WOMEN IN PRINT: FIVE CENTURIES

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Abstract: *This article presents a literature review on women in the printing industry. It explores the diversity of publications on the subject through a systematic literature search based on Web of Science search. It seeks to identify the reasons why women have been marginalized as workers in jobs with higher prestige and pay. What reasons led to the pay gap compared to men. Who are the successful and talented women, whose work has been overshadowed over the centuries. How women have tried to challenge male domination, what women's movements exist today. The writing draws attention to gender inequality, sheds light on the causes of the current situation and provides good examples of how to break down gender stereotypes. In order to address the gender inequality that is still evident.*

Key words: gender inequality, equal pay, women workers, printing industry, literature review

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As women, printers and managers, the authors have personal experience of the challenges of being a woman. The printing industry is a rather masculine industry and, unfortunately, the principle of equal treatment for women compared to men is often violated. There is still a perception that a man should be paid more because he is the breadwinner. This approach is not only outdated, but it also creates a gender gap and severely limits women's opportunities for advancement. Management positions are still mostly held by men, even though women are now more represented in higher education. This is confirmed by the results of a survey among Hungarian printing companies. A targeted questionnaire survey was carried out in 17 printing companies, covering 32% of all employees in the Hungarian printing industry. The data showed that although the proportion of women in the total population concerned is 43.8% and the proportion of women with higher education is also significant: 51.4%, despite these figures, women are represented in only 32.9% of senior management positions.

Table 1: Proportion of women in each job and skill level by industry sector in Hungary

The proportion of women								
Sector	Of all employees	Of the top managers	Of the middle managers	Of the team leaders	Of employees	Of the high graduated employees	Of the middle graduated employees	Of the skilled workers	Of the employees without profession
Total Industry	43,8%	32,9%	34,4%	31,2%	46,4%	51,4%	40,2%	45,3%	43,9%
Large companies	43,7%	32,6%	37,1%	25,0%	46,8%	54,0%	39,1%	46,0%	37,6%
Small and middle size companies	44,0%	33,3%	30,2%	35,6%	45,6%	47,5%	41,1%	44,3%	54,2%

Women are increasingly graduating from higher education in the printing industry, and the proportion of female graduates working for printing companies is also increasing. According to the Hungarian DPR AAE 2023 database requested from the Department for Education, 60.4% of the graduated (between y. 2014-2021) workers in the printing industry are women. If we look not only at the printing industry but at the Hungarian population as a whole, we can also see the trend that has been observed for decades that

women are graduating from higher education in higher proportions than men. In 2023, 34.7% of women in the total Hungarian population had higher education compared to 24.9% of men (www.ksh.hu, 2023). Furthermore, the average wage gap between men and women is not decreasing, neither between physical nor intellectual workers. It also varies significantly between 20 and 30% (www.ksh.hu, 2022).

In this article, the authors seek to present, through a literature review, some of the challenges faced by women printers, the historical background to the development of this inequality, and to draw attention to the many talented women of excellence who have contributed and continue to contribute to the achievements of the printing industry in the past. This article is part of a larger research project looking at the status and impact of women in the printing industry internationally.

2. METHOD

The literature review was carried out using the the Web of Science search using the keywords "wom* AND print*". The 355 results obtained were analysed one by one for relevance, and the references of the relevant articles were processed, finally 45 relevant publications remained which specially target women in the printing industry, most of them form the English-Speaking Countries.

3. RESULTS

Based on the available writings and works, we can see that researchers started to be concerned about the situation of women and equal opportunities in the printing industry in the 1980s. Several historical reviews have examined what led to the printing industry becoming a masculinised industry. They have consciously sought to identify women in the industry who, despite their achievements and accomplishments, have remained in the background.

The following topics emerged from the literature review.

3.1. Women workers in the printing industry vs. a feminist approach

The question arises of whether to talk about women and their role in the printing industry solely in terms of the positions they hold, or to take a much broader, feminist approach to women as creators and their inspirational and society-shaping power (Werner, 2020). Women themselves often deny being feminists, because there are many negative preconceptions and ideas attached to the term, while many do not actually know what it really means (Hoskin et al., 2017). But it is important to define it for the purposes of the topic, as it will be a recurring concept. Two widely known definitions are available in the literature: Bell Hooks (2014) sees feminism as a struggle against the ideology of domination, in order to prioritise human self-improvement over economic power interests. While in Mies's (1991) approach, feminism also seeks to study and combat the oppression and exploitation of women. The first approach is concerned with broader, more general human rights. In this article we will take Hooks's approach.

3.2 Special women in the industry before the industrial revolution

There have been numerous publications on the extraordinary and successful women who ran printing manufactories before the Industrial Revolution, after losing their entrepreneur husband or father, and thus inherited the family business, feeling responsible for running it to support the family. The history of such successful women had been a concern of professionals in the field of women printers since the first half of the 1900s, and they were motivated to compile bibliographies of the leading women in the field of book production and publishing, such bibliographies were compiled by Stowel (1979) in the field of American book production. Another example from the US is Walker's (1987) collection of outstanding women entrepreneurs, featuring more than a dozen brave women who have successfully led their printing businesses. Beech (1989), in an article published in a history journal, lists a number of successful Parisian women who, through their husbands or fathers, ran a printing business. The key to their success was a significant role played by a successfully transferred network of relationships, while the life cycle of the business showed a different dynamic for women, as a remarriage could mean that the business continued to be run in the name of the new husband. Charlotte Guillard's gripping story of a prominent Parisian Renaissance lady moved Goldstein (2017), but similar events and personalities in England have been explored by Jeffery (2020) and by Limbach (2022) from the German-speaking region. Before the Industrial

Revolution, the opportunities and fate of women, regardless of country or even continent, were similar.

3.3 The role of trade unions in the development of gender inequality

With the industrial revolution, after the spectacular mechanisation of the industry, women were still mainly engaged in a kind of manual labour, as folders and sewers, i.e. in the lower prestige and lower paid tasks of the bookkeeping process (Hunt, 1983; Coultrap-McQuin, 1996). The reasons leading to this situation have been investigated by several researchers, such as Burr (1993), Frances (1991), Thomson (1994). Summarising their results, it can be concluded that the activities of male-dominated unions have contributed significantly to the development of inequality. As an example, Christina Ann Burr (1993) of the History Department at the University of Windsor examined the use of exclusionary strategies towards women in the operation and negotiation of printing unions between 1850 and 1914, which may have contributed to the development of a particular division of labour between men and women that was to be perpetuated over time. By analysing historical documents, Burr has shown that men have acquired better paid positions at the expense of women, using the institution of the trade union to do so, so that gender interests have prevailed over class interests in the functioning of the organisation. Adding that employers were also unwilling to pay female workers the same wages as male skilled workers. Surviving historical evidence in America also shows that when employers would have hired women for a more prestigious job, male employees refused to take the job (Thomson, 1994). This is how, for example, although the proportion of women in the American printing industry increased significantly after the Industrial Revolution, from 40.8% to 55.8%, the proportion of women in higher paid, more prestigious printing positions was less than 1% (Thomson, 1994).

A similar historical period has been explored by Ava Baron (1989), who in her work has explored how employers in America 'used' female and child labour to weaken the working power and authority of men, such as in the 1835 printers' strike. Naturally, men felt badly about the presence of women and children in the workplace, as they felt their livelihoods and family support were threatened and they were seen as the enemy.

Surprisingly, the situation in union bargaining has not changed much since the early 1900s, as Burr (1993) has studied. Dawson (2014) examined the situation in the 2000s in his research. The results show that issues of equal opportunities and equal pay for women in trade unions were not adequately integrated into union bargaining until 2010. Even when the issue was put on the agenda, the process of negotiations virtually ensured that the issue remained invisible.

3.4 Women's wider impact on the industry (creators, inspirators)

The question arises whether to talk about women and their role in the printing industry solely in terms of the positions they hold. Or should we take a much broader, feminist approach to women as creators and their inspirational influence and society-shaping power. This latter approach is highlighted by Sarah Werner in her 2020 article. In the history of the printing industry, we should not simply talk about the history of women, but about a feminist history of printing. In other words, how different it is from the history of women and printing. In her article, she presents historical examples of how women have also contributed to the creative process.

Significant works of art and innovations in approach throughout history have often not been given sufficient prominence in their own time. It also happened that outstanding works were published under the names of women's husbands, because it was a better 'sell'. In recent years, many researchers, historians and editors have tried to bring these forgotten works and exceptional women to the attention of the general public. Many publications and articles have been published on the subject. In their book Aims and Objectives (2020), Michelle Levy and Sharren Kandice compile bibliographical data on unpublicised or under-publicised women authors, editors, translators and publishing collaborators who are part of the creative process. Edited in 2021, Briar Levit's book presents the biographies of women, hitherto less well known, from the Harlem Renaissance onwards, who made their living in graphic design, producing outstanding works and shaping public taste. In their book Natural Enemies of Books - A Messy History of Women in Printing and Typography (2020), Fanni Maryam and her feminist co-authors, with its sophisticated graphics and typography, introduce the reader to women printers, illustrators, writers, typographers and typesetters who, through their own narratives, highlight the inequalities of the printing

industry. The major works of art, the innovations in approach that have emerged throughout history, have often not been given the spotlight they deserved in their time.

3.5 Past and present women's movements in the industry

Attempts to break male dominance had already been made in modern England. As the dominant trade unions saw women printers as a threat to the wages of the 'breadwinners', women responded by forming their own printers' organisation. The Women's Printing Society, founded in 1876, employed both working and middle-class women as printers. In sharing the profits of the business, the interests of both investors and employees were taken into account, and they proved to be very successful (Tusan, 2004). It could be said that the full social sensitivity of women was also present here, because they did not focus exclusively on the interests of certain interest groups. The organization published its own weekly periodical called "Women's Penny Paper", where women could make their voices heard (Alexiou, 2022). The publication was designed and produced by women and addressed women in a unique way, thus showing and drawing attention to women's talents. But a similar women's movement emerged in 19th century America. A Boston weekly newspaper called 'The Olive Branch' employed only women in publishing and printing. Rebelling against the prejudices of the time that sought to force women into the 'kitchen' (Roman, 2022), this publishing platform allowed women to express their own creative voices in this era. Within the so-called "Second Wave" feminist movement of the second half of the 20th century, changes were also initiated in the printing industry, which was set up to liberate women so that they would not be devalued workers. In the 1980s, great number of offset printing companies founded and run by women were established in England, but unfortunately, they did not survive long because they were undercapitalised. For those who took part in the movement, it was a life-changing initiative. It is important to note that the common operating model of the feminist presses was a collectivist-democratic form. In general, everyone was involved in all work tasks, with less specialisation than in male-led enterprises, because this was seen as consistent with the radical democratic and feminist ideal (Baines, 2022).

Even today, the women's printing movement is primarily located in Anglo-Saxon Western cultures. They are dedicated to promoting equal opportunities and advancement for women. To give a few examples, the Women in Print Alliance Association, founded in the USA, has a mission to advocate for women through community building, communication, networking and mobilisation in order to increase the recognition of women in the industry and sensitivity to discrimination. The Girls Who Print (GWP) online movement, also based in the US, is already represented in Africa and Europe. It started as a circle of friends, with women in the printing industry facing similar issues, but has grown to a community of 10,000 people. This number shows the importance of the topic. There are already a high number of female senior members who are setting an example for their young female colleagues and helping them to get ahead. Another example: one of the main aims of the Australian Women in Print movement is to build a community of women within the industry, not only to share information but also to help each other in their career development. The movement helps raise awareness of the importance and benefits of equal opportunities for women. It also provides mentoring opportunities for women to develop their skills and abilities.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Even before the industrial revolution, many women were involved in the printing process, running printing presses. These were mainly widows who inherited from their husbands or orphaned daughters. The question arises as to why women have been relegated to the periphery of the printing industry, and why they continue to occupy positions of lower prestige today. The article shows that with industrialisation and the emergence of trade unions, men pushed women out of higher paid positions through their stronger bargaining power and to protect their 'breadwinner' status. Steps were taken to break the dominance of men, forming unions and movements with women-only work in printing and publishing. In a broader feminist perspective, women in the printing industry are not only seen as workers, but also as creators, authors, editors, and publishers. These women, like those in manufacturing, have historically been marginalised and their work has not been recognised. In recent decades, many authors have sought to draw attention to these talented women.

It is welcome news that there is now a women's movement in the printing industry in several developed countries, with a mission to promote equal opportunities for women, break down prejudices and support women's advancement.

This article is part of a larger study of an PhD thesis, and the research will be continued.

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