

THESIS SUMMARY

Gabriella Zsófia Huszti-Szlama

**The Representation of Women Wearing Trousers in the Articles of
Budapesti Hírlap, Pesti Hírlap and *Pesti Napló* between 1896 and 1914**

Supervisor:

Dr. Judit Acsády
Senior Research Fellow

Budapest, 2023

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The background and the rationale of the research

This doctoral thesis explores the representation of women's wearing of trousers in articles published by Hungarian dailies *Budapesti Hírlap*, *Pesti Hírlap* and *Pesti Napló* between 1896 and 1914. The topic lies at the intersection of history (cultural history and history of women), communication studies (semiotics), and sociology (deviance). History provides the background for the research, while communication studies and sociology contribute to the theoretical framework. In recent years, the scope of research on women's history has broadened, bringing less discussed topics, such as the female body, sexuality, women's health, and fashion, to the fore (Kéri 2015b).

The historiography of fashion history dates back to the 16th century, when the need to learn about history, especially ancient history, increased. In the Romantic period, fashion sought a national character. In the 19th century, under the influence of the Enlightenment and then Romanticism, historicism, alongside fashion, dominated several (fine) arts. The first books on the history of costumes were written by art collectors, who considered it their task to present the costumes of the past with the help of surviving portraits from different periods. For this reason, at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, large, comprehensive works were written that defined an era in broad terms (even over a hundred years), assuming that fashion had not changed. These volumes contain many colorful illustrations and engravings; moreover, textual supplements are becoming increasingly common. These texts were sourced from archives and repositories (F. Dózsa 2016).

From the middle of the 19th century, archaeologists and historians began to study costume history by replacing spectacular sketches and graphics with explanatory texts illustrated with simple black and white drawings. They were intended to place various costumes in the context of history and art history. From the mid-20th century onwards, research on the history of costumes began, which continues to play a decisive role. Much of this work has been published by museologists, mainly focusing on the history of their own countries. Fashion history became an independent discipline in the last third of the 20th century. The first step was the recognition

of fashion design as art. Fashion history thus successfully broke away from history and art history to become a discipline of its own right. Although fashion history is methodologically similar in both disciplines, two important differences can be identified. Fashion history treats visual and textual material as sources of equal value, in contrast to historiography, which primarily relies on written sources. The difference from art history lies in the criterion of the quality of the analyzed image, i.e., for fashion history, the main criterion is not quality, but the depicted figure. Nevertheless, dating is a cornerstone of fashion history. The contextual interpretation of the garment and its place in microhistory is crucial for various analyses. This dissertation does not include a pictorial analysis because the press organs chosen as a corpus did not publish any pictorial material on women wearing trousers.

Owing to contemporary research in fashion history, an increasing number of textbooks and popular literature are being produced, both internationally and in Hungary, which are no longer descriptive works but analyses that consider the social history of the period in question and use different, comprehensive methodologies and approaches.

The complexity of the notion of fashion is indicated by its interdisciplinarity with several fields of research dealing with it. For this reason, there is no single universal definition to describe fashion; several concepts of fashion exist in parallel, depending on the field that deals with it. This definition is further complicated by the fact that fashion is not a static phenomenon, as it can have different meanings in different periods and cultures.

The words “fashion,” “dress,” and “attire” often appear as synonyms of each other, and F. Dózsa, referring to Simmel, considers these terms to be equal. Szentesi (2018) does not agree with this idea; she argues that the term “fashion” can be interpreted in a broad and a narrow sense. Broadly, fashion can denote anything followed by a group of people in an era. Narrowly speaking, fashion refers to appearance, mainly in reference to clothing or hair, which is followed by a certain group.

Fashion theory research has approached fashion primarily from the perspective of sociology and communication studies. Thus, the relationship between fashion and society, economy,

language, public space, deviance, and the body has been primarily explored (Szentesi 2018; Nystom 1928; Barthes 1967; Sproles 1974; Braudel 1982; Klaniczay 1982; Zsolt 2007; Steele 1982; Simmel 1973; Perrot 1994; Laurie 1992; Veblen 1899; Sombart 1902; Baudrillard 1993; Entwistle 2000; Csabai 2002).

In the course of my research, the question of trouser wear was closely linked to the emancipation efforts of the 19th century, which are briefly discussed in the following paragraph. Throughout the 19th century, the issues of women's equality, changing power relations between women and men, and economic inequality were at the heart of feminist thought in the United States and Europe. In the last third of the 19th century, the status of women began to change, which was reflected in the struggle for suffrage, the growing number of women's associations, the expansion of work and learning opportunities, the opening of previously closed social spaces (such as coffee houses), and the practice of sports, among other things.

Research on the use of trousers by women is limited. This topic is usually addressed in comprehensive works, and trousers are often presented as clothes used for cycling (Broby-Johansen, 1969; Cunnington & Cunnington, 1976; Ék, 1994). This simple explanation is challenged by Marnie Fogg (2013), who argues that there is no equivalence mark between bicycle clothing and women's wearing of trousers, and by Katalin F. Dózsa (2014), a Hungarian researcher who linked trouser wear to emancipation but did not elaborate on this link.

Two studies on women's trousers are worth highlighting. One is a 1980 publication by Jeanett Lauer and Robert Lauer (1980) on the emergence of reform dresses and women's wearing of trousers in the United States. Their study defined the debate around this change based on four principles and propositions. The first was the masculinity or femininity of the garment, whereby trousers masculinized women. The second principle was that contemporary fashion acted as the embodiment and perpetuator of subordination. The third principle is that subordination emerges in women's fashion fads. The fourth principle is the legitimization of men to determine women's fashion, i.e., the will to repress reform efforts; therefore, women wearing trousers were penalized.

Another paper, *Une Histoire Politique du Pantalon* (Bard, 2010), examined women's wearing of trousers in France in the context of social history, politics, sociology, and communication studies. The source material for Bard's work consisted of contemporary press materials, visual materials (postcards and posters), and ego documents. Bard also drew parallels between women wearing trousers and several areas of emancipation. These include sports, such as cycling, hiking, fencing, skating, sailing, golf, and tennis. One of the most important of these is the bicycle, which has a role that goes beyond sports and transport, as it has enabled women to go places on their own that they could not visit before. In her book, Bard makes a distinction between underwear and trousers but also assumes a transition between them and emphasizes that they are difficult to separate. The other area of emancipation outlined by Bard is work. According to the researcher's study, both white- and blue-collar work were sought to be portrayed in a negative light, especially for urban women. Women performing physical work were depicted wearing trousers and were most often referred to as hermaphrodites. A new type of woman wearing trousers was called in the newspapers "femme nouvelle," or degradingly "gynandry," a French term for a masculine woman wearing men's clothes. The newspapers portrayed women's perceived or real homosexuality in trousers as a moral and social danger. These hostile articles conflated major issues such as feminism and cycling. Bard also points out that trousers symbolize power and freedom.

In the Hungarian literature, women's wearing of trousers has not been discussed in detail, either descriptively or analytically. The primary purpose of this dissertation is to fill this gap.

Bard (2010) highlights two important areas that have been affected by emancipation: sport and work. However, this does not cover all areas that were opened up to women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus, this study covers additional areas.

In addition to Lauer and Lauer (1980) and Bard (2010), the work of Entwistle (2000) and Luck (1992) need to be highlighted, who have examined women's wearing of trousers primarily in terms of physical work. Luck emphasized practicality, which may have helped the diffusion of trousers, but women's trousers in American utopian groups may have been a discouraging

example. In Entwistle's view, women's wearing of trousers emerged primarily in the working class.

Fashion theories and the literature on women's wearing of trousers highlight deviations from norms and the presence of fear and panic. Therefore, the representation of different types of deviance linked to trouser wear was highlighted in this study. To define the types of deviance, I drew on the works of Rosta (2007), Kiss (2020), and Ambrus (2008).

The question of moral panic appears at the intersection of the two studies. As outlined by Stanley Cohen (1972), moral panic is associated with a group and/or an activity related to a group that emerges as a threat to an idealized order in society, and the majority of society perceives the group or the activity as a threat. Critics of moral panic (Hunt, 2007) have argued that moral panic is difficult to study in society. However, the media plays an active role in the creation of moral panic, so that the wave of panic can be traced. Consequently, this dissertation examines moral panic using contemporary press materials.

After reading the literature and corpus, the following questions and hypotheses emerged.

1. How does the contemporary press portray women wearing trousers?

More than half of the articles published in the press had negative views of women's wearing of trousers.

2. On which occasions and in which social public places did women wear trousers, according to the press?

The press linked all the spaces outlined in the women's history review to the possibility of women wearing trousers, according to the literature the category of sports and work being prominent.

3. In which areas is the possibility of women wearing trousers seen as positive by newspapers?

The question is based on research by Bard (2010), who found that for certain sports (tennis) and performing arts, newspapers are more accepting. Her claim

was complemented with the hypothesis that for physical work was positively rated by newspapers.

4. Is the dominance of Paris outstanding in the case of women's wearing of trousers?

In most cases, newspapers connect women's wearing of trousers to Paris; however, London's mention is also prominent.

5. Was moral panic present in the press?

Articles on women wearing trousers met the criteria for moral panic press coverage.

6. Do deviance types appear in articles on women's wearing of trousers?

Types of deviance appear in articles on women wearing trousers, particularly crime and sexual deviance.

Methodology

Before describing the methodology, it is important to justify the time interval and choice of corpus.

The dating of women's history and fashion history was considered. The division of periods in women's history can be linked to political events as well as emancipation efforts and institutionalizations, such as the emergence of feminist movements or the different rights extended to women (Fábri, 1999, 2006; Papp & Sipos, 2017; 17-21; Szapor, 2007; Acsády, 1999). The following division is used to select the time interval:

1st period: from the beginning to 1896

2nd period: 1896–1914

3rd period: 1914–1919

4th period: 1919–1945

The period between 1896 and 1914 is also highlighted in the historiography of fashion history as the period of the “emptying” of historical elements and the outbreak of the First World War. Therefore, I chose these two dates for this study.

At the beginning of the research, I examined several types of newspapers in various libraries, repositories, and archives, including fashion magazines, weekly newspapers, and tabloids; however, they did not contain any significant articles on women’s wearing of trousers. As an example, *A Hét* (1896-1912) published 16 articles on the subject, *Friss Ujság* (1897-1914) 9 and *Magyar Szalon* (1884-1906) 4. In contrast, political dailies published a large number of articles on women’s wearing of trousers; therefore, this type of newspaper was selected. The size of the circulation was also a factor in the selection of the corpus: I chose the three newspapers with the largest circulation. The selection of articles for the corpus was based on two criteria: the term *trousers* or one of its synonyms (*pantaloons*, *breeches*, *divided skirt*) had to appear in the article, and the text had to make it clear that trouser wear was associated with women. Thus, the corpus does not include ambiguous texts, such as “the piece of clothing we dare not name.” Although these examples may refer to women wearing trousers, they are not typical. Furthermore, the corpus does not contain articles that addressed trouser wear in general terms, such as “young people wore nice trousers,” which also does not contain a clear indication of whether the group of young people includes only young men or young women. Based on these criteria, I found nearly 500 articles that mentioned women wearing trousers at a certain depth. During the subsequent data collection, the list of criteria was further expanded, which involved filtering the corpus. Consequently, irrelevant items such as literary novels were excluded from the corpus. The reason for this was the difference in genre; the novels were published as serials, namely, they were divided into chapters and published on several issues (often spanning months), which would have required another, separate analytical work. The other criterion for reducing the corpus was the identification of women’s underwear using the term trousers. During this period, women’s underwear was often referred to as “trousers,” which is not the same as the trousers that are the subject of the research. Filtering these occurrences

was aided by the context of the articles, which clearly indicated the case being discussed. After these four postulates, the corpus consists of a total of 405 articles: 63 articles published by *Budapesti Hírlap*, 209 by *Pesti Hírlap* and 133 by *Pesti Napló*.

This study also utilizes qualitative and quantitative approaches. Content analysis was used as the research methodology. Content analysis is a popular methodology in social science and humanities research, particularly in sociology and political science. However, it is often used as a tool for historical and literary analysis. Content analysis is an interdisciplinary method that aims to analyze communication for a specific purpose (Antal, 1976). Communication, in this case, can be broadly defined to include anything from newspaper articles to television programs to cartoons, and any data source that contains information and can therefore be analyzed (it can be in textual, pictorial, audio, or video formats). The starting point is communication, from which content analysis uncovers information that is not explicitly stated, i.e., hidden from the researcher. When conducting content analysis, the researcher identifies the meaning and significance of the different parts of communication and their complex relationships. According to Babbie (2017), content analysis can be used to interpret any type of communication.

The methodology of content analysis was essentially a quantitative paradigm; however, as the research objectives expanded, the need to extract indirect information also emerged. In 1967, sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss established “Grounded Theory,” which clarified the legitimacy of the qualitative paradigm. Grounded Theory is based on the systematic extraction of theory from data, which enables representation of reality. Therefore, coding is the central activity of this method. The procedure involves the triangulation of data to enhance objectivity. This principle further explains the choice of the three newspapers with different political views, which allows for social heterogeneity. The use of heterogeneous sources reduces the chances of a one-sided approach and results (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

The modern understanding of content analysis is that it is essentially both a qualitative and quantitative methodology; the technical part is based on numerical foundations, whereas the analysis and evaluation of data requires a qualitative approach. The second important element

of the definition is a systematic and objective procedure whereby the researcher must establish a well-defined system of categories and their analysis must be repeatable (with the same results). This requires, in addition to the naming of categories, a detailed category description and the aggregation of terms and symbols belonging to a given category.

The specific analytical technique of content analysis methodology consists of classifying the elements of communication (for example, in the case of a text or its words). These elements are assigned to different categories, and finally, communications are analyzed along these categories. One example of this, which is used in this dissertation, is the classification of communications into positive, negative, and neutral categories, which are indicative of the attitude toward communication.

During data analysis, I developed the following categories and subcategories for content analysis:

Category	Subcategories
Sport	Cycling, Horse Riding, Swimming, Walking, Gymnastics, Flying, Rowing, Automobile, Tennis, Fencing, Winter sports, Combat sports, Football
Countries/ethnic groups	France, England, Germany, United States, Austria, China, Italy, India, Japan, Balkans, Arabia, Greece, Spain, Russian Empire, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Norway, Africa, Switzerland, Mexico, Netherlands, Eskimos, Czech Republic, Siam, Ottoman Empire, Korea
Health	No subcategory was created.
History	No subcategory was created.
Places	Street, Park, Café, Casino, Derby, Boat
Fashion	No subcategory was created.
Performing arts	Theatre, Ballet
Education	University, Girls' School, High School, Primary School
Work	Blue-collar Job, White-collar Job
Right to vote	No subcategory was created.
Associations	No subcategory was created.
Deviance	Crime, Sexual deviance, Religious deviance, Mental illness, Alcoholism, Drug abuse, Suicide

The extent of refusal-support, occurrence, and matrix overlap between the above categories was observed.

To investigate moral panic, I examined the elements laid out by Cohen (2000) in the corpus: exaggeration, distortion, prediction, and symbolization. The evolution of the fever curve of moral panic was also analyzed using an Interquartile range (Kitzinger, 2000).

The NVivo qualitative analysis software was used for coding and analysis. Before coding, I placed the different articles in separate word documents and created a classification sheet in Excel, where I assigned unique identifiers to the variables. Separate codes were created for each category using the software's Text Search function. The Crosstab Query was used to retrieve the representational data, while the Matrix Coding Query was used to examine the overlaps. In addition to the aforementioned functions, the Sørensen-Dice coefficient equation was used to investigate moral panic.

Results

The results are summarized in the tables below.

The aggregated results and the results for each newspaper is demonstrated in the table below:

Categories	Aggregated data	Budapesti Hírlap	Pesti Hírlap	Pesti Napló
Education	7%	5%	8%	7%
History	9%	11%	6%	14%
Right to vote	11%	24%	7%	12%
Associations	14%	11%	13%	18%
Health	18%	21%	17%	19%
Places	35%	32%	35%	35%
Work	36%	37%	38%	33%

Performint arts	39%	38%	38%	40%
Sports	41%	46%	46%	32%
Fashion	48%	62%	44%	49%
Countries/ Ethnic groups	79%	78%	76%	85%

The results show that of all the categories, Countries/ethnic groups occur most frequently (79%) in all the papers. The second-highest ratio belongs to the category of Fashion, showing that the newspapers mostly treated women's wearing of trousers as fashion; this value can be viewed as medium. Sports (41%) is also considered medium, and overall, it is the third most frequently occurring topic in the corpus. This shows that women's trousers were associated with various sports in a number of cases, with cycling being the most common. Performing arts is also included (39%), which highlights the many instances of actresses wearing trousers on stage. Work was slightly over-represented (36%). The value of the theme of Places (35%) was the same as that of the median. The categories of Health (18%) and Associations (14%) were slightly underrepresented, while the categories of Voting rights (11%), History (9%), and Education (7%) were moderately under-represented. This indicates that, when looking at all articles, education, historical reminiscence, and voting rights were the least represented in connection with women's trousers.

In the case of *Budapesti Hírlap*, the only outlier was the Country/ethnic group category (78%). The medium-value category included Fashion (62%), Sports (46%), and Performing arts (38%). The categories of Work (37%) and Places (32%) are slightly overrepresented in this paper, while Voting rights (24%) and Health (21%) are slightly underrepresented. History (11%), Associations (11%), and Education (5%) were moderately underrepresented.

Pesti Hírlap also has a high overrepresentation of Countries/ethnic groups (76%). The categories of Sports (46%), Fashion (44%), Work (38%) and Performing arts (38%) were moderately overrepresented. Places (35%) were slightly overrepresented, while Health (17%)

was slightly underrepresented. Finally, Associations (13%), Education (8%), Voting rights (7%), and History (7%) were moderately underrepresented.

The highly over-represented categories in *Pesti Napló* also included Countries/people (85%). Fashion (49%), Performing arts (40%), and Places (35%) were moderately over-represented, while Work (33%) and Sports (32%) were slightly overrepresented. In *Pesti Napló*, Health (19%) and Associations (18%) are slightly underrepresented, and History (14%), Voting rights (12%) and Education are moderately underrepresented.

In sum, the Country/ethnicity category is strongly overrepresented in all three newspapers, with more than three-quarters of the articles linking women's wearing of trousers to a country or an ethnic group. The table below shows that the areas of women's emancipation are not limited to work or sports as other areas such as education also appear in the corpus that were not discussed by Bard (2010), Entwistle (2000), Luck (1992) or Lauer & Lauer (1980).

An analysis of the deviance categories showed that crime and sexual deviance were the main deviance categories in connection with women wearing trousers. Crime accounted for 31% of all deviances, while sexual deviance accounted for 29%. Bard (2010) stresses in her volume that at the turn of the century in France, sexual and gender orientation were the main issues being questioned. My research demonstrates that this is not the only category of deviance (Rosta, 2007) that comes to the fore among women's trousers.

The representation of the study of women's emancipation and the emergence of deviance is presented as a cross section of the study of moral panic. In relation to moral panic, I drew on the criteria set out by Cohen (2000), which revolved around media representation of moral panic, as indicated in the methodological section.

The research showed that aggression was expressed in articles featuring women wearing trousers (22 articles), and that women tended to be represented in plural, more than one and a half times as many (singular: 531, plural: 874). Cohen theorized that in the case of moral panic, the articles showed repetition. To explore this, I performed a Sørensen-Dice coefficient calculation in NVivo. The results are displayed on a scale of 0 to 1; the closer the result is to 1,

the greater is the agreement. I found the highest agreement with respect to all the texts, with two cases showing almost 100% agreement. If the results are broken down by each newspaper, the agreement is lower but shows a high semantic similarity, even at 0.2. The Sørensen-Dice coefficient was also plotted on a cluster plot (Figure 1).

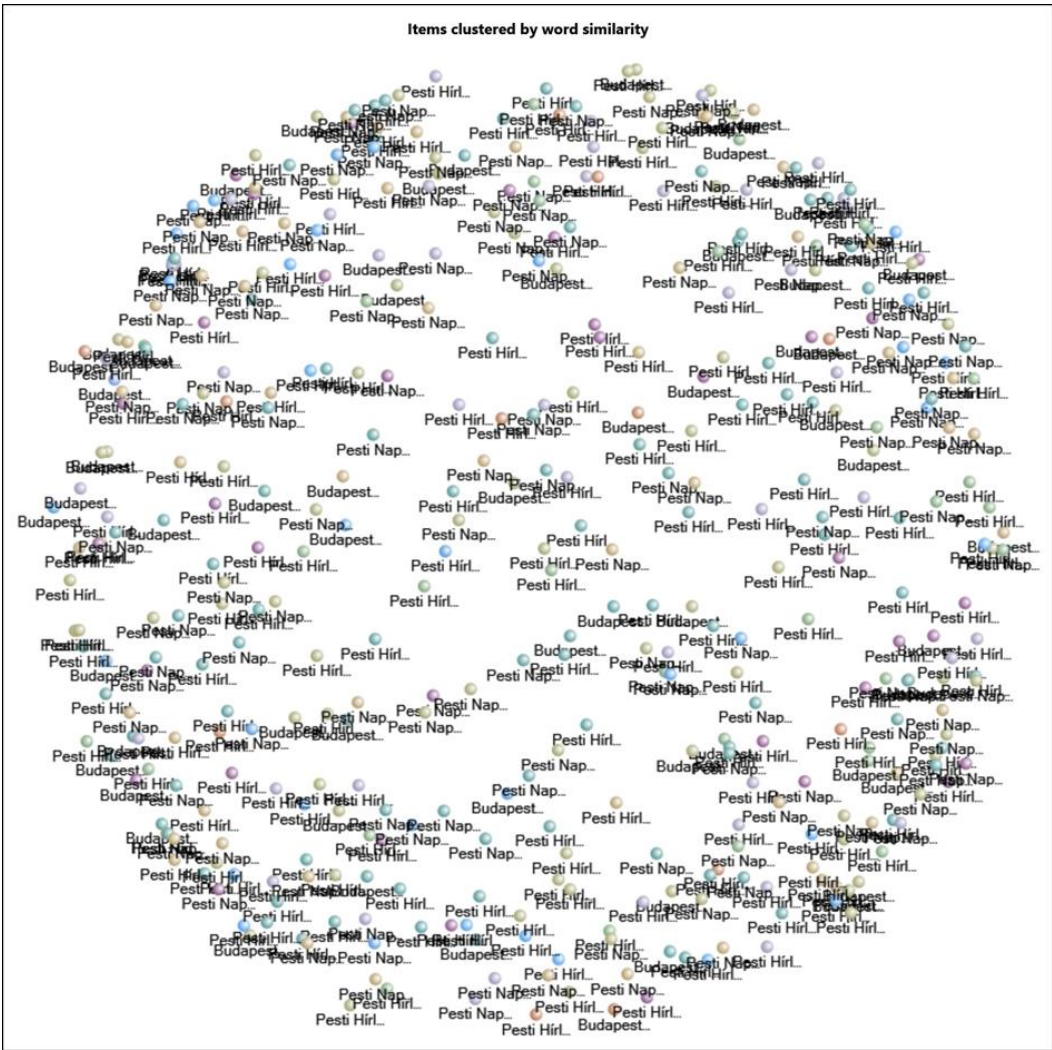


Figure 1: Sørensen-Dice coefficient in in the case of all articles

The interpretation of the figure lies in the location of the points; the closer the two points are to each other, the more similar are the texts.

Cohen (2000) points out in the context of predictions that the opinion of an official is quoted in the newspapers in relation to the group causing the moral panic. In this study, 46 articles were identified. An additional category to Cohen’s theory of predictions was added because after reading the corpus, I found that not only officials but also the authors of the articles predicted an imagined future. A total of 44 articles were identified.

Cohen (2000) highlights symbolisation in his last point, which was studied on the basis of Kapitány and Kapitány's work (2002). The literature related to the wearing of trousers argues that the symbolism associated with women's trousers represents freedom and power (Lauer & Lauer, 1980; Bard, 2010). My research supports these, and the domestic press highlights these symbols.

Finally, in relation to the media's representation of moral panic, the fever curve should be highlighted (Kitzinger, 2000). The literature on moral panic does not provide a numerical value for when it is considered an outlier. Therefore, I have introduced my own statistical approach to this issue. I verified the curve of the moral panic fever curve with an interquartile range. The interquartile range uses the median value to determine whether an element or elements of a number of series are outliers. For the calculation, the number of articles per year was treated as a series of numbers. The analysis showed that the year 1911 was an outlier and therefore satisfied the interquartile range. In this way, I proved that women's wearing of trousers caused moral panic in the media.

Conclusion

In my dissertation, I supplemented the international literature on women's trousers (Bard, 2010; Lauer & Lauer, 1980; Luck, 1992; Entwistle, 2000) with quantitative calculations. Women's wearing of trousers in Hungary is not only prominent in the context of work and sport but also appears alongside other areas of emancipation, such as education and voting rights. My research also approached women's wearing of trousers from the direction of deviance and demonstrated that it has created moral panic in the domestic press. Cohen's (2000) criteria were used and supplemented for verification.

The results of this dissertation contribute to, confirm, and complement the literature through quantitative calculations. In addition, the methodology outlined in this dissertation can be used for other research on garments associated with social changes, such as corsets.

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