

The aim of the project is to analyse the professional, educational and emancipatory aspirations of governesses in the Kingdom of Poland from the end of January Uprising to 1904 in the context of the existing social conventions, the expectations placed on this group and the developing social and economic changes.

The description of their situation is full of contradictions, more jarring in the context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century social conventions. There were the women performing a wage labour while coming from the social class that expected its female members to be domestic and refrain from any connection and participation in the labour market. They acted as caretakers of children while not allowed to have their own. They were young, genteel women of marriageable age not allowed to get married. Finally – they came from the upper class and worked in service. The profession of a governess serves as a lens that showcases dilemmas common to the age and often going far beyond the specifics of this particular profession.

Education and ideological formation of students did not have to correspond with the intellectual formation of their governesses. I will analyse, how these different starting points and different strategies (connected to the personal biographies of particular governesses) influenced their relations with employers, and most importantly – if and how these strategies influenced the relationship with the students and their future life choices.

There are very few Polish academic monographies about governesses, and there is a specific lack of an academic monography focusing on the perspective of the individual biographies of the teachers.

The project approaches the subject both from the socio-historical and anthropological-cultural perspective. Governesses are a unique group whose perspective allows to see the narrative of the history written by the weak. The innovative value of the project is the focus on the personal relations between teachers and students that could be positive or abusive, from both sides.

To achieve this, I will focus on the unpublished manuscripts of personal document left by and about governesses, as well as on the corpus of published 391 diaries mentioning the subject of home schooling in the period of partitions of Poland. Additionally, I will use the diaries and letters of the well-known women who at some point in life were working as governesses – Narcyza Źmichowska, Stefania Sempołowska and Maria Skłodowska Curie. I will also use press articles from various newspapers (conservative to progressive), as well as handbooks and manuals on the subject of home tutoring, to analyse the pedagogical, political and social discourse connected to the work of governesses.

By conducting this research, I hope to examine the grassroots movement of emancipation of women and show that factors of social change manifested themselves not only in loud public marches, feminist conventions and congresses. It was also the case of personal decisions of particular women, who were then able to pass their ideas forward. On the other hand, the examination of the socio-professional group of governesses will shed light on the sources of a particular type of female employment that is still significant today – women as teachers and caretakers. The themes of mission, sacrifice and personal responsibility for the students, as well as the problems of work as a last resort before marriage and children (on instead of marriage and children), the undermining of the female teachers, questions of ideological formation of girls in the education system and the discussions about the role and significance of teachers is still a relevant subject today.