masculine and which is feminine, what they share is the dichotomous structure and the use of gender as a framework of interpretation. They also share the asymmetry between the two sides, as the 'male' side is always superior to the 'female' one. The Swedish historian Yvonne Hirdman has studied the development of gender dichotomies in Europe since Antiquity. The content of what is seen as masculine and feminine has changed, but the *separation* and the *hierarchy* persist. A quality may even switch sides, but so does the cultural evaluation of this quality - just as we saw with the colours pink and blue. An example is the public/private dichotomy, which, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was connected to the autonomous public man and the dependent private woman. In contemporary Nordic welfare states the private/public dichotomy has switched to signify the productive private sector of men, and the costly public sector of women.<sup>34</sup>

This persistent pattern has given rise to theories that gender simply is *defined* by this cognitive figure of separation and hierarchy, and thus first and foremost is a way of signifying power.<sup>35</sup>

It is, indeed, difficult for us to think outside the gender dichotomy and hierarchy. In several of the Scout camps I attended, adult leaders would describe active and self-assertive girls with expressions such as '*she is a boy!*'. To be active and self-assertive are understood as qualities belonging to the boyish side of the gender dichotomy. Thus a girl who possesses such qualities is a bit masculine: she resembles a boy. Most leaders found it very positive when girls were like boys, and certainly preferred them to the sort of girls who cried and were afraid of bugs. However, for the girl, there is a fine line to walk here. Girls who were too self-assertive were

<sup>34</sup> Hirdman, Y. (1988). Genussystemet - reflexioner kring kvinnors sociala underordning. *Kvinnovetenskapelig tidskrift*. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Scott, J. W. (1988). *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York.

judged asocial and self-conceited faster than boys who were self-assertive (because 'boys will be boys', etc.). We also intuitively understand that it would have been an entirely different thing to describe a boy by saying 'he is a girl'. Depending on the situation it may or may not be a compliment to say that a woman resembles the other gender, but to say so about a man never is.

Another expression of this is what has been labelled *the male norm*. Men and boys represent the universal norm from which women and girls deviate. The American sociologist Michael Kimmel once told a revealing story about this: when a black woman looks into a mirror, what does she see? A black woman! When a white woman looks into the mirror, what does she see? A woman! When a white man looks into a mirror what does he see? A human being!<sup>36</sup> As the story shows, it is a general trait that those who belong to the privileged group are perceived as universal human beings, while others are seen as deviant because of particularities such as gender, race, class, etc. The 'others' come to think about themselves in this way as well. The phenomenon is called *false universalism*.

Thus, coeducation is often perceived as a problem concerning 'what to do with the girls', while boys appear to have no gender. They are just children, pupils, Scouts - as children, pupils, Scouts should be. This reaction is not unusual - in most theories and books on child development, the ideal child has all the positive sides we normally connect with boys (for instance, inventiveness, curiosity, courage, autonomy, straightforwardness), while the positive sides we normally connect with girls (for instance, empathy, cooperation, responsibility) are less focused, or are even seen as detrimental to the growth towards autonomy which is so important in our Western view of development. This can sometimes give rise to contradictions. For example, one minute girls may be praised for being more mature, cooperative and responsible, while the next minute, these same qualities are seen as signs of conformity and dependency on adults - and thus immaturity. Child researchers have documented how 4-year-old Norwegian boys' unwillingness to dress themselves is interpreted by the parents in terms of them becoming big boys who want to decide for themselves, while a similar unwillingness in a 4-year old girl is taken as a sign that she is still a small child, not yet a big, clever, girl.<sup>37</sup> Similarly to this tendency to enlarge the positive aspects of boys' behaviour compared to that of girls, there is also a tendency to see negative aspects of girls' behaviour traits (such as creating intrigues, clinging, being passive and uninventive) as part of their eternal feminine personalities, while negative aspects of boys' behaviour (antisocial behaviour such as irresponsibility, egotism, aggressiveness, violence and sexism) tend to be excused as immaturity and, thus, something they will grow out of.

## 2. Sex and gender

Consider the question: is a woman who becomes a prime minister a *real woman*? Is a man who works as a nurse a *real man*? Is he is a sissy, or maybe gay? Could he pass as a 'real man' if he rides a huge motorbike really fast? Is the fact that Gro Harlem Brundtland has a female body that has given birth to four children and that, as a prime minister, she openly shows her emotions in public enough to let her pass as 'a real woman'? Or are her straightforwardness and public power aspects that disturb the picture? Maybe we can let her pass as a strict motherly figure, but the 'Iron Lady', Margaret Thatcher, must definitely be one of the boys! Would it have been possible for Camilla to pass as one of the boys, even with her pink soapbox, if she had had more personal authority?

In short: are notions of *masculinity* and *femininity* actually dependent on aspects other than biological sex; and does biological sex play any significant role at all when it comes to who is judged to be a 'real man' and a 'real woman'? The question raised here is whether there is such a thing as natural femininity and natural masculinity. The answer is no. Whatever standards we may have for femininity and masculinity, they are normative constructions, supported by historical, structural and institutional arrangements. Simply possessing a female or a male body doesn't do the trick. To be a female and to be feminine, and to be male and to be masculine are entirely different things. If you doubt my words, take a look around the world, or through history, and you will see that there are as many ways to be feminine or masculine as there are different cultures.

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<sup>36</sup> Kimmel (1996):4.

<sup>37</sup> Haavind, H. (1987). *Liten og stor*. Oslo, Universitetsforlaget.

## 2.1 Femininities and masculinities

In gender studies the concept of sex refer to the male/female distinction, while the concept of *gender* refers to notions of masculinities and femininities. In contrast to the words manliness and womanliness, which only exist in the singular, *masculinities and femininities* are used in the plural, to indicate that different contents can be put into these words. Within each culture there will be several ways in which one can be masculine or feminine, but not all are equally valued. Different social classes, ages and ethnic groups, for instance, will often have different ideas about what a real man/boy or a real woman/girl is. While a decent income, the latest computer model and a powerful position at work may be important elements in successful masculinity in some social circles, physical power, having a lark, or being good at sports may be what counts in others.<sup>38</sup>

Within a society there will be ongoing symbolic struggles between such masculinities to gain hegemony, for instance by ridiculing or morally criticising each other. Some become dominant, while others are subordinated or marginalized. What is called *hegemonic masculinity or femininity* within a culture are those forms that are most honoured or desired, and they do not need to be the most common forms. In fact, many people live in some tension with, or distance from, the hegemonic gender models of their own culture.<sup>39</sup> The fact that several models of masculinities and femininities may exist in the same culture also show us why not all men have the same status or feel equally superior to women. But the fact that we are often much more worried about subordinated men than about subordinated women shows that the existence of hierarchies *within* each gender group does not abolish the hierarchy *between* genders.<sup>40</sup> As we shall see later, men and boys with a subordinate position within the male hierarchy will often be very careful to avoid being positioned below women. Could Henrik's teasing of Camilla also have to do with the fact that he did not belong to the 'tough boys' in the camp?

The plural words 'masculinities' and 'femininities' may also remind us that what makes something appear as feminine or masculine depends on many different items, of which none is really indispensable. It is the totality that counts, and the specific combination. Such items may be a person's biological sex, the way the person appears, for instance in clothing, manners and body language, the sexual orientation of the person, the person's abilities, interests and competences, the job or positions he or she occupies, personal possessions (a motorbike, a hair dryer, a pink soapbox). Biological sex neither guarantees, nor determines gender. A pink soapbox could easily override the significance of the biological sex if the owner were a boy.

Feminist scholars have argued that it may, in fact, be gender that determines our ideas about biological sex! For instance, not only Walt Disney - but also biologists - possess culturalised minds and may, especially in their efforts to popularise their findings to a broader audience, interpret and describe animal behaviour in terms of cultural gender. For example, the sweet little female bird that tends the nest, while the courageous male flies out to find food for his family; the coquette female cat in heat who sends ambiguous signals to the slobbering male who makes a complete fool of himself by serenading her in public, etc.). The circle is completed when this kind of animal behaviour is used in the next round to legitimise human gender arrangements. Biological and medical science is full of entertaining efforts to 'read' nature in culturally gendered terms.<sup>41</sup> We do not even have to go back to times where one thought that a woman's uterus would shrink if she read too many books. In contemporary genetics, for instance, the relationship between genes and proteins is often described using the image of the brain and the housekeeper. Sometimes nature even has to accept a little modification in order to fit into these cultural frameworks of understanding. For example, the well-known depiction of

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<sup>38</sup> The British sociologist Paul Willis, for instance, showed in a now classic study how English working-class boys confirm their masculinity by *not* submitting to the norms of the school and the teachers, and thus actively reproduce their class status as they gradually drop out of the educational system (Willis, P. (1977). Learning to Labour. Farnborough, Saxon House.)

<sup>39</sup> Connell, R. W. (2000). The Men and the Boys. Sydney, Allen & Unwin. p.10-11.

<sup>40</sup> For instance, the contemporary discussion about 'failing boys' at school (see Chapter 8) is given much more public attention than girls' problems at school ever had. A frequent discussion is whether the school is 'too feminine' for the boys because of the majority of female teachers, while it is very rarely considered as a problem when girls have a majority of male teachers (for instance in high school or at university). At a Scout conference I once attended as a lecturer, a problem discussed was that, today, more girls than boys qualify to become patrol leaders. This suddenly made gender relevant - while it had not been relevant during all the preceding years when a large majority of boys qualified as leaders. My point is not that boys' and men's problems should not be attended to, but that we tend to construct the problem differently according to gender.

<sup>41</sup> See Fausto-Sterling, A. (1985). The Myths of Gender: Biological theories about women and men. New York, Basic Books.



the passive, waiting egg cell, and the quick, aggressive, competitive sperm cells has never been able to take into account the fact that the sperm cells are not actually of the same 'sex' as they carry either X or Y chromosomes. Biological processes are always described through a cultural mind. This may lead researchers to attach more importance to sex differences which seem to fit and explain a given gender system, than those which do not.

## 2.2 Norms perceived as nature

Most people tend to believe that the specific gender system their culture endorses is natural and even biologically founded. Why do we have this inclination to naturalise our own norms of gender? Why is the idea that sex determines gender so persistent? One reason may be the cognitive trap that comes from both sex and gender being constructed as dichotomies. Male or female. Masculine or feminine. Perfect match! But, as we have seen, the symbolic categories of masculine and feminine have a much more multi-layered structure, and even the categories of male-female have proven to form much more of a continuum than we might at first think. Biological sex is the result of a complex interplay of genes, hormones and anatomy that makes us all more or less 'male' and/or 'female'.

Another reason could be related to the fact that in all known societies, structural and symbolic gender play an important role in the stability of the society. To question the naturalness of a society's gender system challenges the stability, power distribution and values of that society. This is precisely what has happened in many Western societies since the 1970s. What do we do with a family arrangement based on the division of labour between a housewife and a breadwinner when women suddenly enter the labour market? Who should take care of the children? What happens to the fraternities in male organisations when women come in and want things done differently? How can a man demonstrate his masculinity when a woman can do everything as well as he can? Is a family still a family when the parents are of the same sex? It is easy to become confused and long the return of the good old days when a man was a man and a woman a woman, and 'nature's rules' were followed. Gender arrangements are important elements of cultural identity - and thus of emotional investment.

Perhaps the most important explanation of our inclination to see our own gender system as the natural one is that gender often plays a vital part in our personal lives. Issues of gender are important in existential matters such as family, love, sex, birth, illness and death - regardless of one's sexual orientation. It is hard to accept that the deepest experiences in our lives should be so culturally relative. We look for something more solid to explain our lives - and religion and nature are obvious candidates. When choosing nature, however, we confuse this concept with what *feels* natural to us, or what we think *ought to be* a natural way of living. Ideas of desirable gender orders belong to the normative field. One can think of many legitimate arguments for a specific gender order - that it is just, practical, makes people happy, gives them equal opportunities, is given by God. The only thing that cannot legitimise it is references to nature, as nature is something we all share, whatever gender order we live by. Thus, we should accept that when we discuss gender arrangements we are in the field of the normative, not in the field of nature. Speak for yourself - not for mankind! There is a world of difference between saying 'this is natural' and saying 'this feels natural to me'.

## 3. Personal gender

Gender works through social *structures*, cultural *symbols* and explicit *norms* - but it is also a personal matter and a reality for each and every one of us. Humans are not passive bricks in the social and cultural structures, we actively shape our lives within these structures, discourses and norms. It is possible, albeit difficult, for a woman to become prime minister, even in more traditional societies than Norway, and it is possible for a Norwegian woman to decide to become a housewife, in spite of what is considered normal for women in her culture. It would not be without psychological costs to go against the grain - the prime minister may be judged an iron lady, the housewife as a woman with an outdated sort of femininity - but it is not impossible to do it. Thus, gender in the world will be more diverse than the often very dichotomous gender in our heads. *Personal* gender concerns the way we fit into (or do not fit well into), *identify with or protest* against available cultural models of gender.

Camilla could have chosen a blue soapbox, or fought back at Henrik, or tried to make pink soapboxes a new trend in Scouting. Why didn't she, rather than just accepting the teasing, or perhaps even appreciating the attention? Perhaps because Camilla does not get much attention from the boys and really longs for it. Perhaps because she feels too insecure to put herself in the limelight. Her pubescent body does not exactly make her look like Pamela Anderson. When we consider personal gender we have to take into account that people are not just comprised of minds that interpret, but also of bodies and emotions. The way we present our bodies - and the emotions we harbour - are definitely not independent of structural conditions, discursive positioning and norms (why else should looking like Pamela Anderson be a point?) but, as they are rooted in our specific life stories and in our material bodies, they also gain their own existence.

### 3.1 Gendered bodies

While cultures do not have material bodies, people do. Let us take a look at the sex/gender distinction from this perspective. What does it mean for our personal gender that we are born with male or female bodies?<sup>42</sup> Does it generate systematic behavioural differences between women and men? So far only three attributes of individual disposition have been documented to have some correlation with biological sex: better verbal abilities with girls, better spatial orientation and higher levels of aggressiveness with boys. However, these are average measures that are visible when studying large populations, and cannot account for the individual girl or boy. In fact, the variation within each gender group is larger than the average difference between the groups. Furthermore, it seems that at least one of these differences is on its way to be overtaken by culture. The gender gap in spatial orientation seems to be disappearing among Swedish children, and this corresponds precisely to a period in which girls have been encouraged to engage in more physical and constructive play.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the effect of sex on biological individual variations is limited.

An aspect that is more relevant in understanding young people is the biological disposition for girls to mature earlier than boys, although we also will find wide variations among individuals here. Girls' verbal abilities and boys' unruliness at a young age may be connected to different rates of brain development, but they are also strengthened by socialisation, for instance, the fact that parents talk more about emotions with their little daughters than with their little sons.<sup>44</sup> Sex-related biological variations always interact with the environment. Even genes and brain cells keep interacting with the social environment during the course of our lives. One does not know, for instance, whether differences in male and female brains are produced before or after the birth, and one does not know either whether they are of any significance. One of the great discoveries of modern science is that the mind also affects the body, not only the other way round. An interesting perspective is that some biological dispositions may be context-dependent. For instance, boys' rough-and-tumble play and girls' more verbal and conflict-mitigating tendencies may be ways to relate to each other. The point is that these differences arise only when boys and girls are together with someone of their own age and sex, thus it may be seen more as a predisposition to respond somewhat differently to specific kinds of stimuli, rather than general temperamental differences.<sup>45</sup> But again, there are boys and girls who do not react in this way at all, so we are still talking about average measures.

What is important when considering these things is not to confuse the ideas of bodily dispositions with biological determinism.<sup>46</sup> We have material bodies, and the bodies we have represent limits as well as opportunities in our lives. People who are born physically disabled will be in a different situation compared to people who are not, however much the culture does to meet their needs. What does biological sex mean for our opportunities and limitations? It will mean different things, according to the situation and how we relate to it. Biological sex is definitely important if I want to bear a child, while it may be other parts of my body that are more relevant if I want to learn Chinese or dance a ballet – or do Scouting. Women's bodies

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<sup>42</sup> As male-female is a continuum more than a clear-cut dichotomy (cf. above), some people (and more than most of us realise) are born with an uncertain sex. However, I leave out this aspect here.

<sup>43</sup> Professor Kjell Härnqvist (personal communication).

<sup>44</sup> Maccoby, E. E. (1998). *The Two Sexes: Growing Up Apart, Coming Together*. Cambridge, Mass. and London, Belknap of Harvard University Press.

<sup>45</sup> Maccoby (1998):115.

<sup>46</sup> The following argument is presented by Moi, T. (1999). *What is a Woman? And Other Essays*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

allow them to bear children, but they are not forced to do so; nor does the physical potential determine what kind of mothers they will be if they do. A mother may have a biological initial advantage in relating to the newborn infant, but nothing prevents a father from having a close relationship with his child. It will just take a little more effort to create it. Thus, humans are both biological and cultural beings in an inseparable entity. We can never say what belongs to nature and what to culture. Bodies are unthinkable without culture, but cultures are also unthinkable without bodies.

Instead of recurring arguments concerning more or less biological determination, it has been suggested to see the body as *part of our situation* in the world.<sup>47</sup> It means something – as it would mean something if I were born with one arm or eyes in my neck – but what it means depends on how it is interpreted in a given culture and society, and on my own actions. Biology does not have any meaning in itself. The biological fact that girls' bodies mature earlier than boys cannot in itself explain their bodily insecurity or vulnerability to sexual harassment by men – we need to interpret the body within a specific heterosexist system to get that result. The fact that most adolescent girls and women menstruate – including at summer camp – can be taken into consideration in many different ways, or be totally ignored. In the interviews with the Scout leaders, the distinction between strong boys and weak girls was often considered to be a biologically-given difference. However, the consequences of this observation differed. In Russia, girls were perceived as frail creatures whose health should be constantly watched. In the opinion of one of the male leaders, girls do not know how to handle an axe, while in the other countries the view was that girls certainly could handle an axe, but not with the same force and vigour as boys. When we asked the girls, some of them found the arrangement fine as they thought it rather boring to chop wood, while others felt hampered in their opportunities to practise wood-chopping or do other things that required strength. From these girls' point of view, one could gain not only competence but also strength by regular training.

A final point is that the leaders' perception of weakness and strength as determined by gender seems to be a generalisation that did not take into account either 'gender in the world', or individual differences. While most boys over 15 are stronger than most girls over 15, this is not the case for the age group we are talking about. In the age range of 11-14, most girls are actually taller and stronger than most boys, because they mature earlier. The adult leaders often mentioned girls' earlier maturation in terms of their calm and responsible behaviour, but strangely enough it was never made relevant concerning physical power. Slight 11-year-old boys would actually be seen as 'stronger' than robust 14-year-old girls, including the one who had a black belt in karate!<sup>48</sup> In this case we may definitely say that gender was in the heads of the adults, and did not describe the girls and boys. A possible explanation is that the leaders had registered boys' tendency to make more of an effort in competitive situations, interpreted this according to the gender scheme of strong men and weak women, and generalised it to all boys and all girls.

### 3.2 Gendered subjectivities

Personal gender is often described through the concept of gender roles. A social gender role is the sum of norms and expectations that a given society has concerning men and women. This determines what kind of behaviours are rewarded, and what kind are punished. In today's social sciences, the concept of gender role is more or less outdated, and has been replaced and theoretically refined by, for instance, the perspective of discursive positionings. The advantage of this perspective is that it grasps better the fact that much of 'the power' belongs to the discourses we all think and act within. Thus, it is not only 'others' who tell us what we should do, we do it by ourselves in order to be comprehensible to others – and to ourselves. This also means that people actively contribute to maintaining discourses that, at the same time, oppress them. While feminists of the 1970s tended to see women as victims of men's power, the perspective today has changed to seeing them as both victims and as maintainers of gendered discourses.

One problem that the concept of gender roles and the concept of positioning share, however different they may be, is that they offer a limited explanation as to why people conform (or not) to roles or discourses. Confirmation of the self – either by obtaining the approval of others, or

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<sup>47</sup> Toril Moi (1999), Simone de Beauvoir (1949).

<sup>48</sup> In fact, the only one who – in this whole study – mentions that girls are actually more powerful than boys at this age is an 11-year-old Portuguese girl whom we will meet later.

by making oneself understood within available discursive formations, are the answers suggested. These are important aspects, but they do not include an understanding of the emotional attachment we may have to certain roles and discourses (and not to others), nor do they explain why such attachments do not always concur with what is expected of us or perceived as particularly meaningful (cf. for instance, the example of a Norwegian woman who chooses to become a housewife).

Concepts of *identity formation* and *subjectivity* address these emotional levels. They aim to explain how cultural patterns gradually turn into personal psychology in specific ways during the course of our lives. A feeling of 'me' as a specific person with a specific life. As subjectivities are never fixed, concluded or entirely coherent, one may also prefer to use the plural here: the feeling of 'me' can be made up of several emotional realities. Some situations make me blossom, others make me feel that I am worthless. Was I really the same person in these two situations? Yes, and no. Identities involve the whole person, but the whole person can harbour different feelings of self, according to the situation.

Identities or subjectivities<sup>49</sup> concern psychological traits such as how I relate to others, the way I experience things, the kind of emotions different situations arouse in me, what threatens or confirms my self-esteem. Such identities are informed by gender - not as a distinct and fixed 'gender identity', but as identities constructed through 'gendered' experiences we have had in life. In this way gender may become part and parcel of who we feel we are, and not something we necessarily identify with explicitly. It is very likely that Camilla has a pink soapbox because she truly loves the colour (as many girls her age do) - not because she wants to express femininity in any conscious way. When it is suddenly 'reduced' to femininity, it may be felt as an offence to the unique person Camilla experiences she is. Perhaps she would feel that changing to blue would not really be 'her'? Seen this way, the problem is not so much that she as 'a girl' does not meet Henrik's standards of Scouting, but that she does not fit in as the person she feels she is. Taking Henrik's point of view, the sheer sight of the pink soapbox may activate his own fears of not being tough enough as a Scout, and thus playing the role of the one who sets the standards may be felt as reassuring. Or perhaps it is simply a clumsy way of attracting her attention? What we may ask, however, is whether there is less room for Camilla's particular gendered identities in the Scout camp than Henrik's particular gendered identities.

Although the choice of pink in Camilla's own experience may have more to do with her personality than with her gender, it is very likely that her colour preferences do not come out of the blue (literally!). Even so, it can be experienced as a personal choice, not as something that has to do with conventional gender norms. We may be stretching the pink soapbox a little far now, but if we apply it to other aspects of our felt identities such as how we relate to others, or the things we enjoy or hate doing, the point may become more sensible. This is what will be done in the empirical chapters.

Similarly to the question we raised above in relation to gendered bodies, we may also ask here whether the gendered identities of girls tend to display certain characteristics and gendered identities of boys display others? Can there be common patterns in the realm of personal gendered identities? And do they relate to age? I would expect that anyone who frequently associates with girls and boys would consent to such a view, as did the Scout leaders and the young people themselves when asked about differences between girls and boys. Some of the differences they described were remarkably similar across the countries, while others were not. I will return to the differences and similarities experienced in Chapter 8, but here I would just like to repeat once more what was said in the introduction to this chapter: what we perceive as gender comes both from our heads and from the world. Perhaps we tend to exaggerate how similar and how different they really are, because we also see them through our dichotomous gender lenses?

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<sup>49</sup> Here I use identities and subjectivities interchangeably. They are different, however, as identity is something one can 'have', while one 'is' a subject. Thus the concept of 'identity' may be associated only with clearly defined, conscious, or chosen images of oneself, while subjectivity better conveys the idea of the psychological totality of the person. Identities are not made up of different departments, e.g. one for gender, one for race, one for being a Scout, etc. Identities are constructed through our experiences in life - and gender, race, and Scouting may influence what these are. Thus, it is more precise to talk about gendered identities or gendered subjectivities than 'gender identity'. Gender identity literally means only the fact that a person knows her or his gender, something that normally is achieved when the child is 1 1/2 years-old, it does not refer to any specific formation. What is psychologically connected to gender for each of us will be a product of our personal life story.

### 3.3 Interactional gender

It is quite clear that the gendered bodies and identities that different girls and boys bring with them into a social setting (for instance a Scout camp), will have an impact on how they participate in these situations. But their chances of participating will also be decided by how others participate, and everyone will have their efforts evaluated implicitly or explicitly by others. Thus, whatever we bring with us of bodily and psychological identities into social situations, something will happen to them there. As mentioned above, it may also be the case that certain individual dispositions only reveal themselves in certain contexts. Social life and shared cultural meanings are created among people, and are more than the sum of individual perspectives.

A final perspective on gender to be presented in this chapter is the *interactional* one. Gender may be seen as something that is created and reproduced continuously through social interaction. Where the body and identity perspectives emphasise gender as something we 'are', the interactional perspective emphasises gender as something we 'do'. And people both are and do. When we interact, we continuously *negotiate* who we are and who others are. We *position* ourselves and others as gender, and get feedback on such positionings. In the episode with the pink soapbox Henrik positioned Camilla as a girl, and Camilla received a feedback on the limits of 'doing femininity' in a Scout camp.

There are two clear advantages to such a perspective. One is that it highlights that children are *active contributors* to the culture, not only passive recipients. Most of the things young people learn, they learn from each other. One can just compare the incredibly long time it takes for teachers to get things into the heads of schoolchildren, compared to how quickly they learn from each other in their own informal networks. This is a point the Scout Movement really has understood and is probably one of the most important reasons for its success. Young people do not only learn from each other how to play football, chop wood and make a campfire, they also negotiate how things should be understood and how you should behave in order to belong to the group. They present their 'self' as they would like to be, and actively adjust it according to the feedback. They develop an identity that is both personal and collective.

Gender is, like age, a category that children use to make sense of the world and who they are. Already from preschool age, children are engaged in what has been coined *border work* between boys and girls. What does it mean to be a boy or a girl? How do you indicate it in a particular setting? What are the limits? Such processes are group processes – boys and girls only do border work when they are together with others of their own kind. A boy and a girl may play happily together at home and enjoy each other's company, but when they meet at school or at a Scout camp gender becomes a group identity to be defended. From this perspective the pink soapbox may be seen as an incident of border work: what Henrik does is to make a statement, in the presence of the other children, concerning the dividing line between girls and boys. In this way one can see gender as something that is created, maintained or changed between the children. What it is to be a boy or a girl is something that is negotiated among the children themselves, in ways that do not necessarily correspond to the way adults tell them gender should be 'done'. Instead of asking how girls and boys are different and how they came to be that way, one can ask '*how do they come together to help create - sometimes challenge - gender structures and meanings?*'<sup>50</sup>

The other advantage of this perspective is that it reveals how power comes into social construction of meaning. Who in the group has more or less power to make their views considered valid in the group? Who decides what is the right way to 'do femininity' in a certain setting? Is it the boys – or maybe the other girls? Or both? Girls and boys ensure that gender is done 'the right way' both for their own gender and also for the other gender. Will Camilla accept Henrik's exclusion of pink femininities in Scout camps – or will she manage to get the laughter on her side? The gender hierarchy is much more open among children than among adults as boys and girls first and foremost are positioned as children – and as such are both subordinated to the adults. Different situations may give each of them advantages or disadvantages. In the playground, boys often seem to be in control, using all the space for their own play, while girls learn to move out of the way and play in the corners. In situations in which more indirect measures of control are important (for instance, in the subtle processes of inclusion/exclusion), the girls may have the upper hand. However, we still see the gender hierarchy in boys' sharper boundaries towards girls than girls' towards boys. And when puberty approaches, 'playing' the gender hierarchy seems to take over from the more childish border work. First they do the separation, then they do the hierarchy.

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<sup>50</sup>Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender Play*. Buckingham, Open University Press. p 4.

## 4. Doing gender

Let us consider all the comments on the pink soapbox scattered throughout these first chapters. This unremarkable little episode may illustrate *structural gender* in the way that girls tend to serve boys more than boys serve girls at Scout camp. It may tell us something about *symbolic gender* as it indicates that femininity is not the most highly regarded value in this context. It may demonstrate *personal gender* as Camilla seems eager to serve the boys, and Henrik seems eager to push femininity away. And it may be an incident of *interactional gender* in which girls assume attentive positions towards boys, or in which border work is done. Gender has been recreated as *separation* and *hierarchy*. The *male norm* has been instated: Henrik is the universal Scout, Camilla is a female Scout. For the adult leader, it just confirms his knowledge of how boys and girls are, it is *normal and natural*.

The pink soapbox is '*doing gender*'. In a few seconds of a Scout camp the multifarious aspects of gender were at work, creating a single little incident of everyday life that we would not normally notice at all. For all we know, both Henrik and Camilla may have enjoyed the incident and created it as a way to show each other attention. That is not the point, as the point is not to make Henrik a scapegoat and Camilla a victim. The perspective of '*doing gender*' moves the problem beyond discussions about who is best or worst off. Both Camilla and Henrik actively '*do*' gender in ways that are meaningful for them culturally as well as personally. The point is to demonstrate how gender is done, how it is negotiated, maintained or eventually changed. A further point is that when we learn to see it, we can address problems and possibilities in coeducation in an effective way.

For these reasons, the perspective of '*doing gender*' has been chosen as the main perspective in my analysis of gender and Scouting. It will focus on how – together – adult leaders, boys and girls negotiate gender in the world as well as in their heads. I use the concept of '*doing gender*' as a concept that also comprises '*being*' and '*interpreting*' gender. The participants bring in their gendered identities, but what happens to them there? Are they overlooked, confirmed or challenged? Are they interpreted in the light of separation and hierarchy? Which aspects of gender are seen as natural or even biological, which aspects are seen as objects for educational intervention? Are double standards and gender attributions at work? What behaviours are seen as positive or negative? How do the different participants understand the situation?

'*Doing gender*' may be seen as something that combines *structural*, *symbolic*, *personal* and *interactional* aspects of gender, and may reveal where the *points of conflict* lie. Thus, these five analytical perspectives will be used in Chapters 4-7 in which I analyse the data on what it means to be a girl or a boy in Scouting in the five troops. They do not refer to different acts, but are different analytical perspectives to be applied to the same act. As I have hopefully demonstrated through the episode of the pink soapbox, structural, symbolic, interactional and personal gender can be done simultaneously.

However, before we dive into the data, we need one more brick of knowledge of gender in the world: where do the models of gender equality and gender complementarity come from, why do the different countries in our study seem to adhere to either one or the other, and what problems will each of them pose when used as an educational model?

### 3. EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCE

#### 1. The European legacy: human rights and separate spheres

Should women and men be equals or rather complement each other? Should women crave to be seen first and foremost as human beings, or rather respected as women? Such questions frequently arose in the course of the research process of this study: the Danish research assistants hardly believed their own ears when one of the Portuguese leaders argued that a good thing about coeducation was that it allowed the girls to do the cooking, while the boys could take care of the orienteering games and other things that did not interest girls. The Portuguese, on the other hand, found it equally shocking to learn that Danish girls and boys slept in the same tents at Scout camps. One of the Russian research assistants asked me privately if what she had learned from hearsay '*was really true*', i.e. that I was a feminist - as if such an identity was close to madness. The other Russian research assistants and I found each other equally ridiculous when, on our week-long journey together, she automatically handed over her backpack to any man who happened to be standing by, while I refused all such chivalrous offers and insisted on carrying my own. As she was actually half my age, this at times gave rise to awkward situations for both of us. This assistant also expressed her concern that I would project my Western equality norms onto the Russian culture of gender complementarity and would not be able to see, for instance, the strong position the Russian woman holds within the family. I, on my side, thought she generalised her Russian complementarity norms when she criticised the West for wanting to make women mannish.

##### 1.1 The dilemmas of equality and difference

The relationship between equality and difference is a confusing one. One reason for this is that equality and difference are not really opposites. The opposite of *equality* is *inequality* or *hierarchy*, while the opposite of *difference* is *sameness*. People arguing in favour of equality are not necessarily claiming that everybody should be identical, but rather that they should have equal rights and opportunities - in spite of their differences. And people advocating difference are not necessarily in favour of social hierarchies, but oppose the idea that men and women are or should be identical. Thus, to be different and still have equal rights and opportunities is, in principle, fully possible. What separates the two models is a different focus and the kind of 'difference' we are talking about. The equality model presupposes the existence of individual differences and makes equal rights the political objective, while the difference model presupposes equity and makes the defence of women's specific values and virtues their main objective. The argument is whether women should be respected as individual human beings or as members of the female group, and the problem is that both parties have problems in combining these identities. They are seen as 'either/or', not as 'both/and'. This leads to serious flaws, as we already have seen in connection with the 'girl question' in the early days of the Scout Movement.

The problem with the *equality model* is that the common universal norm often turns out to be identical to the male norm. When Simone de Beauvoir wrote her famous book '*The Second Sex*' in 1949, she asked in the introduction:

*What is a woman? The very act of stating the problem at once suggests to me a first answer. It is significant that I raise it. A man would never think of writing a book on the specific situation of males in the human race.*<sup>51</sup>

Gender questions become 'woman' questions: women have gender while men are neutral. The equality model invites women to become universal human beings, as long as nothing reminds us that they are women. They become '*honorary men*', as Toril Moi expressed it.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the equality model often carries with it an implicitly or explicitly negative view of femininity. What do women do with their female bodies and experiences within such a context? The problem is that existing gender differences are either not recognised, or they are devalued because they are judged from the perspective of the 'neutral' masculine norm. Women can be equal to men if

<sup>51</sup> Beauvoir, S. d. (1999). *Det andet køn*. København, Tiderne skifter. p.13. The English translation is taken from Moi, T. (1999). *What is a Woman? And Other Essays*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. p.191.

<sup>52</sup> Moi (1999)



they stop being women, but such an offer is neither acceptable nor viable. This is what is criticised by advocates of the complementarity model, and they are absolutely right. When was it decided that values of masculinity were superior to values of femininity? Should universality not include both? It is not a case of true equality when women must choose between being either particular (women) or universal (humans) – either to be imprisoned in their sex, or to eliminate it altogether. Men do not face such a choice; they can be particular (men) and universal (humans) at the same time, and never have to think of these identities as separate or contradictory (cf. Henrik and Camilla in Chapter 2). Thus, while the ideal vision of the equality model is that all people are equal human beings, the reality is often a hidden hierarchy between *universal masculinity* and *particular femininity*. Women can become as brave and as clever as men only if they can overcome their femininity.

The problem with the *difference model*, on the other hand, is that gender is seen as something that is predetermined. It puts requirements on what women and men must do to qualify as real women and real men. Femininity and masculinity become 'essentialised' (i.e. considered to be universal characteristics), with no room for either social change, differences within each gender group, or individual choice. To cite Simone de Beauvoir's diagnosis of such an effort to decide what makes a woman happy:

*Are not the women of the harem much happier than the enfranchised women? Is not the housewife happier than the woman worker? It is not too clear what the word 'happy' really means and still less what values it covers up for. It is not possible to measure the happiness of others, but nothing is easier than describing the situation one wants to impose on others as happy (...) This means that when our preoccupation is with the opportunities of the individual, we do not define these from the concept of happiness, but from the concept of freedom.*<sup>53</sup>

The problem in the complementarity model is the lack of individual freedom. What is feminine or masculine is predefined and places the individual in a straitjacket. A woman or a man who does not conform to the norms of femininity or masculinity is seen as an unnatural creature - dangerous, ridiculous or pitiful. This is what is criticised by advocates of the equality model, and they are absolutely right. There is no true respect for differences when individual opportunities are reduced in the name of fixed group identities. *Complementarity models* are a special type of difference model, which claim that men and women are not only different, but also form a harmonious whole. The problem is that such complementarity models are always asymmetrical: women's destiny is to be mothers and wives to men, while men are seen as individuals, principally free to take their destiny in their own hands. Thus, while the ideal vision of the complementarity model is that men and women are different, but of equal value, the reality is often an explicit hierarchy between *male subjects* and *female objects or helpers*. In real life, of course, men's lives are also restricted in many ways, for instance by being expected to be the breadwinner of the family, to be professionally successful, or to die as soldiers. The point is, however, that relationships to men define successful femininity in a much more fundamental way, than relationships to women define successful masculinity. In Beauvoir's words, a woman is not only different, she is 'the other' in relation to the male subject.

Denmark and Russia represent the extremes in our sample concerning beliefs in gender equality and gender complementarity, respectively, with Slovakia and Portugal in between, combining traits of both. However, the tension between equality and difference is also present *within* each case, as we shall see in the next chapters. This tension is part of our common European heritage, while the different attitudes to it reflect the different paths of historical development. In order to understand more of the inherent dilemmas in the equality and complementarity models, we will therefore first take a brief look at how gender has been constructed historically within modern European culture, and then take a look at the gender situation today in the four countries.

## 1.2 Public man – private woman

Gender is an organising principle for social life in all known *traditional societies*. Work tasks, rights and duties are distributed according to gender. Social anthropologists have shown that although there is an extraordinary diversity in what different cultures and different times have

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<sup>53</sup> Beauvoir, S. d. (1999). *Det andet køn*. København, Tiderne skifter. p.27-28 (my translation from Danish).

considered as belonging to men and belonging to women, the cultural systems always give authority and value to the roles and activities of men. This does not mean that women cannot hold power within specific areas (most frequently the household and child rearing, but also certain work tasks). However, in all these cultures, there is always some area of activity that is seen as exclusively or predominantly male, and therefore overwhelmingly and morally important. Thus, men are the locus of cultural value and the gender order is openly hierarchical.<sup>54</sup> This was also the case in premodern Europe. Men held power and authority as the heads of households, and had different work tasks, rights and duties to women. Women were not seen as weak and passive, however, but rather as dangerously competent, sexually active and immoral creatures (cf. the burning of witches) who needed to be kept in place by male authority. Men and women were judged according to the same scale of values, but men's abilities (spiritual and intellectual values) came out on top and women's (earthbound, body knowledge, sexuality) on the bottom.<sup>55</sup>

What is unique concerning gender in the *modern societies* that first developed in Europe from the 1600s and 1700s is the rise of two completely new ideas, which, at first, seem to be rather self-contradictory. The first is the idea of freedom and equal civil rights for all human beings, whatever their personal situation and their cultural, political and religious affiliations. The other is the idea that men and women are fundamentally different and form a harmonious gender complementarity. How could two so distinctly different ideas arise at the same time?

The notion of human rights is connected to the irreducible value of every individual, and to ideas of rationality, justice, democracy, and free and equal participation that arose in the age of the Enlightenment. However, these rights were first restricted not only to men, but to those men who owned a certain amount of property. Men of the working classes obtained the right to vote only at the end of the 1800s and women even later. Thus, the new universal human subject was in fact a white, bourgeois man. But the principal legitimacy for others to claim freedom and equal civil rights was laid. Since the 1700s, European women have been able to raise the question of equal rights as a *political issue*, and not as one confined to the church and theological arguments. Thus, feminism is a true child of modern society, and the first feminists raised their voices precisely during this period in which the idea of human rights was born.<sup>56</sup>

However, a puzzling fact is that it is precisely when the notion of universal human rights and freedom and the idea of gender equality were conceived for the first time in history that a much more polarised gender system came into being. Femaleness and maleness were now not only a matter of external arrangements such as work tasks, duties and obligations, but understood as fundamental, innate, characteristics. In the new medical science of this period it was argued that women's biology and their destiny as mothers prevented the development of their full humanity. Thus, men had the potential to become fully modern individuals, while women were restricted by their biological sex. They were now defined only through motherhood, and lost their active sexuality.

Symbolic and structural gender interacted here, as they always do: when work was separated from the household as part of the process of the new industrialism, bourgeois men and women increasingly came to live in separate spheres. The tasks of the bourgeois man were connected to public life – work, politics, science; while the life of the bourgeois woman was tied to the family, to love and care for others. The public sphere was constructed as a male domain and was populated by men, while women and children disappeared from it.<sup>57</sup> While being called a

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<sup>54</sup> Rosaldo, M. Z. and L. Lamphere (1974). Woman, Culture, and Society. Stanford, Stanford University Press. p.20-21.

<sup>55</sup> Wiestad, E. (2001). Gender Models in Europe in the 18th Century. Gender and Religion/Genre et Religion. European Studies. K. E. Børresen, S. Sabibbo and E. Specht. Roma, Carocci.

<sup>56</sup> For instance, the French woman Olympe de Gouges who wrote a 'Declaration of rights for women' in 1791, because the 'Declaration of human rights' in the new French constitution was for men only. (She was decapitated for this in 1793.) In 1792 came the English author Mary Woolstonecraft's famous 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women'.

<sup>57</sup> 'Public man and private woman' was the predominant model first and foremost in the bourgeoisie. In other social classes the public/private spheres had less significance: the poor women had to take up paid work, and the poor men did not play any role in the political public sphere. In peasant families the premodern gender order of male authority and gender-dependent work tasks prevailed almost into our times. There are also many examples of how bourgeois women managed to gain access to the public sphere, for instance, as authors or through charity work. The main point here, however, is to understand how this era of European history created a fundamental divide between public and private that symbolically (and to a wide extent also structurally) constituted a gender dualism.

'public man' was an honour for a 19<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois man, the notion of a 'public woman' meant a prostitute. A woman belonged to the home, and her contributions should not be desecrated by instrumental considerations, but be a pure expression of love. Thus, the split between public vs. private space gave rise to splits that still govern our thinking today: rationality vs. emotionality, principles vs. empathy, money vs. love, freedom vs. care. Compared to the premodern period, femininity was now viewed more positively: in contrast to the image of woman as a sexually greedy and immoral creature, the 19<sup>th</sup> century redefined woman as 'the angel of the house', asexual, pure, innocent, fragile and blissfully ignorant. A woman was understood more in the image of a child than of an adult, a fragile and helpless being in need of a man's protection. Competence in relationships, love, care and beauty became distinctly female areas; while independence, rationality, activity, sexuality, and aggressive competition were connected to masculinity. Thus, the single scale of human values of premodern times was replaced by gender-specific ones. Positive male and female qualities became distinctly different and incompatible.<sup>58</sup>

The change from a stable feudal economy to a liberal market economy demanded autonomous people who were willing to pursue their economic life and happiness in competition with others. To prepare men for this merciless competition and to keep its aggressive form within limits, the state became the political regulator, and women the emotional regulator. While motherhood and care for children had always been part of a woman's work, her productive work functions were dismissed in the bourgeois family and her caring functions extended to men.<sup>59</sup> Thus, women came to represent 'the haven in a heartless world' for the new, independent, rational, competing, male individual. Or, to put it another way: woman's private role became a presupposition for man's public role. In Rousseau's *'Emile'* from 1762, we see the idea expressed (for the first time) that boys and girls should receive distinctly different educations in order to internalise the demands they would meet as men and women. While Emile is brought up to become the new autonomous subject, independent of others' opinions and in control of his own life; his imagined spouse-to-be, Sophie, should be trained in interpreting Emile's wishes and opinions, fulfilling them and making them her own. She must learn to read subtle signals to understand his physical and emotional needs better than himself. This gives her a special kind of power, which is indirect, seductive or motherly:

*Within this framework the woman may use and cultivate talents for craftiness, coquetry, intuition, and a set of submissive female virtues that may neutralize male aggressiveness. Rousseau both tolerates and recommends woman's use of such informal power tactics (...) She should cultivate talents for trickery and manipulation together with feminine traits of patience, docility, dependence and flexibility.<sup>60</sup>*

At the same time, however, this kind of female power was deemed illegitimate in the new public sphere in which only steady and rational arguments should count. Thus, female power was a problematic category and, anyway, restricted to the private sphere. Her relationship to sexuality became ambiguous. The Victorian woman was desexualised but, at the same time, completely defined by her sexuality. A single woman was scorned and literally understood as sexless in these times.<sup>61</sup> A woman was a passive prey, not a sexual subject. As her whole existence was defined by her relationship to others, as a mother or a wife, her only private commodity to sell on the market was her sexuality, whether it was her virginity or as a prostitute. Her worth and virtue were connected more to her sexual purity and morality than to her competence and achievements. Thus, the pure and innocent maid and the sex object were two sides of the same coin.

This gender system infused femininity with an ambivalence that can be traced all the way through to the present culture. On the one hand, women, care and emotionality represent a lost childhood paradise for the modern man; on the other hand, they also represent a threat to the modern project through their passivity, dependency and illegitimate form of power. On the one hand, women are idealised and sentimentalised as pure and caring figures, (the mother, the sister, the Virgin Mary); on the other, they are feared or scorned as weak and incompetent

<sup>58</sup> Wiestad, E. (2001). Gender Models in Europe in the 18th Century. Gender and Religion/Genre et Religion. European Studies. K. E. Børresen, S. Sabibbo and E. Specht. Roma, Carocci.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.:313.

<sup>61</sup> Hellesund, T. (2001). Lesbisk, skeiv eller bare kjedelig? Den norske peppermø 1870-1940. Norsk homoforskning. T. Eikvam. Oslo.

creatures. It is not only as receivers of physical and emotional care, but also through the projection of their own fears and weaknesses onto women that the modern European man can maintain the image of himself as an autonomous, strong and rational human being. From this perspective, the gender polarisation is not contradictory to the ideas of the free human being, but is the hidden premise for them.

As we shall see in Chapter 9, this gender order was an important part of the cultural context of the Scout Movement when it began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is also the historical context for some of the present day dilemmas of gender equality and gender complementarity: we have learned to think that one is either an autonomous, rational, active, and aggressive human being, or a dependent, passive, emotional and moral woman. Our European heritage has made us believe that women must choose between becoming a man, or remaining imprisoned and defined by their biological sex.

## 2. Contemporary gender

### 2.1 Different roads to modernisation

To what extent does 'public man' and 'private woman' still inform the present day gender arrangements in our four countries? A quick look at some statistics<sup>62</sup> shows that women have definitely left the doll's house in terms of education and work, but they are considered less valuable labour in terms of pay:

<b>Work and education</b>	<i>Women in higher education. Percentage of total</i>	<i>Women in the labour market. Percentage of total</i>	<i>Women working part-time</i>	<i>Women's pay as % of men's pay (average)</i>
<i>Russia</i>	56%	48%	? (very few)	65%
<i>Slovakia</i>	50%	45%	9%	70%
<i>Portugal</i>	59%	45%	16%	76%
<i>Denmark</i>	56%	47%	18%	80%

We can also see changes in the private sphere, for example smaller households, fewer children, and more divorces than in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are new kinds of social rights and public services such as maternity leave and kindergartens in response to double income families. The variation between the countries is greater in these respects than in education and work. Denmark has the smallest households, latest childbirth (but highest fertility rate), and the best social conditions for working women. Fathers participate more in childcare and housework than in any of the other countries (see later chapters). In Russia, we find the earliest childbirth, the lowest fertility rate and the highest divorce rates:

<sup>62</sup> The primary sources of statistics in this chapter are the United Nations' database *The Worlds' Women 2000* and the databases of the World Bank. For Denmark and Portugal, additional information was found in national equality reports: *Equality in Denmark (1999)* and *Portugal: Status of women (1999)*. For Slovakia and Russia, research assistants and colleagues helped me check national statistics. There are some inaccuracies in the statistics as they are drawn from different sources and the year or the categories may differ slightly. As they are only meant to provide a rough description of these dimensions in the various countries, I found them satisfactory for the purpose. Stein Terje Vikan at UNECE (United Nations' Economic Commission for Europe) kindly checked the numbers, but was not able to verify all of them.

<b>Family</b>	<i>Household size</i>	<i>Fertility rate</i>	<i>Mother's age: first child</i>	<i>Maternity leave</i>	<i>Kindergarten</i>	<i>Divorces per 1000 inhabitants /100 marriages</i>
<i>Russia</i>	2.8	1.2	23	1.5 years with low pay, up to 3 years with no pay. Fathers can take leave but never do.	55% 0-5 years	5.2/74
<i>Slovakia</i>	2.9	1.3	24	28 weeks. Fathers or other relatives can take leave, fathers never do.	62% 3-6 years	1.8/35
<i>Portugal</i>	3.1	1.5	26	17 weeks. Under some circumstances, fathers can take 11 weeks.	35% app. 0-5 years	1.5/23
<i>Denmark</i>	2.1	1.8	30	52 weeks with app. normal salary. 18 weeks are for the mother, the rest can be shared as the parents wish. In 2000, 58% of fathers took 2 weeks or more.	48% 0-2 years 83% 3-6 years	2.8/37

The biggest difference among the countries concerns women's participation in politics. In this respect, Denmark stands out while, in the other countries, the political sphere still appears to belong to men:

<b>Politics</b>	<i>Women in parliament</i>	<i>Women in government</i>
<i>Russia</i>	10%	8%
– Moscow region <sup>63</sup>	15%	10%
– Bashkortostan	4%	0
<i>Slovakia</i>	15%	13%
<i>Portugal</i>	17%	12%
<i>Denmark</i>	39%	28%

The figures show that the preferences for equality models or complementarity models mirror the situation in the countries to a certain degree, especially when it comes to family life and political participation. In Russia, Slovakia and Portugal, women have gained access to some parts of the public sphere (work and education), but are otherwise defined primarily through their family role. In Denmark the split between public and private is increasingly detached from gender dualism.

<sup>63</sup> The figures are for the hometown of the troop only, not the entire region.

However, the different historical developments since the gender order of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the presence of feminist movements in these countries also inform today's understanding of what gender equality and gender complementarity are all about.

Concerning *Russia*, historians seem to agree that the Enlightenment ideas of individualism, rationalism, democracy and human rights had less impact here than in Western Europe, although the ideas were espoused by members of the Russian intelligentsia who, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, saw themselves as part of European culture. Russian authors, for instance, were inspired by the French Revolution and the new ideas of equal rights for women.<sup>64</sup> The transition from old gender orders to 'equality' was rather abrupt in Russia. It took place after the 1917 revolution, within a Marxist framework of interpretation in which individual freedom was considered detrimental to equality. Women's emancipation was only seen in terms of their economic position: '*that puts women – as a labour force – on an equal footing with men*'.<sup>65</sup> A social and cultural approach to women's situation was seen as a bourgeois distortion of the '*woman question*'. Thus, the norm of employed mothers was a fact in the Soviet Union several decades earlier than in other industrialised countries, but within a framework in which there was no personal or political freedom. Thus, in the Russian context, equality in fact came to mean 'sameness', not 'equal rights'. By the fall of Communism in 1989, exhausted Russian women longed for the lifestyle of 'private women', difference and gender complementarity!

In the other three countries, a suffragette movement arose in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but with very different fates. In *Slovakia*, women obtained the right to vote before the Communist takeover in 1948 exposed them to the same Marxist version of gender equality as in the Soviet Union. It has been estimated that Eastern European women work approximately 15 hours more per week than their counterpart in the West.<sup>66</sup> In contrast, in *Portugal*, the dictatorship reinstated an extreme version of 'public man' and 'private woman' as of 1926 and kept this anachronistic order alive until the Carnation Coup in 1974. In *Denmark*, women obtained the right to vote in 1915 and also gained access to work and higher education. However, the norm of 'public man' and 'private woman' prevailed until after WWII.

The second feminist movement that arose in the Western world in the 1960s and 1970s gave voice to severe criticism of the negative effects of the complementary gender model and argued that the cultural appraisal of '*the feminine mystique*'<sup>67</sup> was only a patriarchal polish covering women's unpaid work, economic dependency and sexual exploitation. Thus, since the 1960s, the majority of Danish women have rejected the complementary family model of the housewife-breadwinner. They have chosen paid work and see social rights and men's contribution to the household as important elements in their concept of 'equality'. However, a further difference between Denmark and the other countries is that for different reasons (which will be further discussed in later chapters), the mother figure seems to have been - and still is - more culturally valued in Russia, Slovakia and Portugal. A strong 'private woman' is, of course, a better choice than a weak one, thus the advantages of giving up female power in the family in order to claim a position in the public sphere may seem less obvious.

With such different histories and experiences of what it implies to be defined as 'different' or 'equal', it is not surprising that the project participants found it difficult to understand each other's perspective. Each party may easily project their own recent history onto the other. For instance, from the Russian perspective, the Danish equality model may be seen as a return to the hard work and the purist norms of the Soviet Union. No wonder the Russian women yearn to be weak and feminine. And behind this coquetry they still hold their powerful family role. From the Danish perspective, the Russian idealisation of gender complementarity and feminine appearance seems like reinventing 'the feminine mystique', which modern Western feminism has criticised since the early 1960s. Nordic women certainly do not want to return to the restricted gender roles in which a woman's greatest asset was her competence as a housewife, and a young girl's greatest asset was her charm and appearance. It looks like both parties are heading towards the past of the other! In such a projection, however, one can overlook some important aspects. The Russian women's longing for beauty and a more relaxed life is not

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<sup>64</sup> Aivazova, S. (1994). *Feminism in Russia: Debates from the Past*. *Women in Russia*. A. Posadskaya. London, Verso. This work mentions, for instance, the positive attitude to feminism of the great Russian author Alexander Pushkin, and the lively debates that took place later, in the 1860s, among leading authors about women's rights.

<sup>65</sup> Alexandra Kollontaj, quoted in *Ibid.* p.160.

<sup>66</sup> UNICEF 1999, cited in Haukanes, H. (2001). "Anthropological debates on gender and the post-communist transformation." *NORA* 9(1): 5-20.

<sup>67</sup> The title of the influential book by Betty Friedan in 1963, which is seen as the advent of the second feminist movement.

equivalent to the 1950s housewife era in the Western world. In addition to the stronger position in the family, the level of education as well as the fact that Russian and Slovak women did *not* give up their paid work after 1989 indicate a much more developed work identity than was ever the case in the 1950s in Western Europe. The Danish women's wish to be economically independent and their rejection of stereotypical femininity, on the other hand, is not a rejection of beauty and the good life, but a wish for more individuality, personal choice and more multifaceted gender relationships. This also includes the right to be a sexual subject, not only the prey. In the postmodern era<sup>68</sup> identities have become more plural and are increasingly seen as a play with gestures and expressions, more than a representation of a personal and psychological essence. This also applies to gender.

## 2.2 Postmodern gender

In many ways, the Russian adherence to gender complementarity and the Danish adherence to gender equality make perfect sense. However, the question is: to what extent is this just a question of cultural choice? The present Russian celebration of the 'weak' and the 'strong' sex can, from one angle, be seen as a much longed-for opportunity to express other kinds of masculinities and femininities than those prescribed in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, they also convey a notion of an ideal man and an ideal woman whose essential differences are fixed:

*In contrast to the unified ideal 'mother and worker' of the Soviet period, there are now a myriad of masculine and feminine types, perhaps even a 'discursive explosion' around gender identity (...) Despite the plurality, however, there remains an underlying conviction that there exists, nevertheless, an 'ideal woman' and an 'ideal man' whose essential differences are fixed and normatively correct.*<sup>69</sup>

Russia, Slovakia and Portugal are now on the track of democracy and a market economy - a track that presupposes the norms of individual freedom and equal rights for everybody, and also implies flexibility and rapid change in society. Fixed identities do not match either the conditions or the norms of a postmodern society. It is probably not sufficient (as has happened in Portugal, Russia and Slovakia) simply to grant women formal equal rights yet expect them to remain dutiful mothers and wives, defined primarily by their family role. In a modern society, women are also individuals who sooner or later will demand equal rights and opportunities - including in practice. Thus, a final reason for Denmark's adherence to gender equality may be that it is the richest and most modernised of the four countries as per the indicators below:

<b>Modernisation and wealth</b>	<i>Urban population</i>	<i>GNP per capita US\$</i>	<i>Life expectancy at birth</i>	<i>Illiteracy rate</i>	<i>Mortality rate under 5 year-olds per 1000 live births</i>
<i>Russia</i>	77%	1,700	66 years m/f:59/72	-	20
<i>Slovakia</i>	57%	3,700	73 years m/f:69/78	-	10
<i>Portugal</i>	63%	11,100	75 years m/f:73/80	10% women 5% men	6
<i>Denmark</i>	85%	32,300	76 years m/f:74/79	-	6

<sup>68</sup> While the concept of modernity refers to the cultural effects of the processes of modernisation such as secularisation, urbanisation, industrialisation, commercialisation and individualisation, the concept of postmodernity refers to conditions in which the belief in rationality, progress and justice in societal development has been shaken. Instead of the 'grand narratives' of progress, development, authenticity and truth, the postmodern culture sees reality as shaped through media illusions, play, and the stories we tell - thus gender loses significance as an essential identity and becomes a play of signifiers (see, for instance, Drotner, K. (1999). *Unge, medier og modernitet - pejlinger i et foranderligt landskab*. København, Borgen.)

<sup>69</sup> Pilkington, H., Ed. (1996). *Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia*. London and New York, Routledge. p.16.

According to the feminist philosopher Nancy Fraser, fixed social statuses require societies that are sharply bounded, institutionally undifferentiated, ethically monistic, and characterised by the absence of alternative evaluative horizons and by the legitimacy of social hierarchies. None of these traits are found in postmodern societies: the cultural order is not sharply bounded because of mass migration, diasporas, globalised mass culture and transnational public spheres. No single institution (such as kinship), effectively governs all social interaction. All value patterns and evaluative horizons are continuously and intensely contested, and social hierarchies are illegitimate:

*The most basic principle of legitimacy in this society is liberal equality, as expressed both in the market ideals, such as equal exchange, the career open to talents, and meritocratic competition, and in democratic ideals, such as equal citizenship and status equality. Status hierarchies violate all these ideals. Far from being socially legitimate, it contravenes fundamental norms of market and democratic legitimacy.<sup>70</sup>*

Fraser's point is not that statuses and inequalities among them do not exist in the postmodern society, but that they are continuously contested. Social actors of all kinds, including women, actively participate in a dynamic regime of ongoing struggle for recognition. As we have seen in recent years, postmodern societies give rise to many different group identities. A multicultural society means respecting such claims to difference, but rejecting claims for universalising particular norms of groups, that is, instructing others how they should live or who they should be. This adds a further distinction to the gender complementarity models: while the subjective claim for a gender culture should be recognised, the normative claim on behalf of others to stay within such cultures, is problematic.

It is as difficult to insist on close family bonds in an individualised culture as it is to keep men and women within fixed family roles. The modern capitalist society demands not only loyal members who will stay at their posts, but free and creative individuals who are in constant motion. Emotional ties between family members do not disappear, but rather become 'pure relations', as the British sociologist Anthony Giddens has coined it. Relationships are not maintained by economic and institutional arrangements, but because they are emotionally satisfactory for the individual.<sup>71</sup> In the words of the American sociologist, Marshall Berman, modernisation is a double-edged process that implies gains, as well as losses:

*To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and at the same time – that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are... To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, 'all that is solid melts into air'.<sup>72</sup>*

In a complementarity regime, women are respected and protected, but pay with restrictions in their personal freedom. In the equality regime, on the other hand, freedom is gained at the cost of protective rights and respect for women as women. Women are not seen as virgins and mothers in need of protection anymore, but as subjects in their own right. As long as the gender hierarchy still prevails, this may have some grim effects, especially in terms of sexuality. Women claim to be subjects, but may still be treated as objects - without the respect and protection that were their right as fragile objects in the complementarity system. Instead of the responsible father, masculinity is associated more with the image of a group of competing brothers. The market economy literally makes sex a commodity and disconnects it from the social institutions of the family. Thus, when women claim to be equal to men within the context of a gender-hierarchical society, a paradoxical result may be that their status as sex objects is reinforced. When women crave to be responsible adults, men may feel free to become irresponsible boys.

This indicates that ethical questions have to find new answers in a modern society. One cannot expect women to guarantee morality anymore; new ways will have to be considered. How can an ethical society become a joint responsibility? Does freedom necessarily rule out care and respect for others? The challenge for a postmodern ethic is to find ways to combine individual freedom with care for others and respect for differences.

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<sup>70</sup> Frazer, N. and A. Honneth (2002 (in press)). Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange. London, Verso and Suhrkamp. (Quoted from the author's manuscript.)

<sup>71</sup> Giddens, A. (19xx). The Transformation of Intimacy.

<sup>72</sup> Berman, M. (1989). All that is Solid Melts into Air. New York, Verso. p.15.



## 2.3 A common ethic for coeducation: Parity in participation

Where do these historical and cultural considerations bring us in relation to the educational objectives for coeducation? Can a common objective be formulated at all? A first point may be that what unites the gender equality and the gender complementarity models in a European context is the rejection of inequality and social hierarchies. Nobody wants a system in which women are of less value than men. A second point is that nobody wants equality in the meaning of sameness. Equal rights do not overrule respect for differences between people. The issue is what 'difference' should entail: the right of individuals to express their gender in different ways (or not at all), or the right to claim gender group identities? Who is the subject of justice - the individual, the group or the culture? Does difference mean respect for people's right to be different, or the right of groups to maintain their cultural identity, including imposing this identity on their own members? Is the answer different depending on whether we are talking about adults or children?

The social philosopher Nancy Fraser has suggested that *parity in participation* could be a non-sectarian norm of justice in postmodern society.<sup>73</sup> It comes close to the notion of equal opportunities but formulates it in a more active way: justice means that everyone has equal access to participation in social interaction and being heard. There are two different types of impediments to parity in participation: unequal distribution of material resources and unequal status. Fraser calls these *maldistribution* and *misrecognition*. Maldistribution refers to the economic and structural inequality in society that systematically denies some of its members the means and opportunities they need in order to participate on a par with others in social life. Misrecognition refers to symbolic patterns of cultural value that give some members lower status than others, thus hampering their chance of being full, participating partners in social interaction.<sup>74</sup> Recognition is not understood as self-realisation, but as a matter of justice: one should be allowed to participate in social interaction on an equal footing - whatever one's group memberships. This means that one must take into account existing differences among people. Transferred to our field, justice is not possible if girls are not given the same resources and opportunities to participate as boys, and if their gender is regarded as secondary. To allow one gender to dominate is restricting the other's opportunities to be heard. To offer girls the opportunity to become 'one of the boys' is misrecognition of their gender.

In order to improve parity in participation, redistribution as well as recognition must be taken into consideration. This could be achieved in several ways, depending on the context and situation. As regards society at large, Fraser suggests that redistribution could imply, for instance, redistributing material resources, reorganising the division of labour, or making decision-making processes more inclusive and democratic for all. Recognition could imply, for instance, eliminating group privileges or making them accessible to all, regardless of status. It could mean abolishing preferences for traits associated with the dominant actors, or entrenching norms favouring the subordinates. It could mean giving greater value to differences or deconstructing the oppositions that underlie them.<sup>75</sup> The main point is not to substitute one for the other: redistribution without recognition may lead to stigmatising the recipients - for instance if girls are given 'handicaps' and privileges just because they are girls; recognition without redistribution, on the other hand, becomes an empty gesture or cements the situation - it puts women on a pedestal, but does nothing to improve their actual opportunities. An example would be to praise girls for being willing to serve boys, without also trying to obtain a more reciprocal state of affairs. It is necessary to address inequalities both within structural and symbolic gender.

What the equality model and the complementarity model share in practice is the *gender-hierarchy*, and the challenge to *both* models is to consider how equity and respect - not only for *gender groups*, but also for *individuals* - can be achieved. All of us are both individuals and members of a socially-defined gender class, and both should be taken into account when matters of equity, equal opportunities and justice are considered. To close one's eyes to actual gender differences among people and simply declare that everyone is equal is just as bad as claiming that such differences are static or universal. Justice in practice implies both the principle of equal rights for all participants *and* the recognition that different participants have different needs to be met. Some of these needs are related to the participant's membership of social groups, others to his or her individual situation.

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<sup>73</sup> Frazer, N. and A. Honneth (2002 (in press)). Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange. London, Verso and Suhrkamp.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.:42.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.:66.

### 3. Analysing Scouting in the context of gender

In the following four chapters, the four countries and the analysis of the five troops will be presented. I start with Russia and end with Denmark as these two countries respectively represent the clearest models of gender complementarity and gender equality. Slovakia and Portugal - each in their different ways - linger on the edge between these models. Portugal is probably closer to Russia in its gender model than Slovakia is, but I have taken Slovakia first as it also shares important historical traits with Russia. The chapters are constructed in the same way, thus it is also possible for the reader to cut across the single chapters and compare the different areas:

- *Part 1 describes the gender regime in the country.* It comprises three sections: the first takes a look at some central *gender structures* (1.1); the second considers the general *gender cultures* - the ways in which gender is understood and discussed in the country (1.2); the third looks at conceptions and *upbringing of girls and boys* (1.3). While the first two sections are mainly based on available research literature and national statistics, the third is drawn from what the adult leaders say about boys and girls and coeducation in the interview.

- *Part 2 describes the Scouting system in the country.* The first section provides information about *the national level* (2.1), while the second describes *the troops under study* (2.2). The information in the first section is provided by the research assistants (desk task 1), while the second section is based partly on information from the research assistants (desk tasks 2 and 3) and partly on the interviews with the adult leaders about the programme. This section also includes what the boys and girls say about the programme and what attracts them in Scouting.

- *Part 3 analyses how gender is done in Scouting in the troops under study.* This part has six sections. The first five sections apply the analytical perspectives introduced in Chapter 2:

*Structural gender* (3.1) - activities that are observably divided by gender.

*Symbolic gender* (3.2) - the meanings assigned to gender. The explicit or implicit models of successful and hegemonic masculinity/femininity.

*Interactional gender* (3.3) - how structural and symbolic gender influence how boys and girls, men and women, interact with each other.

*Personal gender* (3.4) - the ways in which the individual boy or girl (through their actions or their attitudes) identify with, conform to, or protest against structural, symbolic and interactional gender in the troop. Here we will also take a look at their views on gender and leadership.

*Gender conflicts* (3.5) - the areas in which the perspectives of boys, of girls, or of adult leaders are in conflict. This section also includes their views on mixed or separate patrols.

The last section (3.6) offers a *summary* and a few comments on the case study. Here the situations will be assessed against the norm of *parity in participation*, both in terms of *distribution* and *recognition*.

The first three sections (3.1-3.3) are mainly based on the observation of the summer camp and troop/patrol meetings. The headings here are catchwords taken from my analysis. The next two sections look at what girls and boys say about gender in the interviews. The headings of 3.4 catch how they describe themselves, the headings of 3.5 indicate their main area of discontent with the other gender.

Some abbreviations are used:

- TL and TA stand for troop leader and troop assistant;
- PL and PA for patrol leader and patrol assistant;
- (f) or (m) indicates whether a leader is female or male;
- (...) means that something has been omitted in the interview or observation. This has been done if it does not add to the point being made in order to keep down the length of the quotes and make them easier to understand;
- Where observation studies were conducted by the research assistants, their name appears underneath. Where no name appears, the observations were conducted by me.

## 4. DOING GENDER IN RUSSIA

### 1. Gender in Russian society

#### 1.1 Gender goes to market

Russian society is experiencing a period of rapid transition from Communism to democracy and market liberalism. Evidently this process has vast consequences on all dimensions of society, not only in terms of the economy, politics and social structure, but also in terms of cultural change in which concepts of gender and generation are important dimensions. Thus, cultures of gender and of intergenerational relations are in a state of flux, displaying a complex, and sometimes rather contradictory, picture.

Women have a higher educational level than men in Russia, and their share of the work force (48%) is almost the same as during the Soviet period. However, they also represent a very high proportion of the currently high unemployment rate.<sup>76</sup> The majority of Russian women have full-time jobs. Even though women hold a greater share of professions that, in the West, have been dominated by men<sup>77</sup>, the work market is strongly gender-segregated. Women hold most of the jobs in education, the public health services and lower administrative functions, which are all low-paid (although being a teacher or a doctor is also considered an important and valued profession). In spite of their high level of education, the fact that they have one of the highest employment rates in the world, and the fact that equal pay for equal work is established by law, the gender gap in income is considerable in Russia. On average, it is estimated that women earn 65% of what men earn, and women hold few of the prestigious leadership positions. This was also the case during the Soviet period, as women were concentrated in low-wage sectors and also held few leading economic or political positions. However, the new market economy has seriously aggravated women's position in the labour market, not only because highly feminised sectors have been reduced and the market economy is said to require precisely those qualities which have traditionally been ascribed to men( such as entrepreneurship, activity, initiative, rationality, risk-taking),<sup>78</sup> but also because the income difference between the private and public sector is extreme. This is not only increasing gender differences, but also class differences. The biggest gender gap in pay today is amongst the highest income earners, whereas it has decreased among low-wage earners. The public sector is dominated by women and older people, whereas the well-paid positions in the business sector are dominated by young and middle-aged men. Negative stereotypes of 'masculinised' businesswomen are propagated through the media.

Discriminatory hiring practices in the workplace especially affect women over 50, mothers with young children and young women who could be expected to become pregnant. The extensive protective legislation for working women (for instance, up to 3 years maternity leave<sup>79</sup>, the right to stay home with sick children, prohibitions against night shifts and lifting heavy loads), combined with a family structure in which women have the main responsibility for home and children, have hit Russian women like a boomerang in the new market economy. Employers consider women to be unstable workers<sup>80</sup> and prefer to employ men, or their responsibility for the family legitimises lower pay. This situation also reflects existing views in this society: over 50% of Russians believe that employers should give priority to men in situations of high

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<sup>76</sup> Most of the information on women's situation in the labour market has been taken from a recent publication of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF): Women (2000). An investigation into the Status of Women's Rights in Central and South-Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States. Helsinki, IHF. This report contains a valuable survey of women and human rights in 29 countries in the region.

<sup>77</sup> In 1989, women constituted 58% of engineers, 67% of doctors and 87% of economists [Koval, 1995 #220].

<sup>78</sup> Attwood, L. (1996). Young people, sex and sexual identity. *Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia*. H. Pilkington. London-New York, Routledge.

<sup>79</sup> Legal provisions grant them the right to return to their workplaces after these three years, but there is no guarantee that the company will still be there when they return. Another problem is that the social benefits granted during such leaves are actually too low to survive on, thus women are dependent on having men who earn well in order to make use of these rights. The law permits fathers to take their share of leave in connection with birth and childcare, but a father on parental leave is very rarely seen in real life. The law permits family members other than the parents to take the leave. In practice, this means the grandmother or other female relatives, making it even more unlikely that a father tends his own child.

<sup>80</sup> I was also told, however, that women are sometimes regarded as more stable, as they do not drink. They are also considered to be more honest – a crucial quality, e.g. in retail sales – and to be more accurate and punctual.

unemployment.<sup>81</sup> Thus, women have become more economically dependent on men, and the desire to benefit from the new individual freedom and enjoy a better life than their parents is therefore often connected to the hope of finding a rich man. A particularly grim side of women's weak economic position in the new labour market is the increased sexual demands on them: in Russia it is not uncommon that job advertisements in the private sector require qualities such as beauty and youth of female applicants, and problems of sexual harassment at work seem to be increasing.<sup>82</sup> Gender discrimination is forbidden by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which states that men and women shall have equal human and civil rights, freedom and opportunities. According to IHF, however, the problem is that the many regulations prohibiting discrimination have no mechanisms for implementation. It is unclear what exactly is forbidden since there are no definitions of what discrimination entails.

In Russia only 10% of the members of parliament are women, and the government comprises only 8%. Furthermore, in spite of widely recognised gender-discriminatory structures in Russian society in areas such as job access, unequal pay, sexual harassment, prostitution, trafficking and sexual violence against women<sup>83</sup>, there is not much political interest in the issue. One obvious reason for this may be the huge amount of other social and economic problems facing the country in its transitory phase, but it may also be related to the specific gender culture in the country.

## 1.2 The strong woman of the weak sex

In Russia we find a strong belief in harmonious gender complementarity – and a widespread belief in the value of coeducation. This specific mix has long and complicated historical roots. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the gender culture of contemporary Russia must be understood in relation to the perceptions of the Soviet era. The concept of 'equality' is understood as detrimental to freedom and democracy, and 'gender equality' is strongly connected to the gender politics of the Communist party. It is thus not embraced with much enthusiasm today. Here are the reactions from some of our Russian Scout leaders when asked about their attitude towards gender equality:

*Question: What is your attitude towards the concept of equal possibilities for men and women, boys and girls?*

*(Pause)*

*TL(m): I wouldn't formulate the question this way. I think it's a wrong conception from the beginning because a man is a man and a woman is a woman. We shouldn't make them equal.*

*TL(f): It's in their nature.*

*TL(m): Why should we make the Elephant and Moska from Krylov's fable equal? [a famous Russian fable everyone studies at school about an elephant and a small dog that barks at it]. Somebody asked me: Who is better, the Elephant or Moska? The first one shakes its trunk and the second one yelps. They are quite different. Why should we make them equal?*

*TL(f): I think that we need to have a certain sphere of common activity but there are functions which must be performed either by women or by men. But there should be some points of intersection.*

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<sup>81</sup> Haukanes, H. (2001). "Anthropological debates on gender and the post-communist transformation." *NORA* 9(1): 5-20. p.374).

<sup>82</sup> Bridger observes that "no potential employer is likely to advertise the fact that sex is part of the job. It is, rather, the occasional advert which adds 'no sexual services required' which gives some indication of how widespread an assumption it is that women should provide whatever their boss demands" (31). The demand in the private sector for young, attractive girls, in combination with the work discrimination against middle-aged women have "left their mark in the current shocking dismissal of women as 'bimbos' and 'babushki' in today's Russia" (36). Bridger, S. and R. Kay (1996). *Gender and generation in the new Russian labour market. Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia*. H. Pilkington. London-New York, Routledge.

<sup>83</sup> It is difficult to state the exact prevalence of violence towards women and whether it has decreased or increased in the post-Soviet period. However, one of the first international surveys, conducted by the United Kingdom in 1985, revealed that as many as two out of every five women had experienced rape (including marital rape), attempted rape or other serious sexual assault (Hall, 1985, cited from Attwood (1996)).

The essential gender difference is symbolically described over and over again, both in the data we collected and in the academic literature on gender in the post-Communist era<sup>84</sup>, as a difference between the 'strong' and the 'weak' sex: men should be strong and courageous, both physically and in character, be chivalrous to women, earn money and support their families. Women should safeguard their femininity, both in appearance and in caring and conflict-solving behaviour; she should be the centre of the home and 'the guardian of the hearth'.<sup>85</sup> In contrast, the Communist gender regime was associated with hard work for women and a puritanical ideology that frowned upon any expression of femininity, beauty or sexuality, as described by the Russian feminist Olga Lipovskaya:

*The female sovok is principally characterized by her asexuality. Typical attributes are severity in dress, a certain mannishness or, even if she is quite feminine, a strict professional orientation outweighing family responsibilities. In a word, she is the émancipée, and the tradition of her negative portrayal can be traced to Tolstoy<sup>86</sup> and Turgenyev.<sup>87</sup>*

From the beginning of the 1990s, the words 'emancipation' and 'feminist' have been used in an increasingly negative sense in the Russian media: the former is connected to the asexual and masculinised Soviet woman, the latter to aggressive, man-hating or lesbian Western feminists who renounce their true feminine nature. The 'over-emancipation' of Soviet women is thus seen as the cause of many social problems, not least the debilitation of masculinity. Women's economic and social independence seem to threaten the morals and motivation of men.

However, while this celebration of feminine weakness and charm - and the emphasis on feminine looks and appearance - may have had a specific revival in post-Communist Russia, models of gender complementarity are long established in Russian history, not only due to the patriarchal structures of the prerevolutionary agricultural society, but also due to the Soviet regime itself. The assumption of natural sexual differences has persisted at least from the Stalin era onwards. As the British researcher Lynne Attwood writes:

*Despite its revolutionary origins, the Soviet Union was in many respects a staunchly conservative society. This was certainly the case concerning relations between the sexes, both social and sexual. Although men and women were theoretically equal, traditional notions of male and female personality and behaviour continued to prevail, with women persistently described as the 'weak sex' (...) Each new generation of young men and women was expected to fit into the established pattern of gender and sexual relations without complaint or question.<sup>88</sup>*

This combination of traditionalism and radicalism was a source of tension in the Bolshevik ideology from the very start, and led to the fact that the Soviet concept of 'gender equality' is quite different from the meaning of this concept in the West. In the USSR, women were given equal access to education and were obliged to take up full-time jobs, but they were also expected to marry and have children early, and the idea that men could take their equal share of housework and child care never played any significant role. Thus, in practice, the celebrated notion of the innately 'egalitarian' nature of Soviet marriage-partnership translated into a heavy triple burden on women: full-time paid work, domestic work/child care, and queuing for food and consumer goods. Men were always paid more than women; the idea that it was natural for men to be the main providers was never challenged; and domestic work was seen as

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<sup>84</sup> There is a vast amount of literature on changing gender structures and gender constructions in the post-Communist states of Eastern Europe, often authored in collaboration between Russia and Western European feminist scholars. The low esteem of feminist perspectives in Russian society and the scepticism towards qualitative methods in Russian social research have had as consequence that quite a few Russian feminist researchers publish in English. In my efforts to understand contemporary Russian gender culture, I am particularly indebted to works presented in the following volumes: Posadskaya, A., Ed. (1994). *Women in Russia: A New Era in Russian Feminism*. London-New York, Verso. Pilkington, H., Ed. (1996). *Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia*. London and New York, Routledge. Buckley, M., Ed. (1997). *Post-Soviet women: from the Baltic to Central Asia*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. Ashwin, S., Ed. (2000). *Gender, State and Society in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia*. London - New York, Routledge.

<sup>85</sup> Kay, R. (1997). Images of an ideal woman: perceptions of Russian womanhood through the media, education and women's own eyes. *Post-Soviet women*. M. Buckley. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. p.84

<sup>86</sup> Tolstoy, for instance: "A woman who tries to be just like a man is just as repulsive as an effeminate man" (here cited from Kay (1997)).

<sup>87</sup> Lipovskaya, O. (1994). The Mythology of Womanhood in Contemporary "Soviet" Culture. *Women in Russia*. A. Posadskaya. London-New York, Verso.. A 'sovok' is Russian slang for a person who still harbours the Soviet mentality.

<sup>88</sup> Attwood, L. (1996). Young people, sex and sexual identity. *Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia*. H. Pilkington. London-New York, Routledge. p.94.

indisputably feminine.<sup>89</sup> Since the 1920s, women never had any serious roles in the Soviet Communist party, either. They were almost absent from any higher political positions<sup>90</sup>, and traditional gender stereotypes prevailed. The British sociologist Sarah Ashwin concludes:

*Thus, the paradoxical legacy of the Soviet era can be seen as strong, independent women who nevertheless ended up doing all the housework, and weak 'feminine' men who nonetheless had the autonomy to relax, drink and escape the domestic arena.<sup>91</sup>*

In addition, as of the 1970s, in the light of increasing social problems in the family, the prevalence of divorce, plummeting birth rates, widespread alcoholism and generally decreasing morals among men, the Communist party revitalised the belief in essential psychological gender differences:

*In the words of G.Belskaia [from 1977]: 'Our schools are to be praised for their success in bringing up girls to be good citizens, but it is time we paid more attention to making them feminine and housewifely, more kind, neat and gentle'. Discussions about male and female personality and the nature of the 'real' man and woman began to proliferate in the general press and in specialist journals aimed at teachers and parents. In 1984 (...) a new school course called 'The Ethics and Psychology of Family Life' was introduced in all schools for pupils in the ninth and tenth grades. It was described as a programme of 'sex upbringing' (...) and one of its stated aims was to help children 'become aware of their special male and female roles'. In other words, it was a programme of overt sex-role socialisation. The hope was that if men and women fitted into more traditional models of masculinity and femininity, they would also fit better into family life: they would be less likely to divorce, and more likely to want more than one child.<sup>92</sup>*

The intention of thus stabilising marriages and increasing birth rates was not very successful. Birth rates continued to fall and divorce rates continued to rise. Compared with the other three countries in our study, Russia currently has the lowest birth rate (1.2 children per woman) and by far the highest prevalence of divorce.

However, the adherence to the norm of harmonious gender complementarity, as well as to the belief in distinct psychologies and social roles of men and women prevail. Women's roles as caretakers, givers and conflict-solvers are linked to their presumed nurturing nature, inherent altruism and maternal instinct, while men's autonomy and sexual instincts are seen as inherent to their masculine role and psychological make-up. As men are considered to have no innate paternal instinct it is, therefore, the woman's task to turn her spouse into a loving father for his children – responsible masculinity must be nurtured through female awareness.<sup>93</sup> Homemaking is seen as an act of love when performed by women in the family, and this makes it almost impossible for women to choose not to do it or to replace it by paid labour. Consequently, not having a loving woman to service him would be mortifying for a man. Because the genders are seen as so essentially different, they are seen as 'two halves' that need each other. This may also explain why homosexuality has been - and still is - so hard to accept in Russia. It goes against everything that is considered normal and natural: the essential gender difference, the heterosexual couple, procreation, the family, the kernel of life and society. Homosexuality amongst men was, in fact, a legal offence until 1993, while lesbianism was considered to be a mental illness that required hospitalisation and medication. Although attitudes are changing rapidly these days, especially among young people, one of the Russian research assistants experienced that all her friends immediately changed the subject when she tried to raise the topic.

When gender is seen as an essential characteristic - both socially and psychologically - the power relations between men and women will inevitably become obscured. It is not surprising that we find quite opposing ideas of what the International Women's day, March 8<sup>th</sup>, is all about.

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<sup>89</sup> Ashwin (2000).

<sup>90</sup> A quota system existed, both for women and ethnic minorities, to secure the presence of 'token' women and minorities, hence the scepticism towards the American or European practices of affirmative action, expressed by the Russians today.

<sup>91</sup> Ashwin, S., Ed. (2000). Gender, State and Society in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia. London - New York, Routledge. p.18.

<sup>92</sup> Attwood, L. (1996). Young people, sex and sexual identity. Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia. H. Pilkington. London-New York, Routledge.:96). According to the Russian-Norwegian researcher Alexandra Leontjeva, the course was a failure, as there were no teachers qualified to teach it. Responsibility for it could be pushed on the gym teacher, or the history teacher. The practices varied. In Leontjeva's school (she graduated from the 10th grade in 1988), the course was a big joke, and no one took it seriously (personal communication).

<sup>93</sup> Atwood (1996):98.

Whereas in Western Europe and in the USA, it is a day to mark women's international solidarity against all types of oppression against females, in Russia it is spent celebrating harmonious gender complementarity, as depicted below by one of the research assistants:

*Tomorrow (8th of March) is Women's Day and all the celebrations have already started today at our workplaces. So nice to see nearly all the women in the city with flowers in their hands. It should be a surprise, so there are often parties with champagne and cakes. You can congratulate any woman on this holiday and women congratulate each other, preparing small presents. But certainly we expect this mainly from our men. It doesn't mean we don't show this love, respect, care all the year round - simply this is a special day and it is nice to value it. And I feel proud that there are such great men around who are really our protectors.*

The day is seen as complementary to February 23<sup>rd</sup>, which is the day of 'Fatherland protectors', often just called 'Men's Day'. On this day, it is the girls' turn to congratulate the boys and put flowers on the monuments of war heroes.

The British scholar Rebecca Kay has likened the 'Ideal Russian Woman' to a *matryoshka* doll with many layers of gender discourses in it. Woman as mother and caretaker also has roots in the forceful image of the 'strong woman' in Russian culture. The strong woman can partly be derived from unstable periods in the country's history during which women had to take care of the family and the farm, while the men were sent to war or migrated to the cities in search of paid work. In more stable social periods, the strong woman has been associated with the maternal role, which is highly regarded in many parts of Russian culture, from the Russian Orthodox image of 'the mother of God'<sup>94</sup> to the 'worker-mothers' of the Soviet Union. As the central figure in the family, the woman is not primarily seen as a 'weak' feminine woman, but rather as a strong - and even strict - figure who usually controls the family budget and holds the real power, even though she will subtly arrange for her husband to believe that he is in charge. One of the research assistants told me about the Russian saying: '*The man is the head, the woman is the neck*' (as it is the neck that, in fact, moves the head). She also told me that it is normal for a woman to give orders to men in the house, but evidently her status as a commander has more to do with deciding household matters than with an equal sharing of the tasks. The role of the strong woman is not only to be a caregiver and to solve conflicts, but also to regulate and refine masculinity. By tender words and continuous praise, a woman can succeed in supporting her husband's masculine self-esteem and thus motivate him to fulfil his obligations towards her and the family. A woman should be clever - but must take care not to appear cleverer than her dear husband.

Intelligence and culture are held in high esteem in Russia and although an intelligent woman may be praised by being described as having '*a male mind*', smartness is not negative for women.

During my visit to Russia, I was struck by the frequently and openly expressed pride in the country, especially concerning intellectual resources, cultural heritage and technological and scientific achievements. This was very different from the other three countries in which national identity and achievements were almost never raised in conversations.<sup>95</sup> And members of the 'weak sex' can rely on such national pride in their self-esteem, as one of the research assistants wrote to me: '*For us the question of equal possibilities is not connected so much to money*'. This context is probably also important in order to understand the Russian Scout leaders' belief that men and women have practically the same possibilities in cultural, intellectual and spiritual spheres.

In spite of a high unemployment rate, low pay and culturally reinforced gender stereotypes about men as breadwinners and women as homemakers, Russian women have chosen to give up their jobs after the decline of Communism to a much lesser extent than was expected. Their work orientation seems to be intact, and many of the well-educated young women from the middle- or upper-middle class also seem reluctant to marry early and want to enjoy a longer period of freedom and independence than their mothers did. The age at which women have

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<sup>94</sup> Eve is a stronger figure in the Orthodox Church than in the Roman Catholic Church. She is associated more with the power of creation, rather than just being the passive container for the seeds of God.

<sup>95</sup> This could, of course, be connected to a certain resentment towards know-all Western consultants (and earlier missionaries) who show up with the good intentions of teaching the natives how to live their lives, with scarce knowledge of Russian history and culture. That national pride was not raised in the Danish case is, of course, also linked to the fact that I am a native myself.

their first child is rising very rapidly: it is now 23 years. This would imply a different kind of relationship between men and women - but are Russian men ready for that? Surveys have shown signs both of more partnership and sharing of work amongst younger people, as well as of markedly more conservative attitudes amongst young men. For instance, a survey amongst teenagers found that while 89% of the young women wanted to work, 73% of the young men would like their future wife to stay at home.<sup>96</sup> The young women's wish to postpone marriage and childbirth has to be balanced against the grim fact that, apart from being enrolled at university or buying one's way out, fathering two children can keep their boyfriends from being drafted into the army. Evidently, the wish for individual freedom and the actual structural and economic dependency on men represent a tension for the modern daughters of the strong Russian woman. Indeed, it may - as time goes by - be the lurking bomb under the model of harmonious gender complementarity that is so dear to many Russians. Research on young women in Russia points in this direction. One of the research assistants, a young woman of 22, also expressed her ambivalence about the situation to me. Even though she was firmly rooted in the idea of gender complementarity, the division of work in the family and the economic dependency of women were felt to be rather frustrating: '*10 years have passed already!*' she exclaimed. As she perceived the situation, women have to do the housework because the men will not. In today's economic situation, men have to work all day to earn enough money. Then, when they get home, they just drop down on the couch. However, as she shrewdly observes, they also make themselves important in this way. What can women do when they do not have the same economic opportunities? And does choosing a man on the basis of his wallet betray the dream of mutual love and respect? It is difficult, however, to find words for such concerns when words such as 'equality' and 'emancipation' have connotations linked to a Soviet past from which she also strongly distances herself, and 'feminism' is connected to unhealthy Western influence. The other research assistant was less opposed to the idea of the woman as homemaker, and believed that 'the wallet' and love could come harmoniously together. She certainly wanted to keep the advantages of being waited on by gentlemen who carry her heavy bags and open doors for her! However, she referred to social research that indicates that men do not recognise the work done by women in the family: '*One of the reasons is that they saw their mothers doing it, and they don't see it as work*'. Or as Rebecca Kay puts it:

*Whilst [Russian] women may happily aspire to an ideal of beauty, may feel relieved at the prospect of being allowed to be 'weak' and to seek a man's 'strength and protection', may be pleased to imagine themselves ruling over an exquisite and perfectly ordered home, they are not prepared to see themselves limited to the private sector only, reduced to brainless bimbos with nothing to offer but their physical attractiveness, or condemned to a life of self-sacrifice and material hardship as overworked, unappreciated mothers.*<sup>97</sup>

On the other hand, women's growing dependence on men also increases the pressure on men to be successful breadwinners and to fulfil the traditional male responsibilities that were previously assured by the state. The latter research assistant admitted that the low wages for women are a '*wonderful excuse*' for women not to work as hard as during the Soviet era. The question is, of course, whether the men wish and have the ability to take on this burden. The labour market is difficult and real wages are falling. In spite of the 'new traditionalism' of the new elite in Russia, the tradition of women in paid work is strongly entrenched in Russia. An opinion poll cited in Women 2000 (IHF) showed that almost 90% of the respondents considered that husband and wife should make an equal contribution to the family budget (but also expected women to do most of the housekeeping). Is the Russian complementarity pattern creating exhausted men and dependent women? For how long can the harmony model really last in the new market?

### 1.3 Bringing up boys and girls to become husband and wife

According to the reports of our three Russian research assistants, a Russian child (regardless of sex) should be well behaved, achieve good results at school, be neat and tidy, and help in the house. He or she should be obedient, but not submissive. Initiative, creativity, independence and self-confidence are also highly valued in Russian culture. Parental authority is still high.<sup>98</sup> young people are economically dependent on their parents until they have finished their

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Kay, R. (1997). Images of an ideal woman: perceptions of Russian womanhood through the media, education and women's own eyes. *Post-Soviet women*. M. Buckley. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. p.93.

<sup>98</sup> Gibson-Cline, J., Ed. (1996). *Adolescence: From Crisis to Coping. A Thirteen Nation Study*. Oxford, Butterworth & Heinemann.



education and they also seek their parents' advice on important matters, such as education, jobs and marriage. Even though some tension is also expressed here in the light of the post-Communist striving towards individual autonomy, the bond between young people and their families appears to be very close and important.

Boys are generally given more freedom in decisions and actions, while girls are brought up more strictly and are expected to do more work in the house and garden. One research assistant explained that this is '*because the girl will become a mother*'. Work in the house and garden is seen as a field of self-expression and even power for girls. Thus, parents are more willing to pay for leisure activities for their sons whom, they perceive, need them more. The same division of work exists in the Russian school system: as of junior high school, needlework and cooking are compulsory for girls; whereas woodwork is compulsory for boys.

Generally, the adult leaders appreciate the model of gender complementarity and the children are seen and evaluated from this perspective. As one leader says about the relationship between girls and boys in the troop:

*TL(f): I would say it is normal. Like in the family between a wife and a husband. They have everything. Sometimes they can't live without each other. Sometimes they quarrel, nearly fight. They have everything. But it is normal.*

*TL(f): The girl understands that she is the future mother. The boy understands that, with the help of the activities in Scouting, he becomes a real man, and the girl understands that she becomes a real woman - a mother.*

Boys and girls are seen as essentially different:

*Question: Do boys and girls behave equally in Scouting?*

*TL(f): Of course not! Because boys are boys and girls are girls. It's more interesting for boys to work with a knife, an axe, they like sports, making a fire. That kind of thing.*

*TL(m): As always, they like to play football or ball.*

*TL(f): What is more interesting for girls?*

*TL(m): Girls like to sit and look at the moon [smiles].*

*TL(f): To dream, to help in the kitchen.*

*TL(m): To pick flowers.*

*TL(f): Well, I don't know. And of course we must have common activities also.*

The leaders explain this difference in terms of girls' and boys' different psychological and physical development. Boys are stronger than girls from age 12-13, and they have greater physical endurance. Girls are weaker, are likely to give up faster, and must also pay more attention to their health. The difference in physical health also determines which work tasks are natural for men and women. Although the accompanying laughter shows that they are aware of the stereotype, they believe that men should chop firewood, dig ditches, make fires, prepare sports fields, find places for swimming, diving and fishing, while women should deal with problems in the troop, keep diaries, make decorations and clothes:

*TL(m): It's natural that a woman won't carry firewood from the forest. She'd rather cut some cabbage, carrots (...) A man is a hunter. He is a breadwinner and a woman is a homemaker. [Everybody laughs.]*

*Question: Do you want to make posters?*

*TL(f): He can't draw.*

*TL(m): I can write a poem if they ask me. But it's not interesting for me to sit and draw a poster.*

*TL(f): He won't draw. And I'll draw with pleasure. I have no problems with it.*

*Question: And do you want to prepare the sports fields?*

*TL(f): [with a slightly defensive intonation] I don't want to do it at all. Because I think it's better to organise boys to do that. Because I think it's their work. Or let our men go and do it! [Everybody laughs.]*

For the Russian leaders, the complementary nature of the two genders also provides the central argument concerning the importance of bringing them together: not necessarily to learn from each other, but because they need each other and should thus learn to know and appreciate each other's differences:

*TL(f): We have no need to separate them. At first they start to understand each other better. Then later when they face problems during their life together, they'll know how to behave. They will know what they are capable of. The problematic demography today shows that in the future we'll have to take care of the survival [smiles] of our country. Fewer and fewer people want to have a family, take this responsibility (...) Separation is harmful. We would have the same situation as in the army. We would have mobbing in schools. In fact, it's a terrible thing. Girls would have the same situation but in another form. They would nag each other and say: You are ugly. They would pick each other to pieces.*

*TL(m): Your make-up is bad. Your skirt is too short.*

In addition it would be utterly boring with just one gender – both for the leaders and for the young people who would miss each other if they were separated.

The concrete descriptions of girls and boys have many common traits among the four countries in our study. What is fascinating is that it gives rise to diametrically different educational agendas. In Russia, it becomes an educational goal to make children understand and accept their differences and their need for each other. At the summer camp, TL(f) said that when they are together girls learn to understand boys, and boys behave much better because boys need someone to take care of. There is also the belief that young people in puberty/adolescence need to talk intimately with an adult leader of the other sex in order to learn to understand 'female' and 'male secrets'. At one of the camps, this led a young female troop assistant to direct all her attention to one adolescent boy for a whole day – incessantly talking to him, touching him, watching him, trying to catch his eye. I felt somewhat provoked by her behaviour, while the research assistant, in turn, was provoked by my reaction: from a Russian perspective, such infatuations between a young person and an adult of the other sex were completely natural and helpful for young people's development. The natural gender needs the right environment – and sometimes also upbringing – in order to develop. A male leader describes how he makes the boys understand their proper role and how he is aware of improving their behaviour along these lines:

*I tell them: You are boys. You are hunters. And the girls will lay the table and put flowers on it. They will say: We don't need any flowers. Let the girls go for firewood (...) We make corrections during the process itself. It's a normal process of upbringing.*

The leaders told me about a problem with a new group of 10-year-old girls who did not want the boys to join:

*TL(f): Here is the last talk we had with them: I said: 'Girls, it's good to play together of course, but how can we manage without boys? How shall we go on a hike?' 'A-a-a, yes. OK, let's invite boys'. There was such a proposal.*

*TL(m): It is their decision, if they would rather go alone.*

*TL(f): They've understood themselves that in some situations...*

*TL(m): They say: 'We'll go on a hike!'. I tell them: 'The kayak weighs 40 kg. You four won't be able to lift it. And the four of you can't carry it. Only boys can carry it. And not the boys from the 5th grade but from the 7th grade. It is legal<sup>99</sup>. They can do it. And here they become thoughtful.*

*TL(f): Then we'll invite some boys.*

*TL(m): They need them at least as brute male force – carriers. Later they'll need them for other things.*

They have also tried to tempt the little girls with other advantages, but they see that the new culture of individualism is threatening the complementarity model. They never had this problem with the older groups, and they certainly have not given in yet:

*TL(f): While working with them we said: 'Boys are knights and every girl would be pleased if a boy offers her a seat in the bus. Then they become interested in boys. It's a problem of upbringing (...) But these children aged 10-11...they don't need it. The girl says: 'I'll do it myself. I don't need any help.' Maybe it's the spirit of the times (...) Maybe their parents say: 'Solve your problems yourself! Your problems are your problems!'*

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. the protective legislation in Russia against women lifting heavy loads.

*TL(m): The questions of collectivism have lost ground. We can see it in the way they are brought up. Now we have to make an effort to make it interesting for them to be together.*

However, the differences between girls and boys also imply that some elements of the programme should be different – for instance new games should be developed in which girls are not hurt, as they often are when they try to play football with the boys. The programme should not only meet the different needs and interests of boys and girls, but also provide an environment in which their different gender-conditioned abilities can be nurtured and further developed:

*TL(m): In general in Scouting, programmes for girls and boys certainly should be different. For boys there should be more of an accent on their physical and intellectual development. For girls this should probably be more voluntary. It is possible that the girls also want to develop physically. It should be there too, but the accent for girls should be on applied things, family and more female activities: to cook meals, a deeper study of cookery, a deeper study of sewing, design, hairdressing, etc. And for boys, there should probably be a deeper study of sports, such applied things as constructing or making something (...) We should work separately with them more at the meetings. For example, give both boys and girls the same material, but let the boys study one theme and the girls another. If the girls want to study, let's say, construction or wood modelling, or something else, for God's sake, let them do it, if they really like it. If it is pleasant for boys to learn the secrets of cookery, the basics of make-up, or, I do not know, sewing, it is also possible. In general, for ages, all the best tailors, best knitters, best hairdressers were men.*

*TL(f): For example, sea activities, it is boys who become seamen, and they are engaged in these schools, cadet schools - it will be of absolutely no interest for the girl to shoot an air rifle weapon every day. Maybe she will be interested in receiving a badge, but not more, and certainly not to become a fan of this activity. It will be absolutely uninteresting for the girl to be engaged in football, well, and so on.*

In this complementarity, however, there is also a hierarchy. When asked<sup>100</sup> whether they would prefer to work with boys or girls, if they had to choose, the boys came out on top, either because they are more interesting to work with or because they are stronger:

*TL(f): I would choose boys because it's easier to work with them than with girls. They are less capricious. It's more interesting for me to work with them. They are psychologically...There is a notion of "men's solidarity". We're not used to speaking about women's solidarity. It's pleasant to work with boys because such a good collective body is created, they help each other and offer a hand or a shoulder in difficult situations.*

*TL(m): I would choose according to the task. Generally I'm not interested in 'class work'. I'm interested in hikes, kayaks, and being in the field. And if I gather a group for this I'll have to take two-thirds boys and one-third girls. Because the situation is the following: the kayak weighs 35 kg and a rucksack weighs 25 kg and one must carry it a long way. And sometimes it's very difficult. Girls simply can't do it. It's because of their physiology. She'll break her leg and I'll be responsible for it. Boys also have limits but they are higher (...) But it depends on the kind of work. I'll take girls to sing songs, to draw a poster with pleasure. Faster than the boys.*

In general, however, the two female troop leaders are somewhat less sex-typing than the two male leaders in their views, and more open to the idea of crossing the gender divide and looking at individual differences. One female leader says, after the male leader stated that 'girls cannot use an axe':

*TL(f): The last camp showed that girls do work with pleasure that used to be done only by boys. Our girls sawed, hewed branches and they liked it. Yes, they liked it.*

The other TL(f) is the only one who stresses the importance of difference within each gender group, but implicitly she also tells us where the border for such positive gender crossings is located, namely at the cold businesswoman:

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<sup>100</sup> This question was only posed to one of the Russian leader groups.

*TL(f): First of all, children are different, there are girls who, so to say, can "catch a galloping horse", they are more dashing, they would like to be recognised and express not only their interests, but also their independence. They can also, at the same level as the boys, kindle the fire, pick firewood, build a wigwam or do something even more cool. There are also boys who are weaker in their health, but they can be interested in the history of Scouting. Such boys may want to become historians or are just interested in more intellectual things, than wood (...) each child has its natural bents and abilities (...) In men's characters there are many soft features, a lot of tenderness, they can quietly and freely concede things, well, let's say, many feminine features. There are also different men. There are more democratic men, there are more rigid men, almost dictators. It is a question of character. The women are different as well. Some women happen to be very emotional or romantic. Business ladies have no softness, they dictate how things should be, whether they are right or not. Well, it all depends.*

Maybe it is no coincidence that this is also the Russian leader who is most attentive to gender-neutral aspects of development and Scouting: in her opinion, everybody - regardless of gender - has a need to express themselves, to overcome fears and complexes and to master things. All this unites children because they understand each other's strivings. Boys and girls join Scouting to be in nature, to meet people and communicate, sing songs, play games. Gender is not a relevant distinction in such things, she says.

## **2. Two Russian Scout troops**

### **2.1 Scouting in Russia**

Scouting in Russia started as early as 1909, but was prohibited by the Soviet regime in 1926. It reappeared in 1990, and in 1998 the *All-Russia National Scout Organisation*, ARNSO,<sup>101</sup> was constituted. ARNSO comprises several Scout associations, which belong to three categories: 1) *Union of Scouts of Russia* (USR). This is a non-confessional association with groups in 54 of the 89 regions in the Russian Federation. 2) Confessional association/groupings – the large Russian Orthodox association covers 50 regions. At present, Roman Catholic, Muslim and Jewish faiths are represented by fairly small groupings, some of which are not yet registered with ARNSO. 3) Scout associations of the autonomous republics - 21 of the 89 regions in the Russian Federation are autonomous republics. Five such Scout associations have so far been registered with ARNSO: Komi, Chuvashia, Udmurtia, Bashkortostan, Hakassia, and five more are on their way.

The two troops from Russia selected for this study both belong to open associations. One is a member of USR, located in a town in the Moscow region, and was one of the first troops in Russia after the *perestroika*. The other belongs to the *Scouts of the Republic of Bashkortostan*, which was started in 1996. Bashkortostan is located in the south-east of the European part of the Russian Federation, between the Volga river and the Ural mountains. The predominant religion in Bashkortostan is Islam, but as the republic is strongly secularised (in line with most of Russia), the religious difference between the two troops appeared to me to make little difference. Both troops are connected to the school or to after-school systems in their communities. In the Moscow region case study, the group originally came from the same school class, and it is their former head teacher who is the troop leader. In Bashkortostan, Scout units are based, as a rule, in municipal after-school centres, and the teachers at the centre function as Scout leaders. This form of organisation draws on the tradition of the Young Pioneers, which was also school-based. This is very different from the other countries in which both leaders and young people stressed that Scouting represented a different sphere of experience and friendships.

In view of the Soviet tradition of formal gender equality and coeducational schools and youth organisations, a mixed-gender operation in Scouting appears as natural for the reborn and new Russian Scout associations. Among the young people under the age of 18 in Russian Scouting, a little more than half are girls (53%). Among the 12-15-year-olds the numbers are fairly even, while boys are in the majority in the younger age section, as are girls in the older age section. Concerning the adults, the gender ratios are even, but, of course, this does not by itself guarantee gender equality in positions. Only one of six national council members is female. This mirrors the situation in society at large in which women in general are weakly represented in political bodies.

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<sup>101</sup> In Russian: *Vserossiyskaya Natsyonalnaya Skautskaya Organizatsiya VNSO*.

Russian Scouting is in an initial phase in which new associations are established and federal structures are built on the basis of a variety of initiatives and Scouting concepts. As they are newly relaunched associations, Russian Scouts do not yet possess their own Scouting books, and must rely on information from abroad. Six Scout training centres, however, have been established by ARNSO, and adult leaders are trained during local, national, regional and international courses. Things are not easy for the Russian Scouts: the size of the country, the complicated structure and constitutional situation of the Russian Federation, the weak economic situation in many regions, the ethnic and political complexity of the country and expensive and underdeveloped communications are huge challenges. ARNSO's membership is increasing and it is difficult to recruit enough leaders to meet demand. In 2001, ARNSO had approximately 10,000 members, of whom 15% were adults. It is open to young people aged between 8-18. The majority are in the age range of 12-15 and nearly all of them leave when they are around 15. The competition is tough, as many other national, religious or political programmes for youth exist. The Russian Scouts do not receive any financial support from the state.

Scouting in Russia is related to some specific pre-*perestroika* features that, in some ways, seem to compensate for their missing Scouting traditions. One of these is the phenomenon of 'tourism'. The Russia concept of 'tourism' is a movement of nature-romanticism and self-expression that developed as of the 1960s in which hikes, mountaineering, canoeing, camping, enjoying a simple life in nature, and singing songs around the camp fire developed. All the leaders we interviewed had been active in this kind of tourism prior to joining Scouting, as had many of the young people's parents we interviewed, especially those of the girls. Perhaps having tourism parents lowers the barrier of access into Scouting for girls? Another important feature is the relationship to the youth programmes of the Communist party, especially the Young Pioneers.<sup>102</sup> When Scouting was banned in 1926, many of its pedagogical ideas and activities found their way into the Pioneer organisation. One of the research assistants, who remembers a happy childhood as a Young Pioneer, said that many of the basic activities and the importance of a symbolic framework were quite similar to what she later experienced in the Scout Movement, although the ideological framework was different and there was less of a focus on nature and woodcraft. In addition to their involvement in tourism, the two leaders in the Moscow region troop experienced the Soviet youth organisations and had interesting reflections on similarities and differences. Among the similarities they mentioned: being motivated to be good, doing good things, participating in various competitions, operating in small groups (called *zvezdochka* (star) or *zveno* (link), in some ways similar to the patrol system). Many characteristics of Scouting such as camping, competitions, the patrol structure, training to be useful citizens by performing good deeds, establishing a strong group identity through symbols, such as scarves, uniforms, songs, ranks, badges etc., are well-known features for several generations of Russians. The Pioneer organisation became less politically strict in the later years of the Soviet Union. What Scouting has added, according to the Moscow region troop leaders, is democratic values, the focus on the individual and the concept of self-developing programmes:

*TL(f): It's the main difference with the Young Pioneers. First of all, there were no programmes in the Pioneer organisation. Second, the organisation was over-organised. That's it. There were no possibilities for the creative development of the personality. And Scouting provides this. Yes! Scouting gives every child the possibility of self-realisation in any direction due to the programmes. And it's really very good.*

*TL(m): And maybe Scouting suited our perestroika because we saw here at least this combination: here is the child, we tell him - develop yourself and learn, on the other hand, we understood that he won't do it himself because we are always with him. And here we have the combination of the individual, the collective and the influence of adult leaders.*

So even though the Russian Scout Movement is young, the country has a solid experience and tradition of youth programmes, as well as of mixed-gender organisations.

<sup>102</sup> The youth programme of the Communist party had age sections quite similar to those in Scouting: those aged 7-10 were *Oktiabriata*, those aged 10-14 were Pioneers, those aged 14-28 were *Komsomol* members. From 18 years of age, after a year-long candidacy and with the sponsorship of two members, one could become a Party member (the highest degree and honour). The youth organisations, on the other hand, were open to everyone. Non-*Komsomol* members could run into trouble when applying to universities, so membership was technically voluntary, but in practice obligatory and sought after. The Young Pioneers and *Oktiabriata* still exist, but mostly as an after-school activity.

## 2.2 The troop in the Moscow region

### *The troop*

The troop's home is a town a few hours train-ride from Moscow. It is a medium large town and the majority of the population (80%) are Russians. It is a 'scientific town' with many educational institutions, a university, and many famous research institutions, especially in the fields of nuclear physics, space physics, engineering and the construction of military equipment.<sup>103</sup> The local research assistant described the town as characterised by a high cultural level and many cultural activities for young people: *'The youth of this town are well-educated, they are self-reliant and self-conscious and have a high intellectual level'* (DT2).

The troop was founded in 1991 by the present troop leaders. In addition to their experiences in the youth organisations of the Communist party, they had both been volunteers for many years at a tourism centre for children (outdoor activities for children), and learned about Scouting when the country was opened to the West. They did not find out about Scouting from Moscow, they said (with some pride), but from their American twin city, Lacrosse (an American couple, who were Scout leaders, happened to come to the town and told them about Scouting). Later some Australians came. The two leaders worked out everything from regulations to programme. However, it is not easy to recruit new leaders. In today's difficult economic situation, most people have to give priority to work in order to survive, which leaves little time for voluntary work. For this reason it was not yet possible to offer general admission to the troop. Instead, they were trying to develop it by establishing groups at intervals of a few years so that the older ones could become leaders for the newcomers. The first group of Scouts (to which the local research assistant belonged) were in their early 20s, the second was our troop, the third was a brand-new group of seven girls, aged 10 (the group that was sceptical about boys). The leaders regretted that they did not have the capacity to offer a programme for the senior age section (16-18 years). Young people this age want more serious hikes and outdoor activities, such as skydiving and motorbike racing, and money for such equipment is not available.

The troop consisted of 6 girls and 8 boys, all Russians, all aged 14-15. Most of them had been schoolmates for eight years, and had been in Scouting together since the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Three boys from other schools later joined the troop. The young people came from upper and lower middle-class families (mirroring the social classes of a university town), and many of them came from single-parent families (cf. the high divorce rate in Russia). Girls participated less than boys in camps and hikes for 'family reasons'. This means that their families made higher demands on them, while boys seldom had such problems. In addition, parents were less willing to pay for leisure activities for girls than for boys, and perhaps they also found the activities a bit too strenuous for the girls.

Earlier, the troop consisted of two mixed patrols (one led by a girl and one by a boy), but they now spent most of the time together and the two patrol leaders did not see themselves as leaders anymore. The two troop leaders were a woman in her mid-40s who was the head teacher of the young people when the troop started, and a man in his mid-50s. In addition, there was a young female troop assistant - who also functioned as our local research assistant.

### **Programme**

The general programme of the Moscow region troop emphasised outdoor camping, life in nature, boating, excursions, culture, history and local lore - in addition to general Scout training and special features such as computer training. A special feature was the combination of history and expeditions - an important source of troop activities was a programme called *'History of Russia through travelling'*. Scouting offered opportunities to travel abroad - the young people in

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<sup>103</sup> The town's fascinating history sweeps us through parts of the history of the Soviet Union: the marshlands on which the city is now located were chosen in 1934 as the location of some of the most feared of Beria's prison camps for political dissidents. When the prisoners were set free as WWII approached, many of them could not return to their hometowns and thus stayed in the town - which is believed to have offered fertile conditions for the later development of the famous research laboratories in the town. The place became a centre for nuclear physics and military engineering after WWII and the researchers stayed in the condemned prisoners' barracks until better housing was provided. When the city was officially founded in 1956, the researchers had just succeeded in constructing the world's first atom accelerator - which again became the decisive technological condition for the Soviet lead in the space race from 1960 (known in the West as the 'Sputnik-shock'). The city was closed to the public until the onset of perestroika. Today, the research laboratories are part of worldwide collaborating scientific networks and enjoy a high international reputation. The economic difficulties, however, have led many of the researchers to leave their positions in favour of business or emigration. This year the town will be declared a 'scientific city', which will mean lower tax rates. The pride in earlier and contemporary intellectual and cultural achievements was conspicuous in the adults and young people to whom I talked.

the troop had already travelled much more than their parents and their peers. The name of their troop denoted a sail vessel and was associated with sea adventures. It thus indicates the kinds of activities they engaged in, which were centred around boating, canoeing, swimming and hiking. The troop normally met twice a week. In the information I have of the programme from September 2001 to May 2002, activities such as hiking, orienteering and outdoor competitions constituted the largest group of meetings, followed by meetings devoted to planning or duty activities, and meetings of a more social and relaxing character. In addition, there was a trip to the theatre and the celebration of a national day. Some of the activities were arranged together with the school. One meeting was for girls only (fortune-telling), while another one was initiated and carried out by three boys alone who dressed in their Scout uniforms and laid flowers on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Compared to the six areas of development in RAP<sup>104</sup>, they judged their programme to score high in the *physical* and *intellectual dimensions*. Both adult leaders enjoyed the outdoor activities. The TL(m) especially appreciated the physical training, and the mathematics of orienteering and knots. The TL(f) also emphasised the possibilities for travelling and communication. Least developed in their programme was the spiritual dimension. They had links with a priest, but he left, and they did not know much about this themselves – Russia is such a secularised country, they said. They emphasised that religious activities should be an individual choice, not something forced on children: *'our children don't like this push in the religious direction (...) I think every person must decide it for themselves'*. They tried to bring in this dimension in other ways: studying religion as part of history, learning how to behave in church, perhaps by listening to music.

The appreciation of democratic values and the emphasis on individual choice and self-development also made them sceptical about the 'social dimension' of RAP, which, in this post-Soviet context, was interpreted as anti-individualistic:

*TL(m): We don't think it's our direction (...) We simply tell them and they understand it quickly, that every person in our world is individual, he must solve his problems his own way (...) Perhaps, giving privileges to individualism or individual features – nevertheless, when we have a troop or a group – we inculcate collective features as well. Also patriotism.*

The ability to function in a group is included rather in the dimension of character development:

*TL(m): We tell them: You will live in a large collective body, like a people or a nation. But you should also develop independence in yourself. That is, life is an obstacle race, and there are areas, and perhaps not the easiest ones, which we should pass alone. And we must be prepared for it.*

The celebration of individual choice also made them sceptical about the norm of obedience. When they outlined the Scout law for their organisation they chose to remain close to the original B.P.-version from 1908, but left out Law No. 7 about obedience:

*TL(m): Our child is not obliged to obey his commanders. We have no commanders! It is not in the spirit of democracy. It may be a wrong translation, but in our contemporary situation the word 'commander' doesn't suit us. That's why we substitute it and say: 'A Scout is industrious', 'A Scout is polite'.<sup>105</sup>*

Law No. 2 was changed from loyalty to king and country, to devotion to God, parents and leaders.<sup>106</sup> The troop leaders have experienced a change in the young people's ability to act as individuals over the last 10 years: the first group could only work as a troop (not in patrols) and it was difficult to succeed in individual work with them. The middle generation worked better when they were alone or in pairs, but had to be organised when they needed to act as a collective body. The youngest group appeared to be too individualised: the boys and girls did not want to be together anymore. This was perceived as a Western influence, and coeducation was seen as something belonging to the Soviet pedagogy.

Another important motivation to become a Scout leader was the importance of working with young people. After perestroika many youth programmes were closed down:

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<sup>104</sup> RAP: Renewed Approach to Programme, European Scout Region, WOSM 1998.

<sup>105</sup> Another sign that Russia is on its way towards capitalism may be the formulation of Law No.3 about helpfulness which, in the Moscow region troop, is phrased: "A Scout is careful and respects the property of others".

<sup>106</sup> See Appendix III for a comparison of the formulation of the Scout Law in the four countries.

*TL(f): We had a certain vacuum; those who worked with children earlier know that children, at least in our country, have a profound need to be together, to do some common things. I don't know why it is so, but our children can't be alone (...) our people are collective'.*

The TL(m) said he was the type of person who liked to pass on his experience to others and liked communicating with children. Children pushed you further – if you wanted to lie on the sofa, the children would say: *'No, let's rather go to the forest – get ready and go'*. As a teacher, the TL(f) said it gave her an understanding of the other side of children's development (the development of their personalities), and provided an opportunity to protect them from negative influences.

In their work they tried to take into account the young people's ideas – they asked them what they wanted, including through questionnaires. Generally, the idea was that adults are responsible for the programme once they had proposals from the young people. If they wanted to achieve something they did not always need the adults' initiative – *'but if they don't want to, they won't do it'*. This concurs with the observations – there were several planning sessions and, at one meeting, the young people's enthusiasm for the new snow completely blew away the adults' plans. Meetings arranged by the young people themselves tended to favour social and relaxing activities.

The summer hike in which I took part was characterised by a very relaxed atmosphere, indeed. The young people seemed to enjoy the situation and each other's company very much. There was no emphasis on uniform (they just wore their scarves), rules, activities or schedules. There were no signs whatsoever of the 'military style' that I observed later at some other camps. They appeared like a group of friends having a good time together. Things seemed to happen by themselves – the tents were put up (and nobody corrected them if they were not standing perfectly), the meals were cooked without instructions or quarrels. The leaders generally encouraged the young people to make their own judgements and decisions. The TL(f) had a motherly attitude with a natural authority – strong and gentle. She gave lots of advice but few commands. The Scouts were very attentive to her and showed great respect. The TL(m) appeared as a quiet and modest man who seldom raised his voice, but took care of practical matters and kept an eye on the boys. The young TA(f) behaved like an older sister – she showed consideration and had fun with the youngsters, especially the boys.

When the young people were asked what they enjoyed in Scouting, both boys and girls alike spontaneously said: camping, hiking, outdoor life, meeting friends and the fact that you learn a lot of new things and broaden your outlook. *'Scouts are like a big friendly family, where everyone supports each other. I like that a lot'*, a boy said. The boys also stressed sports, games, and competitions: *'I would like to have more sports activities and games'*. The girls mentioned canoeing, travelling to other towns, protecting nature, and cooking over the open fire. One girl said: *'I wish there were more orienteering activities, obstacle races and trips to different places'*. The only negative things they mentioned were connected to the behaviour of the other gender (I'll get back to this point later). They had a very high opinion of people who were Scouts: they are better than ordinary people, healthier, more honest and have a better life. Scouts were people with strong wills, who could live together with others and survive under hard physical conditions. Those who did not fit were the weak-kneed, lazybones and egotists, people who watched too much TV, or spineless teenagers who wagged their tails like little dogs when anyone struck them. The girls especially stressed that an egotistical person would not fit in as a Scout: people who only loved themselves, who were indifferent to other people's feelings and needs, who wanted everybody's attention and admiration all the time and thought they were better than they really were, like *'I'm such a hero!'*. The boys tended to stress weakness and laziness: computer-nerds, people who did not want to work, who ate and slept all day long and watched TV, who could not survive without modern comforts, who were too urban and could not endure the hardship of camp life.

## **2.3 The troop in Bashkortostan**

### ***The troop***

The home of the Bashkortostan troop is a big city. Bashkortostan has approximately 4 million inhabitants and is a rather wealthy republic in the Russian Federation because of rich oil deposits (10% of all oil production in Russia comes from Bashkortostan), mining, and a fertile soil for agriculture. It identifies itself as 'the multinational republic of Bashkortostan' as the



inhabitants have migrated from Asia and Europe. Today more than 30 nationalities<sup>107</sup> live in the republic - the three largest groups being Bashkirians, Russians and Tatars. The republic is also multi-religious. A majority of approximately 40% are Muslim, while 30% are Christian, and the rest belong to other religions or do not have a professed religion. However, the society is widely secularised, so Muslims and Christians seem to live peacefully together, while some antagonism exists between two branches of the Muslim faith. Many families are ethnically and religiously diverse. However, some restrictions exist, for instance: Muslim girls should marry Muslim boys, while Muslim boys can marry outside their faith.

The troop had 42 members aged 8-14, divided into two age sections. All the young people attended the same after-school programme in the city. Here, Scouting was a three-year study group with two age sections and meetings 2-3 times a week. As a consequence, those young people who had completed the three years of training could only participate in the camps, not in the ordinary weekly activities. The three leaders were teachers in the after-school programme: TL1(f), who was in her early 30s, was the leader of the older section. TL2(f), the leader of the youngest section, was in her mid-40s. In addition, the Chief Scout of the Bashkirian Scouts was also interviewed and was present at the summer camp. He was in his late 30s and also worked at the after-school centre. Most of the young people came from middle-income families, as parents with low incomes could not afford the expenses, and parents with high incomes tended to seek more prestigious leisure activities for their children, such as horseback riding. For camps and trips, most of the young people had to earn the money themselves. The leaders also confirmed in their interviews that the religious diversity was not of great importance as most of the children came from mixed families both in terms of religion and nationality. The troop included young people of all the major ethnic groups in Bashkortostan. Approximately half of the children were Muslim and the other half were Christian. In addition, at the summer camp, all children, regardless of confessional belonging, took part in the restoration of a Russian Orthodox church.

The boys were in the majority in this troop (24 boys and 18 girls), and the older the age section, the fewer girls: among the seniors, there were only 3% of girls. Some of the girls had a brother in the troop, or belonged to the family of the Scout leaders. A typical pattern was that the boy joined and then his sister wanted to join too. Recently more girls had joined because their best friend was a Scout – but only very few girls joined by themselves (i.e. without any prior connection with the people in the group), while half of the boys did so. TL1(f) said it had an impact on the group when sisters and brothers joined: during the school year it heightened conflict, but during vacations and camps the siblings were more relaxed towards each other. Sometimes the boy protected his sister, sometimes he *'[made] her do his duties'*.

Bashkortostan was originally chosen in order to study a case of Scouting that was in both a republic and a Muslim culture.. The recruitment pattern for girls may be connected to the Muslim norms of decent female behaviour and the men's and boys' obligation to guard the honour of women in the family in the public sphere. By joining together with her brother, in a way the girl 'stayed' in her family. It may also be a reason for the falling number of senior girls: according to the leaders, parents wanted to keep their daughters close to the family at this age – both because they could help at home and because of dangers related to their earlier puberty (sexual and social dangers such as smoking, appealing too much to men with their beauty, or coming into contact with bad influences). The parents also watched their boys, but, for them, Scouting was seen as suitable in order to develop masculine character:

*TL1(f): Parents are more positive about sending boys to camp, where there are difficulties, tests, games, training games aimed at developing male qualities of character and physical abilities. Physical development is not only for health, but also for the strength of their muscles - in the forest the boy runs more than in the city.*

This could, of course, also be connected to the general Russian complementarity pattern, although in the Moscow region troop Scouting was also viewed as positive for adolescent girls. Apart from these possible effects, the Muslim influence seemed to play a minor role in the ways Scouting and gender were done. The Bashkirian girls were, like girls in the other camps, dressed

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<sup>107</sup> In Russia the concept of 'nationalities' is equivalent to what Western Europeans understand as ethnic groups. This mirrors the two different European models of nationality: a Western model, with roots in the French revolution, in which a nation is equivalent to a state: a group of people who inhabit the same territory under the same political and juridical order. In the Eastern model, 'nation' is defined in terms of culture, heritage and ethnicity. One reason for this difference is that, in many Eastern European countries, the notion of nationality was historically prior to the actual establishment of independent states.

in modern sports outfits with shorts or tights and bare bellies, and the big girls frequently dressed up in the latest teenage fashion. They appeared to me to be more active and self-reliant compared to the more attentive and modest behaviour of the Moscow region girls.<sup>108</sup> This may be due to the fact that the majority of the Bashkirian group was somewhat younger, and thus probably less expected to conform to the Russian gender complementarity model than the young people approaching sexual maturity as in the troop in the Moscow region. But it might also be related to the fact that TL1(f) was the leader who stressed the many gender-neutral aspects of Scouting and the individual differences within each gender.

### **Programme**

In the programme from September 2001 to March 2002, the main activities were camps, preparing for competitions, survival skills, e.g. making ecological fires, orienteering, etc. In addition, there were many meetings with a social content or which marked official days: birthday celebrations ('name-days'), a Christmas celebration, the Day of the Fatherland protectors (Feb.23) and the International Women's Day (March 8) – celebrated in the congratulatory Russian style. The military aspects in the Russian troops seemed to be connected to the national culture, and not specifically to Scouting.

On the days we were present at the camp, the programme was to help restore the village church. In addition there were artwork and woodcraft activities and opportunities to prepare for badges and do other tests (such as not speaking or eating for a whole day). The social and emotional dimension also seemed well taken care of: there was a 'get-acquainted' meeting on the first evening. The next day, the game of a 'secret friend' was introduced.<sup>109</sup>

For the Bashkirian leaders, their role as Scout leaders was strongly considered to be part of their professional role as teachers. They both stressed that they enjoyed working with children, and they saw the great advantages of the Scout method. TL1(f) said that she knew from her work in the after-school programme that children were attracted to activities in nature, games and communication (which were in their Scout programme). It also offered an opportunity to work with 'problem' children. They became more organised and they improved their skills and knowledge. The leaders liked the principles of self-organisation and self-discipline. Like the leaders from the Moscow region, they felt a little uncomfortable with both the norm of obedience and the religious dimension. TL1(f) said that the concept of obedience implicitly told the child to submit to the parents and leaders. It oppressed the person, seemed out of tune with the new democratic society they lived in, and was also regarded as a rather unpedagogical approach to working with children, especially boys of a certain age: *'if you take it more softly they will actually obey'*. The chief distanced himself from Christian missionaries of earlier ages. In a multicultural country, religious tolerance was of extreme importance, and Scouting should be open to everybody.

The observations at the summer camp revealed a warm atmosphere and a relaxed tone between leaders and children. Here, too, things seemed to happen by themselves – the children were relaxed and friendly despite the limited space in the house, and big Scouts were very helpful to little Scouts. There was no pushing at mealtimes, for instance, although there was only room for half of the group at a time. Those who had finished their meal rose and washed up their plate and cup under the water spring outside, making room for the next person who was waiting patiently in line. In the get-acquainted game (in which everyone had to remember everyone else's name), there was a light-hearted, non-competitive atmosphere in which the children and the adults helped each other remember everyone's names. I heard few orders or commands from anybody. The leaders often asked the children's opinion on different matters. The leaders gave advice, but the young people were responsible for the concrete implementation. TL1(f) was smilingly attentive towards the young people, TL2(f) had a warm, motherly approach. The chief appeared as a quiet and friendly man who only raised his voice in connection with lining up at the flagpole for the opening ceremony. When the patrols saluted and reported at this ceremony to TL2(f), she looked smilingly at the children while they saluted her. This was the only time they wore their uniforms. Thus, the military aspects were carried out with a warm, motherly style - which gave it a touch of children's play.

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<sup>108</sup> The Bashkirian girls, however, were more reserved in the interview. It is difficult to say whether this is coincidental, due to their younger age or whether it may be related to their Muslim culture as they were the only group of girls who had a male interviewer.

<sup>109</sup> Each person is told the name of one of the others and must pay special attention to this person – who does not know who his or her 'secret friend' is. In Russian the game is called 'giants and dwarfs' – and the attentive person is the dwarf who must care for a giant.

The young people had a decisive vote over the troop programme and this had led to dramatic changes in the programme. According to TL1(f), survival camps (tents, challenges) were more popular with the older group than the kind of camp we took part in. For this reason, her group had preferred a trip to St.Petersburg instead of attending the camp. This was confirmed in the interviews with Scouts aged 10-15. Both boys and girls mentioned the adventurous aspects of Scouting, such as hiking, camping and climbing mountains, and they equally emphasised that they liked the sensation of risk: 'I like extreme situations. Some people love risk, we do' a girl said. A boy loved 'the kick of adrenalin you get – to overcome obstacles like loneliness and hunger' and found that life would be boring without it. The girls also mentioned orienteering, the love of nature or simply running in the forest.

The data on the troop in Bashkortostan is not as extensive as the data on the troop in the Moscow region. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the group in the camp was considerably larger than the one in the Moscow region and they did not work in patrols on the days we were present - thus systematic observations were difficult. In addition, I fell ill during the camp and this, of course, limited my capacity for doing observations. As a consequence, there is only a little overlap between observation and interview data, the summer camp observations and the observations of patrol meetings. Secondly, only two young people from the oldest age section who were supposed to be our focus were present at the camp as they had just returned from the trip to St.Petersburg and could not also afford to go to the camp. This meant a somewhat younger group than in the other four cases making comparisons less relevant. Finally, both the observations of troop meetings and the interviews themselves happened to be rather brief. Thus, it is not possible to give a detailed picture of the Bashkirian troop, but the bits and pieces of information will be briefly commented on and compared with the findings from the Moscow region troop.

### 3. Doing gender in Scouting

What impact do these cultural and social conditions for gender and Scouting have on how gender is done in practice among the Russian Scouts? In this part, I will analyse the observations from the summer camps and the troop meetings, and what the young people themselves said about gender and gender relations. The data comprises the following observations:

From the troop in the *Moscow region* we have observations from a *two-day summer hike* with walking, swimming, camping and cooking – in extremely hot and damp weather. This hike was mostly arranged for my sake and, as the troop had just returned from summer camp, the aim of the tour was mainly to have a relaxed time together. Seven boys and two girls went on the hike, in addition to the three adult leaders, the national research assistant (Evgeniya), and myself. Both Evgeniya and I carried out extensive written observations, and so two field reports are available for this trip. From the troop in the Moscow region we also have *13 observation studies of troop meetings* conducted by the local research assistant, Yulia. At the troop meetings, girls and boys were more even in number (except for a theatre trip that cost money), so this provided an opportunity to check to what extent the gender patterns from the camp might be dependent on girls being a minority. The *interviews* with young people from the Moscow region involved one with four girls, and one with three boys, all aged 14-15.<sup>110</sup>

From *Bashkortostan*, there are two shorter field reports on the *first two days of the summer camp* – from Evgeniya and myself. The camp was in a wooden house with no running water, and the young people were free to group with others as they wished. Thirty-two young people (12 girls and 20 boys ranging from ages 10-18), and five leaders participated. The group was mixed. In addition to the two age sections of our troop, there were also some Scouts from another Bashkirian troop and a group of big girls visiting from the republic of Udmurtia. We arrived on their first day at camp, so not everybody knew each other. In addition to the camp observations, we have some very brief comments from *10 troop or patrol meetings* from the local research assistant, Egor. The *interviews*, also led by Egor (who belonged to the group but not the troop), involved one with four girls aged 12-14, and one with four boys aged 11-15 – and in each group they were all of different nationalities.

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<sup>110</sup> *Girls*: Lena (14), Dasha (14), Lyuba (14), Nadya (15). Dasha had to leave midway through the interview, which is why she said less than the others.

*Boys*: Igor (15), Misha (15), Lasha (15).

Both groups were interviewed by research assistant Yulia, who was a TA in the troop.

### 3.1 Structural gender: *Cooking and carrying*

In the two Russian troops, structural gender is seen in such areas as leisure activities, work division, segregated sleeping arrangements, in the fact that fewer girls participated in activities that cost money (or other 'family reasons') and may have been more dependent on having a relative in the troop.

The difference in leisure activities generally showed physically active and daring boys and quieter and more social girls: on the hike with the Moscow region troop, when we went swimming in the river, all the boys and TL(m) went to jump in the 'tarzanka' – a rope fastened to a tree over the river so you could throw yourself into it. Not all of the boys were equally courageous, but all of those present did it. Meanwhile, the girls and the female leaders and guests swam across the river, and the girls collected flowers and presented them to us. Later on, the boys climbed trees, while the girls mostly sat around the table chatting with the female leaders. Exploration and discovery also seemed to be automatically the boys' domain, while the girls waited:

*The Scouts discuss which campsite to take, this one or the one further on? Igor and Vitya go to look at the next one, the rest of us are waiting in the grass. Lena lies comfortably and relaxed in the middle and did most of the talking.*

In Bashkortostan, the girls appeared quite physically active, but they still left the boys to do the most daring activities, such as swimming in the river at night or walking over broken glass at the campfire. The boys became involved in technical problem-solving and construction activities, while the girls took more care of others (humans and animals). They were also the ones to suggest love-songs around the campfire, although the boys joined them and played the guitar, and everybody liked the songs.

First and foremost, however, gender structures the division of work and duties in Russia. The local research assistant in Bashkortostan told me that a gender-based division of work was typical in the community, thus *'boys are glad to have girls in their teams as girls prepare meals, while boys deal with woodwork and hard jobs'*. In the Bashkirian camp, a couple of girls had prepared our room on our arrival. In the evening four girls volunteered for the next day's duty, which was scrubbing all the wooden floors and helping the female leaders with the meal. A boy also volunteered, but the four girls preferred another girl when they learned what the duties were. While they did the housework, the boys and the rest of the girls worked on the restoration of the church. When asked whether they preferred to be on duty or work on the church, they opted for the church – this kind of work was rated as more important. This division of labour was also mirrored among the adults: the two female TLs stayed in the house with the girls on duty and took care of practical issues, while the men helped the children outdoors. On the third day of the camp, some boys were in the duty team (they were supposed to take every other day), which made the TL(f) quite exhausted as she had to explain everything to them. Boys do not have the same training in household chores as girls, thus it is not so easy to put into practice an equal sharing of work. Fetching firewood, carrying heavy things and doing pioneering, on the other hand, were aspects of boys' work:

*TA(m) says to the troop leader: I'll take all the men with me after dinner and we'll bring firewood. Then he looked at the older girls and added: If you want, you may take a walk. The boys begin to gather firewood and go on foot all the way to the river. They went for firewood twice, and they constructed a flagpole. When they went to the campfire down at the river – everybody, including the little kids, carried firewood. When I offered them help, everybody (even the smallest boys) refused. Some of the older girls also carried firewood. But on the whole, the girls carried blankets, jackets, food – the things that are not heavy (...). At the campfire the girls spread out their blankets and took their seats. The boys were busy making the fire. (Evgeniya)*

When the distance was short or when the work did not demand much physical effort, girls participated. However, nobody seemed to reflect on the fact that scrubbing wooden floors is, in fact, also quite a hard physical task.

In the single-gendered work tasks, there was a pleasant 'single-gendered' atmosphere. The female troop leaders gave advice to the girls on duty and they talked about all sorts of personal matters while working. For the boys, the young male TA created a 'masculine' atmosphere:

*At the entrance TA(m), one big and four small boys are constructing a pole for the camp flag. They are knocking down four big poles in the ground. TA(m) and the big boy are wearing camouflage trousers and military boots. They are stripped to the waist and have a fag between their fingers. TA(m) leads the work with friendly authority and knocks down the poles with big force while the younger boys watch him with admiration. He tells the small ones to tidy up after the construction.*

While the boys were formally put on house-duty in Bashkortostan, there were few signs of an effort to create formal equality in the Moscow region troop. It was seen as natural that girls and boys had separate tasks as long as they were undertaken voluntarily and both girls and boys mastered all kind of tasks: the division of labour was the result of the young people's own choice. However, the leaders admitted that the usual pattern was that girls took the cooking duties (even though boys thought that they were better cooks), and that boys took care of the fire. On the hike, this gender division in work tasks was clear: the two girls prepared the meals, laid the table, served the food, poured drinks and washed up. The boys made the fire (including some responsibility for tending the pots over the fire), collected wood, fetched water, and took the night watch. But most of all, boys were expected to be strong and carry heavy things. The boys' backpacks were much heavier than the girls' and they also carried tents and equipment for Evgeniya and me. The boys carried the heavy trunks of firewood and chopped it up. At one point, we realised that we had not brought enough water:

*Igor offers to walk back to town and buy more. The TA(f) says to me that he is such a big and strong boy, so this is not a problem for him.*

This division of labour seemed to be quite natural to the participants. Everybody carried out their tasks without being asked and seemed content:

*Igor put up poles at the fireplace to hang the pot. The TL(m) assists him. Vitya makes the fire, Yura helps him. Lyonya is watching them. Lena arrives with the bread from her backpack, and spreads a plastic cover as a tablecloth. She cuts bread, sausages, tomatoes, cucumbers, spring onions and lettuce. Nadya puts it on the slices of bread, and arranges everything very delicately. TL(f) sits nearby and gives advice.*

Occasionally, girls collected firewood together with boys just as, occasionally, the boys stayed with the girls while they were preparing the meal - and in these situations the boys sometimes lent a hand:

*Now the dinner preparation starts. The two girls peel potatoes. Misha and Yura sit by them, talking. Lesha and Vitya come too. Everybody is talking. Lena is very active, Nadya more withdrawn. After a while Yura takes a knife and helps peel the potatoes. The other three boys go to fetch wood, and Vitya chops it. The potatoes are now to be washed. Nadya stays ashore and gives the potatoes one by one to Yura who stands in the river washing them. Then he hands them over to Lena, who is relaxingly leaning her body against a tree at the water's edge. She inspects the potatoes thoroughly and protests loudly (for the fun of it) if there is even a grain of dirt left. They all seem to enjoy the situation.*

The leaders expected the girls to take responsibility for the meals:

*The girls are expected to do specific work: 'Girls, you have a mess on the table!', 'Girls, go and wash the ladle!' The girls answer: 'Why us? Yesterday we made the salad'. 'Girls, who is on duty today - you?' The girls answered that they had simply agreed to help. Thus they showed a certain unwillingness to act within the framework of a gender stereotype. There is a certain wish on their part to share the responsibilities in equal parts. (Evgeniya)*

When the boys cooked, the adult leaders took over more. The boys in the Moscow region troop had undertaken the task of cooking porridge for breakfast. However, it was actually TL(m) who did the cooking, and the boys simply helped. Since everybody else was sleeping while the porridge was being cooked, the opinion was that cooking duties had been shared equally: the girls cooked the meals on the first day, the boys on the second. This is a good example of how asymmetry can appear as symmetry: the fact that preparing lunch and a hot dinner involved considerably more work than cooking a pot of porridge was toned down, as was the fact that adults actually took over for the boys. This may also be the reason for some contradictory information in the interviews: on the one hand, boys often referred to doing the cooking on camps and hikes yet, on the other hand, preferred mixed patrols so that they could divide the work gender-wise:

*Lesha: In mixed patrols everything is OK - like girls cook and boys fetch the wood...  
In single-sex patrols, I don't know, they probably do everything together, first fetch the wood and then...*

The rather sharply gendered division of labour and activities was confirmed in later observations of the Moscow region troop. One exception very interestingly demonstrates some of the dynamics of this strict gender work regime. This was a meeting during which Igor invited everybody go to his house to make pancakes. Lena later told the local research assistant about what had happened:

*Lena said that it was Igor's idea to invite everybody to his house to make pancakes, and the girls decided to bring some ingredients from their homes, instead of buying them. So, they put together the ingredients and began making the pancakes. As they were at Igor's home and he was the host, Lena couldn't command there, so everything was in 'Igor's hands', even the cooking. She also added that he considered himself to be the best cook, but he always asked for her advice about the ingredients and their amount. So, he was the chief cook and she was only his assistant, although, in fact, she had cooked more than he had! 'He could only command, not do it, especially when it came to cooking the pancakes', she said. She also added that Lyuba (a girl) made some pancakes, and Dasha tried to interfere in the process. Finally, Dasha also made some pancakes, but Lena's were better. Nadya and Sveta laid the table, and the boys were sitting in the room, laughing and talking. Igor also joined them from time to time, 'he wanted to keep up with everything', Lena said. So, 'four of us were doing something, the rest were having their rest and relaxing', she pointed out. For 1.5 hours or so, they sat at the table, laughing, joking, and eating - and Igor told them lots of interesting jokes and showed lots of photos. 'He was really good as the host of the party', she noticed. So, 'they were satisfied with him, his hospitality and my pancakes', she said, laughing. (Yulia)*

This story of a boy and a girl in the kitchen shows us several things about the Russian gender complementarity system in this setting. Firstly, that it was unusual for a boy to take the responsibility for cooking. Even though it was Igor who invited them home for pancakes, it seemed self-evident that it was the girls' job to bring the cooking ingredients (boys may buy drinks and snacks). Secondly, we understand that cooking is an important area of female identity confirmation. It is an area in which she can show her competence, and in which she has right to exercise power (cf. also the Bashkirian girls who did not want a boy in the duty team). Cooking gives the woman the right to command, but Lena had to relinquish this in this situation out of politeness to the host. Lena's ambivalence towards the work was clear. Even though she made critical remarks about the two boys and the girls who were not working, she also expressed her feelings about Igor taking over her area of power and competence. Thirdly, we see that he did not acknowledge her competence – Igor believed he was the better cook, a point he also stressed several times in the interview. The girls did not seem to agree on this. One of the other girls described another time Igor did the cooking:

*Dasha: For instance, one evening boys fed us with 'very tasty' pasta. Igor cooked it and nobody could eat it. Practically everyone stayed hungry.*

So female competence seems to be important, but it is a well-kept secret among women. We also get the impression that it was enough for Lena to know that it was, in fact, she who had made the tastiest pancakes, not him, and that hers were better than another girl's. With this silence around female work and competence, we are approaching the perspective of symbolic gender.

### **3.2 Symbolic gender: Admired heroes and invisible mothers**

The message in the gender structure is quite clear, as Evgeniya also concluded:

*On the whole, the model of behaviour of different genders is complementary. In spite of the freedom of behaviour, the gender models are clearly revealed – the most typical and approved of for girls (emotional support, organising meals) and for boys (strength display, fulfilment of hard work). By the way, everybody (the girls and the female leaders) admitted the boys' strength and spoke a lot about it. (Evgeniya)*

The seemingly symmetrical division of work and other activities has some asymmetrical aspects. Let's see what happened when Igor returned from his trip to town to fetch water:

*Igor returns with his backpack filled with water and drinks. The sweat is running down his face and body, and he gets big applause from us women around the table. The girls try to lift the backpack but cannot. I also try, I can lift it, but it is really heavy – probably around 30 kg. Later TA(f) tells me that Igor was astonished that there was no tea ready for him when he came back – one does hard work, but also expects to receive care and comfort back.*

The boys' actions were the focus of much attention and admiration on the part of the adults on the hike, who furthermore encouraged the girls to admire the boys:

*TA(f) says: 'Let's go to our boys!'. The boys are throwing themselves with great force from a muddy slope to a rope and splashing into the water from a height of 1-2 meters. The TL(m) stands in the water and instructs them with a very low and soft voice. He also compliments them and takes photos of the jumps. We, all the females, stand looking at the boys with open admiration. The TL(f) gives motherly advice. The three most courageous boys try to surpass each other with ever more daring jumps.*

*The adults' evaluation was important for the boys and the adults were not sparing with praise – 'Look, how well Lesha is jumping!' They received a similar evaluation in other kinds of activities – 'Look, girls, how well Vitya is cutting the bread!' (Evgeniya)*

Strength is a sign of successful masculinity, and this was also revealed at the campfire. The feminine side, however, was mentioned in a less flattering way:

*A new game is introduced in which one has to guess which person is associated with different animals, flowers, countries, etc. Most of the boys are associated with big, strong animals. Lena is associated with a cow – and everybody guessed it immediately!*

Successful masculinity is expressed through strength, courage and heroic actions. This kind of masculinity is made very visible, while the feminine-motherly role connected to care and consideration is taken more for granted. As if such care is something just there for the homebound heroes. The work the girls did was never commented upon:

*Two boys are strapping plastic bottles to their bodies – they are going to swim over the river for more water! They get everybody's attention and admiration, and their photographs are taken. While this is happening, a girl sits alone at the river washing up the big pots. She has been working continuously for two hours now, but this does not seem to evoke any attention or admiration.*

Evgeniya observed that the girls got attention when they did *not* work well enough or did not take care of their health – cf. the perception of girls as fragile creatures, which was also expressed in the interviews with the leaders:

*The girls are also supervised with regard to their health: 'Nadya, stand up from the ground! I'm sick and tired of telling you!' When Vitya injured his leg, it was taken more calmly. They simply treated it and didn't scold him. (Evgeniya)*

As we saw in the pancake-making situation in Igor's house, there can certainly be identity confirmation in silent household chores, and to be taken for granted or seen as fragile may also represent a kind of belonging without having to do dangerous things. One of the research assistants told me that a Russian man should not cry. Although the boys seemed to appreciate the attention and praise, the following small episode may also illustrate the cost of such a masculinity model for the boys themselves:

*One of the most courageous boys slides in the mud and gives a little cry of fright. Then he points at the TL(f) and the TA(f) and says he just frightened them voluntarily. (My comment: I don't think he did – he did slip, and the exclamation was a spontaneous reaction – but maybe it is embarrassing for a boy to show such weakness. To be male in Russia is to be physically strong and courageous, weakness and fright belong to women.)*

The connection between successful masculinity and strength, courage and fear of weakness was also found in the other countries, even though it was not so explicitly admired. One thing, however, which distinguishes this kind of Russian masculinity at this age from all the others is that it seems to be combinable with a certain gentleness in communication with women and an openly expressed appreciation of love. We have already heard about the Bashkirian boys who liked to sing love songs (suggested by the girls), and during the Moscow region hike a boy recited a passionate love poem for us:

*The TL(f) says that Igor is very clever in poetry and theatrical instruction. She tells me about a competition once at a camp where the boys were knights and where the final competition was to be chosen by their lady of the heart (the ladies were the girls, who had only been watching the boys compete). In this final move they had to write a poem for their lady and recite it. The TL(f) calls on Igor and asks him to recite the poem he wrote on that occasion, which he does immediately, with a clear and loud voice. He knows it by heart and his face has a serious and sensitive expression:*

*For you not to suffer from the road's dust  
For your footprints not to be swept away by the wind  
I took my love in my arms and sat her on a cloud  
I was not her friend, nor husband  
I just followed her footprints  
Today I gave her the sky  
Tomorrow I will bring her the world*

These different cultural models of masculinities were also revealed by the fact that the Russian research assistant was more amazed by my amazement! She said that reciting poems was a sign of good upbringing, and she interpreted the love poem more as an effort to gain points in the competition than as an expression of tender feelings. She is probably right, but what she does not acknowledge is that the sheer fact of reciting such words would have been utterly embarrassing for a 14-year-old Danish or Slovak boy. At least an ironic distance would have been indispensable. Another effect of this openness to emotionality may be what the Russian research assistants told me about the deep emotional friendships that exist between men – quite different from the tough male groups we shall meet later.

The admiration of the heroic masculinity is also seen in the adults' many positive comments and evaluations of the boys. In the Moscow region camp, I was told much about the different personalities of the boys, their competence, successes and achievements. Only once did the TL(f) tell me something about the competence of a girl, while there were plenty of stories about different boys. Can girls be better than boys at anything – apart from their central role in caring and as an emotional regulator? Even in cooking the boys were considered the best! Boys as the natural focus for attention and girls in the wings can also be detected in the observation perspective of the local research assistants in their observations of troop meetings. The activities were most often seen through the eyes of the boys, as in this meeting during which the newly fallen snow made the Scouts skip the planned meeting for spontaneous play:

*They came, saw that snow and forgot about their meeting. They asked the adults to delay their meeting, and began to make different things (snowmen, snow-fortresses) and also decided to 'shoot' throw snowballs at the girls. It was really fun! (...) Well, I must say there was a real boy's privilege in 'shooting' the girls and making different objects. Even though they were in the minority (4 boys and 6 girls), they were more adroit and active in their shooting. It was, I would say, a kind of a competition where they shot, and counted how many times they had hit. When they saw that the girls tried to attack them, they joined together, but the girls were always together, so they got tired, and joined together to build a snowman and a big fortress. (Yulia)*

It is also worth noting that the 'being together' seems to change value according to gender: when the boys joined together, it is associated with solidarity, strength and inventiveness – when it was the girls, it is seen as something that made the play boring. The observer does not remark or comment on the fact that two boys appear to be very domineering in almost all meetings, while a much less active girl gets comments like '*the main figure was Lena again*', or her activity is interpreted as a way of attracting attention. Lena's activity, however, seems to stay within the limits of accepted femininity in Scouting, while this was not the case with another girl, Dasha. She did not take part in the summer hike, but was described to me on several occasions as a girl who, by being 'too feminine', irritated the boys: not courageous, cried for nothing and was squeamish about mice and spiders. And, as the TL(f) said to me during the hike: '*to be a girl in Scouting one must in some ways resemble a boy*'. But in some of the later observations of troop meetings it appears that Dasha actually 'resembles a boy' in the sense that she was very good at sports and very active. The problem here seems to be rather that she is 'too masculine' in the sense of taking too much initiative and space. When describing her activities, the verb '*to interfere*' often comes to the observer's mind and pen – Dasha interferes in things that are none of her business:



*It was mostly the boys who were active in the orienteering task, but Dasha was trying to interfere in the process all the time, but she could hardly give any reasonable advice. She is really running very fast, she is the fastest girl, but she also tries to add her own opinions when the boys discuss something. As for the rest of the girls, they were mostly sitting and just looking, even Lena. (Yulia)*

Only twice are Dasha's activities positively evaluated by the observer. Once, when she (with Igor), won a competition in a physical exercise, and the other in a situation in which she, much to the observer's amazement, ran even faster than Igor! Although a girl is not expected to be strong and physically apt, it is not negative. However, to be domineering seems to be beyond the borders of a good girl's behaviour, but not of a boy's. Dasha is not seen as successful in balancing on the fine line between being enough of a 'boy' to be a good Scout, while not going so far as to jeopardise feminine modesty. The lead belongs to the heroic males.

In the troop observations in Bashkortostan, the boys are also seen as the main characters. The events are seen from their perspective - for instance, mention was made of the fact that the boys liked the girls taking part in competitions, or that they liked the looks of some new girls. In the camp, however, there was no more focus on the boys' than on the girls' work. In fact, the girls' efforts received more praise, and the boys seemed to feel a little overlooked:

*The adults praise the girls for the good housekeeping: 'It was Sveta who worked today. The girls always work well' (...) As the boys are noisier, they are more criticised about discipline: 'Yesterday everyone went calmly to bed except in the boys' room' (...) TA(m) read my notes and in the morning shared his impressions with me in the boys' presence. He said a funny thing: 'They don't appreciate us'. The boys added: 'men, boys' - but he couldn't explain why he thought so. (Evgeniya)*

### **3.3 Interactional gender: Courteous boys and attentive girls**

The complementarity model may eventually lead to a rather peaceful interaction between the genders: they need each other and do not compete for the same things. Care is exchanged with chivalry, attention with entertainment. However, it requires each party to keep to his or her role, and this means that boys 'naturally' take the lead and girls have a more reactive position in the social exchanges.

I must admit that I was quite charmed by the courteous and gentle behaviour of the Russian boys! In Bashkortostan, they were attentive to me and paid me compliments. In the Moscow region troop, they offered me their seat on the bus, carried my tent and put it up, gave me a helping hand when I was getting in and out of the river, and they took care that I was offered food first at mealtimes. On the hike, boys and girls from the Moscow region also seem to relate in a friendly and attentive (albeit very gender-stereotypical) way towards each other. This is probably also age-related. We will later learn that the picture may have a less idyllic backside, but let's linger on the surface a while. In Evgeniya's observations, we have a description of how some of the boys got the girls' attention of by frightening them, while the girls took care of the atmosphere and the relationships:

*The girls almost never stay alone, there are always boys around them - if the boys are thirsty, the girls give them a drink. The boys always fool around with the girls trying to frighten them (for example, Yura said: I am just fooling around to frighten them!) and at the same time conceal their own fear. All this is accepted as normal behaviour. Yura was pleased to remark that Nadya had washed the ladle badly. And then he went to wash it with her. The girls keep abreast of the atmosphere and the relationships (when a boy got upset, the girls offered him a crust). (...) From time to time, the boys try to attract the girls' attention, that's why they take the lead. The girls react to their utterances, but prefer not to take the initiative. (Evgeniya)*

The boys were friendly to the girls, but also took it as a matter of course that they were the main characters. Just as Igor expected the girls to have tea ready for him when he returned from his strenuous walk, the boys also took a second sandwich as a matter of course (while the girls did not) in a situation in which there were not enough for everyone to have two. In the observations of the troop meetings, the boys were always in the lead, they took the initiatives, chose the teams for competitions, they did the orienteering and did not like the girls to interfere as they found themselves very competent. Two boys in particular, Igor and Misha, were described as taking a leading role and also as being the centre of social life - always talking,

discussing, telling jokes, etc. Igor (the dominant of the two), was also the strongest boy, which seemed to be an important part of his gender identity and was often demonstrated to the girls:

*Masha (a girl), Vitya and Igor found a thick stick, and began breaking it. Masha's efforts were all in vain, but she was standing watching and, from time to time, gave advice. Vitya couldn't do anything. Igor took the thick stick and broke it again and again.... Then he came up to me and suggested I do the same... I didn't want to, but he insisted. I tried but it was impossible to break it (he was so satisfied), and he showed me again how it was possible for him to do it. He did the same 'trick' with Masha - she couldn't break it, either. (Yulia)*

It also seemed to be up to the boys whether they found the girls' comments relevant - as in the following episode in which the troop was discussing where to go for their summer camp:

*There were lots of arguments, specially among the boys (Igor and Misha were arguing constantly). The girls were sitting and listening. Only Dasha argued with Igor and the TL(f) about the places the TL(f) suggested visiting. Igor didn't pay much attention to Dasha - he missed her words. Lyuba tried to suggest something, but since she actually couldn't go to any camp because of financial problems, the boys did not listen to her. Lena and Nadya were silent. (Yulia)*

The girls' role seemed to be to listen, blend in and be the audience for competing boys, as here in the bus to the theatre:

*The boys preferred to sit in the back of the bus, (where the seats are in one row, to communicate more, and have a chance to see each other without turning their heads or bodies, or crossing the passage, to have a talk with the neighbour to the left or to the right). So, at the back they had a real 'boys club' and only some girls were permitted to join them: Lena and Nadya were sitting near the boys, while Sveta was sitting quietly in the middle of the bus together with the TL(f). Among the boys, Igor and Misha took turns in sharing the stage. Igor was amusing and made everybody laugh at his anecdotes. (Yulia)*

When girls took the initiative, it was often indirectly (except when cooking). Lena, for instance, seemed to exercise her 'dominance' in a flexible and considerate 'feminine' way. In the observations, she is mentioned in the following roles: she often takes the position of listening to the boys and laughing at their jokes, she places herself next to an attractive boy. She shouts emotionally and enthusiastically at the team during competitions. She takes responsibility for organising meals and planning, but never in a dominating way (cf. the pancake-meeting). She is active when duties have to be taken care of (collecting money, for instance).

Much in line with this, we can also see that Lena's striving for influence involves a much more competitive attitude towards another girl, Dasha. She said her pancakes were better than Dasha's, and in a situation in which nobody wanted to do the boring task of collecting fees, Lena suggested that Dasha do it.

The only time Lena is described as more active towards the boys is a meeting at which she arrived wearing make-up and a fancy hairdo, and actively flirted with a particular boy. This meeting, during which a good deal of play fighting between boys and girls was exhibited, may show us how the sexual position of adolescent girls may represent a new female power position - moving from invisible mother to what the research assistants described as the position of 'queens'.<sup>111</sup> They told me that during childhood the girls do most of the work, then as young ladies they become 'queens' and can leave all the work to the boys. And then they get married and take over the work again...

The following episode, where the observer notes that the girls are growing older, may offer a glimpse of the transition to the queen-dom and also how the chivalry of the boys seems to develop into a more brutal fight to be recognised and outdo the rivals:

*I notice that the girls are getting older: Lena is wearing make-up, she has a funny hairdo, her hair is all in plaits and she is wearing a red handkerchief on her head. Nadya and Lyuba also use cosmetics, or dye their hair. (...) I mentioned that Lena has set her eyes on Vitya and she was trying to catch his attention. She patted his head, hugged him in a friendly way,*

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<sup>111</sup> Literally queens, it has nothing to do with the Western slang for homosexual men.

*and they were speaking together all the time. Then, Igor (who was trying to get somebody's attention) took a scarf from somebody (I think it was Lena's scarf, which is red and white, the colours of 'Spartak', a famous football team), and began fighting with Masha using the scarf. A few moments later he tried to get a sandwich from Lyuba, but she said to him: "Get off me". Vitya, Masha and Igor found a thick stick, and began breaking it (etc). (Yulia)*

Dasha's behaviour is not of this complacent feminine style. She seems to insist on taking part in the action, instead of just applauding. She does not flirt with and comfort the boys as Lena does, but quarrels noisily with them, literally insisting on her right to be number one:

*During the competitions, the team was working very hard. They tried to do their best, but there were small quarrels between Igor and Dasha, 'who is going to shoot first', 'let me be first', 'you don't know anything', etc. (Yulia)*

The girls were critical of Dasha's domineering behaviour, even though she seemed to be the one who defended the other girls:

*Igor said that the best (in an orienteering game) had been Misha and Yura. Dasha added 'Sveta also'. (Yulia)*

In the interview, Lena stated that Igor preferred her and did not want Dasha because she was always crying 'I, I want this, I will do that'. Igor said he found Dasha boring, impertinent, stupid, impolite, fussy, hyperactive, too emotional and too talkative. Another girl was also mentioned by the boys in the interview: a girl who, seemingly, made herself appear important and thought she was so much wiser and more grown-up than everyone else. In the interview, Igor also admitted that it annoyed the boys when the girls were too active, because they were active in such a fussy way.

When a boy crosses the border of correct gender behaviour, something else is at stake: in the interviews, both boys and girls talked critically about a boy who, in the end, was expelled from the troop. This boy was too lazy and would not work as boys should do.

In Bashkortostan, the girls seemed somewhat more active in their interaction with boys. On the interactional level, the girls appeared more active and self-reliant, which could be due to their age, but maybe also due to the fact that their leader was less gender-typing in her views. The girls in Bashkortostan spoke up during the acquaintance round (even though they didn't make jokes like the boys did), and a small girl offered to present her group (which contained several big boys). Evgeniya observed from a talk with the girls:

*The girls said: 'In response to the boy's bad language we use the same against them. When they shout at us, we do the same'. The girls to some extent are guided by the boys' behaviour and act actively as they do. On the whole, the girls here behave freely and often feel that they are the masters of the situation and they like it. At the same time they show concern for the boys: a girl turns to a boy near the standpipe - "Let me push it, you are pushing it for everybody and don't drink yourself". (Evgeniya)*

### **3.4 Personal gender: Tired heroes and pretending kittens**

While the boys tried to outdo each other in spectacular jumps from the 'tarzanka', the girls needed encouragement from the adults to give it a try:

*The TL(f) tries to persuade Nadya to jump, but she says she is afraid. TA(f) jumps first to set an example. At last Nadya pulls herself together. While approaching the rope, she laments that she will probably break her back, get water in her mouth, etc. She is clearly 'doing femininity', but she does seem seriously reluctant about the idea of jumping. She jumps - and gets a big round of applause from everyone. Then Lesha does an extraordinary somersault and Vitya does one that is even more daring. All the leaders applaud these jumps too.*

However, the girls were not reluctant to take part in a wide variety of physical challenges. The quiet Nadya told me that what she liked most of all in Scouting was survival tracks! And as we have already heard, girls talked with as much enthusiasm as the boys about the physical challenges in Scouting: they like to hike, camp, climb mountains, run survival tracks just as

much as the boys. The only difference was that sports and the competitive aspect appeared to be less important to them, compared to the boys. Why this inconsistency? Did the girls feel obliged to mention activities (which actually frightened them) in order to assure us that they were good Scouts? Or were they suffering from the overprotection of the boys and the leaders? Were they limited by the image of girls as fragile beings and, as time went by, started to believe in it themselves? As Lena said when she refused to jump from the tarzanka: she had done all sorts of things when she was a child, but now she had become more cautious. They clearly like being pushed a little. They appreciated that TL(f) was a 'modern woman' and that she encouraged them in the right way:

*Nadya: She knows how to teach us to be brave. To make us unafraid of things. She teaches us to share our views (...) TL(f) forced me to do an obstacle course. I climbed halfway up the tree and I couldn't go further. She persuaded me that there was no way back, only forward. And I had to pass it. I liked it very much.*

Perhaps the problem is that the attraction to such courageous activities goes against the masculinity/femininity polarity and may threaten their advantages as 'the weak sex'. For instance, is a woman with strong muscles really a woman?

*Lyuba: Not long ago I saw a programme on TV where a woman said that it could easily be proven that men and women have the same strength. To my mind, if a woman is a bodybuilder, she is a man. A girl should be delicate, tender...*

*Lena: I have a brother who is 22. He thinks that there should be some mystery, something unique about a girl. She shouldn't come and tell everything about herself. There should be something unique about her. She must attract a boy. They say, "There isn't something a woman is loved for. They love her in spite of everything". She must attract his attention.*

In the interviews with the 14/15-year-old Moscow region Scouts, it was quite clear that both boys and girls were somewhat ambivalent about the complementary gender model. On the one hand, this was how the world was and most of them identified with, and were ready to conform to, their ascribed gender positions. On the other hand, they also experienced it as a straitjacket and sometimes found it unjust and a bit odd. They enjoyed their gender privileges – but also lamented the price they had to pay. Let's start with the girls who told us about the ups and down in their life as little kittens:

*Question: What is the best thing about being a girl?*

*Lyuba: Girls are paid more attention.*

*Lena: We can say a girl is at the centre of the events [everybody laughs]. She'll always be offered a place near the fire. If she is cold they'll offer her a jacket...*

*Question: Is it good?*

*Lyuba: Yes. Everybody will look at you, smile and say "what a girl she is".*

*Lena: A girl must be given some allowances...*

*Lyuba: Discounts in the shop [Everybody chuckles]*

*Lena: Yes, discounts in the shop...*

*Lyuba: Boys become angry with this (...) Igor said, 'you've got 6 roubles'. Then we needed more money and he said, 'nevertheless you'll go. You're a chick. Everybody will give in to you'. I got angry with this...*

*Nadya: If a girl is in a circle of boys, they pay more attention to her. As Lena already said, they will offer her a seat, a jacket, and so on.*

*Lena: The girls are taken care of. When we were in the camp, they carried our rucksacks. If it is heavy we immediately give it to them. They help us, that is, they make allowances for us...*

*Nadya: A girl is a creature who needs kindness from boys. A girl knows how to persuade a person. She achieves whatever she wants...*

*Lena: Wait. I wanted to say that a girl must pretend she is a little kitten, so weak...*

*Question: Why? What for?*

*Lena: Ah! In this case boys will treat her differently. If you are a little kitten who is afraid of the storm they'll say, "don't be afraid". They'll be proud of themselves that they are not afraid of that, they have calmed her down. They are good guys. They are not afraid of that...*

*Question: What is the worst thing in being a girl?*

*Lena: I wouldn't like to be a boy.*

*Nadya: They are very capricious.*

*Nadya: We are 'the weak sex', that's bad.*

*Lena: Yes, a girl is very weak. She can't defend herself...I think, boys should understand this and treat this with great respect'.*

To be 'the weak sex' has its assets, but also its drawbacks: you cannot defend yourself, you depend on the kindness and understanding of men. The girls easily identified with the victim position: boys have the ability to hurt girls - and as girls are fragile creatures, they are easily hurt, too. According to Dasha, girls are so tender and responsive that they may yield to the boy at times where they really should say no. The price kittens pay are problems in assuming their full position as a subject. This is especially so when it comes to love and romance, as the kittens have to wait until boys take the initiative, and as boys do not always have well-developed social antennas, this can also hurt:

*Lena: A girl doesn't feel comfortable making the first step herself, a boy can do this...*

*Lyuba: Should a girl really be the first to approach him?*

*Lena: A girl should be inaccessible, that's it.*

*Lyuba: She should flirt with her eyes...*

*Lena: Flirt with her eyes, but not approach...She must have pride. Boys should be tamed. They are lucky. If they want to help a girl they can do this. A girl can't do everything she wants. They are stronger, they have strength. They are lucky to have all this (...).*

*Lena: In my mind, if we still had these rules, I have forgotten what they are called, when girls ruled over boys...They had the same rules as we have today with boys. In the old times a woman offered her arm to a man so he could take it, it wasn't the man who took the arm of the woman. Now the situation is completely different. A girl should only be attentive when boys approach her. Even if her boyfriend wants to hold her. The boys don't understand that a girl is there. They feel fine. They don't understand...*

*Question: You mean it is bad for you?*

*Lena: Yes. I miss tenderness.*

The girls seemed to be well aware of the theatre in this gender play: in order to appeal to the protective masculinity in boys, they must pretend to be little weak kittens. The girls differed in how much they identified with this complementarity play. Lena herself who, as we have seen, was most successful in taking a 'feminine' position in the interaction with boys, indulged herself in the advantages the division of work gave her in Scout camps:

*Lena: I mean, when we arrived, the boys made a tent for us. It would take us more time. The girls cooked, made the camp cosy. The boys are 'the fortress' of the camp. The girls can count on them (...) I think a boy is strength, he is a wall, reliability. A girl brings comfort. They don't exist without each other.*

*Question: Are there activities in which either boys or girls achieve better results?*

*Lena: There are activities in which girls can show their worth. For example designing the camping area...They make the camp cosy, bring flowers, decorate the gates. So this is what the girls do. The gates we decorated were made by the boys, but we brought our femininity into it.*

Other girls were more reluctant to embrace the complementarity model. Both Lyuba and Dasha stressed the similarities between girls and boys much more and wanted more equality. Dasha thought that boys and girls should be equal in everything, including cooking. Lyuba agreed: 'I think everyone should be equal in the patrol'. The leader should be someone who had suggestions and could solve problems. Gender was not important. Dasha confirmed this: 'To my mind, everyone (male and female leaders) should behave the same'. But, as we have seen, the price of this self-conceit is that Dasha often got into trouble with the boys: A little kitten can soon turn into a bad cat. Lena, who had learned the game, even tried to teach the others the secrets of the feminine position:

*Lena: If you want to cry you should go into the forest and do it there. Choose a pine tree, like we did. We had our special place there and we spent time with the girls there. When we needed boys, we came to them so tenderly. It was at the last camp. We were tender with the boys and everything was okay. You shouldn't clear up the relationships in their presence.*

*You shouldn't shout that something had been done wrongly, that a sleeping bag was put in the wrong place. It's not the end of the world! I mean, the girls should be more tolerant sometimes.*

The boys agreed that strength was one of their many assets – although they were also a bit puzzled about it, because what need is there for physical strength when you live in a modern society? They admitted that hard work was needed in Scout camps, but what they were less content with was that they, because of their physical strength, had to do everything!

*Igor: I don't like that there is such a thing... well, that boys work more than girls do. It is not that girls are better or worse, it is that they are not so physically developed and so on. (...) When you are working and notice that somebody is having a rest, that's.... (...) but it seems to me that sometimes they could do it, could cope with it.*

In contrast to the girls, the boys were more preoccupied with the disadvantages of their gender role and they complained about the weakness of girls. As we see in Igor's comment above, this female weakness is understood as innate but, at times, also suspected to be just a good excuse to be lazy. The boys viewed the girls as lazy creatures who always ran away from hard work in order to pick flowers and berries, as in this episode:

*Igor: Once we were on duty in this camp and I was responsible for it, and we all served breakfast together. You would never imagine such a thing, right. And then the girls got up and left.*

*Lesha: Yeah, and the boys were working.*

*Igor: And the boys were working and, you know, there was me, Lesha and Vitya, we were in the field kitchen and were running to and fro, and, you know, that's not easy, and we were running like...*

*Misha: And Yura was also there. Actually, nearly all the boys were there with us.*

*Igor: And we were running.*

*Lesha: Running like mad.*

*Igor: We were running to and fro, to and fro ... and then, when the girls returned from the forest, having picked some berries and other stuff, you know, with a contented look, and we had already sawed and cut all the wood and all those things...*

*Lesha: Had brought water.*

*Igor: Right, we had fetched water and, you know, were tired and, of course, it is nice when you work yourself and get tired, that's nice, but...when someone doesn't work, and you see it, now that's very unpleasant, you feel ill at ease.*

It is hard to be a boy, compared to the restful life of girls:

*Igor: See, boys live in a more cruel world, you know, they have to work for society (...) And we have fights, meetings, sort things out, and girls just sit and eat cakes. They don't have to serve in the army, to fight, right?*

*Lesha: They work less in the camp.*

*Igor: Well, you see, a girl still has an easier life...*

*Lesha: Boys often get more tired, they do more.*

*Misha: Perhaps, that's the reason they live longer.*

*Igor: They are loved by everyone, and they get flowers, and boys never get them.*

*(...) See, a boy goes out with a girl, right, for one year he courts her, sees her home, kneels before her and so on ...*

*Misha: And do girls kneel before him?!*

*Igor: Anyway a boy is... of course, girls have lots of good qualities, but I'm still very glad that I am a boy.*

*Misha: Me too.*

*Lesha: And me.*

While the girls' self-esteem seems to be based on their success in being seen and waited on by boys, the boys' self-esteem does not rely on the opinion of the girls, but is a product of their own accomplishments. And although they lament all their hard work, it is precisely this work that gives them competence and authority, both as Scouts and as future leaders. They found boys much more suited as leaders because they gained the respect of others through their

work, while girls lacked this natural authority: *'they immediately start screaming and then rush to do the same thing'*. It had been an absolute *'shock for everyone'* when Dasha was made a patrol leader, a position she had neither the competence nor authority for in their opinion.

The boys were very preoccupied with the topic of leadership, and discussed it at length, while the girls answered that they would like to try, but only if nobody else were more qualified for the job:

*Lena: Well, I would like to try. I think it's interesting to try yourself in a new field, to try to do something interesting, to suggest something. But anyhow, I would give my leadership to someone else if I thought he could do it better.*

The boys are very careful to distance themselves, not only from ineffective female leadership, but also the authoritarian kind of male leadership. However, they do not seem to doubt their own competence as leaders. There was evident rivalry between the two leading boys concerning who would be the best. During the conversation, Misha insisted that nobody really was an obvious candidate for being the leader of the group, while Igor discreetly tried to hint at himself. When the interviewer finally asked if they would like to become patrol leaders, Igor burst out:

*Igor: Well, maybe I would like to be one some day, after all I have a certain influence on our boys, so many people respect me and, see, I make an effort to do things and there are some girls, you know, who think well of me. And I think I could try to improve our relationships somehow...To tell the truth, here I am the most advanced person, for personally I ...*

*Misha: I would even say aggressive.*

*Igor: Yeah, you could even call me not advanced, but aggressive (...).I'd try to make our life more interesting and fun, see. Would try to organise something all the time. Well, I'm just such an active person, I write poetry, and then..., you know, I'd try to stage all those skits, and when we'd have different performances I'd offer my mite I'd work really hard to make it interesting and nice for everyone.*

To be a leader seems to be an important way to do masculinity for boys – and it requires a good deal of self-assurance to fight for this position.

### **3.5 Gender conflicts: *Egocentric boys and lazy girls***

When these young people were asked about what they didn't like in Scouting, both mentioned gender conflicts: the boys said they had to do all the work, the girls thought the boys dominated. For the adult leaders, this was just a natural interaction between husband and wife – but the young people seemed to be more discontent with it. The areas of conflict were, of course, related to their age, but certainly also to the gender regime they live in. One thing is that the complementarity model prescribes strict roles and those who do not want to conform potentially generate conflict (such as domineering girls and lazy boys). Another thing is the dissatisfaction with the price of one's own gender role, and the envy of the other. While each gender wanted to believe that the other admired their particularity, what the interviews revealed was rather the opposite: while the boys thought they worked all the time, the girls were dissatisfied with their lack of consideration and helpfulness. While the girls sought to appear as mysterious creatures and little kittens, the boys only wished they could do their share of the work or at least become better in sports! In this reciprocal reproach, however, we again see the face of asymmetry: the contempt for the stupid femininity is much stronger than the criticism of egoistic masculinity. And in this evaluation, the boys and the girls actually agreed, but they mostly elaborated on the flaws of the other gender.

The girls were critical of the boys' 'misbehaviour'. They mentioned the boys' double-dealing: communicating with people they otherwise hated if it were profitable for them. They were also critical of Igor and his striving to be in the lead all the time, which put them in the wings:

*Lyuba: He is not a bad guy. He is responsive, sometimes kind. But I feel there is something wrong about him. For instance, he wants to be the leader, an initiator of all affairs. He wants to replace the adult leaders. In reality he is like everybody else. So he argues all the time. We have a conflict with the boys because they'll all follow Igor...*

*Dasha: They are afraid of him...*

*Lyuba: Yes, maybe that's true. Very often he cries that he is the strongest. That's why we have problems of that kind. But in principle everything is all right.*

*Question: Does it mean that Igor dominates among the boys?*

*All: Yes, by all means...*

He is nice when you speak with him alone, and he knows a lot, the girls say, but the minute the other boys come, he starts to show off. Their discontent is particularly connected to the way in which this boy makes himself the main character – and the girls the subordinates:

*Dasha: In a large group of people he considers himself the leader. He thinks he is God and we are his slaves, ready to do everything for him.*

*Nadya: We don't mean anything to him.*

*Lyuba: Sometimes he can insult people without even thinking about it. As if he is the centre of the universe and we're not.*

Boys hurt the feelings of girls, and their egocentrism and a girl's vulnerability makes it difficult in practice for her to be a leader: As a leader of boys, a girl would get hurt, they could tell her to go to hell. Leshya, however, who was described as a boy who was very attentive to, and interested in, girls was judged more positively.

Interestingly enough, the boys (including Igor), agreed to a certain extent that the weak point of boys was their egotism, but they did not particularly see it as a problem in relation to girls:

*Igor: The worst thing about boys is their extreme self-confidence and like, you know, egotism.*

*Misha: Like they think they are superior to others, which is often the case nowadays, I guess, it can be found in all countries.*

*Igor: See, there are lots of bad qualities, like, maybe impudence, or, that we are too cruel.*

*Misha: Yeah, lots of things.*

*Igor: I think they are more selfish.*

*Misha: Self-confidence, like, you would often meet the belief that if you are stronger you can do everything.*

*Igor: Right. Like I'm the strongest at school, and some people are afraid of me, and I guess that's bad, really bad.*

This is, however, all they had to say about weak points of their own gender, while the weak points of girls were manifold, seen from the boys' perspective. Girls might have a certain kindness, and they might be better in the kitchen (that is, if they put an effort into it), and in drawing. The boys did say a few nice things about Lena, and also acknowledged girls who, in spite of their general incompetence, tried hard to improve. Generally, however, they describe girls as not very clever, they ask stupid questions all the time, they do not read books, they are lazy, passive, fussy, hysterical, squealing, bawling, quarrelling, servile to teachers and easily fall under other people's influence. They are dishonest with their friends, reveal secrets, don't speak their opinion. Honesty, tolerance and true friendship belong to the male gender. The interviewer suggested that beauty might be a girls' asset, but was immediately brought down to earth: character was more important than appearances and, sadly enough, a beautiful girl was seldom clever...

The boys did not have a high opinion of the girls' contributions. Men are generally better cooks and girls often do not even make an effort to make a proper meal! The only thing girls seem to have any capacity for is picking all these endless flowers and berries, peeling potatoes and doing drawings. This is also the reason behind their frequent quarrels:

*Misha: While all the boys work, the girls draw and lisp with all those 'ahs' and 'ohs'!(...)*

*Igor: Boys work more, they participate more in different games, and they win more often. The boys are made use of - for our patrol's sake. But, of course, the girls can draw ...and all that stuff (...)*

*Question: Are you satisfied with the way the chores are shared?*

*Igor: Nope! The boys work more than the girls do and that's quite evident, you must do something about it. I mean, let them work a bit, not just lie and rest and then say you are not pleased with something. They should try hard, work, do what they can.*



The girls were much more critical of their own sex than the boys were of theirs, and they saw themselves as a problem for boys: girls are capricious, and not as inventive as boys:

*Lena: I don't mean that our girls are very stupid and won't be able to invent anything. I think there is a lot they can invent. But the boys' brains work more quickly. They know better how to organise competitions, a sort of orienteering activity or some knot contest in which the aim is to find something.*

They acknowledged that girls cannot provide sufficiently interesting conditions for boys in Scouting. Boys need more difficult things, but there could be 'allowances' (handicaps) for girls, for instance, in physical exercises. It can also be difficult for girls to be sufficiently considerate of the boys' interests (the other way round didn't appear as a problem):

*Nadya: The most difficult thing when you are a patrol leader - and in addition if you are a girl - is to take into account the interests of all the members of the patrol, not to pay special attention to women's interests'.*

Both genders preferred mixed patrols – and both genders believed that girls were much more dependent on boys than the other way round (the little girls who did not want the boys to join are surely revolutionary in this context!). The boys thought it would be boring without the girls (as it was also possible to have fun with the girls) and, after all, 'they do what they can to help us'. On the other hand, when a boys-only group attended a Jamboree, they found it really great! There each person did his share of the work. For the girls, a girls-only patrol seemed to be a gloomier prospect: boring and uninteresting. And boys are the 'labour of the patrol', how could they do without it? There would also be a lot of discussions about dress and make-up etc., which doesn't happen as much when the boys are present. They would miss them, too. And they were quite sure that the boys would miss them also: 'There are boys who can't live without girls'. And if they are not appealing enough as mysterious little kittens, at least they could be useful as cooks: 'How would the boys manage to peel two sacks of potatoes by themselves?', they said, laughingly. They definitely did not want to be separate: 'We must just learn how to understand the boys and vice versa!'

Although it is not easy to learn to become complementary, everybody (especially the girls), hope that time would help. When asked whether one should do anything to improve the relationship between boys and girls or leave it as it was, they placed their hopes on psychological development:

*Dasha: No, we should not leave everything as it is. But I hope that when they grow older, they will become cleverer, more mature. Everybody says that.*

*Lena: In two or one-and-a-half years, they'll be cleverer and they will treat us in a different way. They'll become more courageous. They'll say, 'don't bring heavy firewood. We shall do that. We are men'.*

#### **4. Comments on the Russian case**

In Russia we saw a strong belief in gender complementarity, both in the society at large and among the Scout leaders – and the young people are on their way to learn how to do gender with in such a frame. *Structurally* we see a rather strict division of labour, but also some efforts to transgress it. A problem, however, is that when the boys do girls' work they want to be better than the girls and thus threaten an important basis of feminine self-esteem in the complementarity system, and when girls try to do boys' things they risk losing their femininity. On *the symbolic level* we see that the gender complementarity constitutes a hierarchy, where masculinity is openly admired, while femininity is more taken for granted. On *the interactional level* this gives the lead to the boys and the role of adaptation to the girls. The only power position for girls seems to be as adolescent 'queens' – a position that depends on the boys' approval of their sexual signals. On *the personal level*, we see that the different girls and boys identify to a different degree with this system, but that everybody seems to be somewhat ambivalent: the complementarity model has advantages, but there is also a price to pay. What regards *gender conflicts* the harmonious idea of two different halves that need and respect each other may have had a backside of vulnerability and dependency, envy and contempt? The sharp gender line seems to foster fear of weakness in boys, and dependency in girls. There is food for thought that both girls and boys actually long for some of the same: the boys would like to have a helping hand in the work, the girls would like to be allowed to be more active and independent.

What can be done to improve the situation of girls and boys within the complementarity model? There are basically two aspects to be aware of. One is to be more aware of how - and when - respect for difference becomes a hierarchy between differences. The other is to be more sensitive to each young person's wish to transcend narrow gender conventions and help to make it possible.

Seen in relation to the norm of *parity of participation*, one should consider the following problems of *redistribution* and *recognition*.

*Redistribution:*

- The social contexts create *different conditions* for girls' participation, compared to those for boys (money, household chores, less freedom). This may also be a point to make in relation to the increasing class differentiation in Russian society. How can Scouting minimise the unequal opportunities for participation resulting from unequal conditions in society?
- The gender-related division of labour may reduce freedom. An important tradition in Scouting is that each person should be able to survive autonomously. A strict gender division of labour may hamper this ideal. There also seems to be a contradiction between the Scout leaders' adherence to values of freedom, self-development, autonomy, individual focus - and *the lack of freedom inherent in the gender stereotypes*.

*Recognition:*

- Be aware of the *hidden hierarchy in the complementarity model*. Why is girls' work taken for granted, while boys' contributions get public attention and praise? Why all this talk about men *really* being better even at women's work? Take care that virtues ascribed to men are not automatically made the centre of humanity. Note how both boys and girls tried to make their own assets the most important ones in Scouting: those who do not fit in Scouting are those with the bad traits of the other gender, for girls: the egotists, for boys: the lazybones.
- Maybe it is worth *reconsidering how many aspects of the human repertoire one includes in the complementarity model*. After all, these are cultural norms, not nature. Why should a Russian girl be less fit to handle an axe, compared to her sisters in other countries? Why should her health be endangered by playing football? Can a big, strong girl really carry less than a little, weak boy? When is the 'psychological development' of the two genders actually more an empirical generalisation of the effects of Russian upbringing than something innate in the children?
- More attention should be paid to the *non-stereotypical and individual desires of the young people*: the girls who love sports and physical challenges in Scouting. The boys who want the girls to take part in the work.
- Perhaps the '*strong woman*' in the Russian heritage could be a better model for girls in Scouting than the 'weak sex'?

## 5. DOING GENDER IN SLOVAKIA

### 1. Gender in Slovak society

#### 1.1 Post-Communist women and patriarchal heritages

Slovak women have experienced much of the same 'forced emancipation' as the women of the former Soviet Union. However, there is reason to believe that this has been experienced as even more coercive due both to a different historical and cultural situation up until the Communist takeover in 1948, and to the fact that the new situation was enforced upon the country from the outside. In both Czechoslovakia<sup>112</sup> and USSR, more than 90% of women worked full-time for considerably lower pay than men and held extremely few leading positions in work and politics. And, as in the USSR, women's full-time paid work did not imply a more equal share of the work at home, thus here also creating a triple work burden on women.

After the fall of Communism, many women expressed their desire to become housewives again and be provided for, and their participation in the work force became somewhat reduced. However, throughout the 1990s, there was a steady increase in women's motivation to work and a corresponding rejection of 'being a housewife' in the Czech and Slovak republics. Today, their participation in the workforce is 45%. This is not only due to hard financial times. It is also due to a wish to participate as financial providers for the family and to an increasing interest in work for its own sake.<sup>113</sup> Women in Slovakia make up 50% of the students in higher education<sup>114</sup> As in Russia, there is a relatively high percentage of women in medicine, engineering and natural sciences, while the job market is strictly gender segregated with, for instance, 75% female teachers and male dominance in the private sector. A dramatic rise in the age at which women marry and a fall in birth rates also signal that women see themselves as obvious participants in the labour market. Most women work full-time, and the gender gap in pay is slightly better than in Russia: around 30%. However, the unemployment rate has risen in Slovakia lately and - as in Russia - pregnant women, women with small children, single mothers and women over 50 are at a disadvantage in finding and keeping a job. It is difficult for women to reach leading positions. And when they do, they are paid much less than men. While having a job is seen as positive for women, careers, professional growth and success are often perceived negatively as careerism and as neglect or inability to perform their role of wife and mother.<sup>115</sup>

The differences between the various countries in Eastern Europe have become more apparent since the fall of Communism. Ethnically, Slovakia is a relatively homogeneous country. It is more rural, religious, conservative and nationalistic than, for instance, the Czech Republic.<sup>116</sup> Another characteristic is that, following its independence in 1993, Slovakia opted for more state responsibility and centrally-organised redistribution measures than the Czech Republic, and the harsh effect of market liberalism seems to be somewhat milder and less class-dividing than we saw in Russia. Thus, in Slovakia, we see a complicated mix of different cultural trends from East and West and from different periods of history. Since 1989, there has been political pressure towards more conservative family politics. Voices against the reproductive rights for women defined by the UN (contraception, prenatal diagnostics, sterilisation, condoms, sexual education in schools) have been heard both from the Catholic Church and nationalist political parties, but proposals to restrict the law on abortions have so far been rejected by the government and have little support from the population.

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<sup>112</sup> Czechoslovakia was split into the two independent states of the Czech Republic and Slovakia on 1.1.1993.

<sup>113</sup> Raabe, P. H. (1999). "Women and Gender in the Czech Republic and Cross-National Comparison." *Czech Sociological Review* 7(2). According to Raabe, these views are also shared by men in the Czech and Slovak republics, and the rejection of women as housewives is stronger here than in many other Eastern and Western European countries and the US.

<sup>114</sup> Much of the information concerning gender structure in Slovakia was drawn from the report Women 2000 from IHF. Other useful resources were: Lobodzinska, B., Ed. (1995). *Family, Women, and Employment in Central-Eastern Europe*. Westport, Greenwood Press., Funk, N. and M. Mueller, Eds. (1993). *Gender Politics and Post-Communism*. New York & London, Routledge., Raabe, P. H. (1999). "Women and Gender in the Czech Republic and Cross-National Comparison." *Czech Sociological Review* 7(2). and Wolchik, S. L. (2000). *Reproductive Policies in the Czech and Slovak Republics. Reproducing Gender: Politics, Publics and Everyday life after Socialism*. S. Gal and G. Kligman. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

<sup>115</sup> Women (2000).

<sup>116</sup> 86% of the population are Slovaks, 11% Hungarians. There is also a small, but rapidly increasing, Romany population. The period after the separation from Czechoslovakia has seen some authoritarian and nationalist developments, represented for instance by the right-wing-populist Vladimír Mečiar, which have cast some doubt on the human rights status for the minority populations of the country. As a consequence, Slovakia was the only one of ten associated countries that had its application for EU and NATO membership rejected in the first round in 1997. According to Butorova, Z., Ed. (1998). *Democracy and Discontent in Slovakia*, Institute for Public Affairs. Opinion polls indicate, however, that these anti-liberal and nationalistic tendencies in politics are not approved by a majority of Slovakia's population.

We see the same type of protective legislation for women in Slovakia as in Russia. In all the former Communist countries, such rights have only been directed towards the assurance of domestic and maternal functions. Reproductive rights and women's health issues were not given the same attention.<sup>117</sup> The abortion figures reached a peak in Czechoslovakia in 1988, when one out of three pregnancies was aborted, but there has been a sharp decrease in Slovakia since then, mainly due to access to better contraceptives. Domestic violence towards women seems to be alarmingly high. Concepts of violence against women and family violence are not codified in the legal system of the Slovak Republic, however, and the general opinion is that this is a private affair in which the state should not interfere and that the woman herself is often to blame.<sup>118</sup> The influence of religious and conservative forces has not confronted the sexualisation of women's bodies, however. Prostitution and pornography have increased rapidly since 1989 and meet only little opposition. Even in the remote countryside bus I took from the camp, the boards advertising beer had a strikingly pornographic touch - which did not seem to bother anyone but me.

Few women appear as candidates on election lists for political positions and no political party has a stated goal of ensuring an adequate representation of women. Today, only 15% of the seats in the parliament and 13% in the government are held by women. As in Russia, the constitution of Slovakia encompasses basic rights and freedoms to all individuals without regard to sex or race. But here, also, there are few implementation mechanisms, and discrimination and sexual harassment are not defined. Thus, so far, not one case of discrimination or harassment has been brought to court.<sup>119</sup>

## 1.2 Unequal equality

In Slovakia, I never heard anybody talk about the 'strong and the weak sex'. The Slovak Scout leaders do not share the Russian leaders' enthusiastic belief in gender complementarity. They hold gender equality as the main value, although they also readily admit that this is more an idea than a fact in their society:

*Question: What is your view on the concept of equal opportunities for boys and girls, women and men?*

*TL(m): I think everyone should choose for themselves. I think the question is not whether one is a man or a woman - it is a question of individuality. So I find the idea OK.*

*Question: Do you think everybody has the same opportunities?*

*TL(m): Not in real life. There are many other factors which influence a person and...*

*Question: Let's take the difference between men and women. Are there any differences between their opportunities?*

*TL(m): In society, one hundred percent yes. We are a patriarchal society, so generally men have better opportunities under these conditions. And we also have our roles, into which we are boxed, whether we like it or not. We don't have to take them, but if we refuse - the social environment has problems in accepting it.*

*TL(f): I think, it is all right, everybody should have the same opportunities, men and women. So it is more a question of how women or men deal with it, for instance, when a woman is doing a job, which is traditionally a man's job, such as wood chopping. It is up to the individual how he faces the problem.*

The Czech philosopher Hana Havelková has argued that the positive attitude to individual subjectivity and equal opportunities - regardless of gender - should be seen in the light of the many years during which these were suppressed for everybody. General human problems have been put on the agenda in the post-Communist era more than 'particular issues', such as human rights for women. As Havelková says: 'You can only understand the specific situation of Czech women when you understand the common experience and suffering of both the men and the women'.<sup>120</sup> So the struggle is about regaining citizenship in a new democracy, not about considering the situation of specific groups such as women, for instance. Havelková also points out the fact that, during the Communist era, the family became the retreat for personal freedom, and as the private sphere became more important, so did the role of women.

<sup>117</sup> The average Soviet woman had six to eight abortions in her lifetime Eisenstein, Z. (1993). Eastern European Male Democracies. *Gender Politics and Post-Communism*. N. Funk and M. Mueller. New York & London, Routledge.

<sup>118</sup> Women (2000).

<sup>119</sup> Women (2000).

<sup>120</sup> Havelková, H. (1993). A Few Prefeminist Thoughts. *Gender Politics and Post-Communism*. N. Funk and M. Mueller. New York & London, Routledge.p.67.

Thus, the general support for equal opportunities does not necessarily mean a preoccupation with women's rights in the Slovak context. The celebration of equality often includes the unquestioned premise that men and women have different roles to fulfil and that the human rights of women come *after* her obligations as a mother and a wife.<sup>121</sup> Although being a housewife is not an ideal, Slovak women want to combine employment with their family roles. Men have limited responsibilities in the household, and the prevailing view in Slovak society is to consider men as the main breadwinner and head of the family.<sup>122</sup> Issues such as maternal rights and household income instead of individual income are frequently debated, whereas 'women's issues' (outside of their maternal and domestic obligations) have little political priority. As in Russia, Slavonic cultures place great value on motherhood, and the primary emphasis is on women's role as nurturers and caregivers.<sup>123</sup> Even though the role of the mother in these cultures is seen as less passive or domesticated than in Western cultures, the image of the Slovak woman (conveyed in research literature and also in our project data), often seems to come closer to that of a servant of the family and her husband than to the self-confident 'strong mother' of the Russian family. The Czech sociologist Marie Cermáková offers the following depiction of the situation of women in the Czech Republic (and there is little reason to believe that the situation is much different in Slovakia):

*(...) Rather than self-realization, they adapt; instead of fighting back, they defend themselves; instead of making choices themselves, they allow decisions to be forced on them, even when these choices are disadvantageous; they place their own interests after the general interests, (under the current conditions, often those of the dominant male group); and they have an aversion to being identified based on gender.<sup>124</sup>*

As the TL(m) said, the patriarchal structures are still strong in Slovakia. The institution of marriage has retained a high status, and for decades Slovakia has had a high marriage rate and low divorce rate compared with other countries. There is little tolerance for alternative family models. Single mothers are looked down upon, and homosexuality is detested, even though, of course, things are also changing here - especially in urban areas, and among the younger generations and people with higher education.

The contrast between the traditional view of gender and family supported by the Catholic Church, on the one hand, and the adherence to universal rights (also for women) and women's own increasingly strong work identities, on the other, suggest that Slovakia is also in a period of tension and change when it comes to gender arrangements. The mean age for the first child is rising, and the birth rate is falling (1.3). The ideas of gender equality confront the old gender complementarity. In the reports from the research assistants, the hidden price of gender complementarity is much more broadly acknowledged than in the Russians' praise of chivalrous men:

*Here men still hold the door for women and let them go first into the room, but more and more girls are offended by this behaviour. As more voices for equality are heard, women feel that if they want to be taken seriously, they have to let go of their demands for 'gentlemen'.*

She takes a more critical stand on the double standards of sexual behaviour, men's fear of being seen as effeminate, and the ridicule of women who appear as too masculine:

*A man is seen as too feminine when he cleans the windows, when he appears to play the second fiddle, if he walks with a baby carriage, takes a baby on his shoulder when the woman is present, if his boss is a woman, if his wife earns more than he does, when he cries, cooks or is too weak at work, not a career-hunter. When climbing the career ladder, men expect that only men get higher positions.*

*A woman is seen as too masculine if her appearance is masculine - short hair, no earrings, no make-up, wearing trousers, if she is too hard at work, if she does not display her feelings.*

<sup>121</sup> Eisenstein, Z. *Ibid.* Eastern European Male Democracies. New York & London.

<sup>122</sup> Raabe, P. H. (1999). "Women and Gender in the Czech Republic and Cross-National Comparison." *Czech Sociological Review* 7(2).

<sup>123</sup> Pine, F. (2001). 'Who Better than Your Mother?'. Some Problems with Gender Issues in Rural Poland. *Women after Communism*. H. Haukanes. Bergen, Centre for Women's and Gender Research, University in Bergen.

<sup>124</sup> Cermáková, M. (1995). Women and Family - The Czech Version of Development and Chances for Improvement. *Family, Women and Employment in Central-Eastern Europe*. B. Lobodzinska. Westport, Greenwood Press.

### 1.3 Principally we prefer coeducation

Family bonds are very important in Slovakia, although a change towards more individualisation is also visible, due to recent influences from Western culture. According to the Slovak research assistants, the bonds between mothers and daughters, and between fathers and sons, are of special importance – for the better or the worse. Young people stay at home or at least remain financially dependent until they have completed their education. When they leave home, the parents support them and keep an eye on them, and the adult children visit their families as often as they can. The relations between young people and adults are characterised by authority and respect from the young ones, but patterns of upbringing also seem to be in a process of change with different values in action. The research assistants find that the behaviour of young people has become ruder. In general, though, obedience, politeness, helpfulness at home and success in school are still highly valued. Corporal punishment of children is forbidden by law, but in real life it is not uncommon. The research assistants also believe that there are different norms for girls and boys in the family, especially when it comes to the kind of work they are expected to take part in. This is also reflected in the curriculum in school, where cooking and needlework are only for girls, and advanced woodwork only for boys - just as in Russia. According to the research assistants, different moral standards exist: a girl who talks to different boys is quickly labelled a 'coquette', while nobody would think such a thing of a boy who talks to different girls.

As we have already seen, the Scout leaders expressed a strong commitment to gender equality. In addition, when asked directly about differences between girls and boys, they relied on the equality perspective in which individual differences are more important than gender differences:<sup>125</sup>

*Question: Do you think girls and boys behave differently in Scouting and that they have different needs and interests in Scouting?*

*TL(f): I think, that there are no such differences. Some of them are oriented towards nature, some of them to... I don't know what... and some problems can arise from a diversity of interests and different opinions, but I don't think that it has anything to do with gender (...) What a person likes is what he masters, I don't think it is good to sort it by gender. If a boy likes cooking, it is useful, and if a girl likes cooking it is also useful in Scouting.*

*TL(m): To be honest, I don't see any differences, they are very similar in their interests. For example, we have girls whom I have to take down from the trees, and we have a boy who dances ballet. If I compare individuals, yes there are differences, but boys and girls as a group, I can't say that. (...) You can't judge according to gender, it is just up to personality.*

Nevertheless, the leaders indirectly described numerous differences in terms of gender, and the reason for this apparent contradiction seems to be that such differences are perceived as natural and thus of no relevance for the moral and political question of equality. It was especially the male leader who had a strong belief in age-related gender differences of a psychological and physical nature: boys are hot-headed, energetic, noisy and influenced by their hormones in adolescence; girls are peaceful, emotional and easily persuaded to do things. Boys like to fight, construct things, and be physically active. Girls like to draw Christmas cards and prefer a theoretical approach to things. Because of this profound natural difference, segregated patrols in mixed troops appeared to him to be the appropriate at Scout age, while at the age of Cub Scouts and when approaching adolescence, age segregation might function better:

*TL(m): At Cub Scout age, it is better to divide the programme. It is like: 'Uuuuu, we are boys, bbbffff, bad with girls, and vice versa, stupid boys, classic example. But from the age of 10-11 they are able to understand more and can easily cooperate. In my troop it works quite well, at least, as far as I know. But then at the ages of 13,14,15, it is better to go slowly, as it is the adolescent age. They wake up and sometimes it is better to have segregated activities, as boys often put on a show for girls and girls start to put on make-up to be sweet and pretty for boys - classic. So, at camp you sometimes have to say to the boys: Let's go out to the woods till tomorrow for survival, and girls can cook in the camp, or whatever. And then at the age of 16 or 17, I don't see any problem.*

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<sup>125</sup> As our case in Slovakia consists of one segregated girls' troop, and one (almost) segregated boys' troop, the experience of the two leaders was mainly the result of working with only one gender. The leaders were interviewed separately, so there was no interaction in the situation between the views expressed by TL(f) and TL(m).

Principally, the adult leaders preferred coeducation, but they also felt more at ease with young people of their own sex, and would clearly have preferred to work with them if they were forced to choose:

*TL(m): Leader of boys, for sure. Because I am a boy. And I am still a child, too [laughs].*

*TL(f): Like the way it is now, leader of the girls. Maybe because I am a girl, our interests are closer.*

The emphasis on natural differences, however, also seems to rub off onto social differences. Thus, social gender differences appear as the innate, unchangeable, ones:

*Question: And the differences you mentioned, do you see them as something that can be addressed through the educational process, or is it something natural?*

*TL(m): Many things are due to the culture of our society. Whether we like it or not, it's a fact, we can't do anything about that. But, it is also caused by the emotional stuff we have. Boys have other emotional stuff than girls. And it is natural for boys to have more energy and emotional lability.*

*Question: So, you think it's natural?*

*TL(m): It is very natural. Nothing artificial, plus a huge role played by society, but these things are something we can't change.*

As the cultural and psychological gender patterns appeared as natural, little can be done about them, and although the leaders actually did make some effort to widen the repertoire, they didn't expect much to come out of it:

*TL(f): Of course, from childhood boys are led to boys' crafts, and girls to girls' tasks, as I see it, of course a girl is closer to the kitchen than a boy. That is automatic - in the family, everyone is led to the tasks that his father or her mother does most. Yes. But that's normal.*

*TL(m): I think it's normal, boys are responsible for building a camp, leaders are in charge of it. Women are responsible for cooking, but just the coordination of it. And the children, of course, change their positions, that's for sure. We can't show them that only girls cook and only boys prepare the wood. But, anyway, I am persuaded that girls are better at cooking, they have a feeling for that. Not every girl is able to cut wood.*

These assumptions of unchangeable gender differences did not, as we have seen, lead the Slovak leaders to support a complementarity model like the Russian leaders did. On the contrary, they valued gender equality and respect for individual differences. So what does 'equality' actually mean in this setting? Both leaders supported the idea of coeducation, which is still not evident in Slovak Scouting. They found it a good thing for girls and boys to learn to communicate and cooperate. However, the male leader who actually had a few girls in his troop saw no reason for developing special programmes to meet the needs and interests of girls. The boys' world becomes the neutral norm to which the girls are free to aspire. When talking about the aim of coeducation, both leaders automatically took the perspective that it was possible and useful for girls to learn to adapt to boys' interests and behaviour, while girls' interests and behaviour seemed to be of less relevance for boys. Such behaviour may have its assets, but it is best taken care of in separate groups, or used for special purposes:

*TL(m): In our troop girls cooperate a lot with boys, no problem... they run with them, fighting games as well. It isn't so physically hard, they are able to play as well. Yes... sometimes they need their special girls-only programme, mainly for forums<sup>126</sup>, but it is up to my assistants.*

*Question: Do you think that girls are satisfied in your troop?*

*TL(m): Seems they are (...)*

*TL(m): Those girls, their peacefulness can be used everywhere. For example if I need to make something for the Cub Scouts, maybe some Christmas picture or tree, with boys I don't have a chance. They just don't do it, they will not. But the girls, they will do it with pleasure.*

*TL(f): If girls are not used to cooperating with boys, problems can arise during coeducational activities (...) they are not used to communicating with the opposite gender, and when they become older it can be a big problem for them.*

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<sup>126</sup> It was explained to me that 'forums' are an activity undertaken as a collective reflection and discussion about important matters. TL(m) mentioned that they have had forums about newcomers, racism, etc.

The male leader described the organisation of his troop. It seemed to be well suited to the boys' behaviour and values: the theme of the symbolic framework was knights, important issues included team building, fighting games, small boys' admiration of big boys and leadership. The activities that TL(m) himself found most boring were exactly those ascribed to girls: handicrafts, drawing of Christmas cards, botany, detailed preparations, a theoretical approach to things: 'We don't do any handicrafts. I never liked it myself. So all that stuff like Christmas cards, you can't find it in my troop'. He perceives this, however, as a matter of individual choice: 'Everyone has the right to do such activities if he personally enjoys it. Not my business'. It is interesting that the clear experiences of gender differences were not made relevant when the question came to equal opportunities. The male leader suggested, with a smile, that cooperation between boys and girls could be improved by putting them in exactly the same situation:

*TL(m): Maybe... throw them into the water and they will be forced to cooperate. I am also trying to do it in this way. It is not discriminating - it is equal for everybody.*

The female leader was more aware that including boys meant taking their differences and special needs into consideration:

*TL(f): When I think of some games, I think first about girls' interests. But then I try to think a bit whether it would be interesting also for boys. When I find out that there are big differences, I try to think about the next activity - so that it is more interesting for the boys than for the girls.... or sometimes there must be alternatives, one game for girls and one for boys and they play separately.*

However, she also seems to share the view that girls have much to learn from boys, while the problem with boys is that the adults need to calm them down a bit. To put it harshly: girls have nothing to offer; boys have too much. At the camp, TL(f) told me that she preferred mixed camps because boys were quicker than girls to become involved in things and thus could inspire the girls to be more active. But the behaviour of boys made it necessary to be stricter with them. Girls did what they were told more easily, but without the enthusiasm of boys. On the other hand, she also saw that girls reacted more naturally and spontaneously when there were no boys present.

## **2. Two Slovak troops**

### **2.1 Scouting in Slovakia**

The history of Slovak Scouting is dramatic. Scouting for boys was established in the Czech Republic in 1912, and after the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, Boy Scouts also started to be present in Slovakia. In 1922, the first Girl Scout troop was established. Since then, Slovak Scouting was banned three times (1940-45, 1950-68 and 1970-89) and also experienced a number of splits and mergers according to the vicissitudes of Czechoslovakia.<sup>127</sup> Four years after the post-Communist renewal of the Czechoslovakian Scouts in 1989, the present organisation, *Slovensky Skauting*, was established.

Its special history has had a considerable impact on the situation of Slovak Scouting today. Firstly, the different generations of Scouts are much more distinct than in our other countries. Scouting continued to exist illegally during the periods of prohibition, but, of course, with limited recruitment and international contacts. Scout troops were disguised as 'tourism clubs' (cf. Russia), woodcraft clubs or even Pioneers. It became increasingly dangerous to participate in this illegal Scouting and the leaders risked being sent to prison or losing their right to attend university. Under these circumstances, only a few, very dedicated, old Scouts were still around when Scouting was relaunched in 1989, and the recruitment of new leaders was essential. In contrast to Russia where, to a great extent, the new Scout leaders seem to be recruited among teachers or leaders of former youth organisations, the new leaders in Slovakia were young people. Thus, the Slovak organisation is composed of a few enthusiastic 'old Scouts' over the age of 65, and a majority of very young leaders who joined Scouting in the 1990s. For instance, the leaders of our two troops in Slovakia were only 21 and 23 years old, and had been leaders for several years. The youngest of the 14 adult leaders in the summer camp I visited was a boy of 17, and nobody appeared to me to be over the age of 25. There were several sweethearts among the adult leaders.

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<sup>127</sup> Slovakia was part of Czechoslovakia from 1918-39, and again from 1945-92. Before 1918, Slovakia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.



Another consequence of the long interruption of Slovak Scouting is that models of Scouting from the 1950s and 1960s have survived relatively untouched by the developments in other countries – in contrast to Russia, where the much longer ban from 1926 meant that no such old models existed and that inspiration had to be drawn from, for instance, the 'tourist' and Pioneer organisations. For this reason, gender-segregated troops are still the normal situation in Slovakia, and the issue of coeducation is a very sensitive one in the organisation. The older Scout generation is generally sceptical both of new things that 'come from the West' as well as of the models of Communist youth organisations – and in both Western Europe today and in Soviet education, coeducation is the norm.<sup>128</sup> In addition, the programme has kept its original customs and traits with an emphasis on a simple life in nature.

The special mixture of old traditions and young leaders seems to have caused some tensions in the organisation, but also an enthusiastic effort on the part of the young people to renew things after the members of the older generation successively resigned during the 1990s. Thus, Slovensky Skauting was among the first national Scout organisations to adapt to the renewed programme approach from the European Scout Region (RAP). They have published new and appealing materials about Scouting, established internet access for nearly all Scout groups, and have modernised the uniform to be more in tune with young people today. Gender equality is also seen as part of this process of modernisation. The organisation seems to be very aware of issues such as equal representation and the sharing of work tasks. It was interesting, however, to see how the generational issue still played a role. Both the young troop leaders we interviewed as well as some of the troop assistants I met during the camp already referred to themselves as 'the older generation' from the 1990s. They considered themselves to be more attracted to a simple life in nature than the young people of today who want more comfort and arrive at the camp with heavy trunks filled with radios, CD-players and brightly coloured sports outfits. For the public at large, the Scouts also seem to be in a cultural void – some see them as a changed Pioneer organisation, others as some new 'Western' fashion. For this reason they also have difficulty obtaining financial support from private sponsors. Nonetheless, as the biggest youth organisation in the country, they have a relatively high level of state support.

The emphasis on activities and survival in nature prevails in the Slovak organisation. The highlight of the year is the 2 or even 4 week-long summer camps in the wild Slovak nature, far away from any modern comforts. During these camps, they maintain the old traditions of flag and fire ceremonies and the use of 'podsadas' (a special Czechoslovakian tent with a wooden base). The symbolic framework for Cub Scouts is The Jungle Book, while different discovery stories are used for the Scout age section. Handbooks for Scouts and for leaders are being prepared, and they have already been completed for the younger age sections. A training programme for adult leaders has been established. The Scout Promise and the Scout Law are close to the original versions of 1908, but there are some significant changes.<sup>129</sup> In contrast to Russia, the laws about loyalty and obedience have been kept, but being 'a friend to all' has been modified to being a friend to 'all good-willing people' – which, perhaps, reflects the country's history of hardships. As in Russia, the relationship with parents has been added – but where Russian Scouts should be *devoted* to their parents, Slovak Scouts should *obey* them. The law about kindness to animals has been modernised to describe protecting nature and also taking care of human creations, and the law about 'smiling and whistling' is expressed as combining cheerfulness with consideration. The law has been kept in the grammatical masculine form, but some awareness of gender equality may be seen in the adding of 'sister' and 'her' in Laws No. 4 and 7.

Slovensky Skauting had close to 7,000 members in 2000, and has a stable membership growth of approximately 5% per year. 43% of the members are girls/women. The gender ratio is even in the Cub Scout section, while boys are in the majority (60%) in the Scout section. Many young people leave the organisation between the ages of 13-15, so there are few Rovers. The national programme committee is developing a new programme for this age section to improve the situation. The Rovers have mixed patrols, while gender-segregated patrols and troops predominate in the younger age sections. Until 1993, only single-sex patrols and troops were allowed, while today it is up to the troop leader to decide. The Scout groups mostly consist of both girl and boy troops, and both genders must be represented in the leader/assistant leader pair. The national board has eight members, of which two must be women: either the chief commissioner or the vice chief commissioner, and the international commissioner for WAGGGS. At the time of the study, three of the eight members were women which is an impressive number compared to the general situation of women in politics in Slovakia.

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<sup>128</sup> The Slovak Scout organisation is a member of both WOSM and WAGGGS. This creates some problems, as they must adapt to the different sets of rules of these two organisations.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. the comparison of the formulation of the Scout Law in Appendix III.

## 2.2 The troops in Slovakia

### *The troops*

The boys' troop is named after a character in the Lord of the Rings, and the name of the girls' troop translates as wood nymphs or female will-o'-the-wisps. Their home is a large town in Slovakia. Catholicism is the dominant religion and, because of its many churches, the town was nicknamed 'Little Rome'. In the old days, the town was an important meeting point for travellers. Today it is home to a nuclear power plant.

The girls' troop was founded in 1994, after dividing the first troop established in the town after 1989. The troop had 23 members aged 12-14, divided into three patrols. While the names of these patrols at the camp were *Tigers* and *Amazons*, by the time of the interview they had been changed to *Daisies* and *Ladybirds* – I do not know why. The TL(f) was a young female student aged 23 (and she had already held this position for two years). They lacked adult leaders but, at the summer camp, the TL(f) was supported by some of the young women from the Rover section. Our local research assistant was a member of this Rover group. All the troop members were ethnic Slovaks. Most of them came from the middle class with regard to income and a few were from families with fewer financial resources. The girls' troop shared the Scout meeting place with the boys' troop.

The boys' troop was founded in 1998 when the leader turned 18 and was old enough to take on the responsibility. He had been a troop assistant before that. At the time of the study, he was 21 and also a student. In addition, there were three troop assistants, one of whom was his girlfriend. She brought in two 12-year-old girls from her former troop and these two formed their own patrol. Eleven boys aged 13-15 made up the other two patrols in the troop. The ethnic and social composition was similar to that in the girls' troop.

### *Programme*

The TL(f) said that she tried to include different kinds of activities: contact with nature, nature observation and ecological activities, visits to interesting places, games, hikes, walks, forums (cf. footnote 126). The troop had one troop meeting and one outdoor activity per month – in addition to weekly patrol meetings and the long summer camp. The information on the troop activities in the girls' troop from September-January shows that 7 out of 11 meetings were dedicated to planning, evaluation and different social events, while the remaining three were a hike with orienteering, a meeting with handicraft activities and a visit to the ruins of the local castle to learn about the cultural heritage of the country. Patrol meetings were generally used for different kinds of Scout training, such as first aid, knots, and games to develop thinking, memory and social feelings.

The TL(f) preferred the nature activities, but she found it difficult to make the girls interested. Sometimes she had to be a bit strict to get them outdoors! But when they did such activities together with other troops – preferably the Boy Scouts – the girls were more interested as they liked to meet new people and help others. In terms of the development areas of RAP, the TL(f) believed that they did best in the *social* and the *intellectual dimensions*, and were weakest in the physical and spiritual dimensions. The girls were not religiously oriented. The most important issue for the TL(f), however, was that all activities were imbued with Scout values such as friendship, cooperation, helping others, a special lifestyle. This value orientation was what originally attracted her to Scouting and continued to do so. In her view, much of modern life and youth culture (TV, Internet, discotheques, etc.) was detrimental to these values:

*TL(f): When Scouting starts to be modern, I mean, there are some values which have to be kept although the times are changing, but some people try to put things into the programme which don't suit Scouting. To make it more interesting some take the troop to a discotheque. This may be an extreme example, but such things shouldn't be part of Scouting.*

*Question: You mean, it lowers the values Scouting?*

*TL(f): Yes, yes, yes. We should not accept such things in order to make Scouting more interesting. If a child doesn't like it, OK, it is better to lose some children. To try to suit everyone will lead to a loss of basic values in Scouting.*

So even though she saw it as important to meet the interests and needs of the girls and include them in the planning of activities, she was strict on the values. This was also important for the image of Scouting, she said. Scouts with bad behaviour cast a shadow on Scouting in general.

Her views concur with my impressions from the camp: TL(f) had a friendly, but firm and energetic handling of the young people and was strict in keeping up rules and rituals.

The leader of the boys' troop also found Scouting's values important. He said that Scouting was a lifestyle that had totally changed his life. A direct consequence was that he had chosen a social profession. Like TL(f), he was not in favour of 'modern' tendencies in Scouting:

*TL(m): I love very much our Slovak and Czech way of doing Scouting - life in nature, survival and things like that... that's what I enjoy the most. And I am personally very interested in the spiritual part of Scouting (...) Not spirituality like a theory, but something that is inside us, the basic values, friendship, teamwork, ... this is the strongest part of Scouting and it's what makes Scouting special compared to other associations (...) I don't like the kinds of modern Scouting, all those branches which forget the traditions.*

As a leader, he considered himself to be friendly, but strict: 'I try to create as friendly an atmosphere as possible, on the principle that I am the leader and you are nothing'. He felt that he had to yell at them sometimes – at this age boys are quite lazy, he said, then will show off and show their muscles when girls come into the picture. They are having their 'doing-nothing-season' as he himself had had at that age. He also thought it important to be an example. He stressed the importance of being sensitive to the young people's needs and interests, which, amongst other things, meant some flexibility in the programme. There should be room for improvisation. This led to a few conflicts at the summer camp as the female leaders wanted a much more detailed and set programme. My impression of TL(m) at the camp was that he was a bit more easy-going with a more ironic attitude than TL(f), but could also use a strict tone towards the boys.

I do not have as much concrete information about the activities in the boys' troop as for the girls' troop, but the TL(m) told me that the troop worked within a symbolic framework of knights, as indicated by their name. Team-building was a very important feature in all their activities, which is why the TL(m) preferred to keep the troop small. The teams were close-knit and the young people and the young adult leaders were close in age and understood each other well, he said. The only sensitive issue mentioned was fights about who would be the next patrol leaders. In his opinion, troop meetings did not need a specific programme but should be aimed at strengthening the troop in team-building and problem-solving (in addition to relaxing and having fun). Sometimes they just went to the park to play football. The most important thing was being in nature. He also promoted forums – they had had forums about racism and about newcomers. Other activities mentioned were fighting games, tracing games, spy games, trips, running in the woods, competitions in orienteering. In terms of the dimensions of development, he thought they scored well in the *physical, social and spiritual dimensions* plus *character-building*. He believed the weakest areas was the intellectual dimension – he thought there was enough of that at school, and he himself did not like it. Activities such as handicrafts, drawing, knowledge games and botany were definitely not his cup of tea!

The six boys interviewed mentioned making friends, being in nature, trips and fun as the most important aspects of Scouting for them. One said that he needed something else to do other than just playing computer games. What they did not like was when too few people showed up at meetings or were not interested, and one of the younger ones was also critical of the orthodox rules and principles: '*We need discipline, but some rules are too tight. They could be more liberal*'. The boys thought that, to be a Scout, it was important to be a friendly, open-minded and responsible person and one should appreciate nature and be able to survive in it. Delicate people who were dependent on comfort, who did not know how to dress properly in bad weather or who did not get along with others should not be Scouts.

The three girls stressed that they were attracted to Scouting because they were bored at home and wanted to meet new people. They mentioned nature, survival skills, outdoor activities such as making fires and putting up tents, and the long camps as the main aspects, but the social dimension was also very important. They had gained a lot of new friends and they found that, contrary to what happened at school and in everyday life, people in Scouting were friendly and did not betray you. In their view, to be a Scout, one should like nature and outdoor life, be friendly and sociable. The girls talked at length about those who would not fit into Scouting: people who drank, smoked and took drugs, people who complained, were soft and flabby, snobs, urban types and dandies who showed off with their fashion clothes and looked down at others. Two of the girls said that they had fun with the boys when they went to dances, but other girls were criticised for overdoing it: some younger girls only came to chat with the boys, and some of the older girls and even some female leaders talked with the older boys all the

time. They also mentioned alarming problems with drug abuse, even in the Scout hut! This applied mostly to some of the boys, as the girls who had started to do such things tended to leave Scouting while some boys stayed. The girls originally found the programme challenging and adventurous and felt that they used to go on more trips. They now seemed somewhat frustrated: they wanted to learn more new things, to develop themselves more, and wanted to go to foreign countries! They often found that little was achieved during their meetings – just chatting and no action. They felt that they needed more help with the programme as they felt that they were less inventive than the boys.

### 3. Doing gender in Scouting

The camp in Slovakia took place in a remote forest area approximately 50 km from the hometown. The only facility was a small river; everything else had to be constructed (latrines, kitchen, sauna, tepees). The Scouts slept in 'podsadas' (tents with a wooden base), aligned at either side of the camp. Three troops participated in the camp: the girls' troop and the boys' troop from our town, and another boys' troop from a village outside the town, led by a 17-year-old boy. In addition to the three troop leaders, approximately 10 Rovers and troop assistants took part, most of them women. Some of the young female leaders brought their boyfriends with them to give a helping hand. At this camp, there was a majority of girls: in total 26 girls and 20 boys (aged 12-16), and 15 young leaders (aged approximately 17-25). I arrived on the first day of the camp. The observation study was limited due to the size of the group, the organisation of the camp (no patrols had yet been formed) and the fact that everyone had to adapt to a new situation. As the first few days were used to build the camp, I did not get the opportunity to observe the themed activities that had been prepared, which were related to the life of Indians.

In addition to the *two-day observation of this camp*, the local research assistant, Sona, was able to conduct *observations of three patrol meetings with girls and one with boys*, and *interviews* with six boys and three girls (aged 13-15).<sup>130</sup> Two of the boys, Emil and Martin (who were brothers), had a sister, a mother and even a grandmother who were Scouts. The boys were not very talkative – they answered the questions very briefly and politely. Generally, we obtained more extensive data on the girls. The reason for this was that, due to limited capacity, only the girls' troop was chosen as our case study, and the data on the boys was additional. Also, in the camp observations I focused more on the girls than on the boys, and those boys on whom I did focus turned out to belong to the other boys' troop - thus they were not the same boys as those interviewed. This may have resulted in a less nuanced depiction of the boys.

#### 3.1 Structural gender: *Cooking and mocking*

The principle of gender equality was important for the Slovak leaders. This was one reason for the mixed camp, and it was also very visible in their plans for activities and work tasks. The TL(m) and TL(f) led the camp together. While I was present, it was the TL(f) who was in charge of the parades. For the camp theme about the life of Indians, the young people were divided into two tribes and eight families. In order to assure a gender balance, the establishment of groups and leadership followed a detailed plan: the eldest boy and the eldest girl in each tribe were the tribe leaders. Each 'family' consisted of three girls and three boys of different ages, and within the 'families', the young people could compete for the leadership position. The competition involved six disciplines, carefully chosen to give boys and girls equal opportunities: cooking, fire-making, pioneering, botany, knots and first aid. Each person competed in all of the disciplines and those who achieved the best average scores became the head of the family (four girls and four boys won). The person chosen as 'patrol leader of the day' alternated between girls and boys and each day's work teams also involved even gender ratios. However, there were a few exceptions. Each gender group was responsible for digging their own latrines, while building the kitchen (which involved digging holes and hammering down big poles into the ground) was given to a group of boys. Cleaning the river to create a 'swimming pool' was also a boys' job, while the task of tidying the parade area was given to the little girls.

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<sup>130</sup> *Girls*: Katarina (16), Ivana (15), Wanda (13).

*Boys*: Maros (15), Emil (15), Erik (14), Martin (14), Pavol (14), Karol (13).

In the gender-divided tasks there was traditional gender behaviour. The big girls who dug the latrines invited the other girls to the inauguration ceremony. The boys who were preparing the kitchen worked silently and effectively, supervised by some big boys. The younger girls worked well together and seemed to have a pleasant time while they collected stones and flowers to decorate the parade area. Later they made benches for the tepee. They talked while they worked. They took a few breaks and went to watch the boys or went to their tents to play cards, draw or play the guitar. The boys in the river also had a pleasant time, but in a noisier and more visible way:

*Some of the boys have built a dam to filter the water; others are cleaning a small pool. When I arrive the work is mixed with fun and play: A boy jumps into the pool with a big splash and gets the attention of the other boys. Others even up by doing more daring things. The two girls from the boy-troop watch them and laugh. A boy pushes in another boy who takes revenge by splashing water. The first boy splashes back, but is then thrown into the water himself. The two boys laugh and run after each other. The two girls follow their fight and laugh, but withdraw a little in order not to be hit by the splashing. One of them carefully descends towards the pool. Four little girls arrive and watch the boys. Now a boy has found a big jar, which he uses to splash the others – the game escalates. A boy is standing in the pool, almost all of them are soaking wet by now. The boy in the pool dives under the water and gets the attention of the other boys. Now some boys go together and attack a young TA(m). They play-fight, using all their strength. At last the boys succeed in pushing in the TA(m). When he comes up again he pretends to congratulate one of the younger ones on his birthday (which actually is today), the young gullible boy gives him his hand – and is of course pushed in the water! Then four other boys throw in the TA(m) again, and at last the birthday child jumps in himself! One last boy is thrown in because he is now the only one left with dry clothes! Meanwhile, the two girls from the boys' troop have moved a little further back to be safer, but they watch the scene with laughter.*

So what happened in the mixed teams? On the full day I attended the camp, three girls and three boys were supposed to be on kitchen duty. They were supposed to make the fire, prepare the meals and wash up afterwards. The three girls – with help from some of the other girls – worked in the kitchen tent all day, while the boys were absent or escaped in different ways. They may have helped the person in charge of the kitchen (TA(f)) to keep the fire going (I did not watch this systematically). None of the boys took part in preparing breakfast, washing up afterwards, nor in serving the mid-morning snack. The first boy showed up when the girls started to prepare the hot meal at noon:

*In the kitchen tent one of the duty-girls has started peeling potatoes, and the other two join her. And here comes a boy! It is Michal but, after a few minutes of peeling, he leaves again. The research assistant, Zuzana, goes to sit in the kitchen tent. She later tells me about her observations: Michal came back and continued to peel potatoes very reluctantly. Zuzana's impression was that he deliberately pretended he didn't have the skill. The girls did not comment on it, but exchanged glances and asked him to hurry up a bit. A bigger boy then came by and asked Michal to help collect firewood. The big boy laughed. Zuzana's impression was that the intention was to help Michal to escape from peeling potatoes. The girls protest, but Michal gives them a grin and leaves with the big boy.*

The girls eventually managed to catch the two other boys to help wash up in the river afterwards. However, when the time came to prepare the evening meal, the three girls were alone again:

*The three girls on duty work (Ivana, Wanda and Katarina). Michal hides in a big group of boys nearby. A male and a female leader start a game of frisbee right outside the kitchen tent. Only boys participate, including Lubos and Pavol from the duty team. The frisbee ends up in the kitchen tent where it hits Ivana on the head. Everyone laughs. TL(m) comes and makes a mock 'excuse' to Ivana.*

*Michal is fetching wood for the fire. It seems to me that Wanda is most irritated at him, even though the other two have not done much, either. Maybe because he is the youngest of the three? The duty-girls cut up rolls. Some bigger boys keep snatching the rolls the girls have cut, and eat them.*

In all the camps I visited, the girls did the cooking and often also the washing-up, without anybody taking any notice of it. The invisibility of the girls' work was also the case in Slovakia: when we all queued for the dinner which the girls on duty had been preparing for several hours, suddenly Michal and a TA(m) were the ones serving the food! Anyone who had not followed the

previous hours in the kitchen tent would have had the impression that they had also prepared it. What was unique in the Slovak camp, however, was that the boys not only escaped kitchen duty, but they also mocked the girls for having to do it, and constantly teased them by laughing at them, playing ball and play-fighting with each other in the kitchen area, or stealing the food that the girls had prepared.

As far as I could see, the leaders did not notice what was going on. They seemed to rely on their plans for the equal sharing of work, and interpreted things so as to confirm these plans. When I asked a TA(f) where the boys on duty had been in the morning, I was told that one had made the fire (I saw a TA(f) do this), another had helped cut the bread (very unlikely – I spent half an hour watching girls doing this alone), and that the third had allergies and could not participate. On a later occasion, when the girls on duty had tried for some time to get the boys to help with the washing-up, one girl said sourly that someone should chase them with water to get them to come. A TA(f) next to me said laughingly that splashing water was very popular on these camps, and that this was equally true for girls and boys! When the girls protested, the 'autonomy of the team' was evoked. After Michal had escaped during the potato-peeling episode, the following took place:

*The girls talk angrily about the fact that boys never help and that they would prefer to be in a camp on their own. The TA(f) who is responsible for the kitchen comes by and rebukes them for being so late with peeling the potatoes! They say it is because the boys don't take part, but the TA(f)'s response is that it is their own problem to organise the work of the team.*

But Wanda had actually been trying to catch the boys all day. She had to act like a nagging mother, and did not get any support from the leaders:

*Wanda calls for the duty-boys again. Now some of them come carrying a big bowl of water to put out the fire, not for the dishes. Wanda seems to be fed up, so she leaves the scene. Ivana is alone now, looking at the big pile of things to be washed up – then she leaves too. But shortly afterwards Wanda returns with two duty-boys whom she has personally fetched. They take the big pot and walk to the river.*

Finally, in the evening, the TL(m) reacted towards the recalcitrant boys. However, it was difficult to know whether this was due to the fact that I had pointed out to him what had been going on all day. The boys seemed somewhat surprised at his intervention:

*Evening parade. Wanda and the three boys from the duty-team come back from the river while we are lining up. Wanda walks with the filled bowl to the kitchen tent. The three boys sneak into the line, even though those on duty are not supposed to take part in the parades. A little later the other two girls from the duty team come with the rest of the washing-up and proceed to the kitchen tent. Together with Wanda they watch the parade. TL(m) becomes aware that the three duty-boys are taking part in the parade. He rebukes them sharply. The boys first grin back, and then seem somewhat surprised when they realise that TL(m) is serious and insists that they leave the parade. They leave reluctantly and watch the parade together with the girls. Wanda washes the table. A boy goes to the chopping block and chops a stick – a way of defending his offended masculinity?*

### **3.2 Symbolic gender: Soldiers and servants**

I must admit that I did get somewhat upset with what I saw as a jarringly unfair treatment of the girls on duty. At one point I asked the research assistant whether boys in Slovakia ever helped at home.

*The research assistant forwarded the question to some of the male leaders standing close by. One of them gives me a scornful grin and says that he would never dream of doing such a thing. The TL(m) says that he and his brother had to wash up at home – "because I don't have a sister, that's the problem!", he explains. I tell them what I have observed: not only do the girls perform all the kitchen tasks, but they are also scorned by the boys for doing it. TL(m) says that they would have scorned boys in the kitchen, too.*

Apparently, in the boys' eyes, the problem with cooking is not just that they find it boring, but also (and perhaps especially) that it is seen as a contemptible, female activity. It is the very fact that it is women's work that makes it despicable. And the small boys are learning this from big boys: when a female leader finally went to fetch Michal to wash the dishes after the evening

meal, at first he walked with her. But then a group of big boys started to tease and yell at him, and he immediately ran away from TA(f) and returned to them. In contrast to Russia, where the gendered division of work at least seemed to give the girls some kind of motherly dignity, girls in this context appeared more in the role of servants and audience for the boys. They lived other aspects of their lives in private, female groups. Gender hierarchy seems to be more significant than gender complementarity.

Apart from not doing housework, how do you show that you are a male in this context? As in the other camps, physical strength was a sign of masculinity. I was told that only boys were involved in building the kitchen because it required physical force. What did not appear to be relevant, however, was that several of the boys in this construction team were smaller than many of the girls. And nobody seemed to reflect on the fact that digging latrines was equally hard work as constructing the kitchen. What seemed more important than demonstrating physical strength, however, was demonstrating tough masculinity for the other males. This seemed to be the hegemonic masculinity in this context and, for me, it was associated with soldier-like behaviour. This was expressed, for instance, in the military style of the boys' clothes and footwear, the constant yelling and roaring laughter in their male groups, their attraction to fighting and fencing, and their somewhat rough and impolite manners (very different from the attentiveness and gentleness I had encountered among the Russian boys). It seemed to me that to be a successful boy in this setting one should always be mocking somebody or making jokes in the presence of other boys, and this was later actually confirmed by the boys themselves in the interviews. This characterised the way the boys interacted with other boys (cf. the water splashing episode), as well as the ways in which they generally related to girls:

*We rise at seven. A TA(f) gathers the girls in a circle for morning exercises. Some boys and male adult leaders stand outside the circle and laugh and make fun of them. (It seems to me that 'to do masculinity' here you have to constantly make funny remarks, and 'to do femininity' you have to react with a smile or a giggle to these remarks.)*

The connection between masculinity and soldier-like behaviour is also worth noticing as the military style was taken much more seriously in this camp than in the others - where it had always had a touch of play or ironic distance to it. Lining up and ceremonies had a much more formal and ritual character here than in the other camps. Everybody was in full uniform, they saluted, sang the national anthem, and TL(f) announced the day's work programme in a firm voice. The girls lined up silently on one side, while the boys on the other side yelled comments at what the leader said.

This tough way of doing masculinity among the Slovak boys was confirmed in what the TL(m) said about work in the troop (cf. section 2.2), in the interviews with the boys (see section 3.4), and also in the observations of the troop meeting in the boys' troop. In the following episode from a troop meeting, the TL(m) tries to improve the boys' behaviour, but is scorned for effeminacy, and it seems to be important for the boys not to be caught showing any interest in the topic:

*Tomorrow they are going on a trip to the mountains and TL(m) is giving instructions. Jakub arrives on his scooter, and an older boy is mocking him because of his scooter.*

*TL(m) proceeds to give a lecture about polite behaviour, and the boys don't exactly seem excited!*

*The first question is: 'What is good behaviour?' One boy tries to give a definition. The girls support him. But in general the boys take a joking attitude to this theme. One older boy addresses TL(m) using a woman's name. The girls take part in the discussion, while the boys find it ridiculous, but I can see that, deep down, they find it relevant, and they are listening. TL(m) wants to organise the weekend in this 'spirit' to practice polite behaviour. The troop meeting is finished, and some boys stay.*

*Maros takes the sword and gives a performance. Other boys are looking smilingly at him. (Sona)*

### **3.3 Interactional gender: Tough boys and flirting girls**

There was not a lot of communication between girls and boys in the Slovak camp. Girls and boys seemed to stick together with their own gender: the younger girls in pairs of best friends, the older girls in small groups, and the boys in larger groups. There may be several reasons for this. One is that these were the first days of the camp and, as the young people were from

different troops, they did not know each other well yet. Another is the fact that they came from gender-segregated troops and were not used to being in a mixed environment. There may therefore have been some shyness on both sides. Finally, it corresponds to the traditional aspects of their society's gender culture. The interaction between boys and girls displayed some very stereotypical traits not only of gender complementarity, but also of gender hierarchy.

As illustrated in the water-fight episode, the girls were often merely onlookers to boys' activities. They laughed at the boys' inventiveness, but also appeared a bit scared of their roughness. When the boys played, they occupied the space (both in terms of physical space and noise), while the girls waited, played at the edge of the field or in their tents. This applied especially to the little girls. In the evening, for instance, the boys would practise fencing with much noise and applause in the camping ground, while ten little girls stuck together in a small tent, singing songs together. Both the girls and the quieter boys had their available space reduced by the rough boys:

*Two little girls (Lucia and Lujza, 11-12 years old), who have been watching the boys play in the water for a while, climb onto the bridge where TA(f) is already standing. Now that the boys' activities have stopped and TA(f) is there, it seems that they finally dare to go onto the bridge. The most active boys have disappeared and three quiet boys sit watching. One of the remaining rough boys tries to splash some water on the quiet boys, but they do not respond. TA(f) and the kitchen girls leave with their washed things. Lujza and Lucia go back onto the bridge again, now alone.*

The youngest girls were not very interested in the boys. They were busy with other things: making benches, catching frogs, singing, drawing, etc. The older girls, however, contributed actively to making the tough boys the centre of the universe. They reacted with smiles and giggles to their initiatives, while the boys seldom paid them much attention:

*In the kitchen tent four girls are cutting bread and spreading jam on the slices of bread. Two other girls stand by and they all talk lively. I try to ask them a few questions, but they get very embarrassed. Three big boys come to have a look at some arrows that are lying beside the kitchen table. The girls stop talking and they all look intently at the boys, who do not pay any attention to them.*

Some of the female TA(f)s also directed much of their attention towards the big boys. I never saw big boys or male leaders taking any initiative to develop contact with the girls. The big girls tried to get the attention of the boys by acting in a 'feminine' way. They wore make-up, had special hairdos, and wore tight jeans and short, tightly-fitting T-shirts. They screamed and squealed in high-pitched voices when water was thrown on them. Or else they acted 'sweet and stupid':

*A tough-looking guy says something to Wanda while snatching a roll, she squeals at what he is saying.*

*Three big girls build a tepee under the supervision of one of the TA(m)s. The girls are mostly watching TA(m). Katarina takes the rope and makes an effort to bind the poles together at the top. It is difficult to get it up high enough. She makes small, gracious, but not very effective jumps while trying. She looks at the TA(m) incessantly.*

The few times I saw boys contact the girls it was in the rough fashion and the girls seemed to know that their role was to give in:

*Two boys come dragging two girls around 14 and throw them into the water. One of the girls uses her plate to splash after the boy, but the splash hits Wanda who is washing up. The shock makes her take one step back, whereupon she tips the bowl over. She rebukes the two girls who were thrown in the water. The two girls squeal and throw water on the boys. The boys push them into the pool again, and grab two empty jars from the dishwashing while running away. One boy sneaks back to fill his jar with water and one of the girls sees a chance to push him in. But even though he squats at the edge she doesn't succeed – whether it is because she doesn't really try, or because he uses all his force to fight back. He succeeds in getting away and, a moment later, he sneaks up from behind her and pours the water from the jar over her head.*



This traditional gender play was also seen in the observation of the girls' patrol meetings. The girls seemed to be quite bored with each other. They talked about boys most of the time and focused all their attention on the next room where the boys were having their meeting. And when the boys visited the girls, they took over the scene:

*Wanda is responsible for the programme (which is about Indian signs and Scout signs). The activity is quiet, except for two little girls, aged 11. They return to the topic about the Valentine party: they don't want to go there, there will be a lot of noise, and they will be bored. Two boys from next door come in. One of them takes over the role of the patrol leader and starts to explain the Scout signs and symbols. The other sits a bit further away but, from time to time, he makes a few comments while playing on a xylophone. After a while (he was bored), he left the room, but then came back a minute later. Wanda is just sitting and listening to the first boy, who explains. She smiles a little. Sometimes she adds something. The boys leave the room. Wanda continues teaching about signs and marks. A new boy comes in and asks some of the big girls if they are coming to the party. (...) Finally, the girls tidy and clean the room.*

*(Sona)*

### **3.4 Personal gender: Foolish boys and underrated girls**

In spite of the support of equal opportunities, the gender differences were striking in the Slovak case study, both in the leaders' perceptions and in the behaviour of the girls and boys. To a certain extent, we also find the same gender stereotypes in what boys and girls said about themselves and each other. But they also expressed a surprising degree of discontent with the role they had to play. The boys self-critically described their own foolishness, but also adopted the view that this behaviour was natural - men are eternal boys:

*Maros: Girls are more 'normal'. Puberty in boys is stronger. They are more quick-tempered in some situations.*

*Karol: Boys are foolish. Instead of craziness they should do something useful. Girls are more practical (...).*

*Pavol: Girls grow up earlier. That's what I don't like. I am still a fool and adolescent. I can have fun (...).*

*Maros: If a schoolmate wants to appear interesting to a girl he does something stupid. He would try to draw all the attention to himself to attract others. But it is not intelligent. Girls look disgusted, thinking 'how can he be such a fool!' Boys make fun of everything for no reason.*

*Karol: Boys are adolescent forever. My friend is 40 and he is still an adolescent. He goes to discos and does silly things. Girls are more sensible. They do not act foolishly.*

From the boys' self-critical perspective, girls appear to have many positive qualities. Compared to the rough and insensitive behaviour depicted in the observations, it is surprising not only how critical these boys were about their own behaviour, but also how much they actually registered the girls' calmness, maturity, friendliness, sensitivity and seriousness, and their ability to talk about their problems with each other. This may indicate that the masculinity done by the boys was experienced as a socially enforced role, although they had received the message that it was caused by 'hormones'. The boys seemed to be well aware of the price of 'tough masculinity':

*Pavol: Girls have a better approach. They are friendly. Boys are more authoritative.*

*Erik: Girls create better teams. They trust each other more. If I tell Pavol something, he would always smile at first (...).*

*Martin: (...) Relationships between girls are more emotional (...).*

*Emil: A boy cannot prove himself a good Scout if he is sensitive (...) Girls can express their emotions and nobody criticises them for showing their feelings.*

Still, being a boy has its advantages in terms of group solidarity, the right to fight and to behave rudely. It is interesting to note how much closer masculinity was connected to childishness in this setting, as opposed to how the Russian boys talked about men, responsibilities and hard work:

*Question: What is the best thing about being a boy?*

*Maros: We are boys. When one of us gets a crazy idea, we make it into a common game immediately.*

*Karol: As I am a boy I can fight anytime I want. That is different in girls.*

*Maros: Girls also fight, but not so hard. They don't have scratches and bruises. They claw the eyes of the others and wrench their hair. If I fight, the blood squirts around (...)*

*Emil: Boys are ruder.*

*Martin: For example if a boy belches, he apologizes, but he doesn't really care. A girl is embarrassed.*

The girls had less positive things to say about the boys than vice versa. They did give the boys some credit: they were inventive and more adventurous; they had a better programme and were more devoted to it. And they were better at boys' activities, such as football. But, otherwise, they had little good to say. When asked what was positive in being a girl, the focus quickly changed to how they felt ill treated by boys:

*Question: What do you like most about being a girl?*

*Katarina+Wanda+Ivana: Hahaha*

*Katarina: Girl? Oh, there is a lot of...*

*Wanda: Boys have to understand that girls are more sensitive. Yes, there are exceptions - some boys are also sensitive - I know some of them. But it is different. When you say something to a girl, she takes it in a different way. Boys just tell you, 'What me? Go away!'. But girls understand it differently. Maybe you can't see it on the outside, but inside she is worrying.*

*Ivana: A girl can display who she really is. She can express herself.*

*Katarina: A boy is a big macho.*

*Wanda: Boys care about their image - they must be the best.*

*Wanda: And it is sad that he cannot express his feelings, he cannot cry, he cannot afford it. And some boys, it is terrible, they regard girls as garbage. It is awful, I think it is not human.*

They were very explicit about the secondary status of their gender:

*Question: And what is worst about being a girl?*

*Katarina: For example most people do not listen to you. You can say things and nobody cares.*

*Wanda: They can ignore you, and boys sometimes do not accept you.*

*Ivana: And a girl is expected to be well-mannered. A boy can spit, belch, scold anytime and it is all right. But when a girl does it, everybody is shocked.*

*Katarina: And girls must fight for boys' attention.*

In striking contrast to the Russian girls who, even though they had to learn to act softly, were quite sure about their own importance for the boys, the Slovak girls expressed that they felt much more overlooked and underrated. Age cannot explain the difference, as they were the same age as the Russian girls. It may indicate a gender order that has less respect for women, or it may be a sign of a more critical stand against this gender order, promoted by the new norms of equality. The girls found the gender division of work unjust and felt treated like servants by the boys. They felt that they belonged to a gender of less value. They stressed that principles of protective rights hindered their possibilities of individual development. So when asked if they saw differences in boys' and girls' behaviour they had much to say:

*Katarina: (...) Boys, when they are told to do something, they ignore it - while girls are usually willing to do it. And they never listen to us. Girls are not as accepted as boys. But boys are better at some jobs, for example, camp building and girls are more creative, I can say. And opinions are different, surely.*

*Wanda: But if our leader splits us up for the camp building, then she will make girls do easier work. She would underrate us, and that would not be good either: You are weak - so do not do this. I want to try it and if I find out it is too much, I would stop doing it.*

*Ivana: If some things are hard to do, for example lifting a raft, it is a man's work. And you know, everybody thinks that when you are a girl, you have to be in a kitchen. But I do not like it. Why can't a boy do this, too? What does he think? That he is some kind of king? I will cook, he will eat and I will even wash his plate afterwards, or what?*

*Katarina: It should alternate. Everybody should try everything.*

*Wanda: Boys should realise these things. Maybe they would if they were alone in the camp.*

The girls stressed how their chances to develop themselves and learn new skills were limited by the division of labour and the boys' presence. They were not content with things as they were, but were ambivalent as to whether they wanted more equality or just more respect:

*Wanda: For example, when I build a wooden tent, I can learn how to do it and it is fun.*

*Katarina: I also think that everybody must try this and that. To try it and realise that the others also have hard work.*

*Ivana: But it is also nice when we chop wood and a boy comes around, looks at me and says: 'Oh, let me!'*

*Katarina: Boys should do hard work such as chopping wood, but they should try what girls do, to see that it not easy, either.*

*Wanda: Because he thinks that cooking is nothing.*

*Question: And would you like to change it?*

*Katarina: Exactly.*

*Wanda: Sure, yes, certainly.*

The boys, however, did not see any problems with this division of labour and would even have liked to extend it to other aspects of Scout activities:

*Maros: Boys are better at activities that require more power, girls more brain. But there are exceptions.*

*Emil: For example in the camp, boys are better at preparing logs for the fire, and girls are better at cooking.*

*Question: Do you think they should have different activities?*

*Erik: Yes. Girls should focus, for example, on first aid and on thinking, and boys on building and running. Everyone should do things that suit them.*

*Karol: I agree with Erik.*

*Maros: If work were divided between boys and girls, it would be faster. When boys are in kitchen, they are awkward. They get a little experience but...*

*Pavol: Like when someone overloaded the stove and burned a rice pudding. It tasted like something from the rubbish bin.*

*Martin: Adventurous games suit boys better than girls.*

*Pavol: Girls to the kitchen, boys for working.*

*Karol: For working ... you know, hard work.*

*Emil: Boys can do 'hard work', and girls, for example, cooking. But both boys and girls should have an opportunity to try all kinds of work (...).*

*Karol: Girls are for cleaning the windows.*

When it came to leadership, the boys' opinions were divided. They pointed out two different sets of qualities that a patrol leader should have: on the one hand, helpfulness and friendliness (qualities associated with the girls) and, on the other hand, authority and the ability to make decisions (qualities associated with the boys). For one boy, however, the idea of having a girl leader was out of the question, and his way of expressing this illustrates the Slovakian unequal equality in a nutshell:

*Karol: We are all equal. It is not important who is the leader. But I couldn't stand having a girl as my superior.*

The girls stressed the importance of competence and social abilities in Scouting. They thought that boys possessed more authority as leaders, but that this was particularly needed in view of the boys' ruder behaviour. Due to their lack of authority, they saw themselves rather as leaders of the younger girls who would respect them more than peers. They tended to agree that it was difficult for a girl to lead boys. One girl thought that, for an adult leader, a woman's appearance might compensate somewhat for her lack of authority:

*Wanda: It depends, if there is a boy troop with a male leader and a girl troop with a female leader, then gender does not matter. But if there were a mixed troop, it would be rather different. For example, if the female leader is pretty, boys could like her, and the girls too: 'Wow, what a smart leader we have!'*

For the Slovak girls, the boys' recognition is something they must work hard for - and the only possible ways seem to be services rendered, charms and beauty. And they seem quite fed up with this state of affairs.

### **3.5 Gender conflicts: *Hard men and sentimental girls***

The fact that they live in different worlds is a source of conflict between the genders. Both had problems with the other's world. Boys didn't like the ways girls focused on themselves, and as we have already seen, girls found that boys were macho and dishonest:

*Question: Do you sometimes get irritated at the girls?*

*Karol: Yes, there are some in class I am angry with. They are self-important. They say: 'I wasn't able to do my homework because I had personal problems. I visited my dentist'. I don't like it.*

*Erik: Who cares about their personal problems?*

*Karol: I am not interested in girls. I have enough problems with myself (...)*

*Maros: Some girls are too sentimental. Someone says something and they are offended. They cry a lot. A boy needs to be careful what he says when he speaks with a girl.*

*Emil: I can't be rude. A girl is expected to be a perfect person and a caring mother. That is hard.*

*Question: Is there something you hate about boys?*

*Katarina: About boys? If it were only a few things, I would say, it is difficult to choose only one. Some of them can be good friends, but some of them can also hurt you.*

*Wanda: I think it depends on his personality. You have a boy who is gentle and then it is OK, but when he is proud, you have no chance of approaching him.*

*Ivana: I think, I hate it when a boy insists to a girl how much he likes her, and when he is among his friends he slanders her, only to appear interesting.*

The different roles they assume in the camp also lead to some conflicts. As we have seen, the boys' rough play often seemed to clash with the girls' interests and duties. This not only irritated the girls, but also tended to spoil the fun for the boys. In the camp, the boys' water fight came to an end when the girls on duty arrived at the river to wash up:

*But now the fun is over: here come the three kitchen girls with a TA(f) and a bowl of things to be washed up. They smile at the boys' play, but also ask them to calm down a bit. TA(f) asks a boy to help put water into the bowl. He does this and then two kitchen girls take it ashore. The three girls wash the dishes and scrub the pots.*

The hierarchy may also have fostered the tendency for girls to take out their irritation on little boys, while they smiled at the big ones - so small boys, of course, long to grow up and take the lead. One may also speculate whether their marginalised life also contributes to increased conflicts amongst girls. They did not challenge the power of the boys but, instead, they rivalled with each other. One sign of this was the fine line between being attracted to the boys - and being too attracted, cf. the criticism of other girls in this respect. The TL(f) also told me that some girls were sceptical about mixed camps because they felt that the friendships among the girls were sometimes threatened because girls related more to the boys than to their girl friends when boys were present. The TL(m) commented that, in his view, boys did not have such problems with girls: it was okay with girls, and it was also okay without them. The girls gave the impression that there were more conflicts between the patrols in their troop, and problems of respect among the girls themselves:

*Wanda: For example I do not like to be in the Ladybirds patrol, because they are younger than we are. Even if Marika is my age, she has only been a Scout for a short time.*

*Katarina: They do not realise who has been here for a longer period of time.*

*Wanda: They simply don't take Scouting seriously.*

*Katarina: Yes, they come here to meet friends and chat.*

*Wanda: And not only younger girls. One of our assistant leaders came here to meet boys and she spends all her time with the older boys (...).*

*Wanda: The Ladybirds, I mean, they are not like that. It depends on their mood. Sometimes they chat with you, sometimes they exclude you, maybe for fun, but you can get angry. They create a group and start to talk about the others, and group against us.*

*Ivana: But sure, there are people everywhere who speak more than others, and the others feel excluded – also in our patrol. I have such girls. When we discuss something, they do not allow others to say a word.*

As they did not know much about each other, both parties were somewhat sceptical about the idea of mixed patrols, especially some of the boys who only saw girls as creatures who existed to distract men. Interestingly enough, those who were most positive about the idea of mixed patrols were the two brothers who had female relatives in Scouting:

*Question: What do you think about mixed patrols?*

*Pavol: I wouldn't like to have such a patrol.*

*Karol: I can't imagine it. The best is boy and boy. Boy and girl? Maybe that could work. I am afraid that boys and girls would become separated in a mixed patrol (...).*

*Karol: Yes, that's our idea. If five nice girls joined our patrol ... Can you imagine what a mess?*

*Pavol: I would grapple with Georg straight away. That would be the first pair to fight. Karol, you are in different patrol, so I don't care about you.*

*Maros: The advantage of a boys-only patrol is that we say things we wouldn't say if girls were present. On the other hand, in a mixed patrol boys can figure out how girls act in a patrol and vice versa. We complement each other.*

*Emil: I think mixed patrols would be helpful. Boys and girls could learn to know each other. They would behave naturally. The relationships, behaviour and discussions between members in boys-only and girls-only patrols are different than in a mixed patrol. Boys and girls could work as a team in a mixed patrol.*

*Edo: Boys behave better in the company of girls. Sometimes they play 'strong men'. Anyway I'd like to be a member of a mixed patrol.*

The girls agree with the view of the two brothers, and pointed out the potentially positive effects on the boys' behaviour and the girls' boredom:

*Question: And would you like to be in a mixed patrol, or in the kind of patrol that you are in now?*

*Katarina: I would like to try it (...) I would be interested in the boys. But first I must get to know them better and then afterwards, we could make a common patrol.*

*Wanda: Boys can be filthy, because among themselves they are machos, they are hard men. But in a group with girls, they could behave in another way.*

*Ivana: I think boys could learn to be more gallant.*

*Katarina: Boys have other interests and mixing together would make it more interesting. More adventurous. They would bring new games, and we could also teach them a lot of new ones.*

*Ivana: And girls would stop being embarrassed when they are with boys.*

Nonetheless, the experiences of the common camps were not entirely positive. At the camp, the TL(f) told me that, following the previous year's camp, they had held an evaluation session. Some girls wanted to continue camping with the boys while others would rather be on their own because they thought they could do everything just as well as the boys.

## 4. Comments on the Slovak case

In the Slovak case, there was more of an effort to create equality on the *structural level* than we saw in Russia. In practice, however, the responsibility of implementing the plans was left to the girls who ended up doing all the service work, while the boys mocked them for it and also mocked the little boys who were caught helping. On the *symbolic level*, the hegemonic model of masculinity appeared tougher than the Russian one, and gaining a position in the male group seemed to be of greater importance than demonstrating physical strength to women. We saw less *interaction* between girls and boys in Slovakia, but when they did interact, the boys were the main characters, and the girls were eager to get the boys' attention. The boys sought attention through rough behaviour, and the girls through their giggles and squeals and making themselves 'sweet and dumb'. On the *personal level*, the girls revealed themselves to be much more sceptical about boys. They felt excessively supervised and underrated, reduced to servants and felt that their personal development was restricted. The boys were similarly critical of the tough norms of the male group, but had also learned to see this as their nature and admitted that were some advantages to being allowed ruder behaviour. Concerning *gender conflicts*, this kind of gender hierarchy seems to foster emotional hardness in boys and negative self-esteem and anger in girls. Both boys and girls expressed that they experienced this as a problem.

What can be done to improve the situation? The main problem seems to be the naturalised hierarchy and the contempt for women that this generates. Service and sexualisation become the roles attributed to women. The striving for gender equality is restricted by the unacknowledged discourse of gender difference and gender hierarchy in which both girls and boys feel trapped.

Seen in relation to the norm of *parity of participation*, one should consider the following problems of *redistribution* and *recognition*:

### *Redistribution:*

- It is not enough to make plans for equal opportunities; they *must be followed up in practice*. Equal opportunities are not only a matter of numbers, but also what happens during interaction between girls and boys, men and women. Although it may be convenient for the leaders, it is not equal participation if girls are given the role of creating a peaceful atmosphere or of helping with things that boys do not want to do.
- How *can girls be supported in their efforts to create a just division of work*? In the camp it seemed to be the girls' responsibility to create equal opportunities by making boys do their duties. Is this not also a leader's responsibility in a coeducational setting? Leaders should *be more aware that a coeducational setting can very easily activate a traditional division of work*. Perhaps girls can be given strategies and methods to counteract this and learn how to cope with boys in such situations.

### *Recognition:*

- In what ways are the leaders' belief in gender equality *hampered by their own gender-conventional thinking*? Does the TL(m) actually contribute to producing the kind of masculinity in boys that he also sees as a problem, by seeing it as innate and unchangeable? Does he contribute to it by his style of leadership, and a programme dominated by rough fun and fighting games?
- One could be more aware of *the price of tough masculinity*. The boys seem to be striving to cope with it, and some boys are not tough at all. Is this really a matter of hormones, or is it rather a hegemonic form of masculinity?
- Including girls *requires more than just letting them be one of the boys*. There is a tendency to see boys as universal Scouts, and girls as having a gender. There is a tendency to see girls' interests as boring. Why is TL(f) much more aware that she needs to modify her programme to meet the needs of the boys, than TL(m) is when it comes to meeting the needs of the girls? The leaders seem to be aware that girls can learn from boys, but not that boys also could benefit from learning from girls. The boys themselves seem much more aware of this, in fact.
- The *girls' experience of being held back and underrated* should be taken seriously. Not only because this may lead to losing interest in Scouting, but also because it can have a serious effect on their self-esteem. The girls feel frustrated at being 'the other gender'. Why should Scouting not support their demand for equal treatment?

## 6. DOING GENDER IN PORTUGAL

### 1. Gender in Portuguese society

#### 1.1 Class and gender

Portugal is one of Europe's most rural countries. Due to its late industrialisation and 48 years of political dictatorship,<sup>131</sup> Portugal had a weak and isolated position in Europe until it joined the EU in 1986. The country still suffers from severe economic problems and has one of the lowest wage levels in Europe, but it is in a phase of rapid modernisation in terms of economic, social and cultural development.<sup>132</sup> Tradition and modernity live side by side, and inequality in income and education are profound. For instance, even today, only 25% of the population over 25 years of age have more than 6 years of schooling. Thus, a special trait of Portugal is the large gap between the elite and the masses, and not much in between. Roughly speaking, the country is divided into a small, well-educated urban elite and a majority of barely educated, rural or immigrant people.<sup>133</sup>

In the light of this, it may be surprising to learn that women in Portugal constitute a majority in higher education and also have one of the highest employment rates in Europe. From 1950-90 their share of the labour force doubled. Today, women constitute 45% of the labour force, and more than 80% work full-time (the gender gap in pay is 24%). The mean age for marriage and maternity is rising rapidly.<sup>134</sup> All these are important signs of a gender order in the process of changing. However, the sharply divided class system also permeates women's education and occupations. Concerning higher education in Portugal, class is more salient than gender. Even though women constitute 59% of the small group in higher education, 10% of Portuguese women are illiterate, and 75% have less than 7 years of schooling.<sup>135</sup> Work has always been the norm for Portugal's rural and poor women and, even today, the majority of workingwomen are in unskilled labour. From the 1970s, educated women also joined the labour market, and many of them hold high positions. Almost half of all medical doctors and lawyers and a third of the university teachers are women, and they are also relatively well represented in leading positions in the public sector, except for politics.

In contrast to the other countries in our study, it is not seen as an important task for the state to create social conditions for women's paid labour. In spite of full-time jobs and the longest working week in Europe, there are few public day care facilities, and maternity leave is rather short (17 weeks)<sup>136</sup>. During the era of the New State, women's lives were supposed to have a domestic focus; they were not encouraged to take up paid work and needed their husband's permission to do so. When women entered the labour market after the revolution, social rights for workers and working mothers were introduced in the first decade. After 1984, however, the Portuguese state chose a more market-oriented direction. Deregulation and universal rights replaced social rights, and it was left to a higher degree to people themselves to find solutions as to how to survive on low wages, and how to combine work and family. As the work division in most Portuguese families is very traditional<sup>137</sup>, this means it is left to women to solve the problem. The fact that the birth rate has dropped from 2.1 to 1.5 since 1982 (despite a

<sup>131</sup> Salazar's regime the *New State* 1926-1974.

<sup>132</sup> A few figures may indicate the speed of the present development in Portugal: the infant mortality rate has decreased from 94 per 1000 in 1950, to 24 per 1000 in 1980, to 6 per 1000 in 1997. In the same 50 years, the average life expectancy at birth rose 16 years for men and 18 years for women. Carrilho, M. J. and G. Magalhaes (2000). *Fertility and family surveys in countries of the ECE region. Standard country report: Portugal*. New York and Geneva, United Nations.

<sup>133</sup> The main sources for the information on Portuguese gender structure and gender politics were an article by Virginia Ferreira (Ferreira, V. (1998). *Engendering Portugal: Social Change, State Politics and Women's Social Mobilization*. *Modern Portugal*. A. Costa Pinto. Palo Alto, Sposs.) and the information pamphlet from CEWR: *Portugal Status of Women*. On gender culture: the social anthropological studies Pina-Cabral, J. d. (1986). *Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve: The Peasant Worldview of the Alto Minho*. Oxford, Clarendon Press., Cole, S. (1991). *Women of the Praia: Work and lives in a Portuguese coastal community*. Princeton, Princeton University Press., and Gibson-Cline, J., Ed. (1996). *Adolescence: From Crisis to Coping. A Thirteen Nation Study*. Oxford, Butterworth & Heinemann. were also useful.

<sup>134</sup> The mean age for giving birth to the first child today is 26 years. Cohabitation before marriage is also increasingly common. 20% of children are born out of wedlock today, compared to 7% in 1975. Carrilho (2000).

<sup>135</sup> For men the figures are: 5% illiterate and 73% with less than 7 years of schooling (Portugal Status of Women, 2000). This, however, represents a huge improvement since 1960 when as much as one third of the population was illiterate. The educational level is much higher in the younger generations, but still low compared to other European countries, and is also the lowest in the context of our study.

<sup>136</sup> In some circumstances, such as the mother's physical or psychological incapacity or death, or owing to the parents' decision, 11 of the 17 weeks can be taken by the father. This is very rarely done, however. The father can take 5 days leave when the child is born (Portugal Status of Women, 2000).

<sup>137</sup> According to a survey from 1994 between 74% (when the respondent is a man) and 97% (when the respondent is a woman) declared that women did all the household chores, with the help of their daughters (Ferreira (1998)).

relatively low divorce rate) may be a result of this policy. Another consequence is that more and more poor women work as cheap domestic help for educated women so that the latter can keep their jobs. Thus, gender relations in the family may not actually be changing much, whereas the class differences in society are increasing. The Portuguese social scientist Virginia Ferreira says the following about the contemporary gender situation in Portugal:

*After 1984, a rhetoric of 'equality between the sexes' became dominant. Legislators worked on the assumption that economic, childcare and domestic equality between men and women either already existed or would soon be realized, although it has often been acknowledged that social and institutional practices often fall far short of the law. This touches on a fundamental issue: the enormous discrepancy in Portugal between law of books and law in action.*<sup>138</sup>

The 1976 constitution gave Portuguese women one of the most extensive promises of equal opportunities ever seen in Europe. In addition to the general principles of equal rights and freedom, it is stated as a fundamental task of the state to promote equality between men and women, and also that direct and active participation of men and women in political life is a condition for the democratic system.<sup>139</sup> This constitution was adopted by the left-wing government after the revolution, but has been implemented - only to a limited degree - by the subsequent, more conservative, leaders. In contrast to Russia and Slovakia, however, Portugal has some gender equality institutions, mainly as a result of the integration of equal opportunities in the EU's policies. For instance, a minister for equality was appointed in 1999 and gender discrimination in advertisements is kept under surveillance. But things move very slowly. Today, almost 30 years after the constitution was ratified, only 17% of members of parliament and 12% of the government are women. A government proposal aimed at guaranteeing improved opportunities for women's political representation was rejected by the parliament in 1999. In other cases, political initiatives may be ratified, but not followed up.<sup>140</sup> Old attitudes to women are seen not least when it comes to sexual matters and violence towards women. Violence in the family is less tolerated today than some decades ago, but is still regarded much as a private matter. Free legal abortion does not exist in Portugal, and neither does the crime of sexual harassment. Court decisions reveal that judges have different attitudes towards women than those belonging to the equality model of the constitution.<sup>141</sup>

## 1.2 Equality from above – difference from below

According to recent surveys, gender inequalities are not perceived as indicators of social inequality in Portugal.<sup>142</sup> Women's rights do not seem to be a major priority as the subject is overshadowed by the huge social class differences and differences between urban and rural communities. Portugal is one of the very few European countries in which women's organisations and movements have been almost non-existent, including after 1974. Ferreira reports that one of the very few feminist political demonstrations seen in Portugal was met with extreme ridicule and even violence in 1995. This situation may also explain my problems in finding literature on the gender system and gender culture in the country today. While a vast amount of books have been published in English on women's situations in USSR/Russia, Eastern Europe and the Nordic countries - and also in Mediterranean countries, such as Italy and Spain - I only succeeded in finding a few articles on Portugal, in addition to anthropological studies of premodern gender structures in villages.

The same silence characterises the interviews with the Portuguese Scouts - both young people as well as adult leaders. They were eager to talk about Scouting, but had surprisingly little to say about gender compared to the Scouts of the other three countries. Whereas the Russian leaders questioned whether the issue of gender equality was appropriate as differences between men and women should persist, whereas the Slovak leaders had a positive attitude in principle but thought it difficult to implement in practice, and whereas the Danish leaders enmeshed themselves in a discussion about when gender equality became the new straitjacket, the Portuguese leaders' first response was to laugh at the question, and then to insist that it was irrelevant as full equality had already been achieved:

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<sup>138</sup> Ferreira (1998): 177.

<sup>139</sup> Portugal Status of Women, 2000.

<sup>140</sup> Ferreira (1998) describes the situation as a 'carnivalization of politics' - much is said, little is done.

<sup>141</sup> According to Ferreira (1998), the Supreme Court in Portugal in 1989 justified a light sentence for a man accused of rape on the grounds that girls in Portugal should know that they live in the 'hunting ground of the Iberian male' and thus should take the necessary precautions (such as not taking lifts) in order not to excite the male libido.

<sup>142</sup> Ferreira (1998).



*Question: What does the expression 'equal opportunities' mean to each of you? Equal opportunities for men and women, for boys and girls...*

*TL(m): It does not mean anything to me [laughs].*

*TA(f): I'm thinking, and sincerely, no... equal opportunities...*

*TL(m): It is like this, no separation, girls on one side and boys on the other. I see them as a group, and I don't think there are, or should be, or that they have been, separated like that. What we have should be distributed to everyone ... there are the same opportunities for everyone. At least, here, with us, I've not seen those other kinds of situations.*

*Question: So, they have all the same opportunities?*

*TA(f): The same opportunities.*

*Question: And do you notice any differences in making use of those opportunities?*

*TM(m): In the way they do it, yes...that depends on the characteristics of a given girl or a given boy.*

*TA(f): The same opportunities, yes (...) They are really equals.*

*TL(m): What is made available for one is also available for the other.*

However, according to social researchers, the traditional gender order in everyday life seems to prevail. And this is the depiction of gender relations provided by the Portuguese research assistant:

*After work, men tend to get together for a drink (this applies in both urban and rural areas, and to Africans as well as Caucasians) and discuss sports, cars, women, their jobs, politics...*

*Women typically stay at home or, if they have a job, get home as soon as possible, collecting their children at school on the way home. They have to do all the shopping and take care of all the household chores (in the middle and higher socio-cultural levels they may get some help from the men). For most women with a job outside the home, there is no active social life. Housewives meet with neighbours at the grocery store or in the street. It is not customary to invite other women home. At the weekend, women may go to the movies or spend the day out with the whole family.*

*(...)*

*Men are supposed to carry all the heavy luggage, and are also supposed to perform all the heavy tasks. Women (especially rural women, but...) are supposed to do all of the household chores and to educate the children. The older generations tend to be more conservative than younger ones; they have more 'macho' attitudes, but are also more protective towards women.*

As in Slovakia, we see a discrepancy between formal principles of equality and the presumption of natural gender differences in everyday life. However, the blindness towards this discrepancy is much more striking in the Portuguese interviews. Everybody refers to formal equality, takes it as a description of how things are, and has nothing more to say about the matter. I asked the Portuguese research assistant what the reason could be for this, and he answered: *'Gender is a topic that is only discussed in very particular contexts. The usual excuse is: 'Why speak about something that is natural, when all of us are aware of it?'*

One reason for this difference between Portugal and the other countries may be the different histories of gender equality. In Denmark, the term has a long history, and in the former Communist states the concept of gender equality was part of the policy, although in a somewhat different meaning than in Western Europe. In the Portuguese context, however, the idea is relatively new. Gender equality was definitely not part of their experiences with a totalitarian state, as it was in Russia and Eastern Europe. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when legislation was first compiled in writing, and up to 1974, women were subordinates to their fathers and husbands, with a short period of relief during the First Republic (1910-1926). Under the New State (1933-1974), an authoritarian, militant, nationalistic, Christian, and anti-modern regime was in power. Traditional family values were reinstated and supported by the Church, and women's rights were bombed back to before 1910:

*State and church definitions of gender during the New State were directed towards defining relations between men and women within marriage. Under the Civil Code, the husband was the head of the household, and a wife her husband's legal dependent. In the Portuguese Roman Catholic church, the family was defined as based upon paternal authority, and a wife's duty was to serve her husband.*<sup>143</sup>

The 1933 constitution formalised women's status in the notorious Article 5, which declared that everyone is equal before the law 'except for women (*due to*) the differences resulting from their nature or from the interest of the family'. The Concordat, an agreement between Portugal and the Vatican established in 1940, made a Catholic wedding the only one with full legal effects and prohibited civil divorce. Contraception was also illegal and abortion harshly punished. In 1950, family desertion was made a crime punishable by prison, and women could not obtain a passport without their husband's permission. The regime also put an end to coeducation, which had been implemented during the First Republic.<sup>144</sup>

After the fall of the New State, women's legal situation was changed overnight. Researchers have described the new constitution as one that, in one stroke, took Portugal from a medieval model of women's oppression to the most modern gender equality regime seen in Europe. Divorce and contraception were legalised without as much as a rumour of opposition in a country in which the overwhelming majority of people are Catholic.<sup>145</sup> Women did not have to become mobilised to achieve this new state of affairs - equal rights were seen by the political elite as a necessary part of the process towards democracy and integration in the EU. Thus, Virginia Ferreira describes the Portuguese gender equality as a 'top-down' legislation:

*The way equality was institutionalised left deep marks on the social situation of women in Portugal. As one prominent activist stated recently, 'In Portugal there is a missing link, perhaps because the law changed before we emancipated ourselves'. Portuguese women confront a misogynist barrier much stronger than the one found in more advanced countries: the assumption of their inferiority. The institutional-judicial order that governed women's lives until the 1970s defended that assumption, and was based on it. That order, furthermore, was not gradually corroded by the rise of new values or by changes in social practices associated with urbanization and industrialization, as it was in other countries (...) Industrialization was diffuse, indeed, it can be characterized as a process of industrialization without modernisation. These characteristics preclude the spread of individualistic lifestyles, as well as the emancipation of women.*<sup>146</sup>

This unmediated contrast between traditionalism and modern equality from above, in a still predominantly rural country, may be one reason for the low engagement in women's issues, and another may be the general satisfaction with a situation in which the situation of women had enormously improved compared to their condition during the New State.

Another reason for the unease with the topic may be an ambiguity in Portuguese gender culture connected to the contrast between women's actual power in the household in rural Portugal, and the traditional Catholic view of women as '*daughters of Eve*': '*weaker, more prone to sin and bearing the burden for the destructive power of sexuality*',<sup>147</sup> a sinfulness which must be kept under control in marriage with male authority. Anthropologists describe rural Portuguese households as 'matrifocal', which is defined as a cultural emphasis on the maternal role. This position of women may have been stronger in Portugal compared to other Latin countries, as it is a coastal nation with men at sea for long periods. Large-scale emigration may also be a factor.<sup>148</sup> In both cases, women have been left in charge of the household. In this matrifocal

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<sup>143</sup> Cole, S. (1991). *Women of the Praia: Work and lives in a Portuguese coastal community*. Princeton, Princeton University Press. p.102.

<sup>144</sup> Under the New State, women were also restricted in their economic activities and in their access to property. The husband had the right to insist that his wife remained in the home. A man could be granted legal separation if the wife committed adultery, while a wife could apply for separation only if her husband's adultery had created a public scandal or if he had brought his mistress to the family home. When the constitution was revised as late as 1966, the authority of the husband was emphasised even more: '*The husband is the head of the family and, as such, he is to decide and direct on all matters concerning marital life (...) It is the father, as head of the household, who directs the children's education and governs them according to their sex, defends and represents them even before they are born.*' (as quoted in Guimaraes, E. (1987). Portuguese women - past and present. Lisboa, Portugal Commission on the Status of Women. p. 34-35).

<sup>145</sup> Ferreira (1998).

<sup>146</sup> Ferreira (1998):162-63.

<sup>147</sup> Dubish (1995), as quoted in Gemzöe (2000).

<sup>148</sup> Between 3.5 and 4 million Portuguese are residents abroad. 65% of these are men (Vincente, A. (1993). A brief look at women in Portuguese history. Lisboa, Commission for Equality and Women's Rights.

society, however, the ideology of male dominance is still maintained, resulting in what the Portuguese-British social anthropologist Joao de Pina-Cabral has described as the intensively felt 'conflict between man's right to rule and women's effective power'<sup>149</sup>. This leads to a tension in which women and men constantly challenge each other's power by quarrelling, or mocking and ridiculing each other (often using terms with sexual connotations). An anthropologist who analysed the many popular adages on gender in a Portuguese coastal village found they formed three sets:

*...The first set identifies woman as the controlling power within the household; the second suggests that men are in a more privileged position than women; and the third set of expressions suggest that people recognize that gender relations are problematic and not ideal (...) Third parties are advised not to interfere in the business of a husband and a wife, because gender relations in the household are fragile and potentially violent.*<sup>150</sup>

Cole writes that the idealisation of men, not of women, may signify that men's privileged position is not secure and guaranteed, but must be decreed and enforced ideologically through a myth of male dominance. It may be that this cultural heritage of a 'normal', ongoing gender battle takes the air out of the gender equality question – and also, as we shall see later, puts tension into interaction. Why talk about women's rights if they already have more power than they actually should have had?<sup>151</sup> The private tension between men and women may also have more modern roots in this society in which the state expects equality to be constructed on the basis of private confrontations, while social institutions, to a large degree, remain unchanged.<sup>152</sup>

### 1.3 Between gender blindness and gender battles

The late modernisation and the related processes of individualisation may also be seen in the fact that family bonds are extremely important in Portugal today. The Portuguese research assistant writes:

*Our family is the centre of our lives. We still like to live in the same neighbourhood as our parents; our young children stay with their grandparents while we are working. To have a family is to have a lot of worries and concerns, it is said (...) As it is a typical 'emigration country', many thousands of emigrants come to Portugal during their holidays just to be with their family.*

Old people often live with one of their children, and young people stay home until their mid-twenties. A survey from 1997 found that young men lived in their parental home until the age of 28, while young women left at the age of 23.<sup>153</sup> It is very rare for young people to live alone, one stays in the parental home until marriage or cohabitation with a partner. Young people are financially dependent on their families while studying, and the families often also support young couples when needed. Parental authority is high and children are expected to obey and to listen when adults speak, but also to become independent to some degree. Physical punishment is illegal, but is still regarded normal. The Portuguese research assistant has observed a certain values crisis and uncertainty in childrearing in the aftermath of the revolution, with tendencies towards more lenient upbringing, especially in the higher social classes. However, these social classes are also those that have equal expectations of girls and boys, and send their girls - in particular - into higher education, while rural families tend to be more traditional in their upbringing and in their views on the future lives of their sons and daughters.<sup>154</sup> In Portugal, neither girls nor boys have cooking as a subject at school. It was eliminated when the revolutionary regime ended gender-segregated schools and implemented a coeducated comprehensive school system in 1974.

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<sup>149</sup> Pina-Cabral (1986):92.

<sup>150</sup> Cole (1991):88.

<sup>151</sup> This theme of gender conflict even plays a central part in Portuguese history: the first king of Portugal, Alfonso Henriques wrested power from a woman – his own mother – in 1128, and this event led to the foundation of the state of Portugal in 1143. An epic work from 1592 depicts this scene where 'mother and son met in battle on a blood-stained field' – and blames the mother for the mess [Vincente, 1993 #239].

<sup>152</sup> Ferreira, V. (1998). Positive action and employment segregation. *Shifting bonds, shifting bounds*. V. Ferreira, T. Tavares and S. Portugal. Oeiras, Celta Editora.

<sup>153</sup> Carrilho (2000).

<sup>154</sup> Mendes, J. M. O. (1998). Class structure and intergenerational mobility in Portugal. *Shifting bonds, shifting bounds*. V. Ferreira, T. Tavares and S. Portugal. Oeiras, Celta Editora.

The Portuguese Scout leaders were very firm in their view that there were no gender differences in Scouting. The TA(f)s thought that making boys and girls feel they were equal could be one of their goals. To this end, mixed patrols were best, and they could work well. However, last year it did not work very well because of a lot of fighting. So this year they had decided to make two girls' patrols and two boys' patrols and this worked rather well. The leaders did not interpret this in term of gender, however: it was the specific combination of people in the patrol that made them fight, and it was the new combination that made it work:

*TL(m): There are no big differences between having a single-gendered group or a mixed one, or with or without mixed patrols, it depends on the people and on the group we are working with - whether we reach better results or not. In this particular case, we thought it was better to work with single-gendered patrols, and I think they are not losing anything by that, on the contrary.*

One advantage of this arrangement is that problems about who does the cooking disappear. It was a boys' patrol one day, and a girls' patrol the next, and they did it in the same way and with the same interest. The leaders even noticed that they vied for being the ones to cook. When asked if they saw any way they could improve the cooperation between girls and boys, the answer was no: there were no gender differences and they already cooperated so well. The only time a little disturbance came into this harmonious picture was at a point when the two leaders suddenly engaged in a discussion on who actually held the power over whom:

*TA(f): Mixing boys and girls can work. But sometimes there is some discrimination related to girls. The boys discriminate against the girls, because you are a girl...*

*TL(m): I think it is not like that anymore.*

*TA(f): Maybe.*

*TL(m): I don't think so, when there is a group... a group of kids, in Scouting as well as outside, it doesn't matter if you are a girl or a boy, it is an individual, it is that person. It is not like...there is not a big difference. I think nowadays they can do the same things.*

*TA(f): It's true, that's true. But I, as a girl, I feel sometimes discriminated against. I feel it [TL(m) starts laughing] For you it is natural that you don't feel it but...ah... this or that is better if it is a boy.*

*TL(m): But you are the ones who discriminate!*

*TA(f): No, we don't. And we feel it very clearly: 'Go get something there...ah, it is dark... so it is better to let a boy go... one never knows what may happen to a girl alone in the dark'.*

*TL(m): That's a natural male sense of protection [laughs]*

*TA(f): There's something there...*

*Question: Are you serious or are you joking?*

*TL(m): Either way. And...*

*TA(f): Sometimes we feel discriminated against when we are protected, when we try to be equal to boys. For the girl, there is the women's lib, we suffer a bit. And then they have that protective attitude toward us ... maybe we create the discrimination by trying to run away from that. But I must confess that it is nice to feel it... stay there because you are a girl.*

*TL(m): But I don't see that as discrimination, I think that something that A wants to do, and B lets A do it, it is normal. I don't see discrimination in that because you, girls, women, you do what you want, and you can be the first to reject that protective attitude. But you must do it in a different way.*

*TA(f): It is also true.*

*TL(m): And I think that nowadays we don't live like that, we accept all the opinions... there is no discrimination...*

*TA(f): You must not do like the kids did this weekend, when they turned to me... we were preparing lunch, and they said: 'The woman's place is in the kitchen [TL(m) laughs]. And I look at them as if I could eat them: 'But you are here with me so you have to hurry, [laughs], today is also your day'. But I think they were just joking.*

*TL(m): We say it often, but we are joking.*

*TA(f): It is a joke but, you know, there are jokes...*

*TL(m): You can feel it... serious jokes.*

*TA(f): That means, ... I'm in the kitchen as... but you have to be there too.*

*TL(m): I think the one who spent most time in the kitchen was me [laughs]*

The TL(m) sticks to the universalism. He even manages to escape the question of whom he would prefer to work with if he had to choose! While the TA(f) said she would prefer the girls, even though she found them more difficult because they enjoy intrigues, pay more attention to particular others, and remain offended for a long time, the TL(m) said that he would choose first one gender, and then the other.

Do they not see any differences at all according to gender? Apart from the girls' intriguing, they mention the girls' tendency to be more careful and to do things better, while boys want to act quickly. And then there was the physical difference – the boys are bigger and stronger. As an example, they mentioned a particular boy, Hugo, whom we will meet later. But maybe some differences are so self-evident that they are not thought of?

*TL(m): We always looked at things in a natural way, and we are not concerned about gender when we are planning an activity. But there are differences when we deal with them. It must be like that, it is natural. The way we talk to boys is different from the way we talk to girls.*

The local research assistant (who was also a TA in the troop) also conveyed a clear view of gender complementary. The reasons she gave to explain the troop's choice of the previous year's mixed patrols were very similar to what we saw in Russia:

*Mixed patrols are productive. The tasks can be distributed better. And why is that? Each gender has different abilities and interests, a fact that makes the patrols more balanced (...) In our perspective as troop leaders, mixed patrols are a good option because it gives each gender the opportunity to learn from the other, and to see how they can complement each other in the various tasks that must be done (...) They are not alike. They are complementary. The Scout Movement can and should be an educational framework in which both genders can learn how to live with the differences, and find a way to make an advantage out of it.*

These conflicting views on what constitutes individual differences as opposed to gender differences may mirror the transitory phase Portugal is experiencing as a new democracy, in which an old, rural and religious order is rapidly changing into a modern, individualised one. The leaders did not connect this fact to gender, but mentioned it in general terms as an ongoing change in values:

*TA(f): We talked before about education and about my generation, and I think this one is completely different... as all generations are. But this one... there are values which are being lost, and that has to do with our society (...) They are too individualistic, ah... for them it is 'What I want...' (...) Sometimes I see a kid throwing a paper on the floor and I say to him: 'Why are you throwing the paper on the floor?' The answer may be: 'Because I don't feel like putting it in the trash can'. But we have to respect nature, we have to be like that. OK, he will take the paper and put it in the trashcan, but next week he will do exactly the same thing. It is like rowing against the tide (...) Maybe he sees everybody else throwing papers on the floor and maybe he thinks 'if everyone does it, why shouldn't I?' 'Why should I be different from others?'*

Maybe the notion of 'equal opportunities' is, in itself, a symptom of such individualistic values? Thus, norms of gender (as well as of upbringing) seem to be in a confusing process of change in contemporary Portugal. In this one group of leaders, we have met three different opinions of gender: a model of universalism, a model of complementarity and an experience of discrimination and hierarchy. No wonder gender is a difficult topic to talk about!

## **2. A Portuguese troop**

### **2.1 Scouting in Portugal**

Portugal was one of the founding members of WOSM and has had an unbroken history of Scouting since the first troop started in Macau in 1911.<sup>155</sup> In 1913 the Portuguese Scouts Association was founded for boys, and in 1931 the Portuguese Guides Association was launched for girls. Both were open associations. The Catholic Scout Corps, also for boys, was established in 1923. All three associations still exist but, today, the two boy-only associations are today also open to girls, whereas the Guide association has remained gender-segregated. The total

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<sup>155</sup> There were attempts to ban Scouting during the New State, but as the Church defended it this did not happen.

number of Scouts and Guides is approximately 85,000. The Portuguese Scout associations do not receive any stable financial support from the state, but can (like any youth organisation) apply for funds for specific programmes and activities.

Our troop belongs to the Catholic association, which is now called Corpo Nacional de Escutas (CNE). It is by far the largest association with approximately 70,000 members, and its membership has almost doubled since the beginning of the 1980s. The largest age section is Scouts (10 to 14 years), and adults make up 1/6 of the membership. The typical leaving age is between 14 and 18 years of age. Most troops are mixed, but single-gendered patrols are also common. 42% of the members are girls/women, but there are fewer females in the Rover section and in the adult leadership. The national board is composed of seven men and two women.

The CNE has a wide selection of books addressed at the different age sections, and a well-developed adult leader training system. The programme is developed in terms of 3-6 month projects, with a specific theme for each age section: 'hunting' for Cub Scouts, 'adventure' for Scouts, 'enterprise' for Venture Scouts, and 'hiking' for Rovers. It is the young people themselves who develop the projects according to an educational model. Coeducation has been a focus since 1994. It has been the object of several conferences, training courses and publications directed towards troop leaders and trainers, and is now compulsory at all levels of training. The book on badges, printed in 2000, must have been forgotten, however. Drawings illustrating each of the seven areas of badges show large groups of boys engaged in all sorts of dramatic and adventurous activities, and only one or two girls, mainly in passive or assistant positions. One girl fishing and another looking into a microscope are the only exceptions among the 50-60 active boys in the drawings. We recognise the Portuguese gender tension in the words of the research assistant: *'We have many leaders who easily deal with these questions, and also some who almost refuse to discuss them. We are still in a process of change.'*

The Scout Promise and Law are very close to the original 1908 version, except that the promise has been broadened to include duty not only to God, but also to the Church. As a Catholic association, the different age sections each have two different symbolic frameworks, one with the traditional Scout values, and a religious one that addresses spirituality. Together these frameworks are meant to combine humanism and love for nature with transcendental elements of spirituality and faith. Thus, the Cub Scouts combine *The Jungle Book* with the life of St. Francis of Assisi, while the Scout section combines St. George, the code of chivalry and 'the Explorer', with *The Heroes of God's people*. The Venture Scouts combine 'the Pioneer' with the life of a Portuguese saint St. Joao de Brito, and the Rovers have 'Hiking through life' and St. Paul as an example to follow.

## **2.2 The troop in Portugal**

### ***The troop***

The troop (named after a famous knight) is established in a small town of 8,000 inhabitants. It is located between the sea and the mountains, a few hours drive north of Lisbon. The town is a service centre for the surrounding agricultural area and has a balanced demographic composition. Most women of the younger generation work outside the home, but men dominate social and political activities in the town.

The troop belonged to a group that offers Scouting to all age sections and was led by three women and one man. The troop had 22 youth members (10 girls and 12 boys) aged 10-14. They came from middle-class/upper middle-class families. As they lived in a small town, they were schoolmates, attended Sunday school together and also spent some of their leisure time together. The troop could not have more than 40 members, and there was sometimes a waiting list. This year there was a marked increase in the number of girls applying for membership as opposed to boys. However, as more girls than boys tended to quit after only a short while, boys were still in the majority. The troop had experimented with mixed and segregated patrols, and as we have already heard, they currently used the segregated model to put an end to all the fighting in the patrols. Thus, we had two girls' patrols – *Tigers* and *Eagles*, and two boys' patrols – *Bats* and *Panthers*.

There were two male and three female adult leaders, aged 21-27. I only have information about the two leaders interviewed, in addition to the local research assistant who was also a TA. The leaders interviewed were a male TL, aged 27 (and had been TL for the past four years), and a female TA, who was 21. They had been Scouts for 18 and 11 years respectively and also participated in the Rover clan, which they felt gave them a perfect balance of give and take.

### **The programme**

The Portuguese leaders we interviewed had a distinctly values-oriented approach to Scouting, which may be related to the religious affiliation of the association. To be in Scouting is to be useful to others, to contribute to something, and make oneself a richer person by so doing. It is about learning to live together, respecting others, and taking responsibility, all values that are threatened by modern individualism and selfishness:

*TA(f): Responsibility. Friendship. Teamwork. To learn how to live in society, I think that's what is really important. A growing awareness that there are other people around us, that this is not a 'Banana republic'. Everyone has to know how to integrate him or herself into things and to learn that maybe we cannot do whatever we want to do. It is not being 'little kings', like 'I want it, so I do it' – but to be conscious that when we work in a group, there are more people around, and 'maybe I cannot do this because I would be bothering another person'. And we have to know how and where to position ourselves...*

*TL(m): To be fully conscious of what is around us, everything depends on what I do.*

*TA(f): Exactly.*

These values placed high demands on people. TA(f) felt that she was too selfish when, in certain situations, she wished they had just been the Rover clan on a trip together. TL(m) said he did not like inadequate attitudes in people who were Scouts:

*TL(m): I feel down sometimes when I think that I had to decide to put my Scout life above other things, and then I see some people who don't have the same interest, or they have many other interests, ... and I feel a bit sad. But I also see other examples, TA(f), for instance, she is here today and she didn't leave the Rovers, she is living her own experience with the Rovers, but she is also here to help us.*

As an inspiration to meet the ideals, the Rovers make a 'declaration' each year about what they want to do in the coming year, both individually and as a clan. When they succeed, Scouting gives them a feeling of being richer people, different from others who have chosen a more sedate and selfish life style and lower values: 'I think it makes us healthier - mentally, psychologically and physically', the TA(f) said. The TL(m) remembered the feeling it gave him as a young person when he could experience all sorts of things and 'live a different life from everyone else'. He currently enjoyed planning something and seeing it work out successfully. The only thing TA(f) did not like about being a Scout leader was having to put herself on the frontline and taking the responsibility.

It is these values that made them stay in Scouting, and they were also what they want to pass on to the young people. A key concept when the Portuguese leaders talked about their work was 'to transmit the values'. They stressed this much more than any of the other countries' leaders and saw this aspect as especially important in view of the erosion of values they experienced in society. Today young people stay at home, playing videos and computer games. They do not have any connection with nature, they are spoiled, overprotected and lack autonomy. They have too many activity options, and seem to lose interest in Scouting more quickly than before. This represents a difficult educational challenge:

*TL(m): They learn one moment, and then we see our efforts 'destroyed' after a couple of weeks, and we have to start all over again (...) But there are also many situations where they are able to do it... And we talk to them, we make them see a certain situation, a certain point of view, and they get it, they feel that that is right and understand it as a value, for them, as something they have to stand for in the future.*

*TA(f): Along the way they acquire some values.*

What they do concretely has to be adapted to the situation and the needs of the persons involved; the main thing is to create a framework within which the fundamental values can be transmitted. The troop has two disabled members and this situation, in itself, teaches the others to learn to understand and respect different needs. The presence of these two young people

makes it necessary to adapt patrol competitions from competing in terms of time to competing on other aspects. The other Scouts sometimes become a little frustrated because they can never win by being the fastest, but they also see a spirit of helpfulness and respect evolve:

*TA(f): We have to make them understand. Respect is the key word, respect is what has to always be there. He cannot do it for a special reason. You want to know what it is? Come and see it, and try to feel what it is like to be in his situation (...) It has to do with the special needs of each person, and to try to go further ahead - trying to understand, as a group, what the needs are of each one of us and trying to fulfil them. However, we have to make them understand why this has to be done, that this is not done just because we are troop leaders and we want to do it this way.*

I do not have the same level of information on the autumn and winter programme of this troop as I do from the other countries. Nonetheless, from the interviews and the general information on the troop, it appears that there is a weekly troop meeting with different kinds of activities. Camping, hikes, walks, cooking competitions, decorating the patrol corners, games, and attending mass were mentioned. Three observation studies conducted by the local research assistant covered two troop meetings with subsequent patrol meetings and one weekend camp for the PL and PAs together with the adult leaders. The troop and patrol meetings were mainly dedicated to planning and resolving issues in one of the boys' patrols. The weekend camp included a hike, pioneering, making a campfire, planning, and attending mass. In terms of the RAP areas of development, the leaders considered them as a whole and believed they covered them all well. According to the local research assistant, all decisions in the troop were made collectively. Everybody could present ideas to the weekly troop meeting and they were discussed and voted on. My impression from the camp was that the young people had respect for the adult leaders, who were always addressed as 'chief'. The relationship appeared to be friendly, but I had less opportunity to observe it here than in the other camps due to the size and organisation of the camp.

Girls and boys both mentioned friendship, learning new things, and activities such as camping and pioneering as reasons for being in Scouting. However, whereas the girls emphasised the social dimensions and good deeds, the boys stressed the activities and what they got out of them. Activities that were only mentioned by the boys<sup>156</sup> were hiking, night exercises, obstacle races, rope games, decoding messages, following tracks. One boy said that these were useful skills to know if you wanted to join the army, and the others emphasised the sense of adventure, the competition, the kick of adrenalin in activities such as sliding with ropes. The boys also mentioned cooking as something they liked, while they did not like washing up. The girls did not mention either cooking or dishwashing, but one girl said she found it boring to have to clean the hut. Boys and girls agreed that those who fitted in as Scouts were people who were adventurous, ambitious, serious and social. People who teased others or joked all the time, who had no goals in their lives, or who did not like to be in nature would not fit in. The girls added that girls who were scared of bugs or afraid of doing things would not fit in, either.

### 3. Doing gender in Scouting

This year's troop summer camp was a five-day sub-regional camp with 400 Scouts aged 11-14 and approximately 45 adult leaders, of whom a majority were men. A Venture Scout camp was held nearby. The campsite was located in a shady pinewood area just a few minutes walk from white cliffs, the Atlantic sea and a gorgeous blue lagoon. The camp was entitled '*II ExploPio*' (a compound word for the symbolic frameworks for Scouts and Venture Scouts: explorers and pioneers, 'II' because it was the second in a row) and the theme was buccaneers. The camp was divided into four sub-camps called 'Haiti', 'Tortuga', 'Madagascar' and 'Jamaica'. Each sub-camp had its own space with an entrance from a central area and everyone in the same sub-camp wore a pirate scarf of the same colour, in addition to a nametag. Within the sub-camps, each patrol had their own space with tents, kitchen area, dining table, and flagpole. Cooking was done over gas rings because of the fire hazard of the dry pinewood area. Latrines and open showers were simple and common to all. In addition there were some big tents for supplies, an infirmary and staff. Each sub-camp had five adult leaders, and 25 of the leaders formed a support group, which took care of supplies and infrastructure. The leaders had their own tents and dining area outside the sub-camps.

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<sup>156</sup> The poorer quality of the interviews with the girls (see next paragraph) may also explain the lack of details concerning the girls' favourite activities.



Two patrols from our troop participated in the camp. As only 11 young people could participate, the patrols were composed specifically for this camp: *Wolves* consisted of five boys and *Bats* consisted of four girls and two boys, with female leadership. The size of the group was comparable to the one in the Moscow region camp, but the age range was larger. Another difference was the fact that the special patrol arrangement created a setting in which girls were in the majority – the only one in this study. The two patrols were in different sub-camps. Their troop leaders took part in the adult support group, and thus were not directly in charge of their own Scouts.

I arrived on the afternoon of the third day of the camp, and thus the *two-day camp observation* took place during the last days of the camp. As, on the one full day I spent in the camp, I chose to join the mixed patrol for a hike, I do not always have comparable observations of the boys' patrol. The local research assistant, Lidia, provided observations of *two troop meetings, three patrol meetings (one from a girls' patrol and two from a boys' patrol), and a weekend camp* for leaders. The *interviews* were conducted with four boys and four girls,<sup>157</sup> of whom all but one girl participated in the camp. For some reason, the girls were interviewed individually and very briefly, and this reduced the value of these interviews. All interviews, however, are characterised by a more asymmetrical relationship between the young people and the adult interviewer. The young people were less talkative and the interviewer had to make more of an effort to get them to talk than seemed to be the case in the interviews in the other countries. This may be connected to the traditional norms of upbringing, whereby children learn to listen to adults instead of talking themselves. In such a context, interviewing young people may be an odd thing to do.

### 3.1 Structural gender: *Cleaning and quarrelling*

The atmosphere in the boys' patrol and the girl-dominated patrol was quite different. In the mixed patrol, the PL and PA created a motherly environment. They were always with their patrol, and always kept an eye on what was going on. They often sat around the table talking with the members or with others who happened to drop by for a visit. It was like arriving at a family's home:

*The Bat patrol is preparing the dinner. All six kids sit waiting around the table. PL Ana greets me in a friendly way and presents the other members of the patrol to me: PA Inês (13), Teresa (11), Fátima (11), Hugo (13) and António (11). Ana is the cook today. The four girls talk and laugh around the pots. Hugo carries the lamp to them so they can see. António sits passively at the table and looks at the others. Hugo hands over the lamp to Teresa and fools around with a potato-masher. Teresa holds the lamp for Ana and asks me my name. The lid drops down in Ana's pot. Shortly afterwards I see António washing it up. Hugo and Ana quarrel about something while she puts the chicken in the pot. The two boys appear small, compared with the four tall girls. Hugo starts mashing the potatoes, but it is difficult. Ana takes over and he hands her the potatoes instead. She sees that I am writing in the dark and hands me a light with one hand, while continuing to mash potatoes with the other. It is 10 PM – the boys' patrol ate an hour ago, but here they are not ready yet.*

(...)

*Breakfast. PL Ana helps António to clean the pots and then spreads butter on the rolls for everyone. She asks me if I want hot or cold milk. She gives orders to the others while she is working, and rebukes Teresa. António is still struggling with the pots. Hugo puts a pirate scarf on the patrol pennant; PA Inês helps him.*

There was a tendency for the two boys to fall out of the close social circle. Hugo frequently left the camp space to see the other boys, while the girls stayed together. Sometimes the little boy António followed Hugo, sometimes he sat silently with the girls. It was especially when Hugo was out that the girls seemed to have time to relax, talk and laugh, and other girls paid visits. In the troop observations, the well-organised character of the girl patrol was confirmed.

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<sup>157</sup> *Girls:* Girls: Inês (14, PL), Cláudia (13, PL), Fátima (12), Teresa (11, PA). The girls were interviewed individually by the local research assistant, Lidia, who was also a TA in the troop.  
*Boys:* Luis (14, PL), Hugo (13, PL), Paulo (13), António (11). The boys were interviewed as a group by the national research assistant, Fernando, who did not know the boys other than through our summer camp visit.

When I introduced myself in the boys' patrol, the PL did the talking and did not introduce me to the other boys as Ana had. I got the feeling of talking with a chief, instead of a mother. The very talkative PA often succeeded, however, in taking the lead by interrupting my conversation with the chief, while the three younger boys mainly listened to us with big eyes and smiles. The boys seemed to have a fine time together even though, in my eyes, things appeared much less cosy. The camp space was messier, and the contribution of the PL and PA, as far as I could see, was mainly to give commands to the younger members and then leave the space to see their friends. The PL sometimes passed by the campground to inspect his subordinates, and appeared irritated when they did not meet his standards. In spite of the messy and more hierarchical impression of the camp, things actually got done quickly. The boys' patrol had finished their dinner several hours before the girl-dominated patrol on both evenings, but the standard was also considerably lower. In the later observations of troop and patrol meetings, however, the boys' patrol was the one with social conflicts. Here, the boys quarrelled all the time, joked when the PL asked them to be serious, and the PL could not keep order. Thus, among the boys, much seemed to depend of the authority of the leader. When the leader has authority (as did the leader of the boy patrol in the camp), the result seems to be not only effectiveness, but also a clear hierarchy. Instead of a gender structure in household chores as in Russia and Slovakia, here we could see an age structure:

*Clearing up before leaving in the Wolf patrol: The three small ones are working - João takes down the dining table, Paulo disassembles the wooden structures, Pedro packs the kitchen utensils. PA José is fencing with some bigger boys in the neighbouring camp. PL Luis goes to and fro and gives commands, but he does not do a lot himself. He has lost his voice and heats water to make himself a cup of tea.*

In the mixed patrol, the youngest boys were able to escape from duties more easily, whereas the youngest girls could not. This is what happened in the clearing up session in the *Bat patrol*:

*Ana and Inês carry water. Teresa sits down at the table but is immediately told by Ana to wash up. The two boys go into their tent and close the zipper (boys and girls have separate tents, so this is a private boy space). Their excuse is that they must do a report on yesterday's hike, but judging from the noises from the tent this is not exactly what they are doing - screams and laughter come from the inside. Teresa yells that they should come out and help. She is manoeuvring the heavy water can, trying to pour water for the dishwashing. She complains that she cannot see what is washed up and what is not. The things Hugo washed this morning are really dirty. Ana tells Teresa that she must wash up everything again. Hugo opens the lower part of the zipper, his head appears with a grin, he sticks out his tongue at Teresa. Then he quickly zips down and roars of laughter come from the tent.*

*Meanwhile Ana and Inês take down the wooden structures. Inês carries heavy trunks to a pile. Ana gives orders to the other girls. Nobody reacts to the two boys in the tent - even though they are rather noisy. Teresa mumbles angrily to herself that Hugo at least should take care of the garbage, which is his duty today.*

When an adult leader arrived to collect the garbage bags she gently called Hugo and opened the tent. She asked him quietly where the bags were and politely closed the tent again after he had told her. After a long while and much quarrelling between Teresa and the boys, Ana at last took action:

*Ana opens the tent and talks to the boys in a strict voice and tells them to come out and help. The boys answer back, and Ana rebukes them for this, too. She instructs António not to put on the uniform. Hugo comes out from the tent and asks nonchalantly, 'What is the matter now?' He walks slowly around the campsite, picking up his own belongings. António packs his own sleeping back. For the first time this morning I see Hugo do some work: he takes down the flagpole.*

As in Slovakia (but not Russia), the intention was that boys and girls should share all the work. In the mixed patrol camp, there was a written list distributing the different tasks very evenly, and without regard to gender. On the first observation day, it was António's turn to do the dishes, which he did with some assistance from Ana. On the second observation day, it was Hugo's turn (and, as described above, Hugo performed this task so poorly that Teresa had to redo it). And many more quarrels preceded this finale:

*Breakfast. Hugo tries different ways to get into the close circle of girls around the table, and he succeeds in getting some attention. I don't understand what he is saying, but the girls look at him and react negatively to what he is saying. At a certain point it develops into a quarrel: the girls tell Hugo to do the dishes, but he refuses. Neither party presents reasons, it is mostly 'Yes, you have to!' – 'No, I won't!' António is still scrubbing the pots from yesterday. He struggles with the potato masher, which is still very sticky. Ana inspects it and tells him to do it again and better. At last he is done and comes to the table to eat. He has to make his own roll and pour milk, something that Ana did for the rest of us.*

*Ana and Hugo quarrel about the washing up. Inês and Teresa fill in and support Ana. Finally, Hugo (with angry body language), grabs a cup from the table, washes it up and throws it together with the drying pots. Then he walks restlessly around the campsite making angry remarks that all get a reply from the girls at the table. [I wonder what is going on: all there is to wash up is seven cups!]*

*Dinner: When dinner is over, Hugo disappears. The girls stay at the table and talk in a lively way. Two other girls join them and they all seem to have a good time. Hugo comes back and a quarrel starts between him and Ana about the washing-up. It looks like he has finally given in – but he is furious! He throws his plate in the washing-up bowl so the water squirts in all directions.*

*Next morning: Everybody sleeps in after the late night. When I rise at 9 a.m. it looks like both patrols are still sleeping – but not Hugo – he is actually doing the dishes from yesterday's evening meal!*

As with the Slovak boys, the Portuguese boys tried to avoid washing dishes, but they had less power. The youngest boy, António, had no power at all, while the 13-year-old Hugo gave it a good try. He fought to the end but, in the end, he had to give in. Nonetheless, he was still able to protest by doing the job badly! Dishwashing and other cleaning tasks were definitely not popular among the boys. This was also confirmed in the interviews and indicates some transfer from the division of work at home:

*Question: What is it you don't like so much in Scouting?*

*Hugo: Doing the dishes. I don't like doing the dishes when we are camping.*

*Question: And at home... do you like to do it?*

*Hugo: At home it is easier. There is always a machine. And there is always my mother.*

*Question: So what you don't like is doing the dishes?*

*Hugo: Yes, because it is boring. And at night it is cold, the water is cold... I don't like doing the dishes. I like everything else.*

*Question: And now it is you, Paulo. What do you do not like so much in Scouting?*

*Paulo: Doing the dishes. And cooking.*

*António: Doing the dishes and cooking.*

*Question: And you, Luis, is it also doing the dishes and cooking, or are there other things?*

*Luis: Yes, more or less. Doing the dishes, because sometimes it is cold. And after that...cooking. It is hard, but it is needed, isn't it? And sometimes we even have fun while cooking. More things... ah, waking up early...*

The girls did not like cleaning either, but they took it as a matter of course, something that had to be done. In the troop observations we saw the girls doing these tasks, while the boys tried to define them as tasks that were not for real men:

*The Eagle patrol is sweeping the floor. A boy stands in the doorway and watches them with a slight 'macho man' attitude. A couple of minutes later two other boys exhibit the same behaviour. (Lidia)*

Cooking, on the other hand, was something several of the Portuguese boys actually enjoyed! Not only, as Luis said above, because it led to food (which is essential when you are hungry), but also because it was experienced as something new and exotic. Indirectly, we also learn something about the boy's situation in the family in the way they talked about it:

*Hugo: We learn a lot of things here. Cooking, for instance. Most of what I know I learned here.*

*Question: And after that, you practise at home?*

*Hugo: Yes. Now I can help. My mother didn't let me touch the stove because I could burn myself, but I started here and after a while I was more at ease both here and at home. Now, it is a 'piece of cake'. I even cook dinner for my sister. She doesn't like it, but...She makes faces, but she eats it.*

*(...)*

*Luis: The cooking thing. Even though I don't like it very much, sometimes... it is always needed, isn't it? Or we do not eat. We learn, we can use it at home, even if I do not do it very often, but, for instance, if something happened to my parents – God protect them – but if something happened to them, or if they were not able to be at home for a while. And when they go out, I can stay home alone, if I want to eat something.*

The competence, however, does not come by itself. The young boys' efforts at cooking in the boys' patrol in the camp were rather hopeless:

*João and Pedro stand at the dining table, trying to chop onions and garlic. They do this so hopelessly that it is almost unbearable to watch! The knife is blunt and their technique hopeless. Pedro tries to dig out the onion with the knife instead of cutting it, and if he gets a small piece out, he spends an endless amount of time cutting it into smaller parts. Some of the onion falls on the ground and is coated in pine needles.. He looks at us helplessly. It seems that he has never been in a kitchen before, and has definitely never tried to chop an onion. PA José passes by and gives a quick demonstration on how to cut it, but it doesn't help much (...)*

*The three boys are now frying the meat – or trying to fry it. Some pieces of meat swim around in an inch of oil in the pan, and the fire is not on yet. Paulo pours water into a big pot for rice, but he does not measure the amount. Luis passes by and rebukes them. He instructs Pedro to put the meat in a pot and blend it with spices before frying. Pedro does so and pours in a whole bag of paprika – to me it looks like he did this on purpose – and looks 'scared' at what he has done, and tells the others while laughing. Paulo looks in the pot: all the meat has now turned bright red because of the spice. 'Food no good!' João says to me in English, with an apologetic gesture. Pedro says they don't know how to cook. He has another attempt at frying and pours in a lot of oil. Luckily, the pan is slanting, leaving an area where one piece of meat can fry at a time without getting soaked in oil. Paulo has put the rice in the pot and stirs all the time. Ana passes by and tells him to stop stirring and put the lid on instead, which he does. In spite of the rather hopeless cooking, the three boys seem to have a good time together.*

Not all the girls were terribly competent in this area, either, but the learning curve was steeper:

*PA Inês is cutting garlic, also rather ineffectively. She asks an adult leader if one should have water in the pan in order to fry the meat! He explains that oil or butter would be a better idea, and that the spices go on the meat first. She follows his advice and prepares the meat very delicately.*

### **3.2 Symbolic gender: Rhetoric men and supportive mothers**

To be a successful male in the Portuguese setting, you should be independent, strong and clever. The problem, however, was that these boys were neither very strong, nor clever, (compared to the girls), and their degree of independence was partly in the hands of the strict, motherly, girls. The result was quite an entertaining 'rhetoric masculinity' – the boys tried to convince everybody of their bravura, almost as if they were staging a drama with themselves as heroes, but nobody really believed them, not even themselves. The boys' patrol for instance told me that they were MUCH better at cooking than the girls, and they made me promise that I would eat the next meal with them: '*We are the best!*' the PA told me in a dramatically tragic voice. However, when I showed up for the meal, they seemed to have forgotten all about it. They also told me that they had won the previous day's boat race, but a second later this was modified: the truth was that they won the first round, but not the next, so they ended up as third best. After the hike, the PL admitted that it did not go too well '*because two elements didn't complete*' and had to be taken home by car. Later I heard that, in fact, the problem was that the patrol had completely lost its way shortly after the start and had walked around for two hours before they found the first control post. In this version of the story (told by the two small boys who abandoned the hike), it was the fault of someone else who had told them to take a wrong direction. In the total score of the camp, the boys' patrol ended up No. 33 of 42 patrols, while the mixed patrol ended up No. 5.

Maybe this distance between rhetoric and reality was also what fostered the active social style of the boys? The Portuguese boys were the most active of all the boys in this study in making contact with me. They tried to catch me whenever I was on my way to the mixed patrol, they invited me to dinner, and they willingly told me all kinds of things about themselves and others from the first moment. Compared to the Russian boys' gentle attentiveness, some of the Portuguese boys came close to an amusing exaggeration:

*They invite me to have dinner with them. They have an extra plate, but no knife and fork. PA José gives me his and insists I eat first. Oh! They almost forgot to say grace! José extemporises a very long grace in which he includes thanking God for sending 'this beautiful lady' (me!) to the camp. The others smile, but my impression is not that José is trying to be funny – he talks non-stop and nobody else can get a word in. The three youngest boys do not say anything, but follow the conversation with attention. I ask PL Luis a question, who starts to answer, but José takes over.*

The girls were also friendly towards me, but not in this talkative way. They seemed shyer, more reluctant to try their English, and showed their consideration rather by asking me how I wanted my milk and bread prepared, discreetly moving together so that there was room for me around the table, and bringing a light when they saw me making notes in the dusk. This quiet, attentive style is of course, also a side of the motherly role, as we also saw in Russia. Even though the girls had more control over the boys here, they also helped them keep up their masculine pride. This modest 'feminine' behaviour was seen among the adult female leaders, too. As the TA(f) said in the interview, she didn't like to be in the limelight, and the same seemed to apply to the young female leaders here. At the farewell parade for one of the sub-camps, for instance, the four male leaders said a few words of farewell and each got a big round of applause, whereas the young woman refused to say anything and got no applause. I also noticed that many of the young women in the leaders' group were very attentive towards the men. They hovered around them, often sought physical contact and spoke softly, making themselves little and sweet.

The interplay between rhetoric masculinity and understanding mothers was very obvious on the daylong hike I attended with the mixed patrol. When these four tall girls and two small boys arrived at the posts, all the tasks were immediately given to Hugo to perform, with no discussion whatsoever! This seemed to be such a self-evident a thing to do, that even some of the adult leaders at the posts, after having received Ana's call, looked directly at Hugo (the biggest of the two boys in the patrol) when they explained the task. The most amazing thing about this was that nobody seemed to be bothered about the fact that Hugo was neither the biggest nor the strongest in the patrol (nor especially competent). He was simply the biggest boy. My impression was that everybody, silently, acknowledged the boys' need to demonstrate their masculinity. In the situations in which Ana or Inês took over, it was quite clear that their competence (also in a physical sense), exceeded Hugo's by far:

*Post 1. The task is to climb a rope and blow a horn at the top. Hugo is immediately chosen to do it, but then they reconsider it as his leg hurts. Ana easily completes the job. To be tall, as Ana is, is a clear advantage in this task, but had Hugo not had his leg problem, it would have apparently been more important 'to do gender' than to achieve the best result.*

*Post 2. The adult leader looks directly at Hugo while he explains the task: to walk blindfolded through a labyrinth, while following the instructions given by the others. Hugo is immediately chosen to do it. Ana instructs him, but not so well, he stumbles. She grabs him to lead him on the right course; he moves back, irritated. They don't complete the task and everybody looks a bit depressed.*

*Post 3. Here the task is to construct a stretcher made out of materials available on the spot. Ana grabs some sticks and asks someone to fetch the tarpaulin. Hugo does it and complains about having to do everything! Hugo and Ana finish the stretcher with a little quarrelling.*

*Post 4. An old game in which one throws three metal rings over a wooden pole. Ana asks Hugo whether he wants to do it. He throws the first ring, but misses the pole. Ana takes over and gets a hit with No. 2, but misses No. 3.*

*Post 5. Everybody has to crawl over a net made of ropes. The two boys run forward! The girls follow and hold the ropes tight to make it easier to crawl over the net. Hugo gets over it easily, while António has problems. The girls encourage him and he succeeds. When the boys are over they sit down to rest; they do not hold the ropes for the girls as the girls had done for them. Teresa and Fátima find it difficult to get over the ropes; Fátima starts to cry out of fear when she is at the top and gives up. Inês and Ana crawl over with ease and elegance. Fátima wants another try. Ana helps and encourages her, and she eventually succeeds.*

Another striking expression of the rhetoric masculinity, and the girls' and the adults' silent support of it, was the fact that both boys had problems completing the hike. We had barely walked 15 minutes when Hugo started to grumble about a chafe on his foot. Shortly afterwards, he complained about being hungry, and a little later about being thirsty (it was, in fact, a very hot day). He started to walk slowly:

*Hugo complains about his foot. The girls say that he is actually the one carrying the first-aid kit. They offer to put on a band-aid, but he refuses: He wants to do it himself and when he wants! (...) We arrive at downhill steps covered with loose gravel. The girls and the rest of us descend carefully, but then Hugo speeds up and runs down the slippery hill! Everybody gave him their admiring attention. Shortly after, there is a small uphill part. It is hot, and the girls moan as they climb the hill. António has problems as one of the shoulder straps on his backpack has broken, and one of the adult leaders takes it for him. Hugo has lagged behind, complaining about his foot all the time. When he reaches the top of the hill, he 'collapses' with a loud moan. (...) Now Hugo, António and Teresa lag behind. Hugo walks almost demonstratively slowly now. We approach a post. Hugo drops his backpack on the ground and staggers across the line. When we proceed, he has taken off his shoes and walks in his socks. (...) I ask Hugo whether he prefers mixed or segregated patrols. Segregated, he says. Because girls and boys have different interests. And girls are weaker than boys. And yesterday, in the boat race, Ana rowed with a boy - but as she rowed with much less force than the boy, the boat just went around in circles and they lost! Two boys rowing together passed them and won!*

This unwavering belief in boys' strength, just by virtue of their gender (on the part of a boy who was actually smaller than Ana, and in a situation in which he was seriously delaying his patrol), was also maintained by the others. When, at a certain point, Teresa also started to complain about the long hike, Ana immediately suggested that she should stop hiking, something Teresa refused to do, at first. At the next post, Ana urged her again to stop since she was complaining so much. It was only after several hours of walking that someone finally suggested that the boys stop, too. António agreed, while Hugo refused:

*Hugo is really delaying the patrol now. The others insist that he stop at the next post. Ana argues that otherwise he will have trouble walking tomorrow. At the next post, António and Teresa decide to stop. Fátima also stops to be with Teresa. Hugo, Ana and Inês continue and complete the hike.*

I stopped hiking, too, at this point, so I did not get the last part of the story. But I noticed the adult leaders' comments: boys are more independent than girls, they said, Hugo did not stop hiking just because António did, but Fátima stopped because Teresa did. So Hugo's stubbornness, which caused problems and delayed the patrol, was regarded as a higher virtue than Fátima's wish to accompany her friend. It was also Hugo who was particularly mentioned by the adult leaders in the interview as an example of a big, strong boy.

### **3.3 Interactional gender: *Big sisters and little brothers***

One of the first things that struck me when I observed the Portuguese Scouts at the summer camp was the ongoing and sibling-like quarrelling among girls and boys – quite different from the Russian boys' gentleness, the Slovak boys' contempt and the Danish boys' indifference to the girls. There may be more than one reason for this. As we have already seen, the boys' patrol and the mixed patrol really mirrored the general Portuguese gender arrangements in their interaction: the women preferably stay home and have control over the household, while the men leave as soon as they can to fraternise with other men. Small boys sit on the edge between these two worlds. Maybe these children were simply doing gender the Portuguese way, and lived in what has been characterised above as the '*conflict between man's right to rule and women's effective power*' (cf. section 1.2). The rhetoric masculinity and the strict, motherly, control fit into this. Another explanation, which is not necessarily an alternative one, but may add fuel to the flames, is the particular age composition: prepubescent boys trying to challenge the maternal control on which they still depended. Sometimes the boys acted like little spoiled princes:

*Dinner with the mixed patrol. Ana serves me a plate with meat, rice and sauce, and gives me a knife and fork. Hugo takes three pieces of meat in one grasp with his fork, while everybody else only takes one. He pours oil and vinegar over the salad, which annoys the girls - as not everybody likes vinegar. He ignores them and pours on more dressing after having tasted it. He offers me some salad. He also offers me another piece of meat before he takes his fourth*

*piece. He gets a good deal of attention because he has lost his voice, yet even in whispering he manages to dominate the interaction around the table! When dinner is over, he disappears (it is his turn to do the dishes).*

Show-off behaviour is a way to get attention, and perhaps the difficulty in getting into the girls' circle may have reinforced this:

*Patrol members of the mixed patrol and some other kids sit round the dining table, talking about the hike. Pedro, from the boys' patrol, gives a dramatic account of their hike: they lost their way before the first post and messed around for two hours! He and João went back by car. He is telling his story to Ana, she comments, the others listen. Hugo seems to get tired of listening, snatches a scarf from a girl and initiates rough-and-tumble play with another boy. He also tries to interrupt by making choking sounds. But Pedro continues his story and shows Ana on the map where they went wrong. She studies the map and comments.*

As we saw in the clearing-up episode in which Hugo teased Teresa because she had to redo his dishwashing, Hugo's upper hand only lasted as long as Ana let him get away with it. The strong motherly figure and the absence of male backing seemed to be a barrier against the general mocking of women and female tasks we saw in the Slovak camp. In some ways, Ana could also be seen as defending Hugo's fragile masculinity, for example during the hike. For a long time during the cleaning-up episode, Teresa (who, quite understandably, became angry), got no support from Ana:

*Now Teresa has had enough. She goes to the tent, opens up the zipper and scolds the boys for not participating. Ana shouts at both parties to shut up! (...)The girls continue to work. Teresa is sulky and says she will not wash up after lunch since she also had to do Hugo's washing-up from yesterday. Ana ignores this.*

In the tent, when they were trying to avoid clearing up, what Hugo is doing is to teach little António 'to do masculinity'. António is a newcomer in this respect. He obediently did what Ana told him, as we saw, for instance, when he did the dishes, and when he accepted to stop hiking. But Ana was less lenient towards António. Perhaps she, as we saw with the Slovak girls, is able to affirm her power more easily over small boys? This again may fuel their motivation to be like the big boys, as we saw with Michal in the Slovak camp (and maybe António on the next camp?). In the interviews (in which Hugo and Luis took the lead), António echoed everything these big boys said. We also have an episode in which Ana was aggressive towards an older boy in the other patrol:

*While I am talking with José about the hike, Ana has arrived and sits down at the table. She says something teasingly to him about his English, and he runs towards her, so the plates fall from the table. (I also feel irritated about this ridicule of others, which I have seen so often from girls at this age, and wonder whether she has now destroyed my good communication with José). He does not return to me, but continues to talk with some boys about the hike.*

Hugo, on his side, seems not to be content with just getting a little free space within Ana's goodwill. What he is striving towards is to take over her authority. This was very visible on the hike, during which he constantly challenged Ana's authority, in spite of the fact that she let him do all the exciting tasks:

*Finally it is our turn to start the hike. The patrol is given the information, including written instructions and a map of the area. Ana reads the instructions aloud; Hugo studies the map. Quarrelling arises when she wants to see it. She is uncertain about the direction and goes back to ask the adult leader. (...) While we walk, Hugo continues to question all Ana's decisions about which route to take, but she calmly brushes him off. At a certain point when Ana stops, because she is uncertain as to which path to take, Hugo runs ahead in the direction he believes is right and sits down, demonstratively, 'to rest' while waiting for the others. António runs to join him (...) After they have completed the task at post 1, they are given a message to decode in order to find the next post. Fátima bends down so Ana can use her back as a writing desk. Ana asks for a pen, but António, who is the secretary, doesn't have one. He is rebuked: 'What use is a secretary without a pen?? What does he have pockets for??' Ana works on the decoding. Hugo stands next to her criticising her: she's using the wrong code! 'Well, what code would be right then?' Ana asks. Hugo: 'I don't know, but I know you are wrong!' Teresa tries to help Ana. Ana does not respond to Hugo; she tries another code and succeeds in decoding the message. Inês and António stand by, watching her.*

### 3.4 Personal gender: *Courageous boys and responsible girls*

In the Portuguese troop, both girls and boys seemed to be very content with their own gender and neither of them had anything to say in answer to the question of what was worst about being their gender:

*Question: Then, what do you think is worst about being a girl?*

*Teresa: I think there is nothing.*

*Question: There is nothing? You like being a girl and you never thought about being a boy?*

*Teresa: Hell, no!*

*Claúdia: It is better to be a girl. We pay more attention to things than boys do.*

*Inês: If I were a boy, I think I would prefer to be a girl.*

The girls described themselves as more responsible, attentive, and as having more character than boys. The youngest girl, Teresa, even found girls more powerful. They also described themselves as much more obedient than boys which they clearly held as a virtue. The boys, on their side, depicted themselves as strong, fast, courageous, and adventurous. The only criticism of their own gender that occurred to them was that boys were always joking.

These positive self-images seem, however, to be constructed in different ways. Although the girls had some critical remarks about boys' stubbornness and disobedience, they also gave them credit for certain qualities, such as being more easy-going, fun to be with, and good at some tasks that girls do not master as well (chopping wood, for instance). The boys had a much stricter dividing line between the genders. They seemed to keep up their masculine pride much more by differentiating themselves from girls:

*Question: So, what is the best thing about being a girl?*

*Paulo: Nothing [laughs].*

*António: I don't know.*

*Hugo: I'm not a girl.*

*Question: What is the worst thing about being a girl?*

*Luis: Sissy... to be a sissy.*

*Hugo: Always afraid...*

*Luis: Afraid, yes, that's it. They are more afraid. At best, they are more responsible.*

Whereas the girls generally gave more varied answers to the question about gender differences and agreed that there would always be exceptions to the stereotypes, the boys were more unanimous about the negative 'otherness' of girls. When the interviewer tried to introduce some nuances, the boys closed up:

*Question: But you know that there are patrols composed of boys who are also afraid...*

*Hugo: Not mine.*

*Luis: Mine neither.*

*Question: And there are patrols composed of girls who are not afraid...*

*Hugo: Ah... no.*

*Luis: I don't think I've ever met a girl patrol that was not afraid...*

*Hugo: It's true.*

The boys offered many detailed accounts about how slow and ridiculous the girls could be, which clearly functioned as a backdrop to their own assets:

*Hugo: I still remember one girl who asked why there was no TV in the tents [laughs].*

*Luis: But we can always manage to fix the antenna.*

*(...)*

*Luis: For instance, in a game where time counts, the girls want to stay there, answering the questions slowly so that everything is understood...*

*Hugo: And the reports... full of drawings.*



*Luis: The reports are full of drawings and all the details. While the boys want to complete the game as fast as they can.*

*Hugo: And perform well.*

*Luis: (...) The girls, they spend more time doing it. Drawing characters for everything to be understandable, and the leader may not understand and consider it a wrong answer... we always lose time, then.*

*Hugo: The girls are a bit fearful...they want to be at the back, don't they? And when they are patrol leaders, when we are passing through pinewoods, the boys have to go ahead. I don't care about it, but...*

*António: They are more... they are more afraid of things.*

*Paulo: I think girls are more afraid of things. For instance, a boy leader, if he is leading a boy patrol, he sees a dark road and he keeps walking normally, with no problems...*

The boys were clear about the areas in which they felt more competent than the girls. Boys are always better than girls in hikes (!), and boys' tasks are the difficult ones, such as pioneering, handling equipment, fetching wood, climbing trees. In their view, girls are better at organising, decorating and cleaning, while the activity of cooking was debatable:

*Question: Can you tell me what a girl's task is?*

*Hugo: Cooking... it is also a boy's task, isn't it? But girls, they always have that feminine touch.*

As we already learned, Hugo really liked to cook and even started to cook at home. But one is on thin ice when one tries to redefine things within a strict gender divide. During the interview we were able to follow an ongoing negotiation between the two oldest boys as to whether it was okay to say that one liked to cook when one is a boy:

*Luis: What do I like the most? Activities. Hikes, night exercises, ah... games with obstacles. Cooking is nice, you can eat it afterwards. I also like... I like to sleep.*

*(...)*

*Hugo: What do I like the most? Everything, there are the messages, cooking,...*

*Question: You like cooking?*

*Hugo: I like cooking. The meal it is not so good but (laughs)... they don't like it [pointing to Luis] He likes it too!*

*Question: He said before that he didn't like cooking.*

*Luis: But I like it... sometimes I like to cook (...) Even if I don't like it very much, sometimes... it is always needed, isn't it? Or we do not eat.*

The girls' defence of their gender was different. They seemed to be in a position where they, in spite of their positive self-image, had to convince the boys that they could be as good as them. They were not preoccupied with proving their femininity, but rather their competence in spite of their gender. They thought everybody should be - or actually was - equal, even if the boys did not always see it:

*Fátima: Girls can do what boys do, can't they? Maybe not so well, but they can do it.*

*Claúdia: There are things we know that boys do better than girls, but girls also have qualities that the boys do not have, and there is no impediment for the girls or the boys to be good patrol leaders.*

*Inês: I think that what the boys can do, the girls can also do or do even better.*

Interestingly enough, when it came to a description of what made a good patrol leader, it was actually the responsible and caring style that was mentioned by both genders. Here, we may also recognise the adult leaders' moral and social approach. Both boys and girls emphasised that a good PL was someone who was responsible, listened to others, cared for them, helped those who were new or have problems, and could make their authority felt without needing to shout. Nonetheless, the girls who were PLs placed greater emphasis on the caring aspect and on the need to understand others, while the boy PL stressed the unity of the patrol:

*Claúdia: A good patrol leader. Someone who is able to understand the others... who, when someone has a problem, within or outside the patrol, is able to do their best to solve it, or who tries to help.*

*Luis: We have to keep our patrol as united as possible.*

One girl thought that girls might be better as PLs as they are more responsible, while the others thought that either gender would do. The boys agreed that girls could be okay as leaders, even though 'we have to realise that the female sex is a little weaker', and that authority is more difficult to assert for a girl:

*Hugo: A male leader is stronger, can control the elements better and ask them what they want. The girls don't. They get nervous easily, they start shouting [laughing]. But everything is all right, everything fits in. It is just the way they deal with others, because they are girls.*

From the girls' perspective, the problem was the boys' disobedience:

*Claúdia: Yes, but if the Patrol leader is a girl, maybe the boys tend to... not to disobey but... if the girl is not a real leader the boys start ...*

Both girls and boys found girls more obedient, and boys more unruly. Patrol leaders of both genders saw their authority undermined by boys who, in the words of one of the boys' patrol leaders, wanted to 'do things in their own way and then everything ends up wrong'.

### **3.5 Gender conflicts: *Fussy girls and unruly boys***

Obedience seems to have a gender dimension in Portugal: you do femininity by being obedient, and masculinity by being unruly. This dimension also seems to be central to what I have depicted as the ongoing gender battle. The boys ridiculed the girls who had to do everything in such a neat, orderly and unbelievably slow way. At camp, the boys told me about fussy girls:

*PA José says he thinks girls are very bossy. They treat boys as if they were children and think they, themselves, are grown-up. And the boys are much better cooks than the girls! He talks about an episode – it was raining and the girls just sat in tents giving the boys cooking orders. And when they came out to eat they criticised the food! They are also fussy about everything having to be so clean. And then there is this girl, Teresa, who is just crazy! She hit Luis in the previous camp, just because he fooled around a little while washing up! By coincidence, Teresa passes by just at this moment, and the boys yell at her.*

Just as with Dasha in Russia, here, too, it was the most self-assertive girl who annoyed the boys the most, and she did not get any support from the other girls, either. But on a more general note, the Portuguese boys also found female control tiresome. They described their wish to escape it and keep their freedom, and their descriptions also bring to mind the Russian boys' complaints about having to do all the hard work:

*Hugo: The boys arrive and they want to do something simple. The girls don't. They impose their little opinion – no, I have to do this, and this, and this. (...)*

*Luis: Once, at a camp, it was in my second year as an Explorer Scout, I was in a patrol composed totally of girls. It was during a hike. When someone was tired, they... it is different, they help each other but they get a bit nervous.*

*Hugo: Sometimes they cry.*

*Luis: No, that never happened.*

*Hugo: It happened to me.*

*Luis: When we arrived at the campsite, we started pioneering. They did almost all the pioneering, and I was the only boy, 11 years old, and I had to carry on my back all the wood they needed for pioneering, 5 cm wide. I had to ask other boys from another patrol for help and they did help me, and the girls did all the pioneering. But there is a difference. They did it all in a very perfect way. The boys do not. When the girls confront a problem, they make it larger than it really is.*

Another side of this female power is that it also keeps the boys out of certain areas. In Luis' case, he was not allowed to pioneer, but only to fetch the wood. Another area was cooking. In this troop we find the only boys who really wanted to cook, but it was not so easy to get to the pots:

*Hugo: I like cooking. When I'm with a girl I'm not allowed to cook.*

*Question: Why?*

*Hugo: Because they always want to take care of everything.*

Because of all these problems with girls – on the one hand, their strictness, on the other hand, their weakness - the boys preferred single-gendered patrols:

*Question: What do you think about patrols composed only of boys, or mixed? Which do you prefer?*

*Luis: We like only boys most.*

*Hugo: Only boys.*

*Luis: Sometimes they are more rebellious, but I prefer only boys. Mixed? It's bad. (...) Sometimes when we want to do something, we want to go in one direction, we think it is better, and then the girls are afraid, because it starts getting dark, and it can rain, and they don't know how to find shelter.*

*Hugo: And if it is mixed patrols, when we have to decorate the patrol corner, they like more girls' things, you know. The seats have to be all well painted. The walls have to be more...*

*Question: And that is 'to be more girlish'?*

*Hugo: Yes. The boys don't... they like simple things, if this is okay, it is okay.*

*Luis: If we have time, and feel like painting it, we paint it... if we don't, then we will not do it. We don't want to lose time with something that is okay. The girls don't have enough time to do everything they must do.*

The girls, on their side, found the boys rather unruly, stubborn and a bit stupid. They did not obey orders; they wanted to do everything in their own way. The motherly tone is clear:

*Question: In a mixed patrol what irritates you about the boys?*

*Inês: To give an order and they don't follow it. They just stand there looking at us.*

*Fátima: Let me see... maybe their stubbornness in saying that it was like this and that - and it wasn't really.*

*Teresa: Sometimes they do not behave well, they make the kinds of jokes that are not so nice. Act like clowns and so on.*

For Cláudia, mixed patrols have some problematic sides, not only because the boys will not obey a girl leader, but also because of the conceitedness of the dramatic masculinity:

*Question: Do you think mixed patrols are better?*

*Cláudia: Yes, but... if the patrol leader is a girl, maybe the boys tend to... not to disobey but... if the girl is not a real leader the boys start ...(...) For instance, when we are in a patrol, if we have an idea, or a point of view, and the boys say that their point of view is the right one, then if there are more boys than girls in the patrol, the boy is always right (...) They are always implying that we don't know anything, that this is not the way, that this is not done this way, this kind of stuff...(...) For instance, when we are quietly doing something, sweeping, and then the boys think that, ah... that's for girls, so you do the sweeping (...)*

*Cláudia: I think there are things that can be improved. Because I think that boys feel superior to girls, and I think that is something that has no place inside Scouting, does it?*

Another girl said that girl patrols are better organised. Still, all the girls preferred mixed patrols because boys cheer up the 'responsible mothers' with their easy-going attitudes, and because the girls acknowledged the complementarity between the genders:

*Inês: It is like this. Usually, boys are more fun. If we are hiking and everyone is in low spirits, they cheer us up, they help us, and stuff. The girls may be better able to do other things. Maybe the boys are more able to do pioneering or they are stronger. The girls are better able to do other kinds of things.*

*Question: To do what?*

*Inês: I wouldn't say cooking because I think that is the same...*

What can be done about the situation?

*Teresa: Ordering them to help.*

*Question: And they help?*

*Teresa: Yes.*

*Claúdia: For instance, sometimes, when we are camping, try to change the tasks that are for boys and give them to the girls, maybe in this way we could show them that they are not the only ones who know how to do it.*

And the boys actually agreed that there should not be any gender division of tasks because otherwise they would never learn how to do the things they were not good at. Here, the Portuguese boys had the strongest attitude in favour of gender equality of all the boys in the study – perhaps because the household chores were connected to a powerful position, and not only to servicing as we saw in Slovakia?

*Hugo: If it is different things... boys will do this and girls will do that... girls will never learn how to do what they don't know how to do...*

*Question: And the boys...?*

*Hugo: It is the same.*

*Question: Do you all agree with that?*

*ALL: Yes.*

*Luis: The boy can teach the girl and the girl can teach the boy, and they will both learn how to do it both ways...*

#### **4. Comments on the Portuguese case**

The Portuguese case was dominated by the ongoing gender battle, which may be due to the specific age composition in the mixed patrol. However, as was also seen in the attitudes of the boys' patrol and was expressed by both genders in the interviews, it may also be related to what I have depicted as the ongoing Portuguese gender battle about who is in power, and the confusing situation of changing notions of gender. *Structurally*, the girls' world and the boys' world appear distinctly different in atmosphere and organisation. When alone, the boys had to do their own cooking, but lacked the skill. When together with girls, the younger boy complied, while the older boy tried to escape from kitchen duties, with gender quarrels in the wake. On the *symbolic level*, however, the power balance between masculinity and femininity appeared more open than in Slovakia. The masculinity was more of the rhetoric kind, and was kept in control by strict motherliness. On the other hand, this motherliness may also support the illusionary masculinity, as we saw during the hike. Regarding *interaction*, much seemed to be dedicated to the fight for power. However, the younger the boys, the stricter the girls. The boys fought, with no other consideration to gain authority. On the *personal level*, we again see the two worlds as distinct. Both boys and girls were very content with themselves, and very discontent with the other gender, but the boys more so than the girls. The boys were much more active in their border work than the girls were and, combined with their rhetoric, one gets the impression of a more fragile masculinity than femininity. *Gender conflicts* were connected to this fight for power, and both found that the other gender dominates. However, while the boys' approach was to look down on the girls, the girls fought more for the recognition of their own competence.

In some ways the gender battle indicates an unsettled model of equality, on the other hand, the different worlds of boys and girls signal strong complementary gender cultures. And in spite of the forceful motherly role, we also see the gender hierarchy in the way the girls were more understanding of the needs of boys than vice versa.

Seen in relation to the norm of *parity of participation*, one should consider the following problems of *redistribution* and *recognition*:

#### *Redistribution:*

- There is a *mismatch* between the leaders' perception of complete equality and the actual gender-complementary practices. The leaders seem to be very preoccupied with values and ideals, and this may lead to blurring the perception of what is going on in practice. Ideals do not necessarily describe practice. Equal opportunities should prove their existence in the real world, not in books. Could this mismatch be connected to the fact that girls seem to give up Scouting more often than boys? And how about the class divisions in Portugal – how do they reveal themselves in the practice of Scouting?
- Both boys and girls *feel restricted by the other gender* in the work tasks that they are allowed to do. Boys want to cook more, girls want to do some of the more tough or exciting tasks. How could the leaders help solve this problem?
- The Portuguese case also indicates that *age and gender may interact differently for boys and girls*. A girl PL with younger boys is something different than a boy PL with younger girls. Big sister – little brother constitutes a different dynamic to big brother – little sister. In what ways could such matters be addressed, for instance through training courses?

#### *Recognition:*

- The first point would be for the leaders to be able to *talk about gender in an analytical way!* In the leaders' group, some adhere to an ideal of gender equality, others to gender complementarity, and yet others have experienced discrimination against women, while at the same time gender is a non-topic, or something that elicits quarrelling. In view of what the research assistant said about the situation of the gender question in the association, they may actually reflect the situation at large.
- The *relationship between gender differences and individual differences* could be scrutinised more. The leaders do not acknowledge actual gender differences, while, at the same time, they include them where they do not exist - for instance, when they describe Hugo as a big, strong boy when, in fact, he is smaller than all the girls (at least in the camp).
- How can *the different worlds of boys and girls be addressed* – and what would it take to *bring them together*? Is the ongoing fight really necessary? Some points:
- Can the *boys' more fragile identity be supported in non-stereotypical ways*? Can they learn other ways to prove themselves as worthy other than by being the best, and by underrating the girls? Perhaps support in things they do not master well, but want to master would help (training in cooking for instance!). The girls' and the adults' motherly support to illusionary masculinity will probably just make things worse in the long run, and also contribute to the gender battle.
- A girl patrol leader seems to have a *tougher job in gaining authority* than a boy leader. As far as I could see, she was left alone with this problem. Perhaps a more attentive approach and some kind of active support from the leaders would have helped her? Who could support a girl like Teresa in her fight for equal treatment?

## 7. DOING GENDER IN DENMARK

### 1. Gender in Danish society

#### 1.1 From women's issues to gender politics

The Nordic countries have two assets that distinguish them from the other three countries in this study, and that contribute to framing the question about gender and equal opportunities differently. One is that these countries have never had the experience of a totalitarian regime. No state has ever ordered Nordic women either to take up paid work (as in the former Communist countries), nor to become a subdued housewife (as in Salazar's Portugal). As a consequence, the route to paid labour for women was their own choice.

The other asset is that the Nordic countries are among the richest in the world. High taxes and a large social budget have made it possible for the states to provide social conditions such as relatively cheap, high quality day care, parental leave with pay that comes close to a full salary for most people, special benefits for single parents, and measures directed against gender discrimination in the labour market. Altogether, these factors have made it possible for women to combine paid work and motherhood, without being dependent on a breadwinner. Women's labour was also an important condition for the expansion of the welfare state from the 1960s onwards, as they were the ones who filled all the new public service jobs. Thus, the relationship between women and the Nordic welfare states has often been described as a 'social contract'.<sup>158</sup> The state has been perceived more as an ally than as an enemy, something also seen in the special Nordic expressions of 'the woman-friendly state' and 'state feminism' – which indicate the interaction between gender politics from above, and political demands and mobilisation of women from below.<sup>159</sup> As a consequence, their participation in the work force is almost as high as in Russia and, today, the birth rate is among the highest in Europe,<sup>160</sup> even though the age for giving birth to the first child has risen to almost 30 years, and the tie between reproduction and marriage has slackened. Some researchers have pointed to the irony that the state actually acts as the new 'spouse' on which women are as financially dependent as their foremothers were on their patriarchal husbands. But a close relationship between the state and the people is a general trait in the Nordic countries, and up until now this was seen as a step forward compared to the old, privatised, forms of dependency.<sup>161</sup>

However, in this 'paradise for women', as the Nordic countries often are called, traditional gender structures are still visible. In the words of the Norwegian political scientist Helga Hernes:

*Political culture in Scandinavia is characterised by an obligation to work for social equality. This has not led to equality between women and men, but it has reduced the relative distance between them to a higher degree than in other parts of the world.<sup>162</sup>*

Nordic women hold the same share of higher education and work as men, but the choices of both genders are rather conventional. In contrast to what we saw in Russia and Slovakia, technical education is almost entirely chosen by men, and areas such as medicine and economics have only recently become more gender-balanced. The gender segregation in the work market is both vertical and horizontal. Women have been admitted to lower leading positions, but for top leaders the situation is comparable to Eastern Europe, except for political positions. The gender gap in pay is approximately 20%. A special Nordic characteristic has been the high percentage of women working part-time, but the tendency is towards full-time jobs. Today 18% of Danish women with paid employment work less than 30 hours a week.

The traditional gender structures also prevail in relation to the use of rights to parental leave. Although leave is open to both parents, mothers take it to a much greater extent than fathers. Close to 60% of Danish fathers take two weeks of parental leave in connection with childbirth, but only just over 20% take more leave than this.<sup>163</sup> A new one-year leave (introduced in 1994)

<sup>158</sup> Important sources for the information on Danish and Nordic gender structure and gender culture given in this chapter were: Bergqvist, C. e. a., Ed. (1999). *Equal Democracies? Gender and Politics in the Nordic Countries*. Oslo, Scandinavian University Press. Equality (1999). *Equality in Denmark. Towards a New Millennium*. Danish National response to UN Questionnaire prior to Beijing +5. Copenhagen, Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Equal Status Council. Christensen, A.-D. and B. Siim (2001). *Køn, demokrati og modernitet (Gender, democracy, and modernity)*. København, Hans Reitzels forlag.

<sup>159</sup> Hernes, H. (2001). Hvor kvinnevennlige er de skandinaviske velferdsstatene? *Kvinneforskning*.

<sup>160</sup> Danish women's participation in the work force is 47%, and the birth rate is 1.8.

<sup>161</sup> Hernes (2001).

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Maternity leave in Denmark is now 52 weeks with approx. normal salary. 18 weeks are for the mother, 2 weeks for the

to take care of older children is almost exclusively used by women. In principle, however, family obligations are seen as a joint venture between men and women, and much political attention is today directed towards involving men more in child care. In the Beijing +5 report, the Danish Equality Status Council writes:

*Methods to improve gender equality have changed from focusing on laws, regulations and women's rights, priority is now given to changing gender stereotypes. The public debate is concerned with such issues as the results and 'profitability' of working towards gender equality. The debate has changed from a women-oriented to a gender-oriented perspective. Involving men in achieving gender equality has become an important tool.<sup>164</sup>*

Gender equality is still work in progress, but it is fair to say that, today, motherhood does not present a barrier for Nordic women either with regard to paid work or to political participation. The political participation of Nordic women is the highest in the world. In Denmark, 39% of the members of parliament and 28% of the ministers are women.<sup>165</sup> As in the other Nordic countries, gender equality between men and women has been implemented politically since the mid-1970s by a set of gender equality laws, gender equality institutions, a special board for discrimination complaints, and other political measures to ensure the improvement of gender equality in practice. For instance, the kind of job discrimination experienced by Russian and Slovak women is illegal in Denmark and violations are regularly taken to court individually or by the strong trade unions. It is not legal to mention the gender of potential applicants in job advertisements, and there are politically ratified guidelines against sex discrimination in advertising. The minister for family affairs is, as a separate obligation, the minister for gender equality. After mainstreaming became the dominant model, all other ministers also have the obligation to implement gender equality in their laws and policies.

Compared to other countries in the Nordic family, however, Denmark is not the 'best in class'. Work participation and day care provision is high, but the improvement of women's political representation came later there than in Sweden, Norway and Finland, and controversial issues such as sexualised violence and sexual harassment have some problems reaching the political agenda.<sup>166</sup> The inclination to use legal measures in order to assure gender equality is weaker in Denmark than in the other Nordic countries. The rejection of the father's quota of the parental leave, which in the other Nordic countries has proven to be an outstanding political measure to get fathers involved in child care, is an example in case. The Danes often appear as the 'anarchists' of the well-ordered Nordic societies: they are more sceptical about 'experts' and state intervention in everyday life than the other countries are, but strong on political movements and action for equal rights. This 'bottom-up' approach gives the Danish gender situation a somewhat paradoxical character as progressive measures and attitudes of the state and political movements often go hand in hand with unnoticed gender stereotypes in everyday thinking. While, for instance, most Danes agree that gender discrimination still exists in work organisations, measures such as gender quotas for leading positions are met with much more scepticism than in the other Nordic countries.<sup>167</sup> Another example is the equivocal character of the Danish liberal attitude to sex and pornography.<sup>168</sup> These attitudes have, on the one hand, increased social acceptance of the freer behaviour of women but, on the other hand, have also contributed to maintaining sexual gender stereotypes and the Danish 'relaxed' attitude to the sexualisation of women in the public space.

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father and 32 weeks can be shared as the parents wish. Norway and Sweden have a more active father-policy than Denmark: in these two countries 4 weeks (in addition to the 2 weeks in connection with the birth) are exclusively for the father. This means that if a father does not use his quota, the family will lose it. 80% of all fathers use their 2 + 4 weeks quota, and this has also led to a small rise in the number of men who take even larger proportions of the parental leave.

<sup>164</sup> Equality in Denmark (1999):9.

<sup>165</sup> This is, however a dramatic decrease from the last government in which 43% of the ministers were women, a number equivalent to the present situation in the other Nordic countries. The 2001 parliamentary election in Denmark brought a neoliberal-conservative government into power, and this government seems to be much less preoccupied with gender politics and equality politics in general. For instance, the newly established Information Centre for Gender Equality (Videnscenter for ligestilling) was closed down in the spring of 2002, together with the Council for Ethnic Equality and a great many other public councils and committees. The new government has also introduced a much stricter policy towards refugees and immigrants and has cut back on financial support to culture and education. It remains to be seen to what extent this new political situation signals a more permanent political shift in Denmark, which would thus separate the country from the common Nordic heritage of Social-Democratic values of equality and solidarity (still prevalent in the other Nordic countries), although these welfare states are also under increasing pressure from the general neo-liberal currents of globalisation.

<sup>166</sup> Bergqvist (1999).

<sup>167</sup> Christensen (2001).

<sup>168</sup> Pornography was legalised in 1969, but child pornography was criminalised again in 1980. There are more restrictions on pornography in the other Nordic countries.

## 1.2 Danish ambiguities

As in Portugal, women's issues in Denmark are conceived as a question of individual rights, and not as a part of family policy. However, more attention is paid to areas that are relevant to women. Violence against women, for instance, is not seen as a private family issue, but as a human rights violation against women, and shelters<sup>169</sup> have been provided for women and children to escape violent men. Another difference compared to Portugal is that universal rights are not seen as an alternative to social rights. The Danish social policy from 1970 onwards has had as its premise the right and obligation of all individuals to self-provision through paid labour, and the family policy model has had equality between two breadwinners as the norm. Family policy has not been seen as something specifically directed towards women (as in the 'protective rights' in the Communist states or family policies in other Western European countries). Women are treated as individual wage earners, and social security and tax systems focus on individuals, not on families and households. This has given Danish, as well as the other Nordic women, an economic independence that is unique, but has also contributed to the erosion of traditional family structures. Today 50% of all children are born out of wedlock – but most of them with cohabiting parents – and the divorce rate is higher than in the Catholic countries studied (Slovakia and Portugal), but not as high as in Russia.<sup>170</sup> This erosion of traditional family values can, however, also be seen as a profound cultural change in the understanding of what 'a family' is. Most Danish children (85%) live in relatively stable families with more than one parent and often also siblings – but their parents may not be married, and not all family members are necessarily their biological relatives. Joint custody, recomposed families, and single-parent families are today socially accepted family forms. The partnership of homosexual couples is formalised,<sup>171</sup> and the traditional roles of men and women in heterosexual families are highly contested. The East European notion of 'women's two roles' (mother/housewife and wage earner), compared to men's single role as a breadwinner, is practically non-existent in Denmark today, and the idea that it is embarrassing for a man to push a baby carriage or carry a child would be close to incomprehensible to young Danes. While the Russian, Slovak and Portuguese research assistants respond to the question of what constitutes 'a good woman' and 'a good man' by depicting the figures of the loving mother/wife and the stable breadwinner, the Danish assistant describes them as almost identical and equally overworked:

*A good woman is a woman who can handle it all: being a career woman, taking care of her family and still have time left for both friends and taking part in the local democracy. She has her feet firmly planted on the ground.*

*A good man can do the same thing as a woman: he can handle both his career and still take care of his family (cleaning, cooking, etc.). He has time for sports and friends. Husband and wife are equals.*

A bad woman is one who neglects all these things and cannot handle her own children, whereas a bad man is one who does not share the housework. While this may be somewhat exaggerated, considerable changes have actually taken place in Danish homes in the last 30 years: women still do more housework but during this period<sup>172</sup> men have taken over an average of 10 hours of work in the house per week.

This situation in which care for family and children is not culturally conceived as a special duty for women, but often still is in practice, makes the Danes somewhat uneasy about the topic of gender equality. In contrast to Slovakia and Portugal, where the norm of gender equality is an ideal or an abstract norm of little practical consequence (as the fundamental difference between male and female roles is not really challenged), the constant challenge of these roles in the Danish context also makes it more legitimate to question the norm itself. When is enough,

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<sup>169</sup> These shelters – of which there are now 36 in Denmark – are a good example of the interaction between political actions from below and gender politics from above. They were started on a voluntary basis by feminist activists in the 1970s and are today partly overtaken and financed by the state.

<sup>170</sup> The weakening of the institution of marriage is also connected to the fact that Denmark is a very secularised country. Although a majority are formal members of the Protestant State Church, religion only plays a minor role. It is not a coincidence that the Danish Scouts in this study tell us that they feel they must legitimise their membership in the KFUM (YMCA) to people outside who believe that in such an organisation 'you just pray all the time'.

<sup>171</sup> The present debates related to assuring equal rights of homosexuals include such issues as free insemination, legal adoption and whether the formalisation of such partnerships should be allowed to take place as a church wedding. As in other countries, the attitude towards homosexuality in Denmark varies somewhat between urban and more rural areas.

<sup>172</sup> According to time-use statistics from 1994, Danish women over the age of 15 spend 18.5 hours per week on housework, while men spend 14 hours. 60% of Danish women and 55% of Danish men live in families in which each spouse does between 25% and 75% of the housework. (Equality in Denmark (1999)).



enough? When does gender equality become a moralistic straitjacket, and at what point have women gained so much power that it is actually the boys and the men who become the oppressed group? This mixture of questioning the norm, and the perceived obligation to follow it up in practice, is also seen in the response from the Danish adult leaders to our question about gender equality:

*Question: What do concepts such as gender equality and equal opportunities mean to you?*

*TA(f): The young people should be allowed to do what they want. It is OK to push them a bit in the opposite direction of how they normally behave, but the way they want to be – whether it is the traditional gender role or not – they should be allowed to be like that. We should not overdo it, so it is only boys who cook and only girls who chop wood – that is not equality.*

*TA(m): That is compulsion. It's pleasure that is the motivation.*

*TA(f): But the activities should preferably match both genders. We used to play a lot of this rather tough game we named 'the violent ball game', simply because we found it hilarious. But the new girls did not find it wildly amusing – we have discussed that a lot.*

*TA(m): We have changed the focus.*

*TA(f): We stopped the game for half a year, out of consideration for these girls, so they could do activities they liked instead, so they could experience success.*

*TL(m): The question of gender equality is a difficult one. It has to do with your fundamental values, treating boys and girls in an equivalent way. But there should be room for differences between people, too.*

*TA(f): They have a different approach to things, we cannot change that; it may even be biologically conditioned.*

*TA(f2): They should not be pressed into any kind of role.*

*TL(m): I agree. Even though we wear uniforms here, we are not soldiers (...) It may be that more girls than boys cook when we are at camp, but this does not necessarily have to do with traditional gender roles, because there are also many men who cook today.*

What the Danish leaders expressed here is the mismatch between norm and reality. On the one hand, it was a strong norm that nobody should be pushed into any kind of role, e.g. gender roles, on the other hand, gender in the real world nonetheless seemed to be at work in the way men and women, girls and boys behaved, and this gave rise to the thought that it might be biological after all. There are basically four kinds of reactions to this dilemma which are frequently seen in the public debate in Denmark, and which are also present in our material: one is the one chosen by our research assistant, who insisted that equality *was accomplished*, including in the real world:

*At all ages boys and girls are equal in Denmark (...) There are no big differences between the ways boys and girls act within their groups. There used to be typical boys' or girls' relationships, but as the genders become more equal, the differences in intra-gender relations disappear.*

A second reaction, seen in the leaders' comments above, is to explain different behaviour as an *expression of individual choice*, not gender: people choose work tasks according to their personal inclination, and the point is not whether this resembles a traditional gender role or not, but whether it is an expression of free choice or not. One of the young TA(f2)s said:

*OK, it is true that at our last leaders' weekend I was the one who cooked all the meals, but that was just because I was tired. Generally, in the group, I think we do what we feel like doing, and not because we feel obliged to do it. When I, for instance, say I can do the shopping list, it is simply because I feel like doing it.*

And, as the TL said, when it is often men who do the cooking in families today, is it still a gendered activity? When different behaviour is understood as an expression of individual choice, it is the strict norm of gender equality that suddenly appears as the straitjacket, and as something that implies uniformity. The TL(m) said: *I think it is fine that there are differences. We should not expect either children or grown-ups to be exactly alike.* Such straitjacketing would also spoil the fun, and it should be a pleasure to do things! So a third - very Danish - reaction lies right ahead, that all this fuss about gender roles is rather *ridiculous*:

*TA(f2): It appears so ludicrous to throw a schedule on them, like, listen Maria, today you have to chop wood, tomorrow make the fire, and on Thursday you must do the dishes...*

*TA(m): You know, there are more interesting things in the world than having a discussion about dishwashing, aren't there?*

The fourth and last reaction, which we shall discuss further in the next section, is to try to *counteract the stereotypical patterns* in real life, either by intervening in the division of work or by choosing more gender-balanced activities, as the leaders also mentioned above.

No matter which response is chosen to the dilemma between norm and reality, it goes for them all that it is not viable today in the Nordic countries to talk about boys and girls, women and men, without taking this norm of gender equality into account, even when you talk about gender-stereotypical practices, and may defend them as individual choices or as nothing to fuss about. This was very clearly also seen among the 14-15-year-old Scouts we interviewed in this project. Although they reproduced many of the same gender stereotypes as young people from the other countries, they did so with more self-awareness. Perhaps this, more than the actual practice, was the biggest difference compared to the other young people we interviewed, to whom gender appeared as more or less natural, albeit quite tiresome in some respects. The Danish young people talked about gender norms as something that was - and should be - an object for social change. The following reflections on unequal gender practice could hardly have been expressed by any boys in this study other than the Danish ones, and it is interesting that they actually saw gender roles as a matter of free choice to a much lower degree than the leaders:

*There is only one girl in my patrol and it is still a bit male-dominated. She takes the female roles, together with the younger members, or whoever feels like it. But she has the female roles, like, if you look back in time, what women did before. Of course I sometimes do it myself, but then I force some of the others to help me! The division of work is actually a bit male-dominated. (15 year-old boy, PL)*

*We still live under this male chauvinism, rights are not equal, gender equality doesn't exist yet, at least not fully. Well, it does officially, but of course not in reality when you look at people's opinions...and many of them are paid less than men. That must be a really difficult thing to live with. (14 year-old boy)*

### **1.3 Do as you please**

Family bonds are more individualised in Denmark than in our other countries. Family members care for each other emotionally, and they will meet for family occasions, but the practical and financial obligations for old people and young adults are, to a large extent, taken over by the state.<sup>173</sup> Old people get different kinds of support from the community, and young people are entitled to study grants from the state, which, together with some part-time work, makes it possible for them to live on their own. Thus, it is quite normal for young people to leave home after they have finished high school.

The norm of upbringing in Denmark is liberal and child-centred, but also with a clear emphasis on rationality and responsibility. A central value is not obedience, but rather to be able to form your own opinion and act in a socially responsible way. The Danish research assistant writes that Danish children are always given a rational explanation for rules they must follow, and should learn from their own experiences if they do not follow them. Children are widely involved in family decisions - they learn to argue for their rights and negotiate from an early age, but are also expected to cooperate and take others' needs and interests into consideration. Physical punishment of children is forbidden by law and is, in most cases, replaced by explanations and negotiations. This combination of active participation and individual rights is also firmly rooted in the Nordic version of democracy, where influence, active participation, solidarity and equality are central values, whereas authority, elitism and hierarchies are looked upon with great suspicion.

Most people perceive different norms of upbringing for girls and boys as unacceptable, and often also as non-existent, even though statistics on housework do actually indicate that girls help a good deal more than boys do.<sup>174</sup> Our research assistant wrote:

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<sup>173</sup> Cf. the notion of 'pure relations' discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>174</sup> A girl, aged 7-15, who is a single child in a two-parent family, does on average 2 hours and 17 minutes of weekly

*Kids are equal, boys and girls are allowed to do the same things, and can do the same things. There are no differences in the norms of what girls and boys are allowed to do.*

The perception that the equal treatment of girls and boys has been accomplished may, together with the strong cultural value on the individual's right to decide for him/herself, underpin the view that the differences that exist come from the children's own inclinations, not from adults or the gender system.

The Scout leaders did see some differences between girls and boys, but were not sure whether to interpret this in terms of gender or in terms of individuality, or both, and whether such differences should be seen as an enrichment or as a problem, or both. In their experience, boys were keener on active and wild activities. Girls were quieter, or they needed more time to feel safe with the wild activities – but this could also have to do with the fact that girls were a small minority in the troop, they said. Girls seemed to think a bit longer than boys who just threw themselves into things. While boys were intent on the activities and could act somewhat egotistically, the girls were described as having a more social and relational perspective on things, and as having a soothing role between big and small boys:

*TA(f1): I think that the girls we have here are very committed to a sense of community, and maybe not always as committed to a particular project in the same way as some of the boys are. Maybe they don't feel that the main thing is to do the concrete work on our huge pioneering constructions, but rather just to be involved in the process. I think it appears like that. They may have a more long-sighted way of thinking. I believe that a broader goal for them is simply participating.*

*TL(m): They are in the middle, they have sort of a peace-keeping role, they want everybody to feel good, and have an integrating role here among all those big, terrible, boys and the smaller ones. Such as: Are we now taking enough care of little Peter?*

Girls mature earlier and it was therefore best if there were some older boys in the troop so they were not just confined to the boring role of big sisters.

The leaders saw the same differences amongst themselves: some male leaders had a lot of wild ideas, while the female leaders were more down to earth. Generally they found it positive that they had different approaches to things, but the women seemed to be a little more sceptical than the men about the idea that this was determined by gender:

*TA(m): To take a few examples. I'm a bit high-flying and get a lot of ideas, without really considering what it takes to implement them. And there, typically, the female way is to think: Is it safe? Is it viable at all? Last year we were only three men here, as leaders, and then it was like, let's do it! And then afterwards, we find out what it really takes. It wasn't necessary to argue so much for it, such as this is how we can do it, and, yes, we must take care of this and that. Now, with the women here [laughs], I apparently have to argue that it is safe, I have to fight, to explain, to elaborate. They have a different approach to planning and doing an activity. And it is not bad, because it should be safe, and sometimes it even becomes better, I must admit.*

*TA(f1): I don't really know whether it has to do with gender, it also depends on your personality. It could have been me who wanted to build that oil-rig next to the church tower, and TA(m) who was the secretary and had to do this minute-by-minute programme. It is just the way a working group functions. If TA(m) takes the role of coming up with ideas, then I'm happy to be the one who writes them down on a piece of paper. Somebody has to do that.*

*TA(f2): It could depend on gender, but more often, I think, on the person, who is the one who has the ideas and who is the one to pull them down a bit.*

*TA(f1): But maybe we are a little more like mother-hens.*

*TL(m): I think it is both, there are some typical gender role things, and some individual things.*

When it comes to gender, more is at stake for the women. On the one hand, it is degrading to be reduced to an oppressed gender, thus they were eager to emphasise that what they did was out of personal inclination, not gender. On the other hand, as women, they were the ones who

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housework, while a boy in the same situation does 27 minutes. (Equality in Denmark (1999))

would gain from more equal opportunities; they were also more involved in the discussion about what to do with traditional gender patterns. While the men agreed that traditional gender patterns of work did exist in their camps, they also seemed to be fairly content with the situation as long as everybody could master all the tasks. They relied more on the principle of the autonomy of the patrol, while the women were more clear-sighted about what actually happens in the patrols:

*TA(m): The main thing is to solve the task. We don't say: Henrik, do this or that. We say: Hey, see to it that dinner is cooked! And then they know that this implies finding wood, chopping wood, starting the fire, cooking, etc. And we do not control whether they make a cheeky deal so the girls do the dishes and the boys make the fire.*

*TA(f1): Well, I could intervene if these two girls are standing in the kitchen for the third day in a row. I may ask why this boy from their patrol is just hanging around doing nothing, and then: 'Well, we made a deal that he should just chop the wood and that's done already'. I think we realise that this is how it works quite often: that they make these deals. We do notice that! (...) And some of them are actually not capable of making a fire because they always just peeled the potatoes. Gender roles or not, but a Scout should, in fact, be able to do all these things.*

The troop leader agreed that one probably ought to be more aware of such patterns, but it was the two female leaders who used such expressions as 'pushing them a bit', 'kicking them out of their roles', 'sometimes twisting them out of their roles', 'giving them new input'. TA(f1), in particular, was in favour of trying to break away from traditional ways of working and said that they also worked quite consciously in this way among the adults. It was a way of establishing a broader sense of community – across gender, age and groups. The adults may function indirectly as a model for gender relations, but she still thought they could be more conscious about this in the troop, too. She did, however, also agree with TA(f2) that it should not be overdone either. Individuality and free choice must be respected:

*TA(f2): I see it as a challenge, but if we have kicked them several times, I'm not against Maria cooking 60% of the time, if that is what she wants, as long as she is also kicked sometimes to find an axe and chop some wood. She shouldn't use it as an excuse: 'Well, I always do the cooking and the potato-peeling'. (...) I think it is OK to kick them and try to throw them in a different direction, but if they keep crawling back to the old track, which we have kicked them away from several times, and keep kicking them away regularly, then we are working against their personal nature, and I cannot see any point in that either. But it is OK to give them some new input, see that they get this input and become inspired to do other things.*

The men were quicker to raise the biological argument: boys are stronger than girls, girls may become good at chopping wood, but never better than the boys, and this made it a natural thing for boys to do and a way of confirming their self-identity. But they also admitted that training could be a part of it. The TA(m) was most preoccupied with not spoiling the fun of things. When asked about what could be done to improve gender relations, he answered:

*I don't think we can become much better [everybody laughs]. There may come some grand report about what we should try to do. But when it comes down to practice, and I know I have said it ten times now, but it is a question of what you feel like doing. And if you don't feel like chopping wood - you can't make them do it. They do what they feel like. We shouldn't pressure them, like, just because you are a girl you have to learn to chop wood.*

The problem of what to do with necessary tasks that nobody liked, however, was never raised in the debate, either by the male or the female leaders.

All of the leaders preferred mixed groups and talked warmly about how it gave a broader base and more diversity – but when asked about whether they would prefer only girls or only boys if they had to choose, the hidden asymmetry between the two gendered approaches revealed itself very clearly. While the men chose boys immediately, the women clearly felt obliged to choose the girls, and with much ambivalence. Maybe the unpleasantness of this fact was what made the women rebuff the question at first:

*Question: If you had to choose, would you prefer to be a leader of only boys or only girls?*

*TA(f1): That is an absurd question... (everybody laughs) Are you asking whether we prefer mixed or segregated groups?*

*Question: No, I know you prefer mixed groups, but if you had to be segregated, what would you choose then?*

*TA (f1): Hypothetically?*

*TL(m): I have no doubt, I would choose the boys.*

*TA(m): So would I, for personal reasons.*

*Question: Why?*

*TL(m): Because it gets more wild then, and I actually enjoy that. I'm also quite OK with less wild things, but if I had to work with girls alone it would be girls' gossiping*

*TA(m): More sedate.*

*TA(f1): That's for sure.*

*TA(f2): Well, I think I would choose the girls, but I'm not sure I could stand being a leader then. I would choose them automatically, I think, but I would hate it, I would get fed up with girls' gossiping and sort of 'cackling hens' style. I don't think I would last as a leader for ten years, I would not be a Scout forever then, if I were in a girl-only troop. In a boy-only troop I would miss the cosiness of sitting and plaiting each other's hair, and in a girl-only troop I would miss the wildness.*

*TA(f1): Of course I wouldn't choose a boy-only troop, I would find that unsatisfactory too, and I wouldn't be able to offer the kind of Scouting they love. But, on the other hand, I really couldn't stand doing nothing either. Girls' associations, they do absolutely nothing! I might have given it a try, but I wouldn't be so committed, I would get bored, there would just be no meaning.*

The assumption of the tediousness inherent in femininity was also demonstrated at a point in the interview where TA(f1) actually talked positively about a girl-only patrol she chose to join when she was a Scout herself:

*TA(f1): There was this sense of community between girls...*

*TA(m): (mockingly imitates the sound of cackling hens in a high-pitched voice) mimimimi!*

*TA(f1): Well, OK, to some degree it may have been a bunch of cackling hens –mimimimi, as you two (the male leaders) say – but for us it was just great in some way or another. But we also learned that we now and then needed a rooster in our chicken yard...*

So, after all, the assumption is that it is the girls who need the boys, more than the other way around. For the men, Scouting is first and foremost all the wild activities and the group identity established through these activities. Women may be a pleasant element and a source of (necessary) restriction, but they are a supplement. For the women, the very fact of being allowed to be with the men and be part of their world seems to be an essential part of the reward.<sup>175</sup> One of them also remembered the pleasant feeling of being 'nursed' by the big boys. She described what, in organisational theory, is called the '*token position*' of individual women in male-dominated organisations:<sup>176</sup> By being accepted as a little, sweet girl in a group of big, tough boys one may enjoy the tempting combination of transgressing one's own gender role and confirming it in the same move. In spite of a strong and shared belief in gender equality as an already accomplished fact, it was quite clear that gender represented a different kind of problem for women than for men. It was they who had to find ways to resolve the contradiction that even though everyone was equal and could do as they pleased, women nevertheless remained the second sex.

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<sup>175</sup> In this interview the asymmetry is probably also connected to the fact that that the two female TAs were somewhat younger than the two male leaders, and the male leaders were the leaders of the TAs when they were youth participants. Still, it is difficult to imagine that their perceptions would have been the opposite if the group had consisted of two young boys and two, somewhat older, women.

<sup>176</sup> Kanter, R. M. (1993). *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York, Basic Books.

## 2. A Danish troop

### 2.1 Scouting in Denmark

Denmark is one of the founding countries of WOSM, and has had an unbroken history of Scouting since 1910. The first girls' patrol was accepted in the Danish Scout Association (an open association) only one month after its foundation in 1910. The Danish YMCA (KFUM) association was founded a year later. Separate Girl Guide associations were established in 1919 and 1921. In 1972 the two open associations merged, and mixed groups were also established between the Christian associations. However, in 1982, the YWCA (a member of WAGGGS) opted to stay a girls-only association, while the YMCA chose to become mixed.

Today there are three Scout associations in Denmark that are part of the Danish Scout Council: YMCA, The Danish Guide and Scout Association (open), and the Baptist Scouts, altogether comprising 70,000 Scouts.<sup>177</sup> Like other voluntary youth organisations, they receive some financial support from the state. Our troop belongs to the YMCA, which is connected to the Protestant Danish State Church and has as a purpose to invite young people to discover the Gospel. In 2000, it had approximately 30,000 members, of whom 41% were girls. At the time of the study, the national board was chaired by a woman, and comprised five women and six men. At division and district levels men were in the majority, but it is recommended to have leaders of both sexes at troop level and this was the case in most places. The Danish Scouts have chosen a structure with many - partly overlapping - age sections, although not all sections are used: Beavers (age 6-7), Cub Scouts (age 8-10), Juniors (age 10-11), Scouts (11-17), Seniors (14-17), Rovers (17+).

Membership is decreasing in the Danish Scout associations. Many children join the Beavers and Cub Scouts, but only 25% of them continue to the Scout section. The widespread (and often very attractive after-school programmes) in Denmark have become serious competitors to Scouting. Danish children can choose among many leisure activities, and the Scout leaders could see an increasing tendency towards 'zapping behaviour', where children jump from one activity to the other without committing themselves to a choice. The contemporary Danish way of life also creates other problems for Scouting. One is joint custody and recomposed families, which means that many children spend a good part of their time with their other parent and this makes it difficult to gather everyone for weekends. Another is that the parents' busy lives with work and family leaves little time to join as a Scout leader. Although 5,000 of the 30,000 members in YMCA are over the age of 25, it is difficult to recruit enough leaders.

The YMCA association has a wide selection of handbooks on Scouting that address the different age sections and leadership functions. A common model across the age levels is the 'work tree', which is a way of organising and visualising the progressive scheme. The symbolic frameworks of the three youngest age sections are, respectively, the life of beavers, The Jungle book and Indians, while the three oldest sections can choose frameworks for different projects. Leader training is organised at all levels, and addresses both theoretical and practical aspects. Recommendations regarding gender are included in the national handbooks. In the book for patrol leaders, for instance, there is a specific paragraph about 'Girls and boys':

*It is your task to take care that things do not end up with the boys chopping wood and the girls peeling the potatoes. When you are boys and girls together it takes an extra effort to see to it that everyone is given the opportunity to try everything. When you plan the patrol meetings you should take care to include different activities. Some like rough-and-tumble activities, while other girls and boys do not like them at all.<sup>178</sup>*

The handbook for adult Scout leaders states:

*A characteristic of boys is that they want to act at once. When they have a task, they run to solve it. Girls, in contrast, will often reflect on it thoroughly and discuss the problem first. In both cases, it will be valuable for Scouts to be in mixed patrols, because boys may learn not to jump to the first solution to a problem, and girls may learn to speed up so that they can complete the activity in time) (...) It is important that coeducational work contributes to strengthening both genders and gives them respect for each other (...) In our work we should show consideration to both genders, without pushing them into fixed gender roles.<sup>179</sup>*

<sup>177</sup> The Danish Scout Council (the national Scout organisation) also comprises associations in the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

<sup>178</sup> *Min patrulje*, p.12-13. Spejderforlaget 2001. My translation.

<sup>179</sup> *Arbejdsstræet for spejdere, en ledervejledning*, p.42-43 and 72. Spejderforlaget, 2000. My translation.

The formulation of the Danish Scout Law is quite different from our other three countries, and very clearly reflects the anti-authoritarian and participatory values inherent in Danish democracy and child-rearing.<sup>180</sup> The entire Law was rewritten to contain only seven points. Everything associated with obedience, loyalty, duty, courtesy, thrift, and smiling and whistling have been left out! Some of these features have been reformulated in a way that highlights principles of participatory democracy. Instead of obeying, a Danish Scout should form his or her own opinion, instead of being loyal to King and parents, he or she should take responsibility together with others, instead of being courteous and smiling, a Danish Scout should respect others. The emphasis on leadership was also challenged in the mid-80s, and for a decade there was no patrol leadership system. However, when it was realised that this just increased the authority of the adults and made Scouting look more like any other leisure activity, the patrol leadership system was reinstated and became legitimised as leadership training for young people.

## 2.2 The troop in Denmark

### *The troop*

The troop has its home in a high-income area in the suburbs of one of Denmark's largest cities. It is a pleasant and safe environment in which to grow up, and the general impression is that these Danish Scouts belong to a very privileged group of young people, who are driven to and from all their activities by their parents, even if they are within walking distance. The young people come from middle-class families, but with varying income levels. A local foundation provides support if there are financial problems.

At the time of the study, the group to which the troop belonged had approximately 80 members, of which 18 (our troop) were Scouts aged 12-15. Only three of these were girls, as four out of five new girls chose to quit after only a few weeks in the autumn of 2001. There were three patrols, named 'Hedgehogs', 'Aliens' and 'Basserne'<sup>181</sup>. Two girls were members of the same patrol, one was the PA of another. The third patrol was composed only of boys.

The troop's leadership was young. The troop leader and the male TA were students in their mid-20s, the two female TAs were in their last year of high school. The four of them had been in Scouting for between 10 and 18 years and had several years of experience as leaders. The women were part of what is described as 'the strong girl patrol' when they were younger (cf. the 'cackling hens'), and almost all the girls in this patrol were later recruited as leaders. They also belonged to a clan of young leaders who met every other weekend for exciting outdoor events – or just to relax and enjoy each other's company. They talked enthusiastically about the clan and emphasised the opportunity it gave them to balance giving to the younger ones and receiving something for themselves.

### *The programme*

For the Danish leaders, Scouting was a vital part of their lives. They stressed the sense of community, the opportunities to develop creativity, take on personal challenges and test one's limits. The Danes often described this by the phrase: 'You do not attend Scouting, you are a Scout'. They also stressed the value of being together with young people and having their confidence, but distanced themselves from the role of 'educators'. There should not be 'a curriculum' in Scouting; the point was to share friendship and great experiences together across the age range. The goal was to inspire the young people to become creative in their approach, and to want to take on responsibility. In their approach we again discern the Danish anti-authoritarian style, this time at troop level:

*TA(m): It should be fun! You don't want to deliver a fiasco, that's simply no fun, is it? And there may be all these grand and gilded and very complicated words from the national association, 'the emotional', 'five columns', big deal! 'Work tree'! But, listen, if they don't work in practice, then it is better to do something the Scouts think is fun, and, not the least, something that we or I personally think is fun. So what, if we don't have a lot about spirituality or what not, but we do a lot of things that are a lot of fun and that inspire others. We create a sense of unity. So OK, we may not be the most dutiful rule followers, but if what we do is a success, if it's fun – that's what counts.*

<sup>180</sup> See Appendix III.

<sup>181</sup> An untranslatable word – literally it means a stout or fat (male) person, but is also used as humorous slang for three entirely different things: Danish pastry, fat persons, and drafted soldiers.

The key concept in the troop programme is to have '*great and wild experiences*'. There was, of course, a stress on the outdoors, but there was less focus on the simple life in nature that we saw in Russia and Slovakia, and very little emphasis on the transmission of values that we saw in Portugal. Huge pioneering constructions of all sorts of unbelievable things were a central activity. The focal point was that things should be fun, high quality, thrilling, something out of the ordinary, preferably a bit on the wild and crazy side. One reason given for this was that young people had so many leisure-time options that they would simply drop out if they were not offered such attractions. Traditional Scouting disciplines such as knots and orienteering were not much to sell in this market. The point was to bring the young people through the difficult years of adolescence with great experiences and to foster their curiosity. In order to do so, non-traditional activities had to be included. Another reason for the special profile was that this was what the leaders themselves really enjoyed! Both in the clan and in the troop, what was important was to have creative and amazing ideas – and to try to put them into practice. They found it thoroughly enjoyable to do such wild things together, to have their own internal jargon, to have their own hilarious rituals - no matter how childish they might seem to others (like saving all the packaging of their favourite chocolate spread).

The troop's autumn programme certainly mirrored this approach. It was full of slang, internal jargon and catchy, crazy activity titles: '*I'm caught in a cheese-cover*' (competition against another troop), '*Chaos is beauty*' (patrol meeting), '*Jutlanders are also humans*' (Kim's game<sup>182</sup>, and a layered cake race), '*Polaroid*' (photo marathon), '*Save Minimuu – dead or alive*' (fighting game), and '*Stardust*' (preparation of a Christmas stage play about the birth of Christ). The troop met once a week and patrol meetings were included in this time. Everything was planned in great detail by the leadership team, which included the TL/TAs and the PL/PAs who met once a month. The threads running through the programme were fun, play, competitions, games, eating cake and sweets, combined with Scouting activities such as singing, knots, Kim's game, fire-making, pioneering, and learning about B.P.'s life. The games were both self-invented ones such as '*Big Mac*' (another name for '*the violent ball game*'), and amazing arrangements by the leadership team (which illustrates the huge amount of time the young leaders put into the troop): home made roller coasters, rope ways and bridges, just to mention a few. Not surprisingly, concerning the six RAP areas of development, the adult leaders picked out the combination of the *social* and the *physical dimensions* as their strong side, while the spiritual and intellectual dimensions were more in the background. They hated planning, for instance, even though they did a lot of it. The topic of 'emotional development' triggered a discussion between them. For the TA(m) it was expressed in the feeling of unity and group identity, whereas for the women it was more personal, connected to the conversations they had, the openness and confidence they shared, and the individual attention they gave to their Scouts.

There is little doubt that the young people in this troop had a great time, and that they admired their creative and daring leaders. This was also clearly demonstrated during the camp, which involved lots of fun and extraordinary activities, including the construction of their dining table high up in a tree. The tone of the relationship between the leaders and the young people was relaxed and humorous. The young ones tried to play up to the leaders who, to me, appeared as a fascinating mix of adult authority and, at the same time, as playful big brothers and sisters. Some of the leaders also appeared to be attentive to the single and quieter children.

With all this, one may wonder why they had difficulty recruiting? Why did almost all the new Scouts quit after a couple of meetings last autumn? One reason could be the over-stimulated Danish children in this privileged part of the city who may just zap in and out of Scouting. Another could be the fact that it takes some time before one may appreciate all the fun and the internal jargon. The leaders admitted that a problem with the creation of a strong group identity was that it might exclude others. It is not so easy for a newcomer to become initiated into the jargon and all their rituals and, even though they tried to take this into consideration last autumn, they did not succeed.

There may also be a gender dimension to the problem. The male leaders thought that it was okay to put demands on the new ones and, although they tried to be attentive to the quieter ones, they thought that the young people themselves should really learn to be active in order to become part of the group. They wondered whether those who were very quiet would really fit in. The male leaders remembered how grand it was, when they were small Scouts, to look up to the big, tough ones and to try to fight for a position. The women remembered that they had

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<sup>182</sup> A game inspired by Rudyard Kipling's book, '*Kim*', which involves skills of observation and memory recall



been a little scared, and thought it more important to take age and different degrees of 'toughness' into consideration. They could not help feeling sorry for the new Scouts who quit, and they thought they ought to do more to take care of girls and the quieter boys in the troop. Concerning the programme, it was the male leaders who stressed the playfulness and wildness as aspects that really attracted them. The women seemed to enjoy this too, but put more emphasis on the sense of belonging and the communication between people:

*TA(f1): I don't think....well, yes, it also gives me a kick, but maybe I like it best afterwards, when we have built all those things, and we calm down a bit, and have that sense of community where we are sitting together, singing or maybe discussing something like religion. It doesn't have to be ropes and rafts, or very Scouty, it can also be just meeting with the clan for a meal some mid-week evening.*

*TA(f2): Or just lying in a big heap on a cabin floor and talking.*

*TA(m): Where you talk about all the things you did. (...)*

*TA(f2): I really like this situation where, one moment, we all agree to do a million things like running around in some woods, or constructing a wildly high tower, or sleeping on a platform, or cooking that wildly advanced meal over a campfire, or rafting up and down this river, and I don't know what – and then, the next moment, we say, ah, this weekend we'll just relax, let's go and watch this movie, I really like it a lot. It is this combination, where we agree on all this because we just know each other so well.*

The TA(m)'s comment is worth considering. Are they talking about the same thing here? The women seem to be talking about having personal relationships; the man 'translated' this to be talking about the activities they had carried out. There was an indisputably boyish atmosphere in this troop, which no doubt gave the men and many of the boys great pleasure. It actually tended to resemble what we saw in the Slovak boy's troop with its emphasis on fighting, fun and games. Some girls liked it, but many did not, and even those who liked it preferred to mix it with more personal and relational aspects.

This was also confirmed in the interviews with the boys and the girls. Everyone is a Scout because it is fun. The boys were thrilled by the wild activities, the challenges and the pioneering and defined these aspects as being the essence of Scouting: *'If you don't do big activities, wild activities, it is not real Scouting. Then it is just sitting indoors doing knots'*. Two boys also mentioned other symbols of masculinity that attracted them to Scouting: one liked the uniform because he was *'a soldier freak'*; another was interested in weapons. They also liked to meet and learn from people who were older and more experienced in Scout activities than themselves. The girls also enjoyed the activities, but in a broader way. Camping and hiking together, survival trips, night exercises, learning to be strong, and the sense of belonging were things they mentioned. They especially mentioned how nice it was when they went on trips as a troop, and they liked being a part of this clever and self-assured group. The youngest girl, however, mentioned that she felt insecure with the male leaders whom she sometimes found too rough and inconsiderate. What was particularly emphasised by the girls was the haven that Scouting represented to them compared to their life among peers at school. At school you had to act either *'cool'* or *'nerdy'*, here you could be different. But they felt that it was not appropriate to discuss more personal or emotional matters with Scout friends, at least not the boys, in the way they could with girlfriends outside.

In contrast to the Scouts in the other countries, who did not have much esteem for people who were not Scouts, the Danes seemed to face the opposite problem: how to gain respect from people outside Scouting. Many peers found it *'not cool'* to be a Scout and regarded them as *'a bunch of apes running around in the forest'* or goody-goodies who did nothing but *'help old ladies across the street'*, *'attend church every Sunday'* or *'just pray all the time'*. The boys' opinion was that only people who seriously wanted to be a Scout should join. People who just wanted to play it *'cool'* should stay away. The girls went into more depth about the kind of girls who would not fit in. Girls who could not endure the hardness, the cold, sleeping outside, who were not brave, who needed to bring a lot of smart clothes and who would not accept to wash the dishes when they did not feel like it would not survive as Scouts.

### 3. Doing gender in Scouting

The summer camp of the Danish troop took place in beautiful woodland near the sea owned by the national association. The area has many campsites, several houses, activity centres, a kiosk, toilets and showers, telephones, and lighting along the main paths. There were several troops present, but each had their own camping area. Our troop had one of the best campgrounds, located on a small hilltop in the beech forest and with a view of the sea. Nine young people, aged 12-15, and five leaders (three men and two women) took part. There were two patrols – ‘Hedgehogs’ with four boys, and ‘Aliens’ (English name) with three boys and two girls. All the PL/PAs were boys. When I arrived on the second day of the camp, the troop had already built a huge pioneer construction, which combined the entrance to the camp with a dining table high up in the trees and a bridge to a separate platform for the leadership team. In addition to this impressive structure, the camp consisted of a campfire area with benches, a kitchen area, and three large tents, one for each patrol and one for the five leaders. The Scouts used the toilets and shower facilities of the central area.

In addition to the *two-day camp observations*, we have *observations of four troop/patrol meetings* conducted by the Danish research assistants, Ulla, Martin and Jesper, in addition to the *interviews* with the three girls in the troop and four of the boys.<sup>183</sup> All the young people interviewed attended the camp, except for the youngest girl, Julie, who joined the troop in the autumn and was the only new girl who did not quit.

The number of young people in the camp, as well as the gender distribution, was the same as in the Moscow region camp: two girls and seven boys. The organisation in two patrols was different, however, as was the age distribution. The boys were 14-15-years old, except for one who was only 12, while the two girls had just turned 13 and 14. The Danish girls were also in the minority at the troop meetings. This special composition of the group and ages may explain the girl’s marginalised position in this troop, although the boyish atmosphere seemed to be a more general trait of the troop culture (at any rate, the special gender dynamics we see here could hardly be imagined in reverse). As in the Portuguese camp, here we also have two patrols of which one was a boys’ patrol. In this case, however, the mixed patrol had more boys and male leadership.

#### 3.1 Structural gender: *Cooking and pioneering*

As in Slovakia and Portugal, the assumption in the Danish camp was that girls and boys should take part on an equal footing. However, this principle was taken more or less for granted and was not made an object of detailed planning as in Slovakia. As we learned from the interview with the adult leaders, the idea was that gender equality should be taken care of internally in the patrol.

There was little communication between the two girls and the boys. Most of the time the two girls kept each other company. They went on small excursions together to the bathroom or to make a telephone call, or they sat by the campfire area watching what was going on around them while they talked with each other, and, if the opportunity arose, with the leaders or me. The youngest boy occasionally sat with them, but did not say much. He seemed quite bored, but also reluctant to join the group of older boys.

The remaining boys seemed to thrive like fish in water. They were constantly involved in all sorts of activities: pioneering, playing ball, practical jokes. The boys in the boys’ patrol in particular seemed to have a wonderful time in each other’s company. They filled the space with their activities, voices and laughter. At meals they thoroughly enjoyed themselves, throwing cucumber pieces on each other or competing as to how quickly they could swallow a piece of bread. They told dramatic stories and made a lot of funny references to their favourite chocolate spread. The boys’ appetite for competitive and adventurous activities could be seen on several occasions: when they had a boat race the previous day all the boys chose to have individual boats, even the youngest boy who had never tried to sail before (two of the boys turned over), while the two girls decided to share a boat as they had not tried it before, either. When

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<sup>183</sup> *Girls*: Camilla (14), Maria (13), Julie (12). The girls were interviewed by me. I knew the two older ones from my summer camp visit.

*Boys*: Henrik (15), Peter (15), Jacob (14), Mads (13). The boys were interviewed by one of the national research assistants, Jesper, who did not know any of the boys in advance.

choosing handicraft activities for the afternoon, the boys' patrol wanted to cook mink heads (something that smells ghastly and later had to be given up), while the mixed patrol chose to work with leather and bone carving. When they planned a patrol hike for the following day, the boys' patrol decided to cross a huge bridge by foot and walk 50 km (a project they did not carry through), while the mixed patrol settled for 20 km and ensured that they would have enough time to rest. This was not because the girls took the lead. The planning was solemnly in the hands of the PL, but the three boys in this patrol appeared more sedate than those of the boy-only patrol who clearly worked on each other's enthusiasm. Even when they were caught by the leaders to do some boring duty, such as fetching shingles for the camping ground, these boys turned it into a display of force and vigour. Of the four boys, three were described to me as being part of the leadership of the patrol: one PL and two PAs.

Even if they wanted to participate, it was not easy for the girls and the youngest boy to find space, and many different explanations were given for this:

*The boy patrol and the leaders have started to work on the pioneer construction again: they climb around on the poles, improving the knots, extending the constructions. The mixed patrol sits together by the campfire. The three boys chat, the two girls listen to them. I ask why it is only the boy patrol doing the pioneering and Camilla explains that they like it more. After a little while two members of the boy patrol come to sit at the fireplace, too. The five boys carve sticks with their knives and talk together. Camilla listens and responds with facial expressions. Maria sits passively. The two boys who are still pioneering shout, and all the boys (except Mads, the youngest one) rush to help. The six boys and all the leaders are now working on the pioneer construction. The two girls and Mads sit silently by the campfire. I ask them what kind of activities they like the most. 'Pioneering is most fun', Maria answers, and Camilla and Mads agree. But why don't they join the others, then? Well...there are already too many people; there's no room for any more. Mads says: 'We would just be standing there handing the ropes'. A little later a TA(f) join us. She asks Maria whether she is tired of pioneering: 'No, I'm not', Maria says, looking her straight in the eyes, and that is the end of the topic. Now the other TA(f) arrives, while the male leaders and the boys continue the pioneering. The female leaders and the girls first talk about lunch and dishwashing, and then about who from the troop will attend the PL course later in the summer.*

When it came to cooking and dishwashing, however, the two girls got all the space they want and a maybe even a bit more. The two patrols were on kitchen duty every other day. On the one full day I spent in the camp, the mixed patrol was in charge. Breakfast and lunch were quickly organised: a big box containing what was needed to make sandwiches was unpacked on the dining table high up in the trees, so the only thing to do in connection with these two meals was to heat water to wash the dishes. The two girls, with some help from the youngest boy, took care of this. When the dinner preparation started, the young boy was excused as he had promised to do the dishes afterwards, while the two oldest boys appeared with the girls. We do not find the mocking of the Slovak boys, nor the quarrelling of the Portuguese. The Danish boys played a greater role in the cooking and dishwashing, but also seemed to take it for granted that the girls had the main responsibility for culinary affairs:

*PL Henrik and PA Morten make the fire while the two girls watch. The TL(m) arrives with the potatoes and asks who wants to peel them. 'I do', Maria says, and takes the bag. Camilla joins her, while Henrik and Morten sit around the campfire together with the boys from the other patrol. The TA(m) arrives and joins in the conversation with the boys. After a little while PL Henrik finds the recipe for the potato-burgers they are going to cook. 'Should there be a burger for everyone?', he asks. 'Yes!', Maria answers, with an expression meaning that this was a really stupid question. Camilla tries to get the boys to help. Mads excuses himself because of the deal with the dishwashing, but PA Morten comes. Mads quarrels with the girls about the dishwashing deal: it did not include cleaning the pots!*

*PL Henrik looks at the meat for the burgers. One of the leaders says they should wash their hands before they prepare it. Henrik asks if anyone has soap. Camilla fetches her soapbox and gives it to him, and is teased because it is pink. The girls go to sit at the campfire while Henrik starts chopping an onion. He complains about the task. 'Give it to me, then', Camilla says, and takes over the work.*

This way of taking over the kitchen work for the boys was seen several times both during the camp and in the observations of troop meetings during which girls took over the tasks of cleaning and tidying when they found that the boys worked ineffectively. At camp, this was observed in particular with Camilla who seemed to be eager to have contact with the boys, but

was seldom approached by them. The girls also told me that they had helped the boys' patrol with the potato-peeling when they were on duty the previous day, and had also washed a dirty pot for them:

*Morten, who is listening to our conversation, says that they did it voluntarily. Camilla responds that she had been promised a bar of chocolate for the job, and that they had even been ready to promise her a million to do it, but she has seen nothing of this. 'But, okay, how much time did it take me to clean that pot after all?' she says soothingly, almost as if she were arguing with herself.*

Back to preparing dinner: it became increasingly clear that Henrik's and Morten's job was to take care of the special tasks. The deal seemed to be that the two girls peeled the potatoes and prepared the meat, while the two boys made the fire, carved handles for the frying pans, and fried the burgers over the fire. They also helped lift a boiling pot of water because the girls did not dare do it. After the meal, Mads did the dishes with help from Camilla, while Henrik and Morten cleaned the pots.

I did not get the chance to see how the work was shared in the boys' patrol, nor to what extent the two girls kept offering their help. But I noticed that the next morning, when the boys' patrol was on duty, they forgot to heat water for the dishwashing, although they had been reminded about it several times by the leaders.

### **3.2 Symbolic gender: Real Scouts and ridiculous girls**

At the entrance to the camp there was a big banner with the following inscription: '*Lise IS delicious*', and two posters that read: '*Remember the campfires in Viborg?*' and '*Come in and get a kiss or an autograph*'. The references were to a previous national camp in Viborg during which one of the TA(f)s played the main character in a campfire serial about Lise and her boyfriend (and a fan club had been established for her). While this may appear as innocent fun, it does connect both to the particularly Danish ease with the sexualisation of women (not men), and to the kind of symbolic gender I noticed in this camp. During the two days of observations I wrote down all the explicit mentions of gender that I heard. In addition to the banners and posters at the entrance, my list contains the following items:

- There is a (frequently repeated) story about how Henrik had put a crab on TA(m)'s sleeping-bag and how TA(m) had '*screamed like a girl*'. TA(m) defends himself: '*I don't scream like a girl! It must have been TA(f)!*'. Once I hear Maria mumble to herself: '*Would it have been better if it had been a girl screaming?*'
- The girls tell me laughingly that yesterday a foreign leader took Mads for a girl! Later I hear Camilla tease Mads that he is '*a girl and will always be a girl*'.
- During the inspection Henrik defends himself when is criticised at being dirty: '*It is only girls who take baths during a Scout camp!*'. Camilla adds that '*Boys won't take baths, so they are losing points!*'
- A boy asks the TL(m) if he is a hunter. '*Yes, a girl hunter!*', the TL(m) responds with a smile.
- A visiting leader corrects a boy: '*One does not ask girls about their age*'.
- '*You throw like a girl!*', Henrik says to Maria. '*Well, am I a boy then?*', Maria responds.

Individually, these remarks may be nothing to fuss about, and part of the fun and border work at this age. However, taken together, they reveal three things about symbolic gender in this context. Firstly it was the girls' or women's gender (not the boys' or men's) that was made visible and commented upon. Camilla's effort to throw back an accusation concerning the boys appeared rather ineffective. Secondly, these comments all pointed in the same direction – girls were depicted as either ridiculous and incompetent, or in a sexual role. Thirdly, we see that the girls could react towards this in different ways: they could protest directly as Camilla did when talking about cleanliness at camp, they could protest indirectly as Maria did when she hinted at the unquestioned male norm (Would it have been better if it had been a girl screaming? Am I a boy?), or they could identify with the aggressor, by teasing the youngest boy for belonging to their own - second-rate - gender.

Masculinity was invisible because it was self-evident. It was not commented upon, but was present as the norm that constitutes 'a real Scout'. The implicit masculine norm is seen in what counts as the right activities, the right attitudes and the right competences. '*You are not weak, are you?*' the male leaders and the boys asked each other all day long, and of course the

challenged boy was not weak! He smashed the log so it flew in all directions and got admiring comments from the others. Norms of strength, courage, wildness, fighting and competition permeate the culture. The girls were also free to aspire to these norms but were disqualified by the very fact of their gender category. The military style of the camp inspections was certainly carried out with a lot of humour (very different to the Slovak parades), but the TA(m) yelled orders like a sergeant, and the boys were excited by the tone and the competition, while the girls sent me little ironic smiles. The boys screamed out their patrol call, and no holds were barred when it came to winning. While the patrol call for 'Aliens' was rather soft: 'U-F-O, ufo!', the call for the boys' patrol 'Hedgehogs' was:

*We are strong, we are rough  
we are the ones with the quills  
sonny, you are just too blue,  
disgusting!*

In spite of all the Danish fun, irony and distance, this norm of masculinity actually resembled the soldier-like masculinity of the fencing Slovak boys more than the gentle Russian or dramatic Portuguese ways of doing masculinity. When the Danes sang their flag song<sup>184</sup> they celebrated the goal: 'Let us fulfil manhood' - members as they all are of the KFUM (Young Men's Christian Association). Again, the point is not to ban an old and dear national flag song, but to emphasise the point that the girls were receiving a message which the boys and men were probably not even aware had been sent. A hundred little innocent signs make up a gender message: a Real Scout is a tough boy, while even a tough girl at any time can be reduced to a sex object or just a ridiculous creature.

### 3.3 Interactional gender: *Indifferent boys and hearty girls*

The Danish boys did not mock or tease the girls in the condescending way some of the Slovak boys did, but they did not pay them much attention, either. There didn't seem to be much quarrelling (contrary to the Portuguese camp). At planning sessions in the patrols, as well as in relaxed situations in which everybody was present, it was the big boys and the male leaders who talked to each other:

*During the meal the conversation is characterised by quick, witty exchanges between the boys from the boy patrol and the male leaders. The other boys make a few remarks, but most of the time they just listen and laugh. The female leaders also shout a comment now and then and are heard. The two girls follow the conversation, and Camilla tries to make a few comments in the same witty style as the boys, but her voice may not be strong enough to break through, or it may be that her comments just do not trigger any responses. TL(m) and PA Morten occasionally send her a smile when she tries to make herself heard, but then they turn their eyes towards the centre of the group again. Camilla gives it another try by addressing the boy who is sitting directly next to her, but he answers her with only one word. After a while the two girls start to direct their comments just to each other. The boys are having great fun discussing the chocolate spread. At a certain point TL(m) asks Maria what the name of the chocolate spread would be in her native language (Maria's family comes from another Nordic country). She looks embarrassed and says the words in an almost inaudible voice.*

The Danish girls did not flirt and giggle at the big boys like the Slovak girls did. Maria, the youngest, sat with a sharp observing eye most of the time. She smiled at the boys when she found them entertaining, or made sarcastic comments when she found them ridiculous. Camilla, who was 14, really strove to become one of the boys. She shouted and laughed loudly all the time, and tried to attract attention in all sorts of ways, but without much success:

*Camilla shows her scars to anyone who cares to see them, and says repeatedly that she is a collector of scars. 'Where is TL(m)?' she cries, 'I want to wipe my fingers on him!' Another male leader gives her his arm, and Camilla smears all the onion juice of her fingers onto it. A little later she asks Mads if she may have permission to kick him in the head. The others seem to moan inaudibly. The TA(f) asks Camilla about the earrings she made at the craft centre today. The attention seems to make her calm down.*

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<sup>184</sup> This is not a national anthem, but a similarly patriotic song that is sung to commemorate the Danish flag.

Another way for Camilla (and occasionally also for Maria) to get some attention was by teasing the youngest boy. He reacted back, and thus some more or less serious play-fights often developed between him and Camilla:

*Camilla who is mixing the meat and other ingredients sprinkles pepper on Mads' hair. He reacts by sprinkling salt on her hair. She runs after him, yelling and laughing. On a later occasion, when he teases her by saying that she is in love with a certain boy, she threatens him that he will not get a peaceful sleep tonight! Mads says he will just take Maria as a shield. 'Forget it', Maria comments in a chilly voice.*

The leaders sometimes made private contact with the girls. They asked them about different things, or commented on what they were doing. The girls seemed to appreciate this, but it did not contribute to making them visible in the group. And when a boy arrived, the quiet exchanges between girls and leaders often came to an end:

*TL(m) comes to sit by the fire with TA(f) and the two girls. They talk about a trip they once went on. But then Rasmus arrives with a lot to tell, and he immediately becomes the centre of everybody's attention. The TA(m) joins them and they again talk and laugh about how he had screamed like a girl when he saw that crab on his sleeping bag.*

The observations from the patrol and troop meetings confirmed this picture and added further aspects. The boys who were PL/PA took the lead and the girls and little boys were more or less left out:

*The PA is very dominant, and nearly all communication in the group goes through him. The three girls and the youngest boys only say something when they are asked a direct question. The older boys participate more on their own terms (...) Two girls and three boys gradually slip away as the scenes they are practicing over and over again (for a film) do not involve them. The last girl is drawn into the work by the leading PA as she has a big role in the film. (Jesper)*

Camilla's various attempts to get attention, as well as the limited results, were also noted by the three research assistants. Even at a meeting of the patrol leaders' council, she asked again and again for information about a trip but nobody bothered to answer her. She tried to make contact by touching the boys and telling them personal things about herself, which aroused little interest. However, one observer also caught another aspect of Camilla's role in the group: the motherly care she sometimes showed towards the younger ones:

*Everybody runs out. On the way out, Ole stumbles over the bicycle rack. While the others play, TL(m) and Camilla stay with Ole. Camilla comforts him and strokes his hair. My eyes met Ole's and he pulled back as if to say: 'I'm not that little'. (Martin)*

One of the big boys was also observed giving comfort and protection to the youngest girl, but here the problem was that the younger boys often gave her a hard time:

*Two of the younger boys talk teasingly about what nasty things they could do to Julie. One of them suggested locking her in the patrol box. Julie ignores them and the boys drop the topic (...) A little later Ole hits Julie on the head with some cardboard. She starts to cry. Ole laughs, 'I didn't do anything', he says. PL Henrik puts an arm round Julie to comfort her and she stops crying (...) At last they play 'Big Mac'. Julie does not seem to like the game, but she participates. At a certain point Ole knocks her off her feet. She starts to cry and the game stops. PL Henrik tries to find out what happened, especially as, before the game, Ole had promised to leave Julie alone. After this Julie stopped playing the game. Camilla and Maria take part on an equal footing with the boys. It looks rough, but everybody seems to enjoy it. (Ulla)*

To stay in the game, the girls must learn to be tough. This is also a possible way to get attention. Three episodes were reported in which the boys spontaneously became interested in the activities of the girls. One was when Camilla and Maria started to practise a special rolling fall for the film. Another was when some boys wanted Maria to join their team because she was tough. The third was one where their attention was drawn to a girl's body:

*The girl with the big role squats down while they practise the scene. As she is wearing a tight, short T-shirt and low-cut jeans, parts of her waist, lower back and buttocks become visible and one can see that she is wearing G-string panties. All of the boys, without exception, notice it. Some of them steal a look; others stare more openly. Nobody says*

*anything but they look at each other with appreciation. The girl becomes aware that the boys are staring at her. Without a word she pulls her clothes together so they cover her back. She looks a little embarrassed while she does it. (Jesper)*

### **3.4 Personal gender: Proud boys and strong girls**

Compared to the other countries, the Danish girls and boys had relatively little to say about gender differences. The tendency for boys to be tough, insensitive and direct, and for girls to be cautious, indirect, and more preoccupied with what others thought about them was mentioned, but generally such differences were understood as belonging to 'the old days'. Today, personality is more important than gender, they said. The boys, for instance, mentioned that Maria, unlike all the other girls they referred to during the interview, was a very good Scout. Both girls and boys talked critically about 'male chauvinism', and took gender equality as the self-evident norm. What they wondered about, however, was the kind of relationship there should be between such individuals of different genders, and here they had somewhat different models. While girls insisted that equality meant that women had risen to the level of men, some of the boys wanted to keep the hierarchy, for the sake of men's self-esteem. Here are the responses they gave to the question about whether they saw any differences between girls and boys:

*Camilla: The things that interest boys and the things that interest girls always have something in common, in some ways. You know, in the very old days, girls and boys were separated much more, and girls were lower than boys. But now girls have started to be in line with boys. Today girls can allow themselves to be friends with boys, you are more in line with them, and you think more like they do.*

*Maria: I think women and girls have come up higher than they were before.*

*Henrik: There are different kinds of girls and different kinds of boys. There are quiet boys and quiet girls, and there are the very active girls and the very active boys. But you shouldn't put an active girl together with an active boy, because the boy would feel provoked by her. Like: 'I'm the one who is doing this', not the girl.*

*Peter: I think it is fine that both are active, but I think the boy should be the one to take the initiatives, and the girl should be the one to follow up – give her consent, because not all your ideas are going to be brilliant. It depends on creativity, for instance.*

*Jacob: Boys often just jump to do things, I think it is good if there is a girl to think things through: whether it is responsible or not.*

Jacob was a calm and quiet boy who seemed to agree more with the idea of men and women being *in line*. He said that it was true that younger boys may have problems with leading girls. He remembered himself at that age – he couldn't take girls seriously at all, but if a big boy told him to do something he would do it quite happily. His experience was that respect for women came with age. He and the younger boy Mads did not take the lead in the interview, however. Those who had most to say were Henrik and Peter, and they stuck to the idea of 'women's relative subordination', as coined by the Norwegian psychologist Hanne Haavind: 'Women can do whatever they want, as long they do it in a way that is relatively subordinated to the men'.<sup>185</sup> According to Henrik, a young boy's pride could be hurt by being given a female patrol leader. In spite of an impressive rhetoric about individual differences and illegitimate male chauvinism, being a good number two was what Henrik and Peter thought a girl could - and should - be. This applied not least to Scouting. Henrik almost echoed the ideas from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century of boys as soldiers and girls as nurses:

*Question: Are girls or boys the best Scouts?*

*Henrik: When you look back at the Scout Movement, it comes from the military. And again, there is this prejudice that boys are best at physical exercises and everything they were the first to learn. Well, now Scouting has both genders, and gender equality, and there are other activities that everybody can do. But if we look back, I would say that boys are good Scouts. I would still say that the physical side is the boys' area, while the psychological, social and helpfulness areas are the strong side of girls.*

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<sup>185</sup> Haavind, H. (1989). "Endringer i forholdet mellom kvinner og menn." [Materialisten](#)(4).

Even if put more bluntly, Peter and Henrik actually reflect the male adult leaders' view of girls as the soothing element that could buffer the negative aspects of masculinity such as sluggishness, laziness and acting without thinking. On such occasions, girls' higher degree of self-discipline, cautiousness and more logical thinking were valuable, they said, much like we heard from the Slovak boys. We also recognise the juvenile masculinity and the responsible femininity from the Slovak interviews: while the male leaders are almost like boys themselves, the female leaders are those who keep things in control, the boys said. Henrik, who seemed to belong to the more sedate group of boys in the camp, told me that boys' patrols often become quite macho: everything centres around being tough and strong. In his view, the good thing about mixed patrols is that girls put a damper on that. But, apart from women's curbing and maternal role, none of the boys had any ideas about what it could mean to be a girl:

*Question: What do you think is the best thing about being a girl?*

*Jacob: I don't think there is anything! Well, maybe that you come home to a clean and tidy room [laughs].*

*Peter: I agree, and also that you can sew on your badges yourself (...) And then, at Scout camps I never take a bath, at least that is my great goal. And then it is not so great when you come home and can't get it off, you are as black when you come out of the bath as when you went in [laughs]. So it must be a big advantage being a girl... that you can just take a shower, that you can make yourself do it. I can't.*

The boys seemed very content with their own gender, except for their admitted sluggishness and laziness. They also agreed with the Slovak boys that acting without thinking might be a drawback, but this quickly became transformed into being one of their main assets as boys, such as 'the problem' of not wanting to take a bath at camp. They appreciated their ability to throw themselves into things without thinking too much about it. Boys, more than girls, live in the moment, they said. They could eat directly from the pot if they were allowed to, so no washing up was needed (and this was, in fact, exactly how it was done for breakfast and lunch during the camp). Their self-depiction comes very close to that of the male leaders: they presented themselves as creative, people who had crazy ideas, a '*daredevil instinct*', which they said was also fostered by the leaders who threw them into all sorts of situations. This daredevil instinct connects to competence: it is when you put people in tough situations that you know who is tough:

*Peter: When we started in the troop we were sent out on all kinds of hard activities, to separate the sheep from the goats – to find out who had the guts so we could raise the standard. And those who couldn't take it, they quit then. It may be a mean way to do it, but it really raises the standards.*

*Henrik: It shows who really wants to be a Scout.*

PL Henrik and TA Peter found standards and ranks very important. They were also the two who were attracted to Scouting because of the uniform and learning to handle weapons. For them it was a matter of course that big Scouts dominate more than little Scouts (in the right way, of course). In contrast to Jacob and Mads, neither of whom wanted to become a PL, they identified with the hierarchy:

*Peter: A PL should, of course, not just give commands - that is a bad PL. But, on the other hand, since he was once a recruit himself, he should be allowed to be the way his superiors once were towards him. His recruits should be given the same treatment, if they are going to be like him. If a leader has been through it, and it is his turn to command, then it is their turn to go through it. There should be a balance, so they don't do all the work either.*

*Henrik: Of course the eldest should have most privileges, because they are the eldest.*

*Jacob: I don't think it should be like that.*

While Jacob and Mads were not so preoccupied with leadership, being a member of the patrol leaders' council was very important for Peter and Henrik. It gave them influence over the projects in the troop and it gave them a special status. The patrol leaders' council was very active, and was said to have a high standard and be close-knit. Perhaps the strong and dominating relationship we saw in the interaction in the camp between the leaders and the big boys also comes from the fact that almost all the big boys (together with the leaders) constituted this 'in' group, while a small group of girls and little boys were excluded? Camilla had become a PA after the camp and subsequently joined the leadership team, but as we will learn in the next section, she stayed in the wings.



It appears that, more than in any other of our case study troops, the Scouting arena for the Danish men and some of the boys represents a place where you are allowed to do a kind of masculinity that is otherwise stigmatised in the name of gender equality. This is in line with a frequently discussed theme in Denmark: that men have been trapped in a feminine world and that their natural masculinity has been oppressed.<sup>186</sup> One could ask whether the strong Danish discourse of gender equality also fosters special needs for the confirmation of masculinities for some boys and men? In this case, for a girl, being equal in such arenas becomes a contradictory task, not least when this strong norm of masculinity is, at the same time, wrapped in the politically correct norm of gender equality. And this is exactly the impression we get from what the girls told us in the interview.

The girls were very eager to present themselves as strong and tough girls. Camilla told me that the important thing in the troop is *'to take it like the boys'*. You should take care not to act too girlishly. Learn to swing an axe and say things bluntly. You should not openly show that you are afraid, but learn a more 'cool' way to express things:

*Camilla: Be clever and don't show it if you're afraid of something. You shouldn't like: 'uhhuuu, no, I don't dare to do this'. You should be able to say really calmly: 'Well, this is not what I fancy the most'. Try not to look scared, think of something else. And you shouldn't start to cry either.*

*Maria: You should learn to control yourself. If you know that you cry easily or are scared of something, I mean, of course it is OK to be scared, as long as you don't go like 'no, I don't dare do this, eeech!'.*

We understand, however, that not all girls are as strong as they are. Camilla and Maria seem to be constantly negotiating what it meant to be a girl, when the norm was that you should be a boy. They were very preoccupied with drawing a line between themselves and the weak and over-feminine girls. At camp they told me about other girls their age who were so ladylike that they had to use three layers of nail polish and would die if they broke a nail. Camilla willingly admitted that she used a bit of make-up, too (she was actually wearing a heavy blue eye-shadow, which contrasted with her otherwise practical outfit), and she had recently started to file her nails, but she was definitely not afraid of breaking a nail! There was also a girl in their troop who wasn't really the type to be a Scout. She could not keep up the pace when they were on a patrol hike, she had brought too many things with her, and the boys ended up having to carry things for her. Little Beavers were also ridiculous – they did nothing but eat all the time. The YWCA girls' troop staying in the campsite next to them was the worst of all: they wore stupid hats, and behaved hysterically when they played *'the violent ball game'* with the troop:

*Camilla: Each time we started to fight they started to cry.*

*Maria: Yes, like this: uuuuhhhhuuuu!*

*Camilla: One of them got an elbow in her head.*

*Maria: (mocks) 'Oh no! I've got concussion.'*

*Camilla: I had a knee and an elbow in my head a hundred thousand times and so what!*

In many ways, what Camilla and Maria tell us about learning to be tough and repressing your fear is probably something that describes what many boys must also go through to really become 'one of the boys'. But there is an important difference. Although Camilla and Maria did their best to prove that they were different from such weak creatures as the YWCA girls, they could not escape their gender. The boys defined them as girls and bunched them together with these contemptible girls. Even though Camilla had a black belt in karate, she was seen as weak - simply because she embodied the wrong gender. Maria told me at camp how surprised some of the boys were to see her chop wood. They did not think she had the strength to do it, and stood in a ring around her and watched her. But she had been chopping wood for years! The boys also mentioned this episode to illustrate that Maria was an amazingly good Scout. What annoyed Maria most was that they were not aware that it was their own mental models that were the core of the problem:

*Maria: I find it quite annoying that they don't reflect on this. Because I am not the one who has changed, it is they who have not seen it before.*

*Camilla: It is they who have been blind.*

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<sup>186</sup> Nordahl, B. (1994). *Hankøn i skolen*. Århus, Modtryk.

*Maria: It is okay if they say 'I did not know you could do this', if they like what I'm doing. But if they become so surprised, and actually find it a bit odd that I can do these things at all. That is what annoys me, and boys are often like that. It is almost like they don't dare or don't want to know you as a person, they judge you from what you look like.*

The problem of being judged simply on your gender and what you look like, instead of who you are and what you can accomplish, is that, when you are a girl, it quickly comes down to judging your body and appearance. However strong they are, the girls are trapped in female bodies, which define them as sexual objects. The Danish Scouts were the only ones who spontaneously mentioned the body as a drawback of being a girl.

*Maria: Boys have this image when they hear about a new girl, they fantasise that she is totally beautiful, and if she isn't - she isn't pretty at all. Very many boys have this idea of how you should look, like all those porn stars such as Pamela Anderson, you should look like them to be right (...) they just want this over-delicious body and blonde hair and big eyes and full lips*

*Camilla: Whom they will later call a tart.*

*Question: Was this also the case when you first joined this troop?*

*Maria: I don't know... but I always think: 'What do they think, what do they like, what do they think when they look at me? I don't remember it clearly, I just felt that all the boys laughed at me, they looked at me and then they laughed among themselves, it was a bit odd, I don't really know what they think of me.*

*Camilla: I remember, I kept my mouth shut the first month, totally silent, couldn't say a word.*

The boys also mentioned the body as a special problem - for girls. In their view, some of the advantages of being a boy were that you could be freer with your body: you could take off your shirt if you felt hot, you could urinate standing, and you could scratch your body wherever you wanted without people thinking it was wrong. And as we saw in the G-string episode at the troop meeting, the female body becomes visible in a way that a male body does not.

The girls tried to overcome problems such as these by sticking to their self-definition as strong girls, and also by sticking together. Camilla and Maria willingly included the younger, and more easily scared, Julie in their concept of '*luckily we are three strong girls*'. They revealed a heartbreaking combination of heartiness and vulnerability. Camilla said that the boys in the troop were not quite as '*heartless*' as boys at school, but direct action could also be needed here:

*Camilla: Here you know that they have a heart somewhere, they wouldn't really hurt you seriously. They will draw a line somewhere... but, still, it is good that we are three good, strong girls, because they know that if they try [to do something unpleasant], it can easily end up with themselves getting boxed on their ears.*

*Camilla: It is important that the girls stick together. If we did not have each other as support we could easily have broken down one by one and, of course, left the Scout Movement.*

The dream, however, was to be accepted on an equal footing with the boys, and for Camilla and Maria, this dream actually appeared to come true after the game with the hysterical YWCA girls. Camilla and Maria had run hard and had fought with bloodshot eyes and their team won! After this demonstration of force and fighting spirit, the boys saw them in a different way:

*Maria: After that game Camilla and I were not called little girls anymore! Actually, after that camp I think the boys looked at me in a different way (...) I really like it when the boys look at you as someone like themselves.*

*Camilla: More respect, for sure.*

*Maria: On the last day at camp, Rasmus and Peter even asked us if we would join their patrol!*

*Camilla: They never did that before.*

*Maria: Before it was more like, this girl Maria, she is just odd (...) In their eyes I was just a quiet girl, and suddenly they found out that I wasn't like that at all.*

*Camilla: You have to be able to break through to those boys.*

They described this special event as their '*breakthrough*'. A girl needed to demonstrate that she was tough enough before she could be accepted. When Julie, who was otherwise very silent in the interview, said that the boys told her that the reason she did not manage things was because she is a girl, the other two explained to me:

*Camilla: But that is because Julie has not had her breakthrough like Maria and I had in that game, so that's why she is told this. So was I before. You need a breakthrough with those boys.*

*Maria: You know, the boys are quite nice, but they are also so stupid. They just have this image of you until you do something.*

*Question: But don't the boys need a breakthrough, too?*

*Maria: No.*

*Camilla: No, because...*

*Maria: They have been here.*

*Camilla: Because there are mostly boys, so they just fit in naturally*

*Question: So you have to prove that you are good enough because you are girls?*

*Camilla: Yes, it is one of the disadvantages, because sometimes it can take a really long time. In my case I was here for two years before they understood that I actually could accomplish something. You must prove that you are strong, both physically and mentally (...) It is about gaining respect.*

*Maria: To prove that you can do things and that you are strong.*

*Question: But small boys, shouldn't they prove such things?*

*Maria: Not in the same way.*

*Camilla: They are boys already.*

As a small minority in a very boyish troop, what is on their minds is survival, to get a breakthrough, to get a chance to renegotiate their hopeless gender. But do the Danish girls really want to become one of the boys? As an echo of what we heard from the young female leaders, the girls admitted that there were aspects of their lives that had no place in the troop, such as talking with others about personal matters. There was also some criticism of the boyish toughness. In their view, boys were not good at talking about their feelings, they were scared of what the other boys would say, whereas it was more acceptable for a girl to cry. Boys were not very sensitive - they didn't see other people's problems or needs. They had to be told everything explicitly. The male leaders had a harsh way of behaving, they cut you down if they did not agree with you, and it was certainly a good idea to stay away from the tough TA(m) if you had pains somewhere, they said. The girls described a good leader as someone with more 'female' traits: someone who took other people's feelings into consideration, someone who asked others what they wanted and listened to their opinions, someone who did not just think of him/herself all the time. But a leader should also be able to make activities fun, and they thought boys were better here; they had more imagination. Maria was not sure if she really wanted to become a PL, and wondered if she would be able to make the activities interesting enough for the boys. Camilla, who had become a PA after the camp, would have liked to give it a try, but admitted that it was more difficult for a girl PL to gain respect than a boy PL.

The boys agreed that it was difficult for a girl to have authority as a PL, although they thought it ought not to be so:

*Henrik: My PA does not have the same kind of respect because she is a girl. It is, of course, male chauvinist, but they don't have the same respect for her, and they only take orders from me (...) But I believe that if the PL were a girl and a boy the PA, they would hold the same amount of power. Because in these Scout circles there is not as much respect for a girl as for a boy.*

Gender is significant when it comes to power. Being a PL can compensate for gender, but not to the extent that a girl would ever be above a PA of the superior gender. Unless they had become used to it from a very young age, Henrik said, it was difficult for a boy to take orders from a girl. So, for the sake of the boys in the patrol, at least the PA should be a boy, unless it was an exceptional girl '*with a very good leadership instinct*', who proved herself to be good enough and on whom one could really rely. However, such girls are rare, we understand.

### 3.5 Gender conflicts: *Male chauvinists and girls who lower the standards*

Gender conflicts remain mostly beneath the surface in our Danish troop. The big boys feel assured of their superiority, and the girls are eager to adapt to the masculine norm because they want to be in the troop. The only visible conflicts were big girls teasing (and also comforting) little boys, and little boys teasing little girls. Both boys and girls were in favour of mixed patrols, although the boys were not unconditionally in favour. They appreciated the girls' role as buffers of excessive masculinity and they found that girls might add a different approach to things. Those boys who did not have girls, or only had one girl in their patrol, regretted this. In their view, one learned to relate to girls in Scouting and, in terms of the atmosphere and sense of community in Scouting, mixed patrols were definitely preferable. When it came to competitions, however, girls were a drawback, as they are often weak and slow:

*Henrik: When it comes to competitions it is best to be boys.*

*Peter: We have had weak girls here, two of them have quit, but we have also had slow girls, who delayed us a lot. And it was really a lot, something we couldn't live with. We were very annoyed about it, the standard just went straight down.*

*Henrik: Yes, the girls really delay us! But otherwise, I'll stick to my view that the best patrol is a mixed patrol and that it creates a different kind of community.*

In the observation of a troop meeting, these two boys were also reported to be somewhat irritable towards the youngest boy, and one PA criticised the youngest girl for being slow and bringing down their standards. The TL(m) rebuked him for this, even though the adult leaders actually seemed to foster the aspiration of high standards.

Another problem, according to the boys, was that girls' opinions, valuable as they might be, could also spoil the good atmosphere among boys. Camilla, who became a PA in Henrik's patrol, had been a member of the patrol leaders' council for some while, but it was difficult to really include her. The boys' reflections on this display just about every single item that has been indicated by organisational research when investigating why male organisations tend to exclude women, in spite of their intention to do the opposite. It is about relative numbers, networks, habits, information, culture, and questioning the competence and seriousness of newcomers:

*Question: Is everything fine in the collaboration between boys and girls?*

*Henrik: Not everything is fine, because right now there are more boys.*

*Jacob: When we do the planning it is mostly the boys who do it, because we are not used to collaborating with girls.*

*Peter: The problem is also that many of the boys in the leadership team attend the same school, and Camilla attends another. So it is kind of easy to plan these things at school, and she is not there. And when you get home you don't want to repeat it, because it is actually done.*

*Henrik: And then we get used to her not being there, and our collaboration improves in this way. It is easier because of this (missing) female approach.*

*Peter: When we have the patrol leaders' meetings of the here in the Scout house, she is also very often absent. And I'm afraid it is because she doesn't get the information...She became a PA very suddenly, and I really don't know if she likes the responsibility.*

*Henrik: She has, in fact, no responsibility.*

*Peter: There is also the question of e-mail. She doesn't care about that and the rest of us take that very seriously. There is always a new e-mail about Scouting. We send photos, memories to each other. Also to have something to talk about.*

*Henrik: She doesn't seem to take any initiative to become part of our unit. And we don't take the initiative either by saying: Come, join us, Camilla. We don't do that.*

*Peter: And it is actually also a bit annoying that she has this different approach. When you are many boys and only one girl, and she often has a different opinion. So maybe it is just easier to get things done when everybody has the same approach, and find it fun and laugh. There is also this difference in sense of humour, between me and the girls. It may be more fun to do the planning when boys and girls are apart.*

The girls seemed to prefer mixed patrols unconditionally because of their eagerness to be accepted on an equal footing with the boys:

*Camilla: It is definitely best to be mixed, it improves relations between girls and boys. It makes you more equal, and there wouldn't be so much about what is feminine and what is masculine.*

*Maria: I couldn't stand being in a girl patrol. It would never give me a chance to talk with those boys, they would forever think that I was just this quiet person that I'm really not.*

Playing for time, they seem to be prepared to pay what it cost to be accepted as strong girls in a boy-dominated troop. They saw they were pushed towards gender roles, but also tried to reinterpret it in gender-neutral ways, just like the female leaders did. For instance concerning the role of mothers to the boys:

*Camilla: I don't want that role, so I take care they don't push it on me. But, of course sometimes one has to keep them in control, but you are not a mother.*

At camp they told me about another of their strategies: to let the boys take the lead, and just say stop sometimes, although it made the boys cross. From this perspective it was actually an advantage to be so few girls, they said, because had there been more girls they would have taken the lead, and then the boys would have become even more cross. And when the boys left the cooking to the girls, this was nothing to take seriously:

*Camilla: Cooking is a problem - nobody wants to do it. And here the boys have this tendency to say that cooking is a girl's thing - that is for them to do, and they can do the dishes too, those are things girls do.*

*Maria: But we don't do it, for sure.*

*Camilla: It is good that we are three strong girls, because otherwise we would have given in.*

*Julia: TL(m) says that everybody should share the work.*

*Camilla: But I take it up again later. When they throw other work tasks on us, like, the girls can make the fire, then I reply: But you used to say that we are best at cooking and washing-up, so I guess you had better make the fire!*

*Question: What do you think about the boys telling you to cook and wash dishes?*

*Maria: I never take it seriously. I don't think they really mean it.*

*Camilla: They would never hit us if we don't do it (...) But I must admit that during cold hikes, I really like to get my fingers down in some hot water, doing the dishes really warms you up.*

But both the observations, as well as the testimony of the boys, indicate that the girls actually accepted to do the work that the boys did not feel like doing:

*Mads: Girls are better at forcing themselves to do things. If none of us feels like doing the dishes, they can make themselves do it.*

Thus, the leaders' golden rule that everyone should do as they please seems to apply better to boys than to girls, even though the girls did their best to hide it. When it came to household tasks, the divide between norm and reality was actually recognised much more by the boys than by the girls and the leaders:

*Question: Should boys and girls do the same tasks at camp?*

*Henrik: You don't say that girls are the best at cooking so that they do it, do you? Of course it is shared. I think girls and boys should do the same tasks, because if not they don't get anything out of it. If there is something they don't know how to do, well, then the camp is a chance to learn.*

*Question: And how is it in your patrol?*

*Henrik: In my patrol Camilla does the dishwashing, or at least gets it going. It is this practical, female thing. It is because she takes the initiative to do it. I might say, OK, we must prepare dinner, and then give the task to Camilla because she is better at handling it than I am. And that has been proven. That's how it is. So she gets the household tasks, but we help her, for sure. Otherwise it would be: the women wash up; the boys do knots.*

*(...)*

*Question: Are girls better at some activities?*

*Peter: Generally cooking...no, dishwashing! I take myself to be quite a good cook, maybe not at camp, but at home at least. But doing the dishes, and household work in general, has never been my thing. It has always been something...it refers to something women do.*

Even though the general picture was that the girls willingly adapted to the boys, and were ready to neutralise the significance of gender in their interpretations more than the boys did, they also had some awareness of the asymmetry. When asked about what the worst thing about being a girl was, these hearty girls suddenly turned feminist:

*Camilla: Some of the worst... it is men who are real male chauvinists and think they are the only ones who can do things, I just hate it. If there is someone on TV whom I think is a big male chauvinist, I just stand there yelling: 'Who in Hell is this male chauvinist?!'. Even when my mom is not home, I can yell in front of my father and brother: 'Who in Hell does he believe he is, such a male chauvinist!'. And often, if you say something against these guys, then you get it thrown back like 'Who in Hell is this bitch?!', 'Who does she think she is that stupid chick' or something like that (...)*

*Camilla: Boys may look down on you, this male chauvinist thing about girls are of no value*

*Maria: I actually see (she mentions one of the boys) as quite fascist.*

*Camilla: He can be awful sometimes.*

*Question: Does he look down on girls?*

*Camilla: Yes, sometimes he does, but as I am the PA I can sometimes tell him to shut up.*

For Maria the worst thing was being defined all the time by the boys, not only in terms of gender, but also as an immigrant. She wanted to be seen as a person! When asked about what could be done to improve the relations between boys and girls in the troop, she raised the body problem again:

*Question: Do you have any ideas of what could be done to improve the relationships between boys and girls in the troop?*

*Camilla: (whispers) No.*

*Maria: No, or well, I have a few things, but they probably wouldn't help a lot, because...it will never be like that anyway, I don't think so. But if the boys stopped having these images about these perfect bodies... I mean, Scouting isn't about that, it isn't about that at all! It is about becoming friends, it is not about becoming sweet-hearts. That is really not the reason for joining.*

One may wonder whether this sexualisation of girls, which is only mentioned by the Danes, is actually more prevalent in Denmark because of the liberal attitude to sex in the Danish culture. Or whether it is rather the strong norm of gender equality that makes the Danish girls see and protest against such sexualisation, while it went unnoticed in Slovakia, for instance.

#### **4. Comments on the Danish case**

The Danish situation is a confusing one. On the one hand, we have this very strong discourse on gender equality, individuality and doing as one pleases. On the other hand, this contributed to hiding the actual inequality in boys' and girls' situations. For the two boys who dominated in the interview, gender equality seemed to mean that girls should be allowed to be a good 'number two', or that they were willing to ignore the gender of a girl if she was unusually clever. For the girls, gender equality meant that women had the right to rise to the level of the men, while men could remain as they were. In both cases, the challenge becomes how to improve girls, not boys. To prove themselves as equal beings, the girls eagerly tried to copy the boys and also contributed to hiding the asymmetry inherent in the culture. At the same time, they struggled with their female bodies, which could not escape either gender or the defining gaze of the boys. *Structural gender* is seen in the way that the boys occupied the space, while the girls and smaller and quieter boys were in the wings. The Danish boys did play more of a part in the household tasks, but the girls still had the main responsibility. 'Do as you please' seems to describe the boys' situation better than that of the girls. *Symbolically*, girls were made visible as bodies or as a ridiculous gender, while boys represented the universal norm that set the standard for being a good Scout. *Interactionally*, older boys and leaders dominated. The girls

and the little boys stayed in the wings. The girls tried to get attention by copying the boys' style or by doing the dishes, not by giggling and flirting as we saw in Slovakia. Within the norm of gender equality, such behaviour would have positioned you as a girl, not as the equal being the girls strove to be. From the perspective of *personal gender*, some boys identified very strongly with the masculinity norm and saw girls as moderators of unbridled masculinity, while the quieter boys seemed less concerned with this hegemonic masculinity. Girls left the troop or tried to live up to being strong girls and strove to be accepted as one of the boys. *Potential gender conflicts* may be that Scouting represents a central arena for masculinity confirmation for some boys and that girls may spoil the fun. For girls, there is a ticking bomb in the male chauvinism inherent in the hidden asymmetry.

Seen in relation to the norm of *parity of participation*, one should consider the following problems of *redistribution* and *recognition*:

*Redistribution:*

- As in Slovakia and Portugal, in Denmark we find a mismatch between what is said and what is done. However, since the leaders, as well as the young people, have a much stronger and more conscious discourse on gender equality, the *mismatch becomes all the more conspicuous here*. It seems to me that their relation to the gender equality norm is a very ambivalent one. It would be important for the leaders to analyse this problem more thoroughly, not least on the emotional level.
- An important point would be for the leaders to realise *the schism between norm and reality*, to see the hidden asymmetry behind principles such as 'do as you please', and to acknowledge that not all patterns of interaction can be fully explained as an expression of individual differences. The female leaders seem to be more aware of these problems than the male leaders. Not all work tasks get done if everyone does as they please, and defining the girls' role as moderators in boys' activities is not gender equality, nor parity in participation.
- The culture seems to have some rather *hierarchical structures* that could be reconsidered. It is important to notice that not only the girls and the female leaders, but actually also two of the four boys interviewed had reservations about the hierarchical boy culture of the troop. Considering the limited size of the troop, the focus on the patrol leaders' council could signify the marginalisation of a few girls and small boys.

*Recognition:*

- The *symbolic gender* defining the female gender as ridiculous, incompetent or as sex objects should become conscious and actively opposed. One should become aware of the problems the girls experience *in relation to their bodies*, and the experience they have of being defined by the boys.
- The *boyish culture* prevalent in the troops should be analysed in relation to the adult women's and the girls' desire for a more balanced profile. They do enjoy the 'wild' things, but want something more. The sense of group solidarity is not the same as personal relationships.
- Be better aware of making masculine values and norms universal. *Maybe the tough boys need some improvement, too?* Does keeping up the fun for the boys imply keeping the girls subdued? Or could you keep the fun and let the hierarchy go?
- Having fun is a priority in this troop. Nothing wrong with that, but who decides what is fun? Perhaps different people find different things fun? It also seems that there are boys who do not identify with the toughness. *Who is the troop for?*
- *Does this troop want girls* so much that the men and tough boys could think of changing anything? Or should girls be grateful simply to be allowed to be there?

## 8. GIRLS AND BOYS

### 1. Girls and boys within and between borders

The four empirical chapters show that, in spite of different cultural contexts, there are similarities across the borders. There are similarities in the *age- and gender-related behaviour of the young people*, and there are similarities in the prevailing gender norms in the *educational context of Scouting*. In this chapter I will take a look at the *personal and interactional gender of boys and girls* across the borders and in the final chapter I will analyse the *symbolic and structural gender of the Scout arenas*.

The four troops offer us a fascinating web of similarities and differences between the countries, as well as different cultural frameworks of interpretation of what may be similar or different. We also see individual differences and different subcultures within the cultures: the tough boys, the calm boys, the popular girls, the quiet girls, etc. Generally, however, the results of both the observations and the interviews show that boys were more energetic and daring in physical activities. They took up more space, and received more attention. Girls seemed to be more oriented towards social relations, enthusiastic in many physical activities, but reluctant to take part in the roughest games. They adapted more easily to the boys' activities, but received little attention - except from other girls. The Scout leaders were well aware of the coexistence of overall patterns and myriads of varieties and exceptions. As a consequence, their answers to our questions on gender differences often vacillated between the perspective of the group and the perspective of the individual. One moment they were formulating stereotypes; the next they were stating that it all really depended on the personality of each person.

Instead of an 'either/or' analysis, I would suggest trying to use these perspectives simultaneously, without reducing one to the other. On the one hand, it is certainly true that ideas about the differences between girls and boys are highly over-generalised and infused with normative interpretations and evaluations. The American child researcher Barrie Thorne argues that what we see as typical for boys or girls often only applies to about 50% of them - as a rule the most popular ones in each group. Furthermore, these ways of doing gender are very context-dependent. As Thorne says, children do their gender in the most stereotypical ways *'in crowded spaces with witnesses'*<sup>187</sup>. As argued in Chapter 2, gender and age are categories that children use to make sense of the world, and it is through these that they negotiate their social identities. To do your gender in the 'right' way in the presence of your peers is important for a child's self-esteem and inclusion in the peer group. In less crowded or institutionalised settings, girls and boys often demonstrate a much broader repertoire. Thus, it is important to see the individual variation, the context dependency and also the historically changing expressions of gender, and not reduce the individual to a static stereotype. On the other hand, gendered group cultures exist as social realities, and every single boy and girl must relate to them, either by joining, negotiating or rejecting them. As we have also seen in this study, girls and boys at this age do live in separate worlds to some extent, and it is important for parents and educators to understand what goes on in these worlds.

## 2. Gendered worlds

### 2.1 Gender group cultures

While the individual variation among girls and among boys is widespread and complex, something seems to happen when they are with others of their own age and gender. Boys who are otherwise calm and sensible may suddenly become alert and start to play-fight or compete about who is the best, or the fastest, or the strongest. Girls, who in other situations are self-assertive and independent, may become completely absorbed in what others think of them. The picture contains variations - some boys just prefer to watch the other boys play-fight; some girls do not take an interest in gossiping - but only very few choose to stay away from their same-sex group or prefer the other gender.

Although such age-related gender cultures will always have a local and shifting form, they also display traits that have proved to be more general. We also find these traits in our five troops.

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<sup>187</sup> Thorne (1993):53.



The first is the *gender separation of childhood itself*. From 4 to 12 years of age both girls and boys show a strong preference for playmates of their own gender. This does not mean that they are unable to play with a child of the other gender, but if they have a choice they choose playmates of their own kind.<sup>188</sup> The process starts for girls at around 2 1/2 years of age when they seem to withdraw from boys and prefer other girls. The difference in maturity at this stage may well be the explanation. Boys start to seek other boys' company one year later. The gender segregation reaches its peak from 8 to 11 years of age, and is almost totally dominant in contexts where children are in groups and on their own.<sup>189</sup> The efforts of teachers or parents to increase cross-gender interaction are very seldom successful. The children may do so as long as they have to, but when they are allowed to choose by themselves, the gender divide is quickly reinstated. A little girl of 9 once told me about her teacher's efforts to make them practise gender equality: '*On Monday, Wednesday and Thursday we have to play with the boys - but on Tuesday and Friday we are let off*'. The strong preference for one's own kind was also very clear in all the camp observations in this study. Girls stayed close to other girls, and boys grouped with other boys if nobody told them to do otherwise. We also saw intensity and social coherence in the single-gendered patrols, and more quarrelling in the mixed patrols: boys seemed to have more fun when they were alone, and girls became more active and enjoyed themselves more when the boys were gone. The boys' patrols in Denmark and Portugal, and the situations in Bashkortostan, Slovakia and Portugal where girls worked or talked together without boys may exemplify this. Boys and girls regularly communicated in a friendly way - but if there was no special occasion, both parties withdrew to their home base.

Another well-known trait is the differences in *play styles and modes of communication*. Boys play in larger groups more often than girls and it is especially in such settings that their play becomes physical, rough and competitive. Questions of dominance and hierarchy are often at stake in boys' groups. They challenge each other to risky dares to prove their strength and toughness. In this way a hierarchy is developed among them. Most boys thoroughly enjoy this kind of play, but the likelihood that conflicts will arise is also high, and direct aggression - both physical and verbal - is seen more often in their groups. The tarzanka-jumping and walking on broken glass in Russia, the water fights and fencing in Slovakia, the bragging boys in Portugal, and the grandiose projects and wild fun in Denmark all relate to this kind of boys' culture. Girls are often afraid of boys' physical and aggressive behaviour and they develop strategies to avoid it, for instance by avoiding being in the way of a gang of boys or by ignoring teasing boys.

While most of the girls we met at the camps liked to do physically demanding activities such as hiking, survival tracks, orienteering, etc., the competitive and heroic elements seemed to appeal less to them. In this little episode from the Moscow region camp we see the girls' cool reaction to the boys' heroic approach:

*Forgot salt - discussed what to do. The boys proposed to swim across the river and buy some salt in the kiosk. The girls remarked that the salt would get wet and proposed to ask the neighbours. (Evgeniya)*

Another example was during the Portuguese hike when PL Ana did not hesitate to ask the adults for help to make sure that she took the right road, whereas the boys' patrol relied on their own competence - and lost their way completely. Both boys and girls can play in smaller groups, but girls' groups are often more intimate, and their relationships more personal. Boys identify more with the team or the gang at this age and generally seem to accept the inherent hierarchy. Their groups tend to be more cohesive and this is experienced as a unit demanding loyalty. This different conception of groups and group members was seen in the attitude of two patrol leaders in Portugal when some of the patrol members abandoned the hike: whereas the boy PL saw this as a defeat for the group, the girl PL took an individual perspective and thought it would be best for Hugo to stop so that he would not be exhausted on the following day.

<sup>188</sup> The generalised pictures in this chapter are mainly drawn from my own and Monica Rudberg's books Bjerrum Nielsen, H. and M. Rudberg (1989). *Historien om jenter og gutter*. Oslo, Universitetsforlaget., Bjerrum Nielsen, H. and M. Rudberg (1994). *Psychological Gender and Modernity*. Oslo, Universitetsforlaget., in addition to Maccoby, E. E. (1998). *The Two Sexes: Growing Up Apart, Coming Together*. Cambridge, Mass. and London, Belknap of Harvard University Press. and Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender Play*. Buckingham, Open University Press. The descriptions of boys and girls at different ages are very similar in these books, although the explanations of the patterns found differ somewhat. While Thorne mainly relies on an interactional explanation, Maccoby refers to biology, socialisation and cognition, and Monica Rudberg and I to a psychoanalytical and cultural approach.

<sup>189</sup> Maccoby (1998)

When girls participate in larger groups, the group is often more of a framework around the intimate relationships between friends. The typical girls' game has fewer participants, is more verbal, and is characterised by turn-taking. Conflicts are more indirect, and aggressiveness is expressed with relational means. The girls are generally better at cooperating and mitigating conflicts, and are characterised with what has been called *double-voicing*: while each girl pursues her own interest vigorously, she also negotiates with the partner and takes the other person's wish into account.<sup>190</sup> Whereas, by mid-childhood, boys' groups will often have an explicit, stable and accepted hierarchical structure, the relationships and power structure among girls are much less visible, contested and constantly in a flux.

The third trait is that boys seem much more aware of *distancing themselves from girls* than the other way round. From around 6 years of age many boys are very concerned with maintaining borders, and they also frequently distance themselves more from adults than girls do. This was also found in the observations and interviews in our study. As we saw, girls were generally more interested in - and attentive to - the boys than the other way round. We also saw many episodes in which boys demonstrated their resistance to being drawn into things associated with girls/women (e.g. pink soapboxes, showers and dishwashing); yet even though the girls might have been reluctant, they did not detest masculine activities in the same way (for instance, 'the violent ball game', water fights, tarzanka-jumping and wood-chopping). Whereas the girls interviewed often expressed severe criticism of the boys' behaviour, the boys were often more contemptuous in their views of girls, and such remarks often elicited common laughter in their groups. This does not mean that the boys always talked negatively about girls, but when they did, it seemed to trigger a sense of triumphant fraternity - and this is very different from the way the girls supported each other's indignation when talking negatively about boys. The general finding in the research literature is that boys exclude and objectify others by 'dirty talk' and 'sex talk' more than girls. In Maccoby's words, their groups thereby become '*more sexist, more exclusionary, more vigilant about gender boundary violations by their members, and more separate from adult culture*'.<sup>191</sup>

## 2.2 Age and gender

Many explanations can be given for the gendered cultures, and they do not necessarily exclude each other. Biological differences in the rate of maturity may trigger the separation, and prenatal hormonal priming may underpin boys' rough and aggressive play. But, as argued in Chapter 2, biology neither determines culture, nor the individual case. Social arrangements of childhood, differences in upbringing and in what is seen as normal or desirable behaviour will determine the outcome. Boys' and girls' own use of the gender labels to create meaning and shared culture maintains them or eventually changes them. What definitely calls for a social and psychological explanation is the third trait: the asymmetry between boys' and girls' boundary maintenance towards the other gender. Cross-cultural research on children has found that societies in which men have a significantly higher status than women produce boys who, at an early age and with great effort, try to distance themselves from women and girls, including their own mother.<sup>192</sup> The psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow has suggested that the combination of a societal gender hierarchy and the fact that in nearly all cultures it is women who are responsible for child care may contribute to making femininity dangerous for boys, including on an emotional level. In order to become 'a boy' he must distance himself from what is feminine, but does not have a male model within reach; whereas girls have a model in flesh and blood around. As a consequence, masculinity may be a more fragile identity than femininity, and the need for assuring male superiority in collective forms may be an expression of this. The fear of the strong mother and the allure of the good mother must be counteracted by their joint contempt for, and distance towards, women.<sup>193</sup> Thus, some of the seemingly universal traits of boys' and girls' play in childhood may be due to the social fact that most known cultures have gender hierarchies and family arrangements that make women solely responsible for child care. From this perspective, a change in parental roles would be of great importance for changing gendered cultures, also among children. As long as closeness, care and intimacy remain culturally and personally defined as exclusively feminine, many boys will fear it - including the dishwashing that symbolises it.

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<sup>190</sup> Sheldon, 1992, cited in Maccoby, 1998:49.

<sup>191</sup> Maccoby (1998):77

<sup>192</sup> Whiting and Edwards (1988), quoted in Maccoby (1998).

<sup>193</sup> Chodorow, N. (1989). *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*.

Boys' collective boundary maintenance, their contempt for girls and their fear of being seen as weak, appear to reach a peak in prepuberty (12-13 years of age for boys). In developmental psychology they are often described as male caricatures – restless, greedy and *'with a language that would make a soldier blush'*.<sup>194</sup> At the same time, they are attracted to – and disgusted by – the girls' developing bodies. Whereas the little boys generally accepted the motherly authority of bigger girls (for instance, António in Portugal), and the older boys showed some positive interest in girls (and even admitted that they were better qualified in certain areas), the prepubescent boys seemed to fight their way out of the maternal space to prove their fragile masculinity. In this fight, the approval of other boys gains importance. We saw several of these prepubescent boys during the observation studies: Portuguese Hugo who needed to defend his interest in cooking by claiming that an older boy also said he liked it, or who constantly challenged PL Ana's authority. Slovak Michal who escaped kitchen duties and was supported by the other boys. Danish Mads who quarrelled about exactly how much dishwashing he had to do. We also saw how the different cultural contexts influence the expression of this age-related gender fight: whereas Michal was actively supported by a macho boy culture and escaped from all work, Hugo had to face a culturally more powerful female figure, and Mads' fight was limited to negotiating the smaller details of the sharing of work – as he was in a culture in which the older boys saw it as principally right that boys should take part in the housekeeping. It is interesting to see that the degree of hostility towards girls expressed in the interviews by boys of this age actually mirrored these cultural differences:

*Karol (13 years, Slovakia): Girls are for cleaning the windows (...) I couldn't stand having a girl as my superior.*

*Hugo (13 years, Portugal): They (the girls) impose their little opinions – no, I have to do this, and this, and this (...) Sometimes they cry!*

*Mads (13 years, Denmark): Boys are much better at all the stuff with fire, axes and knives.*

For the girls, the difficult and insecure age in relation to gender is not prepuberty, but puberty. Prepubescent girls (11-12 years of age) are seldom worried about gender. They are a head taller than the boys, they are stronger and very active, and they usually have stable and intimate friendships with other girls at this age. They are not negative about boys the way boys are negative about girls – boys just do not interest them. The weak/strong distinction is not connected to the female/male divide as it is for the boys who try to look stronger than they know they are. The girls still identify with maternal power, which is seen in their good organisational skills and intense interest in dogs, horses and babies. In developmental psychology they have been described as 'Amazons', relying on their own strength, and absorbed in their own projects. We saw them in the observations as the little girls enthusiastically occupied with their own projects (catching frogs, making benches, intently observing what was going on around them), and who were always in pairs of best friends. The lack of interest in boys was demonstrated in the interviews with girls of this age:

*Question: Then, what do you think is worst about being a girl?*

*Teresa (11 years, Portugal): I think there is nothing.*

*Question: There is nothing? You like being a girl and you never thought about being a boy?*

*Teresa: Hell, no!*

The older girls knew what was worst about being a girl: that boys hurt their feelings, did not pay attention to them, or reduced them to their bodily assets:

*Lena (14 years, Russia): A girl is very weak. She can't defend herself... I think boys should understand and treat this with great respect (...) I miss tenderness.*

*Katarina (16 years, Slovakia): Most people do not listen to you. You can say things and nobody cares (...) girls must fight for boys' attention.*

*Maria (13 years, Denmark): Boys have this image when they hear about a new girl, they fantasise that she is totally beautiful, and if she isn't – she isn't pretty at all. Very many boys have this idea of how you should look, like all those porn stars such as Pamela Anderson, you should look like them to be right (...) they just want this over-delicious body and blond hair and big eyes and full lips.*

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<sup>194</sup> Bloss, P. (1962). *On Adolescence*. New York, Macmillan. Bloss took the description from Dostoyevsky who described boys of this age in one of his novels.

In Russia and Slovakia we especially noticed a dramatic difference between the independent and self-assured prepubescent girls, and the insecure pubescent girls who dressed up and waited for the boys' attention. It was not their peers (who were still prepubescent), but the somewhat older boys who paralysed them. Whereas, during childhood, girls will often have refined their skills in intimate relations, autonomy is the developmental task on the agenda in puberty. The boys, who have trained in this since their childhood, become an obvious route to autonomy for the girls, and in this way a girl can also demonstrate her will to gain autonomy from her parents. She tries to attract boys by playing all kinds of 'feminine' cards, and tests out her new sexual power. She wants to be seen as a grown-up woman – but is scared to death she will not succeed. This makes her vulnerable to harassment and condescending remarks from the boys. Social psychologists have indicated a fall in girls' self-esteem at this age, coined in the phrase '*confident at 11, confused at 16*'.<sup>195</sup> They experience the dilemma of making themselves into sex objects: they waver between exposing their bodies in a sexualised way in order to be seen as grown-up and hiding them in order to avoid being the target of sexist comments from the boys.<sup>196</sup> Again we see the interaction with the cultural framework: the Slovak girls, who mostly squealed and giggled, felt overlooked and underrated. The Russian girls were not overlooked, but felt that boys did not understand their need for tenderness. The Danish girls took a critical stand against the standards of the perfect female body – but could not escape them.

The boy's route to the girl is often longer and more devious. Whereas girls may use boys as a route to autonomy, boys may use girls as a route to intimacy. But intimacy is much more dangerous for them than autonomy is for the girls. To begin with, they often approach girls wholly on the premises of the boys' group: girls can tell you how 'open' and 'tender' boys can be in private, only to undergo a regular personality transformation when other boys appear on the scene. Several of the Russian and Slovak pubescent girls mentioned this problem in the interviews. Ivana, from Slovakia, said: '*I hate it when a boy insists to a girl how much he likes her, and when he is among his friends he slanders her, only to appear interesting*'. The sexual dependence on girls that boys so obviously feel is in itself problematic for them – it rouses both the fear of being engulfed by femininity and of being rejected due to a lack of masculinity. This ambivalence gives the encounter with the girl the fragmented and staccato-like character that often hurts girls. In the interviews with boys in this study we do not see any particular interest in the girls on the part of the boys, but the older they were, they more positive they were. As Danish Jakob said, boys' respect for girls improved with age. Some of the other 15-year-old boys also expressed some insecurity towards the socially more mature girls:

*Maros (15 years, Slovakia): If a schoolmate wants to appear interesting to a girl he does something stupid. He would try to draw all the attention to himself to attract others. But it is not intelligent. Girls look disgusted, thinking 'how can he be such a fool!' Boys make fun of everything for no reason.*

As we saw with Portuguese Ana, who teased a boy on his efforts to speak English, the pubescent girl may also use her relational skills to project her own insecurity on boys of her own age. Except for the Russian boys who thought that their girl peers were lazy, the other boys felt that their own laziness sometimes made them fall short of the girls:

*Henrik (15 years, Denmark): I'm too lazy.*

*Jakob (14 years, Denmark): If I were a girl I believe I would be more active. I live with just my mother, and as a boy I can be totally sluggish. I mean, I sleep 12 hours and watch TV for the rest of the time. Nothing else, maybe just change my sitting position...[laughs].*

*Peter (15 years, Denmark) You can tell yourself to pull yourself together, but you don't do it. It's like an obsession. You lie there on the sofa and watch a stupid programme and you can barely be bothered to lift your arm to take the remote control and change the channel. I just lie there for a quarter of an hour, thinking: 'Now, I'll do it', but then I just lie there and never get it done. Nor the homework, either. My impression is that girls just do it. That is a great advantage they have.*

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<sup>195</sup> Gilligan, C., N. Lyons, et al., Eds. (1990). Making connections: The relational worlds of adolescent girls at Emma Willard School. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. (1995). How Schools Shortchange Girls: The AAUW Report. New York, Marlowe & Company.

<sup>196</sup> Orenstein, P. (1995). Schoolgirls. Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap. New York, Anchor Books.

At around the age of 17/18, young people often seem to find the tone again. In modern societies this is a period when individualisation is more important than exploring the meaning of gender, thus both can relax and even search for atypical ways to be men and women. This is especially so today as girls head towards education and a career of their own and can thus reach autonomy in other ways than through a man. The prolonged period of youth, in combination with attention to gender equality, seems to have had an important impact of change, not least when it comes to young girls' development. We see this, for instance, in very active and self-assured girls in the high school classrooms in Scandinavia today. Whereas a common pattern for girls in the 1950s was to give less priority to their female friends once they had a steady boyfriend, many Scandinavian girls today are very conscious about not '*losing themselves*' in relationships with boys and the need to '*prioritise your female friends*' at this age.<sup>197</sup> Still, when they choose to stay with the older boys to whom they were attracted as pubescent girls, they may tend to remain the junior partners. As different age groups are present in Scouting, this may be a problem to take into consideration.

Thus, there seem to be some age- and gender-related traits that are fairly similar across the borders, and which may make sense in relation to developmental psychology and children's play cultures. However, they are interpreted in different contexts, and also handled in different ways. The psychological and social development of girls and boys always interact with the societal context and cultural norms. In all countries, boys' and girls' development are considered to be an objective of educational intervention, but the notion of what is 'natural' for the two genders appears to be a rubber band concept: when you want to interfere, nature has to oblige; if you do not want to interfere, it is excused by the very same nature. Developmental theories are mainly generalisations of empirical findings and, for all we know, they may change when the conditions of childhood and youth - or cultural notions of gender - change.

### 2.3 Relationships and activities

The different group cultures of girls and boys are often interpreted in terms of activity/passivity or engagement/boredom. One reason for this may be that boys' activities and rough physical play are much more visible and audible than the girls' relational projects. Although girls are very active and pursue their interests with just as much intensity as boys, the objective and the methods tend to be somewhat different. Two episodes observed in Russia illustrate this. In the first episode, I became the centre of active relational interest on the part of two prepubescent girls in Bashkortostan:

*We walk to the river. Katya and Sveta, two 12-year-old best friends, carefully adjust their walking speed to mine – they want to get in contact! They think for a long time and then formulate a question in English. They ask me my name and respond that it is 'beautiful!'. Then they ask me what kind of sport I do, and I ask them back. I ask them about their siblings, and they ask about mine (...) We reach the riverside. The boys rush into the water; the girls spread their blankets and invite me to sit down. After our swim they offer me a towel. They also compliment Zhenya on her beautiful swimsuit. Katya and Sveta are wearing exactly the same type of bikini: green with small flowers on them. They give me a shell they have found. (...) On our way back we continue our conversation: Do I have a dog? A cat? What is the cat's name? Zhenya heard them talk enthusiastically to each other in Russian when they got home: 'We can speak English! We know everything about her!'*

In the second episode, boys from the Moscow region tried to establish contact with the girls and the research assistant who was present as an observer:

*Masha, Vitya and Igor found a thick stick, and began breaking it. Masha's efforts were all in vain, but she was standing watching and, from time to time, gave advice. Vitya couldn't do anything. Igor took the thick stick and broke it again and again.... Then he came up to me and suggested I do the same... I didn't want to, but he insisted. I tried but it was impossible to break it (he was so satisfied), and he showed me again how it was possible for him to do it. He did the same 'trick' with Masha - she couldn't break it, either. (Yulia)*

Friendship is important for both boys and girls because everyone needs to have his or her identity confirmed by other people, especially peers. In this regard, both genders are oriented towards relationships and both can act strategically in order to obtain such confirmation. But it appears that what is necessary in order to *feel* accepted and valued by others is often

<sup>197</sup> Bjerrum Nielsen, H. and M. Rudberg (1994). *Psychological Gender and Modernity*. Oslo, Universitetsforlaget.

somewhat different for girls and boys: girls feel valued when they are successful in creating an atmosphere of intimacy and confidentiality in the company of specific others. For boys, it seems more important to ensure that their achievements are seen and admired by others, and the more the better. Girls often try to emphasise the points of *similarity* with others (the green bathing suits, the reciprocal way Katya, Sveta and I asked each other questions about family, leisure, cats and dogs). The goal and reward is the atmosphere created of interpersonal intimacy whereby we become specific persons with specific lives for each other. Igor also wanted to establish contact, but his method was to emphasise his *difference* to others in an area in which he was superior. His reward was the others' admiring gaze. We also saw an incidence of this during the hike in Portugal: for Hugo it was humiliating to give up the hike, whereas for Teresa and the younger boy it was not a problem. For Fátima it was more important to stay with Teresa than to complete the hike. Boys are by no means uninterested in relationships, nor are girls uninterested in activities, but their point of departure in pursuing these things may be different: for girls a relationship is often a *prerequisite* of common activity, whilst the opposite is the case for many boys - for them, doing an activity or competing with each other is a way of *establishing* a relationship. The social anthropologist Sigurd Berentzen has shown how Norwegian preschoolers do gender when they arrive at the kindergarten in the morning: the little girls pick out another girl and ask if they could be together for the day. When the alliance is established, they decide what to play. The little boys arrive and yell out: 'Does anyone want to play football?' And they relate to each other through the game<sup>198</sup>. A girl's activity and reality orientation are directed to a great extent towards the exploration and development of competence within the field of personal relationships. And she is often in better contact with her own feelings, especially those concerned with daring to feel small and weak. We saw this difference in relational competence clearly expressed both in the observations and the interviews. The girls and the women were generally much more aware of emotional reactions and relational processes, and much more advanced in putting words to such experiences. Although the story told by Danish Camilla and Maria about how they had learned to be tough and fearless in Scouting may hold for boys too, it is probably not a coincidence that it was girls who were able to describe it.

For some reason, adults often seem to understand the world of boys better than that of girls. They acknowledge that the boys' bad sides are connected to their strong ones. The aggressive, disorderly, and egocentric behaviour is seen as a tiresome and immature exaggeration of their good sides (energy, enthusiasm, and collective spirit). One has to take the rough with the smooth, and just hope the boys grow out of it. When it comes to the girls, adults seem to disconnect the good and the bad sides. The girls' social skills are highly praised when, from the adults' point of view, they are used in a responsible and mature way, but the adults are less happy with the girls' personal attention to each other, their gossiping and intriguing. Girls represent the eternal 'cackling hens' as the Danish leaders coined it, whereas boys, even though they are hot-headed and aggressive, are seen as more interesting to work with and more honest and direct in their ways of relating to each other. However, the girls' ways of relating to friends and handling conflicts mirror their approach to the world just as much as the boys' do. Furthermore, the negative evaluation of the girls' culture often leads to a somewhat idealised image of what really takes place in the boys' groups. Let us investigate their peer group life from this perspective.

Boys are quick to start playing, whereas girls often spend considerable time agreeing on who is to play with whom, what to play, how to play it, etc. There are two reasons for this. One has to do with the leadership structure: the boys' hierarchically organised groups imply that the leader decides what everybody should do. The girls' groups, which often consist of several pairs of best friends, may be less effective in decision-making, but potentially more democratic: one has to merge the needs and wishes of different individuals before one can take action. The other reason is that, for boys, the point is to get to the activities quickly (as this is their arena for relationships); for girls, the negotiations are in themselves an important way of establishing relationships and paying attention to specific others. The content of girls' friendships with each other is often developed around such agreements and rules - secret ones more often than not - and these often concern who is 'in' with them and who is 'out', who can know about something and who is to be kept out. The exclusion is not necessarily motivated by ill-will against the third party, it is rather the means employed by girls to confirm their private alliance: you mean so much to me that I can be especially considerate of your needs and I don't need anyone else to satisfy mine. This may also explain why girls often prefer dyads: if there are more than two, betrayal and exclusion are possible. Of course, boys may also play in dyads, but their dyads

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<sup>198</sup> Berentzen, S. (1980). *Kjønnskontrasten i barns lek*. Bergen, Sosialantropologisk institutt, Universitetet i Bergen.

seldom have the same psychological foundation as those of the girls, a fact that may be observed when a third boy appears. If he can be fitted into the ongoing activity, he is usually allowed to join in.

The rules for boys' and girls' games are also different. Boys' rules are often more formalised and impersonal, whereas girls' rules tend to be more obviously personal and therefore also changeable - a fact that has given rise to the characteristic allotted to them by moral researchers of being 'opportunists'. Another explanation, however, is that two different concepts of justice are at stake here more than two different levels of moral development. The American psychologist Carol Gilligan has shown how girls/women and boys/men tend to approach moral dilemmas differently. In her studies, for men, justice meant exercising your rights without interfering with the rights of others. Their presumption was a world of separate, but equal individuals, whose interaction must be regulated. For women, justice meant showing care and responsibility for others and for oneself. Their presumption was a world of relations in which moral problems were seen as possible misunderstandings or fractures in human relations that only communication and personal considerations could repair. For the women, men's morality was scary because of its potential justification of indifference to, and irresponsibility towards, others. For the men, women's morality was too personal and diffuse.<sup>199</sup> Gilligan calls this a 'justice of rights' as opposed to a 'justice of care', and her point is that they mirror different, but equally important, aspects of human life that have not only been split, but also valued in hierarchical terms through the social gender arrangement (cf. Chapter 3). In practice, the 'justice of rights' may also find space for personal sympathies and antipathies but, in contrast to the girls' openly personal morality, this must be denied or hidden and legitimised in other ways. In a study of boys at a holiday camp, the Norwegian ethnologist Aslaug Hetle gives some examples:

*If a popular boy loses a fight with an unpopular boy, many interpretations can be found. The unpopular boy broke the rules - he didn't really win. The popular boy chose not to beat him. Or the popular boy is helped in the actual fight by his friends.<sup>200</sup>*

Thus, the 'impersonal' rules can be stretched quite a lot to suit personal sympathies, without the boys involved ever admitting that this was the case. On the contrary, they will be able to make it look as if the system of rules had been upheld - as the unpopular boy is said to have cheated.

The way of handling conflicts is very similar. The boys' much appraised directness may not only entail much more physical violence, but also merciless ridicule, teasing, and stigmatising of girls and 'weak' boys. No wonder some of the boys definitely preferred to have girls in their patrols! Girls use physical violence more rarely. Their weapons are mainly relational because their conflicts are relational and because they are more verbally and socially skilled from an early age. Their orientation towards the relational field makes little girls rapidly become more advanced in the nuances of communication and psychological insight. They often master better than boys the subtler means of communication, and understand the relationship between content, utterance and context. For this reason they often understand the emotional situation of others better, but this can, of course, also be used negatively when they are in conflict: why shed blood or empty each other's bags on the floor when one small remark in the right context and with the right intonation can do the job? It is rather inconsequential when, one moment, adults praise girls' social maturity, sense of responsibility, empathy and 'peace-keeping role', then stigmatise their handling of conflicts the next. As with boys, the rough comes with the smooth, and why should physical violence be so much better than verbal means? In the perspective of today's world situation it would be more reasonable to claim the opposite.

Girls' conflicts often last longer than boys': this is connected to both the means and the objectives. Negotiations usually take longer than a quick war, but there is less collateral damage. Girls' conflicts are more personal because the content of their friendships concerns personal relationships. It has to do with being chosen or not chosen as a person. Whereas boys' conflicts are often more limited in character (e.g. 'Who won this game?' 'Did he break the rules or not?'), the girls' conflicts often involve the status of the whole person. This is a logic adults should know well from their own intimate relations: if your loved one lets you down, appeals to justice and authority do not help much. Repaired communication and renewed trust are the only measures, and these are not achieved in a minute.

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<sup>199</sup> Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a Different voice*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>200</sup> Hetle, A. (1973). Gutter på feriekoloni. *Etnologi*. Oslo, University of Oslo.:22

### 3. Girls and boys – together and apart

Classroom research has demonstrated that when girls and boys are together in the same room, and each follows the rules of his or her gendered culture without interference from the teachers, boys come to dominate the interaction.<sup>201</sup> In this section I will offer a short overview of what this research has revealed and, in the next, I will discuss its relation to what we saw in the coeducational settings of this study.

In general, the situation before puberty is as follows: girls tend, more than boys, to follow the rules established by the teachers and, for instance, tend to speak only if they are asked a question; boys, on the other hand, take more initiative (positive as well as negative). Consequently, boys are more often rebuked, but also receive more positive attention from the teachers. When their initiatives are considered positive and relevant, they often lead to fairly long class discussions. Other boys join the discussion, while girls often merely look on or withdraw and whisper with other girls. When the teacher wishes to conclude the discussion and go on to more structured activity, the girls are called upon to take part (who do so willingly).

The different ways of participating in the classroom conversation make sense when seen in relation to girls' and boys' peer cultures. Girls' relational orientation makes them both more interested in relating to the teachers as human beings and more competent in understanding their demands. The boys' more assertive behaviour may be connected to their more hierarchical and competitive social life, where getting public attention and admiration from the group of boys count more than intimate relations. Scandinavian studies show how boys take the classroom as a self-evident arena for competition (marking their difference from other boys), whereas girls will often have a more reluctant attitude to the public sphere of classroom talk, and look for ways to emphasise similarity in experiences and emotions. When a girl does nevertheless have a try, and speaks in order to say that she has had exactly the same experience as the previous speaker, nothing could be of less interest to the males who are present. It is the same when the girls actually do say something 'relevant to the subject matter' in a traditional sense: they will often pack the subject-element in a personal wrapping - with the result that the teacher, in fact, often entirely fails to notice that this actually was a relevant point.

It is true that not all boys have equal success with the classroom public. Many boys - particularly those who are not from a middle-class background - also have difficulty in expressing themselves in a relevant way in class. They, too, gradually become rather silent in class discussion, but when they cannot manage the competition, their solution is usually to withdraw from it completely. They establish a cosy boys' corner with other boys in the same situation - or shall we say: a fresh boys' hierarchy? They become one another's terms of reference, while what is going on in the classroom scene is viewed and commented upon as though it were a TV programme they were watching. But the little girls who fail to meet the criteria of relevance in public react differently. They want to be noticed by the teacher so much, not because they are more obedient or have more respect for authority than the boys, but because they will go far to obtain and preserve a desirable personal relationship, in the same way that many boys will go far to adjust to an impersonal organisation because it gives them so much satisfaction. Therefore the girls sit still, waiting for the teacher to catch sight of them, which he only does when he takes a look at the time and remembers that he has still not gone through the homework. A Danish study concludes that girls in primary school are '*the putty of the classroom*': schools exploit the girls' orientation towards the interpersonal in order to make classrooms function. However, once classroom norms and routines have been established, and a public space for communication has been established for the boys' academic encounters with the teacher and with each other, the girls become considered as boring and uninteresting students.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> See, for instance, Kelly, A. (1988). "Gender Differences in teacher-pupil interactions: a meta-analytical review." *Research in Education* **39**, Mael, F. A. (1998). "Single-Sex and Coeducational Schooling: Relationships to Socioemotional and Academic Development." *Review of Educational Research* **68**(2). The information in this section is mainly taken from these articles, in addition to Bjerrum Nielsen, H. and B. Davies (1998). The Construction of Gendered Identity through Classroom Talk. *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, vol.3: *Oral Discourse and Education*. D. Corson. Dordrecht/Boston/London:, Kluwer Academic Publishers. and Bjerrum Nielsen, H. (1998). *Sophie og Émile i klasseværelset. Pædagogik - en grundbog til et fag*. J. Bjerg. København, Hans Reitzels forlag.

<sup>202</sup> Bjerrum Nielsen, H. and L. Kirsten (1985). *Piger og drenge i klasseværelset*. Oslo, Pedagogisk forskningsinstitutt, Universitetet i Oslo.



The subtle interplay between the priorities and social orientations of girls and boys, the structure and content of classroom discourse and the response they receive from the teacher can be seen as almost inevitably maintaining and reinforcing the traditional gender order. No study has shown girls receiving more individual teacher attention than boys. In the overwhelming majority of classroom research in the 1970s and 1980s, it was found that, on average, teachers paid less attention to girls than to boys. Across all age sections, school levels, subjects, and socio-economic and ethnic groupings, girls received fewer instructional contacts, fewer high-level questions, less academic and behavioural criticism, and slightly less praise than boys.<sup>203</sup> Male teachers paid slightly more attention to boys than to girls. While girls volunteered to answer questions as often as boys, they were less likely to initiate contact. The boys initiated more contact with teachers in classroom talk, whereas girls tended to contact the teacher outside this context.

Boys seemed to occupy their teachers' minds both in and outside of the classroom. When describing their students, some teachers were reported to have described each boy, then added: *'And the rest are girls'*.<sup>204</sup> This even applied to girls who were outspoken and active in classroom conversation. In a Swedish study, which found girls dominating the conversation in a few of the classes under study, the teachers referred to the active girls as the *'girl mafia'*.<sup>205</sup> Because boys were perceived as individuals who were either more demanding, more interesting or more unruly than the girls, the teaching was planned and executed with them in mind. Generally, girls' better achievement and more cooperative style meant they received less attention:

*The overall picture of teachers' relationships to students of both sexes indicates that the girls do get some praise for their obedience and willingness to please the teacher, but that they pay a price for this by being forgotten and taken for granted, they do not exist as individuals in their teachers' minds.*<sup>206</sup>

These differences in interaction and perception occurred despite teachers' assertions that they did not treat (nor wished to treat) girls and boys differently. They were often unaware of their differential treatment of girls and boys and even disbelieved the evidence when confronted with it. Several studies have found that teachers overestimated the extent of the girls' verbal activity, whereas the reverse applied to the boys. Boys were only considered to dominate when the gender difference was extremely marked.

In recent years, attention has also been directed towards boys' problems in coeducational settings. More boys than girls have behavioural problems in school, and more need special education, especially the working-class boys.<sup>207</sup> The problem of *'failing boys'* has gained more attention and is seen as a consequence of a situation in which girls have gained more confidence because of the rise of equality norms and have become more active than the picture above may indicate. Recent studies from Scandinavian schools suggest that girls speak up more in classrooms today – but that they still keep their relational interests. However, the problem of *'failing boys'* seems to be strongly class-related – middle-class boys seem to have less difficulty in matching the new, self-confident, girls. However, with a majority of female teachers in schools, the atmosphere is characterised more by maternal – rather than strict paternal – authority, and it has been pointed out that the activities and standards at school are taken from the traditional feminine sphere: be good, sit quietly, be considerate, collaborate, verbalise your feelings. Seen from this perspective, the power strategies of the boys may be seen as a response to a situation in which they feel they cannot match the girls' superiority either socially or academically. For instance, boys often complain that adults take the side of the girls when girls and boys are in conflict, or that girls are let off more easily. A Danish author even claimed that boys were *'caught in a matriarchate'*, dominated by women who did not accept boys' ways of doing things.<sup>208</sup> It may be true that the modern school has developed from the strict paternal authority to a milder form of female power. However, other reports tell us that unruly boys are still better able to charm their strict mothers and teachers than girls are (cf. Chapter 2).

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<sup>203</sup> Kelly (1988).

<sup>204</sup> Stanworth, M. (1983). *Gender and Schooling*. London, Hutchinson.

<sup>205</sup> Öhrn, E. (1991). Könsmönster i klassrumsinteraktion. *Göteborg Studies in Educational Sciences 77*. Göteborg, University of Göteborg.

<sup>206</sup> Wernersson, I. (1977). Könsdifferentiering i grunnskolan. Göteborg, Göteborg Studies in Educational Sciences 22. p. 254, (my translation from Swedish).

<sup>207</sup> See, for instance, Epstein, D. e. a., Ed. (1998). *Failing Boys? Issues in Gender and Achievement*. Buckingham, Open University Press. Head, J. (1999). *Understanding the Boys: Issues of Behaviour and Achievement*. London, Falmer Press.

<sup>208</sup> Nordahl, B. (1994). *Hankøn i skolen*. Århus, Modtryk.

Actually, it is female teachers - more than male ones - who become most irritated by the girls' gossiping and relational conflicts; the male teachers hardly notice what takes place in the girls' group. Thus, maternal authority at school does not necessarily give girls greater advantages than boys.

The problem that girls tend to be invisible in classrooms, and that boys suffer from the female atmosphere in school, has again given rise to the question about single-gendered education. Today, the scope is no longer to refine gender socialisation as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but to improve boys' discipline and counteract stereotypical gender roles, especially for girls. The argument has become feministic: coeducation fosters inequalities because 'rating and dating' disturbs the academic work, and because boys are allowed to dominate. Without boys, girls would receive more attention from their teachers, they would feel freer and find more space in which to be active, and would not be imposed the role of calming down boys in the classroom. Single-gendered education seems to improve academic achievements for both sexes, but especially for girls. It is not at all surprising that former youth participants of the '*strong girls' patrol*' in the Danish troop were later recruited as leaders. It is more doubtful whether Camilla and Maria will be among the adult leaders in a couple of years. The problem with single-gendered education, however, is that it also fosters aggressiveness and sexism among the boys. In the Slovak case, in which we had a single-gendered organisation, these traits were seen among the boys, as well as very traditional, girlish, responses from the girls. One of the Slovak girls said in the interview that being in segregated troops made girls feel more embarrassed when they were with boys. Thus, there are drawbacks with segregation, too.

Better results have been obtained when using gender segregation as an educational method within coeducational settings. This means putting girls and boys together on certain occasions and apart on others. In Denmark this has been tested with good outcomes in subject areas that are strongly associated with one gender or the other (physics, computers, gym, sewing, cooking), in classes in which girls are very timid, or in which there is considerable conflict among boys and girls.<sup>209</sup> The idea is to be able to meet each gender's orientation and interests better, to establish a context for learning in areas otherwise dominated by the other gender, and to make the students more aware of gender structures in a coeducational setting. The results have been particularly good for girls, but may also be satisfactory for boys. Girls are given a chance to be more active and realise how much energy they normally use to adapt to the boys, and boys may realise the 'peace-making role' that girls often have. It is especially the quiet boys who miss the girls - as we also saw in the interviews with the Scouts. After a period of segregated teaching and heightened awareness of gender structures, the girls are more active in coeducational settings and boys are more attentive to the girls' right to be heard.

## 4. Gender trouble in the patrol

### 4.1 Border work and identity work

Many of the gender features from coeducational classrooms match what we have seen in our troops. The boys tend to dominate the space, physically and verbally, while the girls adapt to what remains. We saw this, for instance, in the play sequences in Slovakia, during the hike in Portugal, during competitions in Russia, in the public conversations in Denmark. The leaders paid more attention to boys, especially in public settings, whereas communication with girls tended to be more private. According to our observations in the camps, it was especially the male leaders who seemed to pay very little attention to the girls, although some of the female leaders were also very preoccupied with the boys. This seems to be much the same dynamic as with the teachers: the boys were seen as unruly but interesting, the girls as compliant and a bit boring. In addition, some of the male leaders praised the girls for their role as '*the putty of the classroom*':

*TL(m) (Slovakia): Those girls, their peacefulness can be used everywhere. For example, if I need to make something for the Cub Scouts, maybe some Christmas pictures or a tree, with boys I don't have a chance. They just don't do it, they will not. But the girls, they will do it with pleasure.*

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<sup>209</sup> See Kruse, A.-M. (1992). "...We have learnt not just to sit back, twiddle our thumbs and let them take over'. Single-sex settings and the development of a pedagogy for girls and a pedagogy for boys in Danish Schools." *Gender and Education* 4(1/2). and Kruse, A.-M. (1996). "Approaches to teaching girls and boys." *Women's Studies International Forum* 19(4).

*TL(m) (Denmark): They are in the middle, they have sort of a peace-keeping role, they want everybody to feel good, and have an integrating role here among all those big, terrible, boys and the smaller ones. Such as: Are we now taking enough care of little Peter?*

It seems to be a widespread belief within Scouting that the patrol system is, in itself, a remedy for inequalities.<sup>210</sup> The idea is that a coeducated patrol, based on principles of equality and mutual respect, will lead to positive and respectful relations between girls and boys. What has been taken less into consideration is the border work of boys and the different ways of confirming one's identity according to both gender and age. Often, boys and girls have different preferences concerning what they consider to be amusing activities, and how to confirm one's identity. Whereas many of the boys enjoy demonstrating their strength, being unruly, becoming number one and showing off, many girls are more interested in doing things well, sharing secrets, and including personal relationships in their activities. We saw this most clearly demonstrated in the different cultures of the boys' patrol and the girl-dominated patrol in Portugal: the efficient organisation, and motherly care and attention to individuals in the girls' patrol, and the messy, but relaxed, hierarchical structure of the boys' patrol. Should the patrol be a loyal unit or a gang of friends with personal relationships? Boys and girls tend to choose differently. The boys find the motherly style suffocating, whereas the girls find the boys' obsession with strength, rank and hierarchy rather stupid.

Another problem is what boys' fraternity processes do to girls. The boys demonstrate masculinity to each other, and may use girls as raw material for this, either by deeming them irrelevant, or by increasing collective self-esteem through a condescending attitude to girls. Small boys look to big boys to learn how to behave (cf. Michal in Slovakia and António in Portugal). The girls are placed at the bottom of the boy hierarchy, and the fact of teasing the girls may create coherence among the boys. The nature of the girls' teasing is related more to making themselves interesting in the eyes of the boys, as we saw with Camilla. This also applies to the bigger girls who, individually or in competition with each other, tried to attract the attention of older boys. Some girls also expressed reluctance at taking part in the boys' wild play – as in the Danish girls who left the troop and Julie (who was still there) who was reluctant to take part in the games, the Slovak girls who did not enter the river while the boys were playing, the Russian girls who did not enjoy being targets for snowballs. When crawling over the rope net in Portugal, the girls spontaneously held out the rope for the boys, whereas the boys were only concerned with their own performance. Antonio crawled over the ropes, even though he was afraid, whereas Fátima needed more persuasion. So did Nadya when she jumped the tarzanka.

As a result of all this, the coherence of mixed patrols may be a problem. The difference in numbers is also an important consideration. When one gender is in the minority, they may be given a hard time and, given the membership profile in Scouting, this will most often be the girls. The different cultures of identity confirmation may also make it difficult to overcome: for the Russian and Portuguese boys, for instance, taking over cooking was a threat to the girls' identity confirmation. Girls who try to be strong and clever may be a threat to boys, or risk being seen as unfeminine. As the Russian girls said, a woman with big muscles is not a real woman - she is a man. For girls, the allurements of the weak position may also be at stake: it is nice to be nursed or waited on by big, strong boys.

These aspects also have consequences on their chances of leadership. Boys are more concerned with rank and rivalry. In the Danish boys' patrol, three of the four boys described themselves as leaders! Leadership seemed to be a more serious business to them. They stressed authority and mastery, whereas the girls stressed the ability to listen. Most boys found boys best as leaders – they were more competent, had more authority. This was also the case in Portugal in spite of the fact that it was the 'feminine' leadership abilities that counted in this case! Generally boys found girls too nervous and fussy to be leaders. As Portuguese Hugo explained: *'It is just the way they deal with others, because they are girls'*. In Russia and Portugal, girls were seen as incompetent to become patrol leaders, whereas in Slovakia and Denmark (where boys gave girls more credit for the girls' competence), the argument was that it was hard for boys to have a girl leader. The girls stressed more equality in leadership, but admitted that they found it difficult to assert their authority over unruly boys and that they felt less inventive than the boys. As the Russian and Slovak girls expressed it, the combination of egotistical boys and vulnerable girls makes leadership difficult:

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<sup>210</sup> See, for instance RAP p.78, 153, and the pamphlet Coeducation from 1992, p.4-5.

*Wanda (Slovakia): Boys just tell you, 'Who me? Go away!'. But girls understand it differently. Maybe you can't see it on the outside, but inside she is worrying.*

*Lena (Russia): I'm not against it [girls as PL]... but they can say to her something like 'Go to Hell!'. It will hurt her.*

As we saw in the interviews, boys were more reticent about mixed patrols than girls. The Slovak boys thought that girls would distract them too much and that they would have to refine their behaviour; the Portuguese boys thought that girls would destroy the relaxed atmosphere with their perfectionism and fussiness. The Russian and the Danish boys who were a year or two older found it okay with girls, but also okay without. The girls lowered the standards by being slow, weak and scared, but they also added some kindness, perhaps a soothing element that counteracted the macho culture, and were useful when it came to cooking and dishwashing. The girls criticised the bad and egocentric behaviour of boys, but were generally more positive about mixed patrols because they also found the boys more fun and inventive. The Russian girls also needed them as *'the labour of the patrol'*, whereas the other girls tended to find themselves as the servants of the patrol. Some girls admitted that mixed patrols meant accepting boys' domination, whereas the Danish girls still hoped that mixed patrols would one day lead boys to respect them, as it was only by being together with them that they could demonstrate how clever they were.

What is different in Scouting compared to the classroom is that the group includes different age groups. With few others of one's age there may be no one with whom to create an alliance. We remember Mads and António who sat by the two girls without really entering the circle because they were younger than the other boys. We remember Julie who, as the youngest girl, was harassed by younger boys and did not have an age-mate with whom to counteract this. She was taken care of by the older boys, but they did not confirm her identity as a special person. The prepubescent girls in Russia and Slovakia were strong because they operated in pairs. The combination of age and gender also leads to different dynamics in the patrol. We saw it in Portugal: PL Luis held authority over the younger boys in his patrol and made them do the work, whereas the younger boys of PL Ana's patrol were allowed to escape the work, while the younger girls were put to work. The younger boys in Luis' patrol accepted and even admired his authority, whereas the younger boys in Ana's patrol constantly challenged hers. In Denmark, where the mixed patrol had a boy leader, the girls accepted his control and also did the work. Thus, the age and gender patterns interfered more negatively with the girls' patrol leader position than with boys'. As the Danish boys described it: if a girl were a PL and a boy were a PA, they would have the same authority! The most sensitive age relationship in Scouting seems to be the one between pubescent girls and latency/prepubescent boys. Some 13-year-old boys appeared to have problems respecting a girl leader. It is a very different situation for a girl to be the leader of contemptuous prepubescent boys, than for a boy to be the leader of active, prepubescent girls. Girls respond through motherly control or teasing of the smaller boys – thereby motivating them even more to become like the big ones who do what they want.

This catalogue of possible gender knots in the patrol is probably close to a 'worst case scenario', as it presents together all the different types of problems we saw in all the different troops. The patrol model in Scouting is seen as essential, and for good reasons. It gives young people a free space of their own, and an arena in which they have to take on responsibility and rely on and learn from each other. The survival of the Scout Movement is probably indebted to this educational approach. However, this does not mean that it is without problems, and, in my opinion, the leaders could be more aware of problems that may arise in groups of young people of different ages and gender – hence this 'worst case' list. The principle of *'the autonomy of the patrol'* is unique and positive, but it appeared to me that it might also function as a 'rubber band concept': made relevant in some situations, and not in others. While most leaders considered it acceptable to intervene in the life of the patrol with practical instructions of all sorts, problems related to age and gender were generally overlooked and left to the young people (especially the girls) to solve by themselves.

## **4.2 Gender models and hierarchies**

What impact do the different gender models in the four countries have in relation to the gender cultures of girls and boys? Starting with the experiences of the adult leaders, we see both similarities and differences in the way they described boys and girls, as well as in how they evaluated the characteristics of each gender:

<b>Leaders about girls and boys</b>	<i>Boys positive or neutral</i>	<i>Girls positive or neutral</i>	<i>Boys negative</i>	<i>Girls negative</i>
<i>Russia/ Moscow region</i>	Stronger, whine less, greater endurance, stubborn, supportive of each other, good collective body, generous, more logical thinking.	Active, positive initiative, have ideas, organise things, thrifty, orderly, pay attention to appearances, attentive to each other.	Less self-disciplined, lazy, more negative initiatives, better at executing than at conceiving ideas, disorderly, aggressive.	Weaker, more demanding, whining, capricious, touchy, fussy, absorbed in themselves if in love.
<i>Russia/ Bashkortostan</i>	Have more ideas, eager to do things, humour, wit, competitive, active, the collective aspect is more important, analytical thinking, critical questions.	Loud, nice clothes, careful, the individual is more important.	Do not complete things, always joking, aggressive, showing off their superiority.	More languid, not so interested, more passive.
<i>Slovakia</i>	Stronger, energetic, want to have fun, easily interested, good at organising things.	More patient with theory, explanations and sedate activities, easier to persuade, quiet, peaceful, more emotional, more skilled.	Have stupid hormones, lazy, unruly, hot-headed, emotionally labile, bragging, react negatively, need strictness.	Weaker, sedate, less enthusiastic.
<i>Portugal</i>	Stronger, bigger, direct in conflicts, conclude their conflicts more easily.	Mature, more careful, try to do things well, natural ability for many things, think ahead.	Less careful, want to do things quickly.	More intrigues, stay offended, give more attention to particular individuals, adapt their interests to friends.
<i>Denmark</i>	Stronger, more engaged in the activities, enthusiastic, wilder, fun, accept hierarchies.	Quieter, need time to feel safe, more mature, responsible, engaged in the social side of things, think ahead, have a peace role, take care of people, cosiness.	More egocentric.	Gossiping, 'cackling hens', boring, sedate.

Everybody seemed to agree on boys being *stronger, more energetic and more enthusiastic*, whereas girls were described as *more mature, responsible and careful*. These qualities also function as a negative mirror of the other gender: boys were seen as *lazy, bragging and less self-disciplined*, girls as *weaker, more sedate and less enthusiastic*. These characteristics match some of the general traits in the descriptions of boys' and girls' cultures well.

But there are also differences. There was a tendency for the Danish and Slovak leaders to describe boys with more juvenile qualities, such as wild, fun, enthusiastic, hot-headed, whereas the Russian and the Portuguese leaders put more emphasis on boys' collectivist attitudes and generosity. The Russian and Portuguese girls were described as active, both in their positive and negative qualities, whereas the Danish and Slovak girls were depicted as more passive and

boring. Especially Russia seemed to draw the lines a little differently than the other countries: in Russia, analytical and logical thinking characterised the boys, whereas in the other countries the leaders saw a theoretical approach to things as something more typical of girls. Thus, the leaders' perceptions of girls and boys, seen in relation to the two gender models of complementarity and equality, can be summarised as follows:

	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
<i>All</i>	Enthusiastic, but disorderly.	Responsible, but sedate.
<i>Complementary cultures</i>	Collective, aggressive, direct, analytical.	Individualistic, fussy, organising, capricious, demanding.
<i>Equality cultures</i>	Fun, wild, enthusiastic, egocentric, hot-headed.	Boring, gossiping, passive.

The juvenile masculinity of the equality cultures is also seen in the much stronger identification with boyishness on the part of the Danish and Slovak male leaders. They described themselves as still boys or not grown-up, and they did not hide their immense enjoyment at taking part in this boyish world. Their programmes mirrored this. In Russia and Portugal, the male leaders identified more with an adult or responsible form of masculinity. They were much more concerned with their role as educators in transmitting moral values and contributing to the development of the young people than having fun. Thus, the masculinities in the two gender models might be described as a '*brotherhood culture*' in which women are seen as either irrelevant or as responsible (but boring) adults, and a '*patriarchal culture*' in which women are seen as kind and caring (but also fussy and demanding) children. As we will see in Chapter 9, both models of masculinity/femininity can also be found in the history of Scouting.

We see some of the same general patterns when the young people described gender differences. Let us see how they answered the questions about what was best and worst in being a girl or a boy. The questions elicited views on the characteristics, as well as the advantages/disadvantages of the genders, but the situation of the other gender was mostly seen from the young person's own gender perspective:

<b>Boys about gender</b>	<i>Best in being a boy</i>	<i>Best in being a girl</i>	<i>Worst in being a boy</i>	<i>Worst in being a girl</i>
<i>Moscow region boys (14-15)</i>	Stronger. Men's friendships. Goal oriented. Honest.	Can just sit and eat cakes, easier life, live longer. Loved by everyone. Kind.	Too much confidence. Selfish. Live in a crueler world. Fights, army. Must work, earn money, get tired. Drinking.	Lazy, fussy, stupid, squealing. Dishonest, servile with teachers. Easy to influence.
<i>Bashkortostan boys (11-15)</i>	Stronger, more courageous, more endurance.	Better at cooking.	Nothing.	(not asked)
<i>Slovak boys (13-15)</i>	Stronger, can fight. Collective spirit, has more fun, can do what he wants, relaxed.	Practical, friendly, serious, sensible. Can express emotions without being criticised. More brain.	Puberty is stronger, quick tempered, foolish. Not allowed to be sensitive.	Sentimental, self-focused, easily offended, crying.
<i>Portuguese boys (11-14)</i>	Strong, fast, courageous, adventurous, relaxed.	Maybe more responsible.	Always joking.	Sissies, always afraid, slow. Fussy, bossy.
<i>Danish boys (13-15)</i>	Strong, fast, courageous, throw themselves into things. Free, direct. Freer with his body.	Nothing, except for clean rooms, more showers, sewing her own badges on. More self-disciplined, more logical.	Impulsive, lazy, stubborn.	Are looked down at. Self-centred, intriguing. Weak, slow.

<b>Girls about gender</b>	<i>Best in being a boy</i>	<i>Best in being a girl</i>	<i>Worst in being a boy</i>	<i>Worst in being a girl</i>
<i>Moscow region girls (14-15)</i>	Stronger. Takes initiative, inventive.	Boys pay attention to, take care of, a girl.	The army. Must be tough. Shouts at girls, loses his temper. Lazy.	Capricious. Being the weak gender.
<i>Bashkortostan girls (12-14)</i>	Stronger, more frank, may help you.	More active, better games.	Passive, stupid games, fight, shout at girls.	Shy. Quarrel and scratch other girls.
<i>Slovak girls (14-15)</i>	Can do what he wants, more inventive/creative, more adventurous.	Can express herself. More rational.	Macho, hard, insensitive, must be the best, concerned with his image, cannot express feelings or cry, proud, treat girls as garbage.	People do not listen to you, being ignored, not accepted by boys. Expected to be well-mannered. Conflicts among girls.
<i>Portuguese girls (11-14)</i>	Better at communicating, fun, does things more easily, winner.	More character, powerful, responsible, obedient, does things better.	Jokes, behaves badly, lazy, stupid, stubborn, not responsible. Feels superior to girls.	(not asked)
<i>Danish girls (12-14)</i>	Does not give birth, direct, creative. Holds power over girls.	Can cry.	Male chauvinist, thinks only boys can do things. Not attentive to others, defines others, concerned with girls' looks. Tough, can't show feelings.	You are judged on your gender, pressure to be beautiful. Intriguing.

The Russian/Portuguese boys described a heroic masculinity, whereas the Danish/Slovak boys described a boyish right to do what they felt like and to act before thinking. This is mirrored in what the girls said: the Russian girls described themselves as the centre of things, whereas girls from the other countries lamented that they were looked down upon, but saw themselves as people who could express feelings - something the boys could not. However, when we take a look at what they said about each other, we see that the complementarity model also hosts much anger from boys against girls, whereas the boys' relationship to girls in the equality models was split between recognition and contempt. The boys in the complementarity cultures were quite negative in their depiction of girls: they were seen as incompetent, fussy and bossy. It was only the Russian boys who thought there were any advantages in being a girl: spoiled things with an easy life compared to the hard-working man. Boys from the equality cultures tended more to see girls as more adult and responsible than lazy boys, but also inferior because of their gender.

Compared to the leaders, the young people describe gender much more as an asymmetrical power position. In all of the countries, the girls' situation is more determined by the boys than the other way round: the boys describe girls as contemptible sissies, weak, slow and scared, who might lower the standards. They find this annoying, but it is not made relevant when they describe what is negative about being a boy. Negative aspects of their own situation have to do with their own shortcomings or internal relations in their own gender group. The girls describe the negative aspects of their situation as being much more related to the boys. Boys were described as arrogant, oppressive and badly behaved *towards* girls. Whereas boys may be irritated by girls, girls feel looked down upon by boys. This was clearest with the Slovak and Danish girls – and there may be two different explanations for this. One is that the juvenile masculinity excludes women in a different way than the patriarchal masculinity, and that women lose the chivalry and protection they have in complementarity cultures. Another is that the equality model also makes girls *expect* more equal treatment, and thus allows for their discontent to become more conscious and explicit. It is worth noticing that the negative image of the gender relationship in Denmark and Slovakia also stems from the fact that girls and

female leaders were much more explicitly critical of gender hierarchies, whereas in Russia and Portugal there seemed to be less tolerance for girls who did not comply to their prescribed feminine role. The consciousness of gender mechanisms was also generally higher in Denmark and Slovakia, including on the part of leaders and boys. The Danish boys, in particular, had an impressive knowledge of the illegitimacy of unequal treatment with regard to gender, although they had difficulty in turning this knowledge into practice. What we see here is not a stable gender order, but maybe a new gender order coming into being.

In this change of gender order, the female leaders seemed to play a more active role than male leaders. Across all the countries, male leaders tended to be *more stereotypical* in their gender perception, whereas the female leaders were more aware of the differences within each gender group and saw the line between the groups as more blurred. This matches general research findings that have shown fathers to be more active in their sex-typing of their children than mothers.<sup>211</sup> A second difference is that female leaders generally seemed to be *more critically aware of gender inequalities* in the troop, whereas the male leaders tended to find everything okay as it was, whether they subscribed to a gender dualism or thought that there were no gender differences. When we consider this in the light of another finding, namely that both girls and boys generally seemed *to prefer their female to their male adult leaders*, it is rather thought-provoking.<sup>212</sup> The reasons mentioned for the preference of their female adult leaders were their higher degree of flexibility, understanding, 'modern' attitudes and responsibility. Male leaders were more often seen as strict, hard or juvenile. One may wonder whether the gender models of some of the male adult leaders are actually a bit outdated for young people of today?

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<sup>211</sup> Maccoby, E. E. (1998). The Two Sexes: Growing Up Apart, Coming Together. Cambridge, Mass. and London, Belknap of Harvard University Press.

<sup>212</sup> This concerns their own leaders. When asked generally whether they preferred male or female adult leaders, there were no clear preferences. Almost everyone thought both men and women could be good leaders.



## 9. SCOUTING, EDUCATION AND GENDER

### 1. Gender in Scouting

#### 1.1 Boyhood and Scouting

Scouting was originally created as an activity, and subsequently developed into an organisation, for boys. Like other previously male-only institutions, it later opened its membership to girls and, as we saw in the previous chapter, it displays many of the same problems and dilemmas present in other coeducational settings concerning personal and interactional gender. However, the male culture of Scouting was not only a consequence of the single-gendered organisation – it was also an integral part of its primary objective when it first started. Does this have any impact on symbolic gender in Scouting's culture today? As we heard, Danish Henrik believes it has, and perhaps he has a point.

Scouting was born in a period marked by a great concern for masculinity. It is well known that Baden-Powell (as well as his contemporaries) were gravely concerned about the declining British empire and, to a large extent, considered the situation a result of failing masculinity in men: *'You cannot maintain an A1 Empire on C3 men'*.<sup>213</sup> The British man had deteriorated to a physically deficient figure with a pigeon breast, bad teeth, flat feet, slack will and no self-discipline. Alarms were sounded that as many as 60% of young men were unfit for military service. Only a restoration of manhood, physically as well as spiritually, could save the nation. In Edwardian England, good citizenship and military ideals converged, thus values of *duty, loyalty, self-sacrifice, courage, honour and obedience* became the primary means of building male character. This was also the case in the Scout Movement. The organisation in autonomous patrols with a clear authority structure was taken from Baden-Powell's military experience. The values promoted through the Scout Promise and Law relate to finding one's place in the team: six of the original nine laws were about duty, obedience and loyalty (see Appendix III). From this perspective, Scouting could be seen as a remedy for civilisation: re-establishing the responsible, self-controlled man of the 19<sup>th</sup> century European gender complementarity model, as well as earlier masculine ideals such as the morality of chivalrous knights: with loyalty to God, king and country, help to the weak, reverence to women, and self-sacrifice for them all.<sup>214</sup> In short, Scouting was about making effeminate boys into real men.<sup>215</sup>

However, this is not the whole story - as the Scout Movement could just as well be said to be about making boring men into vibrant boys. B.P. himself as *'the boy-man'*, and his famous words *'When in doubt, ask the boy!'*, indicate another side of crisis-ridden masculinity: man domesticated and made effeminate by civilisation and mass culture. A new cult of masculinity emerged at this time, worshipping a free, playful and wild masculine life: sports, athletics, boxing, games and novels about the Wild West became symbols of men's lost power and excitement, whereas urban life and modern facilities were seen as destructive for the development of masculinity. The doctrine of the inner strength of a man was challenged by a doctrine of the body and physical exercise.<sup>216</sup> The spontaneity, energy and vigour of boyhood became the opposite of over-civilised manhood: *'Boyhood was glorified, boys' vices suddenly became men's virtues'*.<sup>217</sup> In these two masculinity concepts of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, we in fact recognise the *'patriarchal culture'* of responsible man and childish woman, and the *'brotherhood culture'* of juvenile man and responsible - but boring - woman, analysed in relation to the models of gender complementarity and gender equality in Chapters 3 and 8.

One consequence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gender complementary arrangement with 'public man' and 'private woman' was that boys had much less contact with their fathers. They became imprisoned in a female world and potentially turned into whiny little mama's boys.<sup>218</sup> In order to counteract this, many new institutions were created around the turn of the century to nurture

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<sup>213</sup> Baden-Powell, as quoted in Rosenthal, M. (1986). *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement*. London, Collins. p.3. The description in this section of the early Scout Movement is mainly taken from Rosenthal's book and from Warren, A. (1986). "Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout movement and citizen training in Great Britain, 1900-1920." *English Historical Review* **101**: 376-398.

<sup>214</sup> Rosenthal (1986):56

<sup>215</sup> This is still a living ideal in some places. In Berkeley in the spring of 2001, I saw a troop of American Boy Scouts of Cub Scout age, dressed in T-shirts with the slogan: *'We make boys into men'* (if my memory serves me correctly).

<sup>216</sup> Kimmel, M. (1996). *Manhood in America*. New York, The Free Press.

<sup>217</sup> Rotundo, A. E. (1993). *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*. New York, Basic Books.: 256

<sup>218</sup> Kimmel (1996):157

and protect male impulses in the boy, and the Scout Movement can be seen as the most successful of these. B.P. was in tune with his time when, in *Scouting for Boys*, he said that *'Manliness can only be taught by men, and not by those who are half men, half old women'*.<sup>219</sup> B.P. also warned adolescent boys against sentimentalism and *'girlitis'* (which could threaten male comradeship).<sup>220</sup> While man and woman were defined in a complementary relationship to each other in the 'public man – private woman' model, manhood tended now to be seen rather as something created through a relationship among men. In this relationship, women had no place and may even have been seen as a threat. Once a man was hooked in wedlock, freedom was gone forever.<sup>221</sup> More than ever, women came to be associated with unmasculine traits such as weakness, emotions and unreliability. However, a consequence of the boys' organisations was that men had the chance to be together with children again, and were not only confined to being the breadwinners of the family.

It was during this period that boyhood and girlhood emerged as new concepts, and boys' and girls' spheres of education and play became completely separated (including the introduction of the pink and the blue clothes mentioned in Chapter 2). The founder of the new adolescent psychology of the time, Stanley Hall, stated that coeducation would *'virify women and feminize men'* - something that would have the most severe consequences for boys as they would be forced to *'sink to a standard purposely set low for girls'*.<sup>222</sup> Whereas girlhood was modelled on the domestic woman, boyhood was connected to virile ideals and the free, wild, competitive, aggressive life in gangs with other boys outside domestic space. According to Rotundo, boys' lives were thus divided between two spheres: one of cooperation and nurture at home, and one of competition and conflict in the gang of boys. The implicit values of this boy culture were the bravery of *'stoicism and daring'*: suppression of weak and tender feelings connected to the feminine world at home, and an emphasis on courage, mastery and loyalty.<sup>223</sup> Rotundo cites Daniel Beard, the founder of the American Boy Scouts, who remembered that he and his friends scorned boys who *'never went barefoot, wasted lots of time talking to girls, took no hikes, bathed often but seldom went swimming, won prizes at Sunday school but never on the ball field, and bought kites instead of making them'*.<sup>224</sup> The new child psychology of the time interpreted this boy culture as boys' inherent nature: boys were primitive savages, young barbarians, full of animal spirit. It was during this era that the phrase *'boys will be boys'* was coined and boys who did not love to play or march were looked upon as misfits.<sup>225</sup>

The early Scout Movement combined several models of masculinities: the *honour and self-sacrifice* of the premodern knights, the *character* of the responsible and self-disciplined man, and the *vigour and physicality* of the passionate manhood of the end of the century. While this may have been important in view of the general support it had at the time, it does not by itself explain the Movement's success with the boys. The historian Michael Rosenthal concludes his otherwise very critical book with the words:

*It is fair to say that in the three-quarters of a century of its existence Scouting has sustained itself less through the efficacy of its ideology in dealing with national problems than through its ability to interest the young – as well as their elders – in its activities. Whatever its real social aims, it works finally because adolescents continue to find it attractive.*<sup>226</sup>

Thus, an additional way of understanding the boyish nature of the Scout Movement is that it found a form of organisation as well as values that fitted the psychological world of boys at a certain stage: latency and prepuberty. As we saw in Chapter 8, many boy cultures at this age are still to a large extent characterised by activity, mastery, competition, physical play, fights, adventure, gangs, rules and rituals beyond the reach of adults. It comprises boys' groups with a hierarchical and stable power system, an emphasis on solidarity and unity, a fear of weakness, and fierce border work against girls.<sup>227</sup>

<sup>219</sup> *Scouting for Boys*, 1908, as quoted in Rosenthal (1986):266

<sup>220</sup> Jeal, T. (1989). *Baden-Powell*. London, Hutchinson. p.108.

<sup>221</sup> Rotundo (1993):

<sup>222</sup> As quoted in Kimmel (1996): 163

<sup>223</sup> Rotundo (1993): 41

<sup>224</sup> Ibid: 52

<sup>225</sup> Gillis, J. R. (1974). *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations 1770-Present*, Academic Press.:111

<sup>226</sup> Rosenthal (1986):281

<sup>227</sup> There is much concern in the Scout Movement about young people leaving the Movement when they turn 14-15 years of age. According to my argument here, the reason for this may be that Scout culture is in many ways a perfect organisational expression of the psychological world of boys at the latency/prepuberty stage.

## 1.2 Old models in new texts

A considerable effort has been made over the last decades to broaden and modernise the value platform of Scouting, including making it less gender-stereotypical. WOSM has gradually extended the objectives and value platform of Scouting, and not least the underdeveloped 'feminine' side has been given its proper place in its educational publications. The areas of personal growth have been extended from physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development to also include affective or emotional development. RAP<sup>228</sup> provides an explanation for this:

*We consider that the area of emotions and feelings, which is essential to an individual's well being, has generally been somewhat neglected in Scout programmes and should be the focus of renewed interest.*

Affective development is defined as '*recognising one's own feelings and learning to express them*', while the area of social development includes the relational part: '*Developing an appreciation of relationships with others, acquiring communication skills, equal partnership between men and women, rejecting social or nationalistic stereotypes and prejudices*'. Care for others is not mentioned here, but it is found in the interpretation of the organisation's mission statement from 1999 about building '*a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society*'. A '*self-fulfilled individual*' is defined here as '*someone who is able to make his or her own decisions and manage his or her life; someone who actively cares about and for others (...)*'.<sup>229</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 1, RAP acknowledges that whereas girls may need more training in the former, boys may need more training in the latter. However, the educational objectives should ultimately be the same for both.

The closer we come to practice, however, the more the boyhood model takes over. While the general chapters of RAP are carefully gender-balanced, the old model surfaces in the chapters about concrete activities for young people (Activities and Section Methods). In this section we are sometimes taken back very abruptly to the idealised boyhood of the turn of the century, and B.P.'s texts are used as illustrations throughout these two chapters. Values of '*fun, fighting, feeding*' and '*noise, risk and excitement*' are reinstated through these texts, and also through the straightforward statement that if a boy does not match this model '*he is abnormal*'. The patrol model is interpreted in the image of boy culture: '*Scouting put the boys into fraternity gangs, which is their natural organisation whether for games, mischief, or loafing*'.<sup>230</sup> A footnote does remind us that the word 'boy' today should, of course, be read as 'young person', but the problem is that the gender is not in the word, but in the cultural and psychological norm inherent in the text. Thus, the boy in latency/prepuberty is still discernible as the model for Scouting. This age is described as being characterised by three strong interests: '*Love of adventure and exploration; desire to conquer territory and organise it; gang mentality*'. While the first would fit for prepubescent girls too, the last two are unmistakably taken from boys' cultures. The play patterns described for different ages are the boys' versions, and all the books and symbolic frameworks are about boys and men: The Jungle book, Robinson Crusoe, Mark Twain, Ulysses.

## 1.3 Freedom for children – and girls

A reason for the success of the Scout Movement was no doubt that the ideals of masculinities were integrated with the very modern educational ideas of the time. As an officer, B.P. had been an enthusiastic moderniser of the military system, and had dismissed drill-based training exercises in favour of greater personal responsibility and skills in tracking, signalling and riding. He had put an emphasis on individual and small group instruction, as well as on encouraging the officers to pay more personal attention to the welfare of the men. This pedagogical renewal was combined with naturalist ideas of the time about Indians and woodcraft, and his own experience of the importance of games and play from the Siege of Mafeking.<sup>231</sup> B.P. was very critical of the constraints of the contemporary educational system with its narrow syllabus and rote-learning, and its failure to incorporate the development of the whole child.<sup>232</sup> He was inspired by the ideas of the new child-centred and activity-based pedagogy, for instance of John Dewey and Maria Montessori. He saw the patrol system as one that gave clear responsibility to

<sup>228</sup> Renewed Approach to Programme, European Scout Region, WOSM 1998, p.41-53.

<sup>229</sup> Understanding the Mission Statement, WOSM, 2000.

<sup>230</sup> B.P., as quoted in RAP, p.105, 129, and 136.

<sup>231</sup> Warren (1986):381-83

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. 385

the children, thus encouraging cooperation, mutual care and responsibility. He wanted a friendly relationship between adult leader and child, and was in favour of learning by doing, not by instruction: '*an appreciation of the wonders of nature rather than arid Biblical instructions*'.<sup>233</sup> The split in boys' lives between home and peers was also bridged to some extent: as Scouts, the boys were given responsibility for areas that belonged to the female sphere of work such as cooking and sewing, and the Scout Movement encouraged responsible citizenship through public services and spiritual development.<sup>234</sup> Even so, the Scout Movement was clearly developed and organised with boys in mind.

Playing and the free life outdoors did, however, turn out to have great appeal to girls, too. As we have seen, B.P. himself was positive towards accepting girls, but his idea of an ideal girl came close to that of a boy: a female comrade who could walk long distances and was predisposed towards an outdoor life, and who did not indulge in '*silliasity*' and self-advertisement though a feminine appearance.<sup>235</sup> Thus, we discern the prepubescent girl here, more than the pubescent girl. Even though girls were eventually organised in separate associations that offered activities to develop nursing, homemaking and mothering skills, the girls' associations also kept many of the characteristics of the boys' programme. Actually, Agnes Baden-Powell's book for Girl Guides, published in 1912, was almost directly copied from '*Scouting for Boys*' – with some additions and changes. The American historian Laureen Tedesco has shown that the frequent references to males and a male code of honour were not changed in the early versions. As she points out, it must have been a bit strange for Girl Guides to learn that a salute is '*a sign between men of standing*' that can also be used when meeting '*a defenceless person or a lady*'. However, this also allowed them to imagine themselves in roles previously reserved for men. As Tedesco writes: '*it elevated and empowered the girl reader at the same time as it excluded her*'.<sup>236</sup>

Compared to the life of Victorian girls at this time, the Scout programme for girls must have been close to revolutionary. For the first time, middle-class girls were allowed to play boys' games and engage in demanding physical exercises, and many girls seized it as a most welcome alternative to piano and dance lessons.<sup>237</sup> One such girl, who enrolled and later became the head of the girls' association in Denmark, recalls her experiences of becoming a Scout as a young girl in 1911:

*...For the first time we found something that was adapted to our age (...) you were put into small groups, patrols it was called, and here you could make your own plans for what you wanted to do, and you could go on hikes. We could - I know that not all troops were allowed to do this - but our troop leader was generous on this point. We were not allowed to stay out at night, but we could take a hike on Sundays from morning to night, and our parents agreed. And we went alone.*<sup>238</sup>

Another of the Danish girls remembers their worries when they had to join a separate association for girls:

*But one day we got a disturbing message from our parents: if we wanted to continue to be Scouts we had to join an association for girls, which was just being started. Two ladies, the misses Alberti in the Women's Book Club, would arrange 'something for girls who wanted to be Scouts'. We were not happy with the idea. Adults have a tendency to spoil children's play when they interfere, and we did not want to have our play spoiled. But there was no way around it. It was either or.*<sup>239</sup>

Thus, the girls' yearning for free play and adventure was gradually incorporated into the educational objectives. This meant restrictions on their activities and an orientation in a more 'decent' female direction. However, having their own separate associations also meant that Scouting came to be an important arena for training girls in organisational skills and leadership. This might not have happened to the same extent if they had been included in the boys' associations. Historians seem to agree about the progressive role played by Girl Scout and Girl Guide associations, both in revealing a period of youth for young women, and in contributing to

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid:397

<sup>234</sup> Ibid: 397

<sup>235</sup> Jeal (1989):427

<sup>236</sup> Tedesco (1998):28

<sup>237</sup> Romme (1985)

<sup>238</sup> Hanna Lund, interviewed in Romme (1985):185 (my translation from Danish)

<sup>239</sup> Annesofie Hermann 1073, as quoted in Romme (1985): 188 (my translation from Danish).

the gradual change of women's roles during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the American historian Joan Brumberg, the Girl Scouts were among the first to break the Victorian silence on the body, for instance, by giving girls straightforward information about menstruation.<sup>240</sup> Participation in the Movement gave the girls self-confidence and training in a range of areas that were otherwise closed to women,<sup>241</sup> and provided young women with networks that made it safer to leave home in order to pursue an education or take on a job.<sup>242</sup> According to Romme, in the case of Denmark, there was the explicit idea from the very start that Scouting for girls could help to create more equality between men and women in society. Scouting was a way to modernise ideas of girls' upbringing in the Danish middle class. A more robust female ideal with an emphasis on practical skills instead of embroidery and piano-playing was introduced, and the Girl Scout Movement played a part in this change. However, this had to be done in a way that would not be considered too provocative, thus, some of the more boyish customs had to be taken away. There were restrictions relating to the dress code, learning to work outdoors without getting dirty, more order on camps and no sleeping in tents for a decade after a camp in 1916 with bad weather. Nonetheless, the patrol system assured a free space that could not be completely controlled by adults. Romme concludes that there was probably a considerable difference between the official line of '*decent girls*' from the Girl Scout associations and the freedom the girls could enjoy in practice.

So what is the situation today when the girls take part in mixed organisations? Does Scouting still play a progressive role in girls' education? To what extent is '*the boy*' still the icon in the Scout culture, beneath the coeducational objectives?

## 2. One of the boys?

### 2.1 The second sex in Scouting

Just like the first girls in the Scout Movement, the girls we have met in this study joined Scouting for the same reasons as the boys: freedom, friends, fun and adventure. When asked what they enjoy in Scouting, all girls and boys across the four countries mention the activities of outdoor life, being in nature, learning new things and making new friends. Thus, with the present recruitment, making Scouting more girl-friendly does not seem to imply that the main concept of activities should be changed. What *should* be worked on, however, is the symbolic gender and the gender culture surrounding these basic activities. In my view, this means that more attention should be paid to three aspects in the *practice* of Scouting: the perceived dichotomy or *separation* between activities and relationships, the *hierarchy* between activities and relationships, and the *underrating* of girls' competence in activities. As long as these aspects are not addressed, the girls will remain '*the second sex*'<sup>243</sup> in Scouting, left to negotiate their gender on unequal terms with the boys. The effects of symbolic gender are best illustrated by the Danish troop because here, despite the higher general awareness of gender inequalities, we also have the combination of a distinct boyish culture and a clear minority of girls. However, the same basic mechanisms are seen in all the troops and are also generally known from other studies of what happens when women enter male organisations.<sup>244</sup>

#### ***The separation between activities and relationships***

Although boys and girls equally appreciate most activities in Scouting, boys tend to put special emphasis on activities that give them what they themselves call an '*adrenalin kick*' (such as, sports, games, constructions, competitions, etc.), whereas girls tend to stress more *being in nature in an active way* (for instance through orienteering, canoeing, running in the forest, camping, hiking and travelling). This matches quite well what we have learned about boys' and girls' cultures. The girls are generally less inspired by the competitive atmosphere, as things can become too rough, and they want a broader spectrum of activities. From their perspective, a person's worth is not primarily a question of his or her courage and achievements. What the girls appreciate in boys is their inventiveness and cheerfulness, not the strength and

<sup>240</sup> Brumberg, J. J. (1997). *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*. New York.

<sup>241</sup> Romme (1985), Tedesco (1998).

<sup>242</sup> Christensen, H. R. (1995). *Mellem backfishe og pæne piger*. København, Museum Tusulanum.

<sup>243</sup> The title of Simone de Beauvoir's famous book, published in 1949.

<sup>244</sup> See, for instance, Kanter, R. M. (1993). *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York, Basic Books.

competitive performances that boys themselves are so proud of. In fact, it is only the Russian girls who mention strength as an asset of boys, and here it is connected to the expectation that boys must do the hard work that girls cannot do. For the girls, the patrol is not primarily perceived as a unit demanding loyalty, but as a group of individual people who do enjoyable things together. Whereas the activities themselves and the sense of group unity seem to be sufficient for many of the boys, most of the girls in our study directly or indirectly call out for more personal relationships and communication - not *instead* of the activities, but *in addition* to them. Few girls seem to enjoy the military tone, the roughness, the fights, the hierarchies or the tough leaders, but they like activities and adventure. Although it may be age-related, it is still remarkable that we found the most active girls in the troop in Bashkortostan, where the troop culture was warmer and more caring, and less rough and competitive.

In the interviews, the boys are more preoccupied with themselves 'being Scouts', whereas the girls are more interested in relations between people and are generally much more aware of people's different needs. Many of the girls are puzzled by the boys' lack of interest in relationships. As one of the girls expressed it:

*Maria (Denmark): It is almost like boys don't dare or don't want to know you as a person. They judge you from what you look like (...) It was a bit odd. I don't really know what they think of me.*

This was also seen among the young adult leaders: whereas the young women often tried to approach the young men in a more caring and personal way, the young men seemed most occupied with the concrete activities. The girls' approach was seen as something that could spoil things, as, for instance, in the fear that girl patrols would just reduce Scouting to sedate cosiness. We heard about Camilla's approach in the patrol leaders' council, which the boys saw as inappropriate:

*Peter (Denmark): And it is actually also a bit annoying that she has this different approach. When you are many boys and only one girl, and she often has this different opinion. So maybe it is just easier to get done with it when everybody has the same approach, and finds it funny and laughs. There is also this difference in sense of humour between me and the girls. It may be more fun to do the planning when boys and girls are apart.*

The discussion among the Danish leaders about what the 'emotional dimension' in RAP means - the sense of group unity or openness and confidence - and what the point of social relationships is, highlights the difference. For the women it is to be together as persons, but for the men it is to recall their heroic deeds:

*TA(f1): I don't think...well, yes, it also gives me a kick (the wild activities), but maybe I like it best afterwards, when we have built all those things, and we calm down a bit, and have that sense of community where we are sitting together, singing or maybe discussing something like religion. It doesn't have to be ropes and rafts, or very Scouty -, it can also be just meeting with the Clan for a meal some mid-week evening.*

*TA(f2): Or just lying in a big heap on a cabin floor and talking.*

*TA(m): Where you talk about all the stuff you did (...).*

The Danish female leaders are more oriented towards others as individuals and are aware of the effects of the tough and hierarchical culture, whereas the male leaders identify with it and merely consider that people have to put themselves forward if they want to be heard. Activities and personal relationships tend to be seen as mutually exclusive, and the separation is understood as a gender split, despite the fact that some boys also support the girls' wish for a wider-ranging combination.

### **The hierarchy between activities and relationships**

The problem with the girls' approach is not only that it is different, or wrongly conceived as an alternative to activities, but that it is also seen as boring, or not being 'a real Scout'. It is seen as 'cackling hens', Christmas cards and endless flower-picking. As Danish Henrik put it: 'If you don't do big activities, wild activities, it is not real Scouting. Then it is just sitting indoors, making knots'. After all, what really counts in Scouting is to be strong, daring, courageous, competitive, to have a 'daredevil instinct'. Toughness in the troop separates the sheep from the goats, Henrik said - and the goats seem to be the competitive boys, whereas the sheep are female plus some weak boys who are not 'real boys'. When we ask the young people whether boys or girls make the best Scouts, the boys have no doubt: the boys! They find themselves

best at activities such as pioneering, constructions, wood-chopping, making fires, handling the gear, hikes, competitions - in short, *'the difficult tasks'*, as the Portuguese boys explain it. In RAP we may also hear an echo of the boys' talk about 'real Scouting' and boring girls, when the two types of activities in Scouting are described: variable activities are *'aimed at stimulating new experiences, exploration, hiking, building, service to the community, etc'*, whereas the fixed activities are described as repetitive tasks, aimed at *'maintaining the cohesion and smooth function of the group, relaxation games, practical tasks (cooking, supplies, clearing up)'*.<sup>245</sup>

The hierarchy between boys' and girls' interests and needs was also seen by some of the leaders. What the leaders say they enjoy most themselves is identical to what they think boys enjoy, never identical to what they think girls enjoy. The *'emotional dimension'* of RAP is not mentioned as being an important aspect of the work by any of the troops. In the three countries where an intellectual and theoretical approach is seen as more characteristic of girls than boys, the *'intellectual dimension'* is only given importance by the leader of the Slovakian girl troop. In Russia, however, where an intellectual approach is seen as a quality of boys, the intellectual dimension is given importance. Coeducation is seen as positive as it allows girls to take part in boys' games, but single-gendered groupings are considered when girls' special needs and interests are to be met. Thus, girls can, and should, learn from boys, but boys have nothing to learn from girls. Thus, the situation could, in fact, appear to be as Danish Henrik described to us: *'In these Scout circles there is not as much respect for a girl as for a boy'*.

Some boys praise girls for their maturity, responsibility and better approach to tasks, but this is not what Scouting is really about. Thus, it is difficult to say when such characteristics of girls are meant as praise or ridicule. Too many baths and too much cosiness may quickly turn a hero into an ordinary boy. Girls are okay as moderators of the worst effects of male culture and as the moral and responsible guardians. Their self-discipline is also useful when it comes to activities that boys do not want to do, such as drawing, decorating, cooking and washing the dishes, but these qualities are secondary, not essential. They are of no value when it comes to competitions or separating the sheep from the goats. Girls can create a better atmosphere - but they lower the standards, as Danish Henrik bluntly put it.

This way of considering the relationship between 'male' and 'female' activities actually resembles the old ideas of girls as nurses and moral guides to the male soldiers. It is seen in what has been analysed as symbolic gender in the analysis of the troops: successful masculinity is to be strong, tough and heroic; successful femininity is to be invisible, modest, caring and accepting. Even in the strict motherly regime in Portugal, the older girls took responsibility for giving indirect support to the masculine ego of young boys. It is also seen in the role often played by the female leaders towards the male leaders: soothing, caring, admiring and personal. In this respect Scouting appears unbelievably traditional when it comes to gender!

Even though some of the female leaders seem to have adapted to this traditional gender model, very few of the girls we talked to wanted to be pushed into the comforting role. In more or less clear words they fought against it - just as the first girl Scouts fought against being restricted in their activities by a Victorian gender culture. The girls did not join the Scout Movement to be the servants, cooks, cleaners, nurses or the admiring audience for the bravura of the boys. Quite the opposite: these girls joined the Scout Movement because they love outdoor activities and adventure. They want to take part in the fun activities on an equal footing with the boys. We heard many angry remarks in the interviews with the girls about boys' traditional gender thinking: *'He thinks he is God and we are his slaves'* (Russia), *'What does he think he is - some kind of king?'* (Slovakia) and *'It is good that we are three strong girls, because otherwise we would have given in'* (Denmark). So why do they accept it? Do they feel lucky to simply be allowed to attend in spite of being the wrong gender of 'real Scouts'?

### ***The underrating of girls' competence in activities***

The problem they face is that 'to be a girl' and 'to be a Scout' do not fit as well together as 'to be a boy' and 'to be a Scout' do. As girls, they stick out. They have to prove that they are competent *in spite* of their gender. The Danish girls told us that a *'breakthrough'* was necessary, and that one should expect this to take several years. Boys do not have to prove their competence in the same way because they *'just fit in naturally'*. Or to put it more precisely: the boys' right to participate in competitions among boys is self-evident, but the girls' is not. The point here is that even if girls actually *do* have the competence, it has to be proven, and when it

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<sup>245</sup> RAP, p.112.

is, it is seen as an exception that makes the girl *'like a boy'*. Girls must be more careful about what they say or do, because negative things will be ascribed to their gender (cf. Camilla and Maria who did not open their mouths when they first joined), whereas positive things are interpreted as exceptionally good for girls. However, the girls also experience that sometimes they are not even given a chance to prove themselves, because their gender disqualifies them (cf. Maria's frustration about not being considered competent to handle an axe, or the Slovak girls who thought they were always given the least challenging tasks). In the eyes of the girls, the boys hold the power to define who the girls are, without even knowing them!

Almost all of the boys we interviewed found it more typical for boys to be strong, courageous and fast, whereas girls were described as weak, slow and scared. For many of the boys this simply meant that boys are more competent just by virtue of their gender. Among the adults, we also saw these gender stereotypes at work, for instance, through a lack of awareness that many girls were actually bigger and stronger than many boys. As a result, girls are seen as less competent in important areas. They are given easier jobs (which always happen to be the more tedious and boring ones). As the Slovak girls say, the problem is as much that they are *underrated*, as that they are different. This underrating leads to the perpetuation of the system: because boys are seen as so tremendously strong, they get the brief, spectacular and power-demanding tasks, and are excused the more enduring and mundane tasks. And it is the short stunts that are remembered, whereas housework is only seen if it is not done. What will be remembered from the Moscow hike? The two boys who crossed the river with plastic bottles strapped to their bodies to fetch water? Igor who went back alone to buy 30 litres of drinks for the troop? Or that Nadya and Lena spent several hours cooking and doing the dishes?

## 2.2 Negotiating gender

For the girls, *the separation*, *the hierarchy* and *the underrating* mean that their gender is something that must be constantly negotiated: how can a girl be a 'real Scout', when 'a real Scout' is a boy? The paradoxical message she receives is, on the one hand, an invitation to become 'one of the boys' (if she is clever enough) – but, on the other hand, everything she experiences tells her that she will never really be one of the boys, because she is a girl. There are different reactions to this paradox, and we find them in different proportions from all the girls.

One is to *internalise their own secondary status*, and be appropriately modest. Some of the girls express themselves in ways that show that they have accepted that girls are not as clever as boys, but that they should still do their best:

*Fátima (Portugal): Girls can do what boys do, can't they? Maybe not so well, but they can do it.*

They admit that they would probably find it difficult to be good patrol leaders, not only because they have less authority, but also because they think they might be too girlish in their choice of activities. At the same time, the opposite situation is not thought of as a problem:

*Nadya (Russia): The most difficult thing when you are a patrol leader, especially if you are a girl, is to take into account the interests of all the members of the patrol, not to pay special attention to women's interests'.*

*Maria (Denmark): I'm afraid that it might become too girlish, and then the boys would say 'no, we don't want that'.*

A more active variant of this internalisation may be the *'token' position* that one of the Danish leaders described, remembering how she, as a little girl, had been 'nursed' by the big boys in the troop. Everyone knew that she did not meet the boys' standards, but she still enjoyed being the mascot.

Another reaction is to do the caring and service work as a way of becoming accepted by the boys, but to deny that this is what one is doing, or deny the significance of it. This strategy means *contributing actively to concealing one's secondary status*. This was particularly clear with the Danish girls, who were observed doing much of the caring and service work - which, according to the boys, was also the normal state of affairs. When asked about it, the girls admitted there was a problem as nobody liked to do the dishes, but they also claimed that they themselves refused to take on this traditional female role. Or if they did do it, they diminished the gender aspect: why fuss about washing the dishes? After all, your hands get warmed when



it is cold, and a Scout should help wherever she can, shouldn't she? Thus, Scout values can also contribute to making a girl to accept her lot as the second sex.

A third reaction is to really try to *match the norm*, and insist that girls can be as good as boys, if they are just allowed to prove it. Camilla and Maria told us that their strategy was to learn to *'take it like boys'*. Their *'breakthrough'* in the *'violent ball game'* was, symbolically enough, against some sissy, crying girls from a single-gendered troop. The cost of this strategy is the contempt for one's own gender that comes with it. As we saw in the interviews, it was not only the men and boys who described girls and femininity in a negative way – the women and girls also did so to the same extent. Girls coined as *'boring'* and *'gossiping and cackling hens'* came from one of the female leaders, although one of the male leaders did support her strongly by his imitation of cackling hens (*'mimimi!'*). A consequence of this strategy of trying to be 'one of the boys' is that girls and women have to construct a clear and visible line between themselves as exceptional girls and other, more ordinary, girls. When we asked the young people who they thought would fit in or not fit in as a Scout, the boys generally responded that weak and lazy characters would not, whereas the girls were often very specific about which other *girls* would not fit in: those who are easily scared and afraid of bugs; those who are softies and can't take the tough outdoor life; those who indulge in fashion and make-up. And, for the Danish girls, those who refuse to do the dishes if they do not feel like it. It should be noted that this was not the case in Russia where, according to the girls, those who would not fit in as Scouts are self-centred and bragging boys. Here boys and girls are not competing on the same field. The danger of competing on the same field is that you lose the 'handicap' and the 'allowance' that the Russian girls argue in favour of. When you first enter the game, all kinds of tricks may be used, and one of the tricks that the competing girls are defenceless against is when their gender is made relevant by boys: at any time a strong and tough girl may be reduced to her looks and appearance. And this is a trick that the girls cannot use against the boys. This was the problem Camilla and Maria told us about.

A final reaction is to *get angry*. In different ways all the girls express this anger, but they do not seem to know what to do with it – and therefore often return to the other three strategies. Some leave the Scout Movement after a while, whereas others are so fond of the Scout activities and the friendship they have that they take the rough with the smooth – but at what cost to their self-esteem?

As mentioned above, these processes are well known from other settings in which women enter male cultures. It is about relative numbers, networks, habits, information, culture, and questioning the competence and seriousness of the newcomers. However, the problems are exacerbated in institutions that are especially important for the confirmation of masculinity (e.g. the armed forces, rock bands, etc.<sup>246</sup> – and perhaps also Scouting). For some of the boys, Scouting seems to be an arena for proving masculinity. There may be different reasons for this. One is that there is a declining number of such arenas in modern society; another is that, in some countries (Denmark for instance), Scouting is associated with a 'goody-goody' image, which is at odds with most contemporary cultures of masculinities. Thus, the boys must prove their masculinity if they join the Scouts and, in order to match the contemporary culture, the 'wild' masculinity is probably a more obvious choice than older forms stressing self-discipline and chivalry. For those boys who also feel marginalised in other peer cultures where masculinity is demonstrated (for instance through sports, cars, and drinking), the need to prove masculinity through Scouting may be even more of an urge.

If Scouting is not just masculine by tradition, but also represents an important arena for some boys to prove their masculinity, the situation of girls in Scouting is further complicated, as they may be seen as people who may make the boys' efforts to prove their masculinity more difficult (e.g. if girls are more competent than the boys in 'masculine' activities). This adds to the dual message they receive: on the one hand, they should not be too feminine (as femininity is not what Scouting is about); on the other hand, they should not be so tough and strong that they make it difficult for the boys to prove their masculinity. As Henrik and Peter from Denmark explained to us, being a good number two is what a girl could and should be, in order not to hurt the boys' pride. In the complementarity cultures of Russia and Portugal, we saw that girls who were too active and self-conceited (Dasha and Teresa) bore the brunt of the boys' anger. Thus the art is to balance on a fine line – not too feminine, but not too masculine, either. This was what Lena tried to teach the other girls in the interview with the Moscow girls. When one gender has a strong need to confirm its traditional gender identity, an obvious response of the

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<sup>246</sup> Werner, A. (1996). "(U)Seriose damer i forsvaret". *Institut for sosiologi*. Oslo, Universitetet i Oslo., Lorentzen, A. (2001). "Kvinnelige rockartister - kuriøse sjarmtroll eller respecterte musikere?" *Kvinneforskning*(3).

other gender is to do the same: when boys prove their masculinity by being stronger than girls, girls may choose to prove their femininity by being weaker than boys. This certainly may have some satisfactory aspects for the girls, too (especially at the age of puberty and for girls who do not belong to the 'popular girls' in other peer cultures). However, if they also joined because they wanted to transgress the traditional repertoire for girls, this leaves them in a rather contradictory situation.

### 3. Doing equity?

#### 3.1 Recognition and redistribution

An important finding in this study is that the young people experience problems with gender that the adult leaders do not acknowledge. Whereas the leaders seem quite content with the gender models they advocate (whether it is harmonious gender complementarity as in Russia, or universal gender equality as in Slovakia, Portugal and Denmark), and also believe that these models are implemented in practice, the young people tell a somewhat different story. In gender-complementarian *Russia*, boys feel they have to do all the work, -whereas the girls say they have to put on a play of being weak little kittens. There are allurements in this, but also problems. They consider the boys dominating and egocentric and lament that they are not as free as the boys are to take initiatives. In *Slovakia*, where the strong belief in formal gender equality accompanies an equally strong belief in gender-specific paths of biological and psychological development, the boys feel they must live up to being tough young men and as foolish in their eternal adolescent masculinity as they are told is normal. The girls, on the other hand, feel underrated and treated like servants. In *Portugal*, where ideas of formal equality live side by side with an ancient and unsettled power battle between the genders, boys find girls bossy and fussy, whereas the girls' experience is that boys consider themselves superior to girls. In the equality paradise of *Denmark*, where everybody is free to do as they please, the boys admit that they do not live up to the norms of gender equality (and are also somewhat ambivalent towards practising it), whereas the girls feel they are looked down upon and defined by the boys in terms of both competence and appearance.

Referring back to the norm of *parity in participation* introduced in Chapter 3, one may analyse this as problems related to *distribution* and *recognition*. The principle of redistribution is about the right to be equal; the principle of recognition is about the right to be different. Thus, giving consideration to both may provide a joint model for improving justice and democracy within the gender complementarity and the equality models.

#### **Redistribution**

Throughout the countries in our study, girls do more of the repetitive or 'fixed' tasks in Scouting than boys do. This is not a division of work they have chosen themselves, and most of them do not approve of it, either. Some of the boys also have complaints about the distribution of tasks: the Russian boys who believe that they do most of the work, and the Portuguese boys who would like to be allowed to cook more than they do. Girls from Slovakia, Portugal and Denmark experience that their access to work tasks defined as most appropriate for boys is restricted. They want to try out their strength in such activities as wood-chopping and pioneering, and they also protest against the 'protective' underrating of their competence. As one of the objectives in Scouting is to educate young people to take full responsibility for themselves (e.g. by being able to explore and chop wood, as well as by being able to organise meals and wash the dishes), the young people, indeed, make a point here.

When Scouting was single-gendered, boys cooked their meals and washed their dishes, and girls had no problems chopping wood and making a fire. When girls and boys come together in the same arena, gender suddenly gains significance as a framework of interpretation, turning dishwashing into a feminine task, and wood chopping into a masculine task. Thus, the result of coeducation may, in fact, be a reinforcement of traditional gender roles. In a single-gendered troop, active girls are what they are - active girls. In a mixed troop, they become 'like boys'. In a single-gendered troop, doing the dishes would just be a task to be done, whereas in a mixed troop it becomes a contaminated feminine activity. It is truly a paradox if traditional gender divisions of work are reinstated in the name of coeducation and modern gender equality!

This problem is not taken seriously by the leaders, either because they find the division of work natural, or because they only relate to equality on the formal level and leave the follow-up to the young people themselves. In fact, in all of the countries we saw that leaders tended to conceal the uneven work division: in Russia, the leader stepped in quietly and cooked the porridge for the boys; in Slovakia, a male leader and a boy suddenly turned up to serve the food that the girls had spent several hours cooking on their own; in Portugal, where PL Ana made Teresa redo Hugo's bad dishwashing; and, in Denmark, nobody interfered when the girls took over the kitchen duties for the boys. To interfere would be to violate the autonomy of the patrol, the argument goes. Thus, the responsibility for improving gender equality is laid on the young people themselves - in particular on the girls.

But why fuss so much about cooking and dishwashing? There are more interesting things in the world than discussing the dishwashing, as one of the Danish male leaders expressed it. After all, the boys do not lie in hammocks - they contribute in other ways to the community by carrying and chopping wood, and making the fire. There are several reasons to fuss. One is that the two kinds of jobs are not given the same value or social prestige. Whereas the boys are admired for their strong and spectacular contributions, the girls do *invisible and low-prestige work*, thus reproducing their status as boring girls. Thus, 'cooking and doing the dishes' should not be understood only literally, but also in a wider sense: the tasks nobody wants to do. Another reason is that the division of work has *consequences for further participation*: to do a task may increase your qualifications in that area, but it also contributes to lowering your qualifications in others. Thus the more stable a work division becomes, the less probable it is that it will be changed. We have seen boys at play or doing interesting exploring tasks while girls prepared the food and did the dishes. In this way, the image of energetic boys and sedate girls becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. A third point is that the gendered division of work is *not a symmetrical choice*. The girls do the cooking and dishwashing *because* the boys prefer the other tasks. Thus, the idea that everybody can do as they please does not take symbolic and interactional gender into account. The boys learn that one should not do what one does not feel like doing and believe that this applies to everybody. Therefore, when the girls do the dishes, it is probably because they enjoy it. The girls learn that one has to do boring tasks sometimes in order for the group to function. Thus, the idea of responsible girls also becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. When leaders leave young people to do as they please, they do not know what really shapes the division of work. Nobody chooses one's work tasks in a social vacuum. Feeling responsible, seeking the others' acceptance and approval, confirming gender identities in culturally meaningful ways are difficult to single out from personal inclinations.

If one does not want to interfere in the autonomy of the patrol, girls must be given support in other ways in order to defend themselves against being expected to be the service and care workers of the patrol. They should be made aware of the mechanisms in this work division and learn to distinguish better between personal preferences and being nice girls who adapt to others' needs and expectations. First and foremost, girls should learn that they have the same right to be in Scouting as the boys - they do not have to pay for it by providing extra services. The suggestion from the Slovak and Portuguese girls about boys being sent alone to camp could be implemented in the form of gender-segregated duty teams for low-prestige tasks.

At the same time, it is also important to find ways to change the gender-related status of different work tasks. If cooking were the object of as much attention and training as orienteering and pioneering, perhaps its prestige would increase to the extent that even boys would want to do it. This may be difficult with an activity such as dishwashing, so a reasonable solution would be to apply the 'do as you please' principle more to high-status tasks (whatever they are), and be strict with the requirement that everybody should take their share of the low-prestige tasks (whatever they are).

### **Recognition**

Whereas redistribution concerns the right to be equal, recognition concerns the right to be different. This involves both respect for the gender group to which one belongs, and respect for each person's choice as to how he or she wants to express gender and sexuality. Both boys and girls may have problems in this regard but, as we saw in Chapter 8, there is a gender asymmetry - as the lack of recognition for both comes primarily from boys and men. Whereas girls' problems with recognition stem from boys and even leaders, boys' problems of recognition seldom stem from girls. In all four countries, girls experience that they are *looked down upon* by boys, and *reduced to their gender* by both boys and leaders, and they find this at odds with the norms that should prevail in Scouting:

*Claudia (Portugal): Boys feel superior to girls, and I think that is something that has no place in Scouting, does it?*

*Maria (Denmark): If boys stopped having these images about these perfect bodies...I mean, Scouting isn't about that, it isn't about that at all! It is about becoming friends - it is not about becoming sweethearts. That is really not the reason for joining.*

To be reduced to your gender means that standards of what you should be or do are based solely on the gender category, whereas your individuality is disregarded. This can be seen, for instance, in expectations that girls should, or should not do, or cannot do certain things - or it may be expressed through double standards. Both leaders and boys apply such double standards but, according to the girls, it is the boys who make one's appearance more important for being successful as a girl. Their developing bodies become the object of interest and scorn on the part of younger boys, while their bodily functions are either ignored by the leaders (as far as I could see - for instance, the fact that girls menstruate at this age (including when they are at camp) was not taken into account) or interpreted in gender-stereotypical ways (weak girls who should not do certain physical tasks).

Solving these dilemmas requires action on two fronts: one is to give status to 'feminine' tasks and values; the other is to try to disconnect these tasks and values from gender, and see them as what they truly are, namely, part of the common human repertoire. This would also be helpful for many boys who risk being seen as 'feminine' if they are not 'tough'. Boys' problems with recognition do not stem from girls, but rather from other boys or adults, or the norm of what 'a normal boy' is. Some of the boys identify with these norms and do not have problems with recognition. However, we also heard other boys contesting the competitive and tough boy culture:

*Emil (Slovakia): A boy cannot prove himself a good Scout if he is sensitive (...) Girls can express their emotions and nobody criticises them for showing their feelings.*

*Igor (Russia): The worst thing about boys is their extreme self-confidence and like you know, egoism (...) See, there are lots of bad qualities, like, maybe impudence, or, that we are too cruel.*

*Henrik (Denmark): Of course the oldest should have the most privileges, because they are the oldest.*

*Jacob (Denmark): I don't think it should be like that.*

Thus, when the tough and competitive boy culture is equated with 'real Scouting', both girls and some boys will experience problems of recognition. It would be worthwhile to consider posing the question of gender differently: perhaps the problem is this kind of masculinity itself, rather than the young persons who do not fit into it? Perhaps the real challenge for the Scout Movement is to find ways to contribute to creating a new kind of masculinity - one that hails from the 21<sup>st</sup> (as opposed to the 19<sup>th</sup>) century.

My point is *not* that we should now stigmatise traditional boy cultures and raise traditional girls' cultures to the new norm. There is nothing inherently wrong with competitive sports, rough physical play, or wild projects, and the attraction towards these activities has the same right to be recognised as that towards all other kinds of activities. Wild boys (and girls), and tough men (and women) are fine - as long as they do not occupy the space at everybody else's expense, or expect special treatment, or the right to be more equal than others. All gender cultures and activities should be recognised, provided that:

- they do not limit others' right to self-expression. Football, fencing and fighting games are fine activities as long as they do not require girls and quieter boys to limit their range of activities. Fencing, fighting and football are no more important or worthy than other activities;
- they are not considered universal. This means that one is aware that not all boys necessarily like fencing, fighting and football, and that some girls do;
- they are not turned into a norm for others. This means that they should not be seen as something that members of a certain gender group should do in order to be a successful member of that group. For example, boys who do not enjoy football, fencing or fighting, and girls who do, are neither abnormal nor deviant.

The problem is when everyday phrases such as '*boys will be boys*', based on an empirical pattern (many boys actually do like football, fencing and fighting), are used to legitimise and

excuse behaviours that limit others, or when they become universalised and normative. The same problem arises when developmental psychology is used as an excuse - as we saw especially in Slovakia and Russia: to blame 'stupid hormones' for rough and sexist behaviour means that boys and men are permitted to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. It might be of more help for the boys if the leaders asked themselves how the boys' striving to confirm insecure identities could be supported in less gender-stereotypical ways?

In order to acknowledge the different participants' right to be recognised, the programme should first and foremost be *varied*. This is not only important in relation to gender, but also in relation to individual differences. People enjoy different things and need to broaden their competence in different directions. These differences do not necessarily follow the person's gender, but often do to some extent. When working with coeducation and for equal opportunities and equal partnership between females and males, one should be aware of the *actual effects* of gender culture, but not *essentialise* these effects (i.e. consider them as universal) in a static and dualistic model of gender. To describe people through sociological categories such as gender, ethnicity or social class can be seen as a violation of each person's unique personality. Without these categories, however, we would lose sight of important social conditions for individual development. This would mean that social and cultural constraints are interpreted as a person's fortuitous or inborn personality, and this may impede the counteracting of injustice and unequal treatment. Sometimes it is helpful for girls to be seen as girls, exposed to the same kind of discrimination and marginalisation. At other times, it may restrict their possibilities for development.

At a time when gender relations in society at large are rapidly undergoing change (e.g. in Europe), we should less than ever expect to find an excessively stereotypical gender pattern among children. We should also be aware that the societal value of what are traditionally seen as gendered competences may be undergoing change. The cultural researchers Ginorio and Huston, who have worked with ethnic diversity in schools in the US, suggest that the concept of '*possible selves*' would be a better educational concept than 'self-esteem'. Whereas the concept of self-esteem tends to be static and decontextualised, the concept of 'possible selves' addresses change within a given social context. The objective is to help young people imagine for themselves potentials and futures in different - but not unrealistic - ways:

*The concept assumes that only in social interactions with others do individuals cultivate beliefs about the pool of possible selves from which they imagine and claim their place in the world.<sup>247</sup>*

As we have seen, the girls often need a little push to take part in courageous activities. It was because of a gentle push that Russian Nadya finally jumped the *tarzanka*, and Portuguese Fátima managed to crawl through the rope net; whereas nobody helped the Slovak girls to join the game in the river, or the Danish girls to take part in the pioneering. It does not help girls to overprotect them or to allow boys to take over the activity from the girls. Girls from all four countries mention this. They praise leaders who encourage them in a sensitive way to expand their limits, and they plead to be trusted to try out things more on their own. As the Slovak girls said: only then would they have the chance to judge things for themselves. As the Portuguese girls said: in this way they could show the boys that they are not the only ones who know how to do it.

### 3.2 Tool box for gender observations

Young people in Scouting are different, the troops and the local contexts are different, and so are the broader cultures of which they are part. It is not possible to establish a specific checklist for more gender-equal Scouting. What I hope this report may contribute to is to make adult leaders understand and analyse gender in a more informed way. I will conclude by offering a few tools which I hope may be of help to leaders who want to improve gender equity in their troop:

- The first thing you should realise is that gender is not only out there, it is also inside your own head. It is a mental model you see things through. Thus, a good start would be to take a critical look at your own ideas in two areas:

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<sup>247</sup> Ginorio, A. and M. Huston (2001). *Si, Se Puede!/Yes, We Can: Latinas in School*. Washington DC, AAUW Educational Foundation.

- what you consider normal and natural when it comes to gender;
- what you consider to be desirable skills and capabilities in the young people in your troop.

To do this, start analysing your own thinking, for instance in the following exercises:

- Make a list of the activities you do in the troop – both the variable and the fixed ones – for instance, orienteering, knots, botany, first aid, hikes, fighting games, cooking, dishwashing, taking care of equipment, cleaning the Scout hut, writing reports, etc.

Score each item according to: 1) What you personally enjoy more or less. 2) How often you do these things. 3) What boys and girls respectively in your troop like or do not like to do. 4) What status these activities have in the Scouting culture to which you belong. 5) Whether these activities are associated with gender in your culture. Example:

<b>Gender in the programme</b>	<i>My preference</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Boys/girls preference</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Symbolic gender</i>
<i>Pioneering</i>	High	On every camp	Both	High	Masculine
<i>The 'violent ball game'</i>	Medium	Every meeting	Boys	High	Masculine
<i>Orienteering</i>	High	Once a month	Both	High	0
<i>First aid</i>	Medium	Once a year	Girls	Medium	Feminine
<i>Dishwashing</i>	Low	Three times a day on camps	Nobody	Low	Feminine
<i>etc.</i>					

- Take a look at your list: How many of the troops' activities are associated with masculinity/femininity? What is their relative frequency? Do activities associated with masculinity generally have a higher status than activities associated with femininity? Are your own preferences mostly in line with the boys' or with the girls' preferences? What 'gender' do the preferences of boys and girls have; what 'gender' do your own preferences have? Would you characterise the culture of the troop as caring and/or competitive? Conclusion: Do boys or girls fit best into this troop? What could you do to broaden the range of activities and the general culture to make it more gender-balanced? What could you do to level out the gender differences in status?
- Make a list of the educational values on which you base your work in your troop – for instance, skills in different areas, helpfulness, autonomy, solidarity, caring, fun, etc. Make the same assessment of these values as above, adapted to this case:

	<i>My preference</i>	<i>How do I work with this?</i>	<i>Boys/girls best</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Symbolic gender</i>
<i>Skills in orienteering</i>	Medium	On hikes	Both	High	0
<i>Fun</i>	Important	Games, fights, rituals, social events	Boys	High	Masculine
<i>Autonomy</i>	Important	Patrol activities	Boys	High	Masculine
<i>Caring</i>	Medium	Patrol activities	Girls	Medium	Feminine
<i>Gender equality</i>	Medium	Work plans	Girls	Medium	Feminine
<i>etc.</i>					

- What characterises boys and girls in your troop? What do you see as positive or negative? What are the consequences for your work?

- Try to be honest: What do you feel about wild girls and shy boys? What do you feel about wild boys and shy girls? What kind of educational steps would you take for each? In what situation might you have different standards for the two - intentionally or unintentionally?
- If you subscribe to a gender complementarity model, you should reflect critically on how many traits you really need in your gender model, and in what ways they may be contradictory to the freedom and individuality of the young people.
- If you subscribe to a gender equality model, you should make an extra effort to be honest in your rating!
- Analyse the composition of your troop: numbers, age relationships. If your troop is unbalanced: what are the consequences for the minority gender or minority age group? Do they have problems? If your troop is balanced in numbers: which group's culture dominates? Do they all receive the same amount of attention from you? Do some of the young people come more to your mind than others when you plan the activities of the troop?
- What are the age ranges and genders in each patrol? Do you have a combination of pubescent girls/prepubescent boys? Are you aware of possible problems in these patrols?
- Make a list of some stereotypical male and female attributes in your culture (strong, courageous etc., versus weak, intriguing, etc.). Think about each young person in your troop and consider which attributes seem to match the individual girl or boy – how many boys or girls are clearly on one side or the other? How many combine qualities from both sides? Is it context-dependent?
- Now it is time to do some observations. Conduct observations of, for instance, a patrol meeting, a troop meeting, a particular activity (e.g. while on a hike, or while dinner is being prepared during the summer camp). Dedicate yourself fully to this task - make somebody else run the programme. Answer the questions from the young people, but do not interfere actively in what they are doing. Forget your role as an educator for the moment. Shift between sitting down and walking around, and make notes on everything you see. Imagine that you have just arrived from Mars and have never heard of Scouting before and want to describe what you have seen to your colleagues back home. Look for structural, symbolic, interactional and personal gender. I suggest that you take them one by one: one observation study where you just look for structural gender, one when you look for symbolic gender, etc.
  - *Structural gender*: Do boys and girls do different activities/tasks? How did that come about? Is the choice of one gender a consequence of the choice of the other?
  - *Symbolic gender*: What kind of femininity and masculinity is praised or criticised, directly or indirectly, by the young people or the adults? Write down every time gender is explicitly mentioned and in what way.
  - *Interactional gender*: Who takes up the physical space and the space of conversation? Who takes initiatives, who adapts? Does anybody seem to have difficulty in getting heard? Are boys and girls putting others into fixed roles? Who gets the attention of the leaders?
  - *Personal gender*: How do different boys and girls fit in with - or contradict - the patterns? What are the limits for behaviour? Does exceeding the limits have different consequences for boys and for girls?
- Next round: make somebody else observe you while you are working with the young people!
- Beware of two traps when you observe or analyse what girls and boys are saying and doing: 1) Making gender relevant where it *is not relevant*. 2) Making gender invisible when it *is relevant*. If you are in favour of gender equality, you should be especially aware of mechanisms that make gender disappear:
  - *Naturalising/normalising*: This is natural (thus there is nothing to note)! For example, boys are stronger, therefore...
  - *Marginalising/making it a coincidence*: This is an exception! Normally girls are much more active, a girl/boy could have done that, too, etc.
  - *Individualising*: This is a specific individual! This particular girl is a very shy person, gender has nothing to do with it.

- *Falsification*: When one boy/girl does once what the other gender does all the time, it is seen 'as the same' (the boy who peeled one potato vs. the girls who peeled potatoes all the time).
  - *Minimising/magnifying*: Minimising behaviour in one gender and magnifying it in another can be a way to see the unequal as equal (boys didn't speak all the time, and some girls were quite active, too).
  - *Making it harmless*: C'mon! It was just for fun! ('Screaming like a girl').
  - *Justifying as freely chosen/blaming*: It was their own choice! It is their own fault (they prefer to be silent, they are not active enough)!
  - *Bad faith*: Justifying a situation based on what was said (but the girls said they didn't mind doing the dishes).
  - *Taking the map as the territory*: for instance, taking intended norms as reality, or taking work lists as evidence of the equal sharing of the work.
  - *Flexible interpretations*: Using different reference frameworks (sometimes the autonomy of the patrol is made relevant – sometimes not). Other *rubber band concepts* may be Scout values, hard work, fun or individual differences.
- Interview groups of girls and boys – *ask the boy, ask the girl!* Perhaps you can use some of the questions from the interview guide in Appendix II.
  - Put all the pieces together and find out what you can do to improve the situation!
  - Good luck!



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## APPENDIX I

### Desk tasks for the research assistants

#### Desk task 1: Write a summary of the Scouting system in your country

Deadline: October 1 2001

The summary should include the following items:

- Short history of the Scout Movement in your country (incl. when and how it became coeducated)
- Describe the structure of the Scout organisation in your country (incl. no. of women/men in leading positions)
- Special features, special problems for the Scout organisation in your country?
- Members – total number, w/m-ratios, different at different age-levels? Is membership declining or increasing? What is the typical age(s) to leave?
- General programme – special features?
- Symbolic framework?
- The progressive scheme?
- Scout promise and Scout law
- How are the Scout handbook (for the young people age 11-15) and the leader's handbook organised?
- How are adult leaders for this age group trained? Objectives of the training.

#### Desk task 2: Write a description of the troop

Deadline: October 1 2001

Include these items:

- Describe the local community (urban, rural, high-income/low-income area, ethnic composition, physical environment, special problems or advantages, etc.)
- How is the group organised? (Different age levels, leader structure, boys/girls, men/women in leading positions etc.)
- Decision-making in the troop – adults/young people – girls/boys?
- Members of the troop – number, sex, age, ethnicity, social class.
- Who are the adult leaders?
- General information about the programme and the activities of the troop.
- Gender features: Differences between girls/boys? Problems?
- Other relevant information in order to understand the situation in the troop?

#### Desk task 3: Write a description of the concrete programme in the troop

Deadline: February 1 and June 1 2002

Keep a diary of the activities of the troop:

- Date
- Describe the content of the activity and how it was organised
- Participants? (patrol, troop, group)
- Who was responsible for planning and implementation?
- If possible: short evaluation
- If possible: gender observations?

## **Desk task 4: Write a summary of the general cultures of gender and childhood in the country**

Deadline: March 1 2002

This summary should have four different paragraphs:

### A. *Find national statistics on the following items* (for Russia: also for the two regions chosen).

Remember to write the year of the figures:

- Women's and men's paid work (% over age 20 who are in paid work, % of married women who have paid work, % full time/part time work – other things of relevance for your country)
- Differences in pay men/women
- Average age for first child
- % of children under age 3 and under age 6 who attends kindergarten
- Divorce rate
- Higher education (% women in higher education)
- List some important educations/professions where women or men are in the majority
- Leading position in work life (public and private sector): % women
- Parliament: % women
- Government: % women

### B. *Gender politics* (check laws and arrangements – ask your local community administration):

- Does your country have a law or other policies concerning the equal treatment of men and women? If so, what?
- Are equal rights for women seen as part of family politics or (also) as a separate issue?
- Is equity an important public and political question? (Is gender equity on the political agenda or is it often discussed in media?)
- What are the rights in connection with maternity leave? (Length of period, payment, father's rights?)
- Other types of parental leave (for instance in connection children's sickness).
- Availability, quality and payment for kindergarten/day care?
- Availability, quality and payment for after-school programmes?

### C. *Gender culture* (your impressions – but try to think a little beyond your own social group, too, and be aware that the items below can vary a lot depending on age):

- How would you characterise typical inter-gender relations?
- How would you characterise typical intra-gender relations?
- What are the limits for what it means to be 'a good woman'? What is 'a bad woman'?
- What are the limits for what it means to be 'a good man'? What is 'a bad man'?
- Is homosexuality culturally accepted? Are gay rights a political issue?
- Violence in the family – prevalence, and how it is understood (normal/abnormal, private matter/public matter, etc.)

### D. *Children and family* (your impressions):

- Would you say family bonds are very important in your culture? Try to describe in what ways.
- What would you say are the central values in child rearing? (E.g. obedience, self-confidence, autonomy. Strict or child-centred? Is physical punishment of children regarded as legitimate?)
- What is 'a good child', 'a bad child'?
- How would you describe the typical child-parent relationship? (E.g. authority, respect, partners.) Economic dependency? At what age do young people typically move away from their family?)
- How would you describe child-adult relationships outside the family? (Relationship to teachers for instance.)
- Different norms for girls and boys in the family?
- Children's inter-gender and intra-gender relations at different ages? What activities can/cannot girls and boys do together? Team sports?
- Special circumstances in children's lives and situation in your country? What impact does this have on Scouting?

## APPENDIX II

### Interview Guides

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE (groups of girls/boys):

[Text in brackets: [ ] is information for the interviewer, not direct questions. Be aware that some questions will be irrelevant in the event of negative answer (e.g. question 13: "In what ways?"). Why? = why/why not?]

[Start the tape-recorder before you give the introduction.]

#### *Introduction:*

Give a short presentation of yourself if not everybody in the group knows who you are. Then do the introduction:

- This interview is part of an international project in which we are comparing Scouting in different countries. We want to know what young people like and don't like in Scouting, and also how girls and boys cooperate. As you know, we have been present at some of your activities (the summer camp, patrol meetings, etc.). Now we want to hear your opinion on these matters.
- I will tape the interview and transcribe it (if necessary, translate it into English) and send it to the leader of the project – she lives in Norway. Nobody else will be allowed to listen to the interview or read the transcripts – neither the other members in the patrol/troop, nor the leaders, your parents or teachers. If the project leader decides to use some of the things you say in her report, she will not mention your name. It is also important that you who are here keep silent on what the others say – OK? (Make sure that everybody gives his/her consent to this.)
- I would like all of you to express your views, so I may now and then put a brake on the most active and call on those who may be more silent. It is fine if our talk takes the form of a discussion as there will probably be different views on things. But take care not to interrupt each other too much – and let everyone speak their opinion. I guess our talk will last for appr. 1 1/2 hours.
- Any questions before we start?

#### **Theme 1: To be or not to be a Scout**

- First I would like everybody to say their name and age, the name of your patrol, how many years you have been in Scouting, and whether your parents are Scouts.
- Can you tell me why you are a Scout, and also what you like best in Scouting? Why? [e.g. activities, relationships, culture]. What do you not like so much? Why?
- What kind of young people like Scouting, do you think? Who would not like it or would not fit in? Why? [Ask them to describe a person who would not fit in.]

#### **Theme 2: Life and leadership in the patrol**

- Tell me about your patrol – for instance, how are the tasks and responsibilities shared? Do some people dominate more than others?
- Do you have any opinions on what is needed to be a good patrol leader? Are boys and girls different as patrol leaders? In what ways? How about male and female adult leaders?
- Those of you who are not patrol leaders yet – would you like to become one? Why? What would you do then?
- Those of you who are patrol leaders/assistants already: What would you say is the most difficult in being a patrol leader? Does it happen sometimes that the patrol members challenge your authority as a leader? In what ways? [Is it boys and/or girls who challenge?]

### **Theme 3: Girls and boys**

- I would like to hear what you think about the relationships between girls and boys. Firstly, do you think girls and boys often behave differently or have different opinions and interests? Can you describe some of these differences? Are you yourself like that? Are your friends?
- What is the best thing about being a boy/a girl? [own gender] What is the worst?
- What would you think is the best thing about being a boy/a girl? [other gender] What is the worst?

### **Theme 4: Girls and boys in Scouting**

- What do you think about mixed patrols versus girls/boys only? Why? [Advantages and disadvantages with either - try to get concrete descriptions and examples.] What do you prefer yourself? Do you have experiences of both? Do you sometimes get irritated by the girls/the boys? [The other gender.]
- How would you describe a good [clever] Scout? Would you say that boys or girls generally are better Scouts? Why? Are girls and boys best at different activities? Do you know of any exceptions to this?
- Do you think boys and girls should do different tasks or share all tasks equally (for instance when at camp)? Why? What about in your patrol? Are you content/discontent with the division of work? If discontent: what can you do about it?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the cooperation between girls and boys in your troop/patrol? Or is everything perfect as it is?

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE (adult leaders):**

The introduction is probably not necessary as the leaders will know about the project, but you should, of course, introduce yourself if you are not already well known to the interviewees.

About anonymity: We will probably use some of your answers in the report. Your names will not be mentioned, but your identity may be difficult to disguise as the troop is known. Therefore: Please be explicit if you have some views that you want to be treated with special confidentiality (this would mean that, in the report, we could write 'a leader says...' without specifying the country).

### **Theme 1: To be a Scout**

- Everybody: name, age, education, profession. How long you have been in Scouting, and for how long you have been a troop leader or assistant troop leader in this troop?
- Can you talk a bit about why are you a Scout and what it means to you? What values in Scouting are the most important for you?
- What aspects/parts of Scouting do you personally enjoy the most/the least?

### **Theme 2: The troop**

- Describe the troop – with an emphasis on its strong and weak sides. Special problems you struggle with?
- How would you describe your educational approach? What do you take into consideration when planning the programme? What kind of activities do you have most/least of? Why? Seen in relation to the six areas of personal growth (physical, intellectual, affective, social, spiritual, character development – for instance as they are described in RAP (Renewed Approach to Programme by WOSM)) - where would you say your programme has its strengths and weaknesses?
- Is it important for you to relate to different needs and interests of different children when you plan or when you interact with them? [Ask for examples.]
- In your experience: do male and female leaders often react/work differently and do they tend to do different tasks (for instance on camps)?

### **Theme 3: Girls and boys in Scouting**

- I would like to hear your experiences on the relationships and cooperation between girls and boys, both generally and in your troop. Firstly, do you think girls and boys often behave differently or have different opinions and interests in Scouting? Can you describe some of these differences? What do you see as their stronger or weaker sides?
- Do you see these differences as something natural, or something that should be addressed through the educational process?
- What is your view on the concept of 'equal opportunities' for girls and boys, women and men?
- Transition from Cub scouts to Scouts, and from Scouts to Venture Scouts: What are the main differences between these three levels, in your opinion? Do you see different problems in the transition for boys and for girls?
- Do you prefer to have girls/boys separated or mixed? Why? What are the advantages/disadvantages of either model? If you were asked to choose: would you prefer to be a leader of boys or of girls? Why?
- Do you think of different needs and interests of boys and girls when you plan the programme or when you interact with them?
- Do you have any good ideas/suggestions for how to improve cooperation between girls and boys in Scouting?



## APPENDIX III

### Comparison of the Scout Law in the four countries

Changes in content in relation to original version are marked in italic.

Original version-B.P. 1908	Russia	Slovakia	Portugal	Denmark
1. A Scout's honour is to be trusted	1. A Scout is honest and truthful	1. A Scout's honour is to be trusted	1. A Scout's honour is to be trusted	5. A Scout <i>is to be trusted</i>
2. A Scout is loyal to the King, to his officers, to his country and to his employers	2. A Scout is <i>devoted to God, parents and leaders</i>	2. A Scout is loyal	2. A Scout is loyal	6. A Scout <i>assumes responsibility together with others</i>
3. A Scout's duty is to be useful and help others	4. A Scout is <i>careful and respects the property of others</i>	3. A Scout is <i>supportive</i> and helps others	3. A Scout is a useful person and <i>does a good deed every day</i>	2. A Scout is helpful
4. A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter to what social class the other belongs	5. A Scout is a friend to everyone, and a brother to every other Scout	4. A Scout is a friend to <i>all good-willing people</i> and a brother/sister to all other Scouts	4. A Scout is a friend to all people and a brother to all other Scouts	
5. A Scout is courteous	10. A scout is <i>polite</i>	5. A Scout is courteous	5. A Scout is courteous <i>and respectful</i>	3. A Scout <i>respects others</i>
6. A Scout is a friend to animals	6. A Scout is a friend to animals <i>and to the whole of nature</i>	6. A Scout <i>protects nature and all valuable creations of humans</i>	6. A Scout <i>protects plants and animals</i>	4. A Scout <i>protects nature</i>
7. A Scout obeys orders of his patrol leader or Scoutmaster without question		7. A Scout obeys his/her <i>parents, superiors and leaders</i>	7. A Scout is obedient	7. A Scout forms his/her own opinion
8. A Scout smiles & whistles under all circumstances	7. A Scout is <i>merry and never gets upset</i>	8. A Scout is <i>cheerful and considerate</i>	8. A Scout is <i>always cheerful</i>	
9. A Scout is thrifty	8. A Scout is <i>modest</i>	9. A Scout is thrifty	9. A Scout is <i>thrifty, sober, and respects the belongings of others</i>	
10. A Scout is pure in thought, word and deed (added in 1911)	3. A Scout is pure in thought, word and deed	10. A Scout is clean in thought, word and deed	10. A Scout is pure in thought, word and deed	
	9. A Scout is <i>industrious and persistent</i>			1. A Scout <i>listens to the words of God</i>