

THESIS WRITING SEMINAR

Part 2

WRITING AS MUSIC

Thinking about writing in terms of music

to compose, composition

rhythm – the pattern of beats, regularity of beats, beats are recurring... including both accented and unaccented beats

meter – grouping of beats into regular measures, gathering of beats into groups... how music moves through time... because of a meter, a musician knows how many beats to expect in each measure (so you can as a listener also clap, tap your foot, dance... can the listener/reader 'synchronise' with your music/writing?)

tempo – the speed or pace of playing (e.g. slow, fast...)

techniques – how certain notes are to be played (e.g., smoothly and connected or sharply and detached...)

mood – what is the mood of a piece, how should one play/write to produce a certain mood (e.g., calmness or vigourousness...)

melody – a succession of tones that the listener/reader perceives as a single entity

FLOW

Simple meter! (four four meter, example)

a meter that does not change

bar bar bar bar bars with different note durations but of the same value

4 beats in a measure

4 quarters = two halves = one whole = 2 quarters and four eighths = and so on

A quarter note gets one beat

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time. The first measure contains four quarter notes. The second measure contains two half notes. The third measure contains one whole note. The fourth measure contains two quarter notes followed by four eighth notes. Vertical lines separate the measures, and arrows point to each with the label 'bar'. A larger arrow points to the first measure with the text '4 beats in a measure'. Below the staff, text explains that 4 quarters equal two halves, one whole, or two quarters and four eighths. Another arrow points to a quarter note with the text 'A quarter note gets one beat'.

A bar is a segment of music bounded by vertical lines which holds a certain number of beats.

What a bar is in music, a paragraph is in text. What beats are in music, sentences are in text.

A paragraph is a segment of text bounded with a blank space or a tab (paragraphs should be clearly identifiable) which holds a certain number of sentences.

Both bars and paragraphs should have a certain value that does not change throughout the score/text.

Simple meter!

(four four meter)



1 – accented beat

2-4 – unaccented beats

[Time Signatures: 4/4 – YouTube](#)

Pay attention to the first (accented) beat

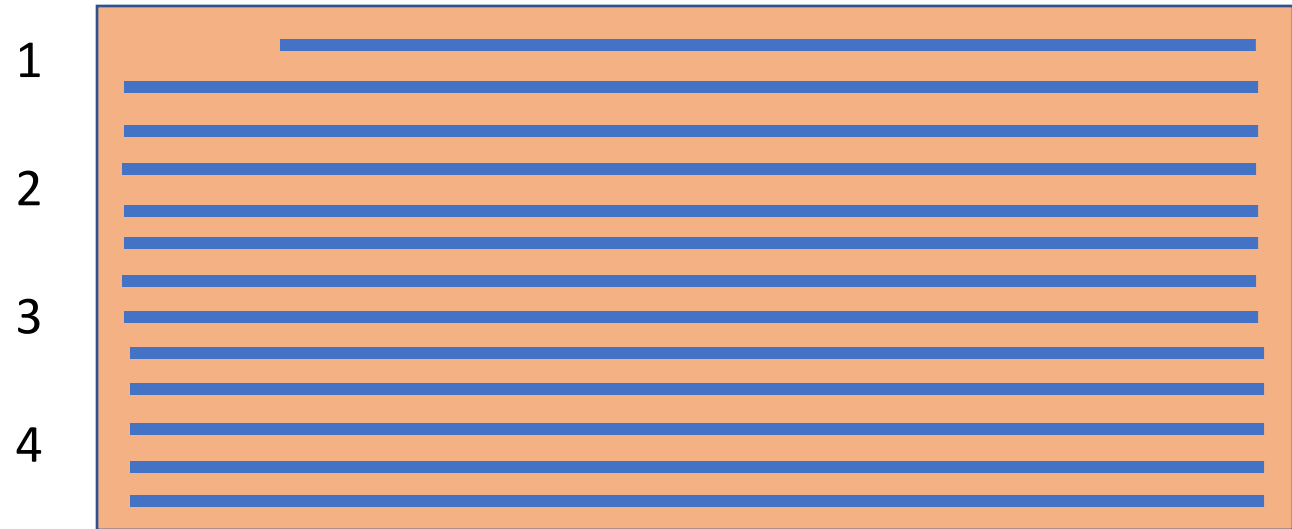
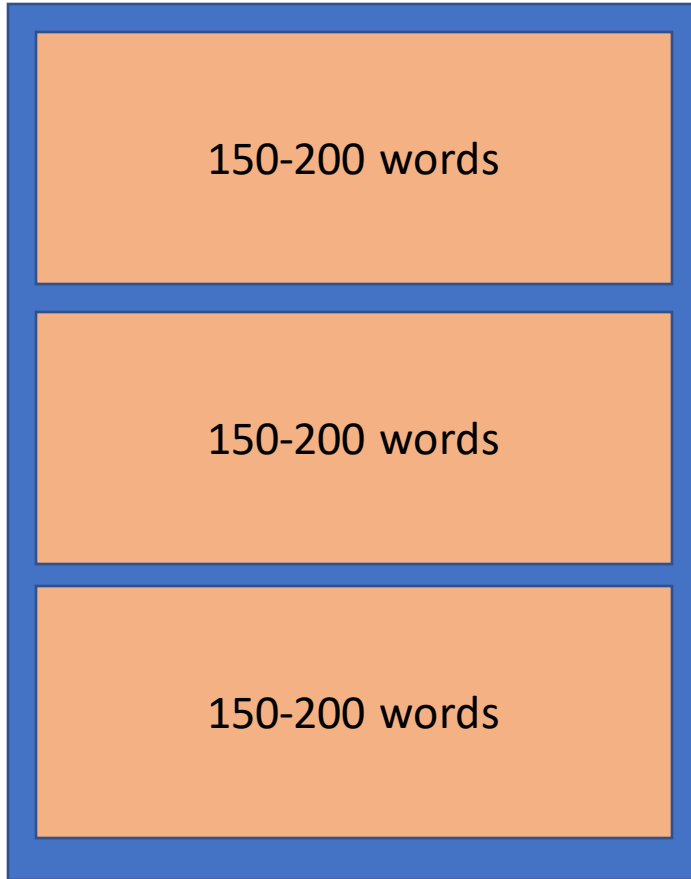
Simple meter in text

How to secure a flow of your text?

Flow is secured through careful paragraphing because paragraphs are the basic units of text.

Give your text (composition) a simple meter, with the first accented beat (argument sentence in a paragraph) and stick to it throughout the thesis.

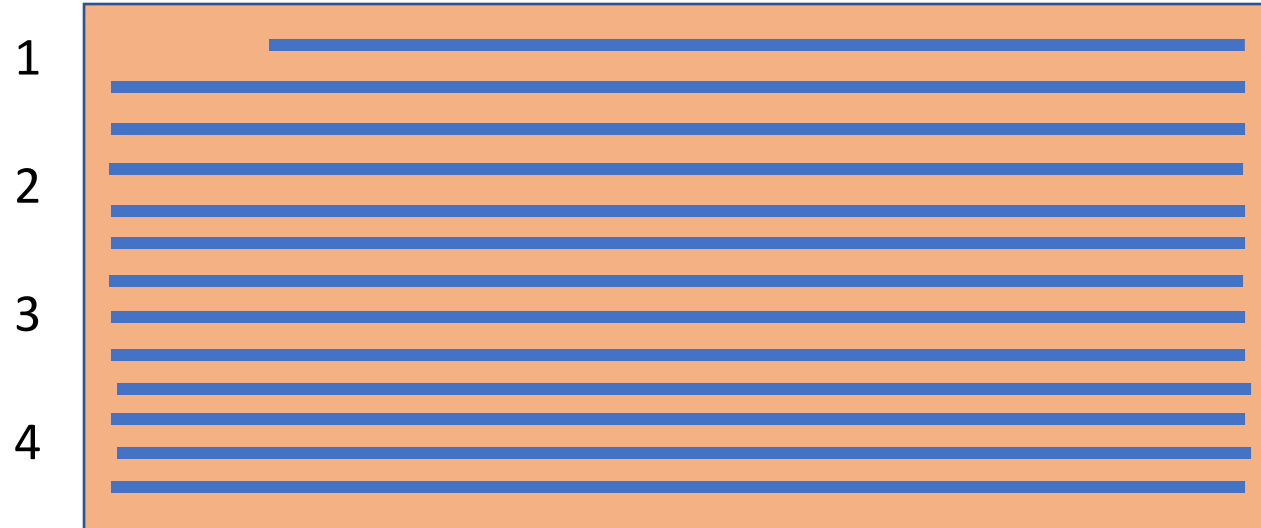
one paragraph – one developed idea in simple meter



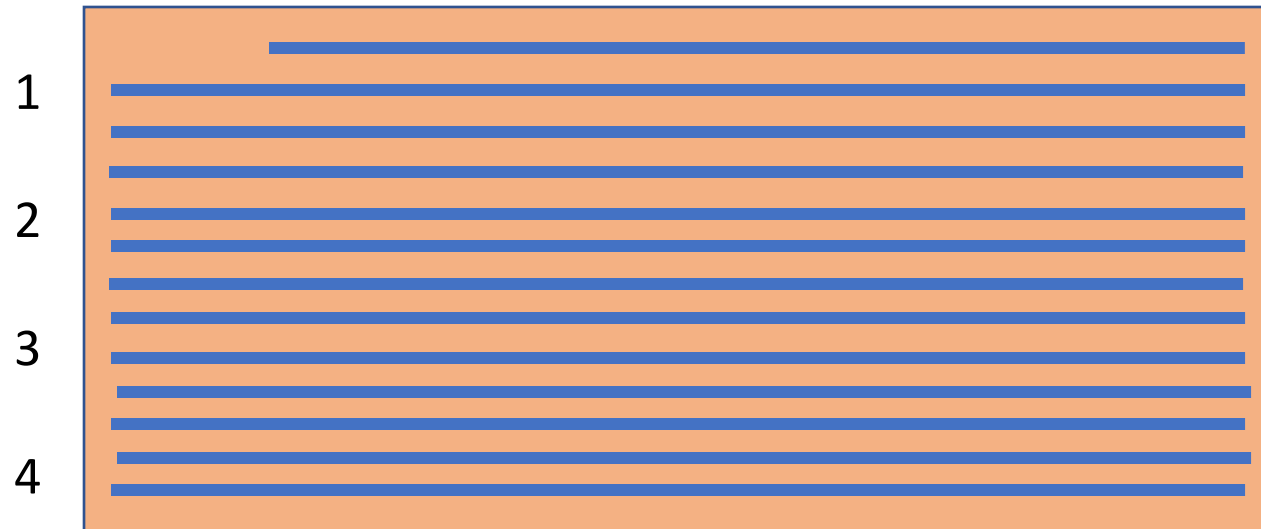
1 – argument sentence (accented beat)
2-4 – development, evidence, substantiation

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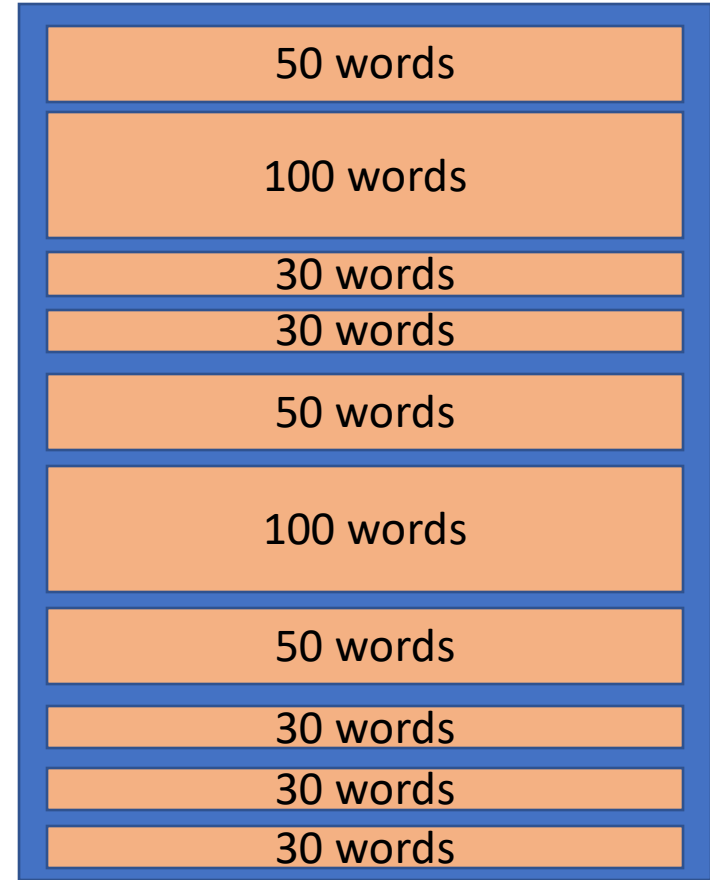
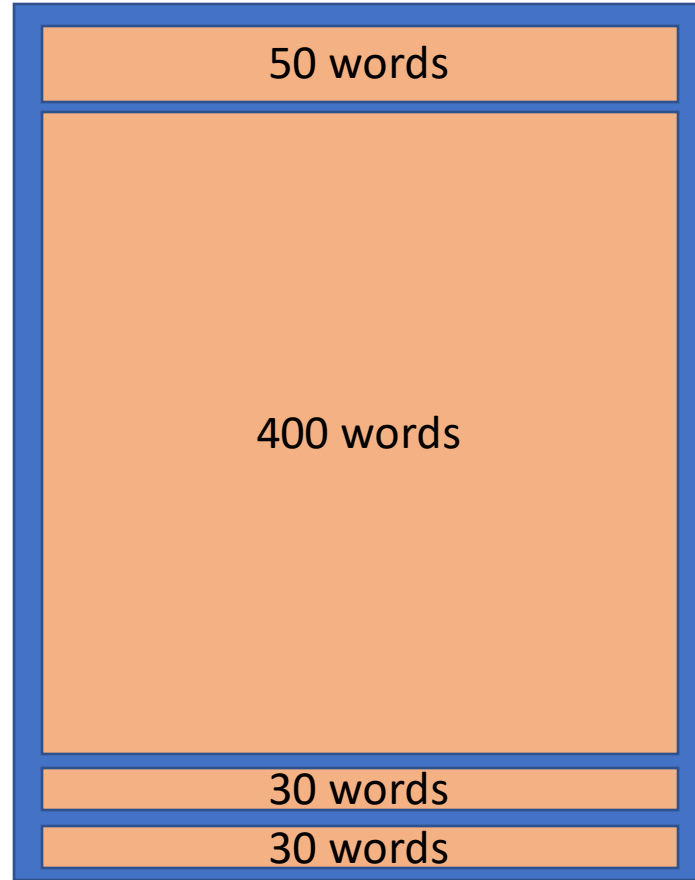
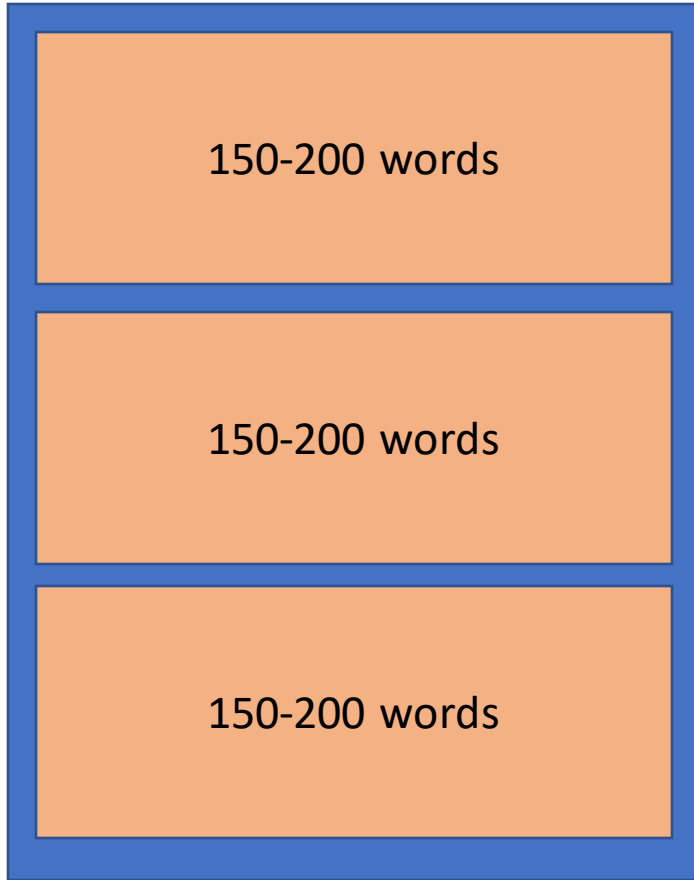
one paragraph –
one developed idea
in simple meter



one paragraph –
one developed idea
in simple meter



one paragraph – one developed idea in simple meter



Mixed meter (changing meter)

What kind of mood do you expect?
How will this sound?

Stravinsky The Rite of Spring Score

Part 4 – YouTube (1913)

Sacrificial Dance

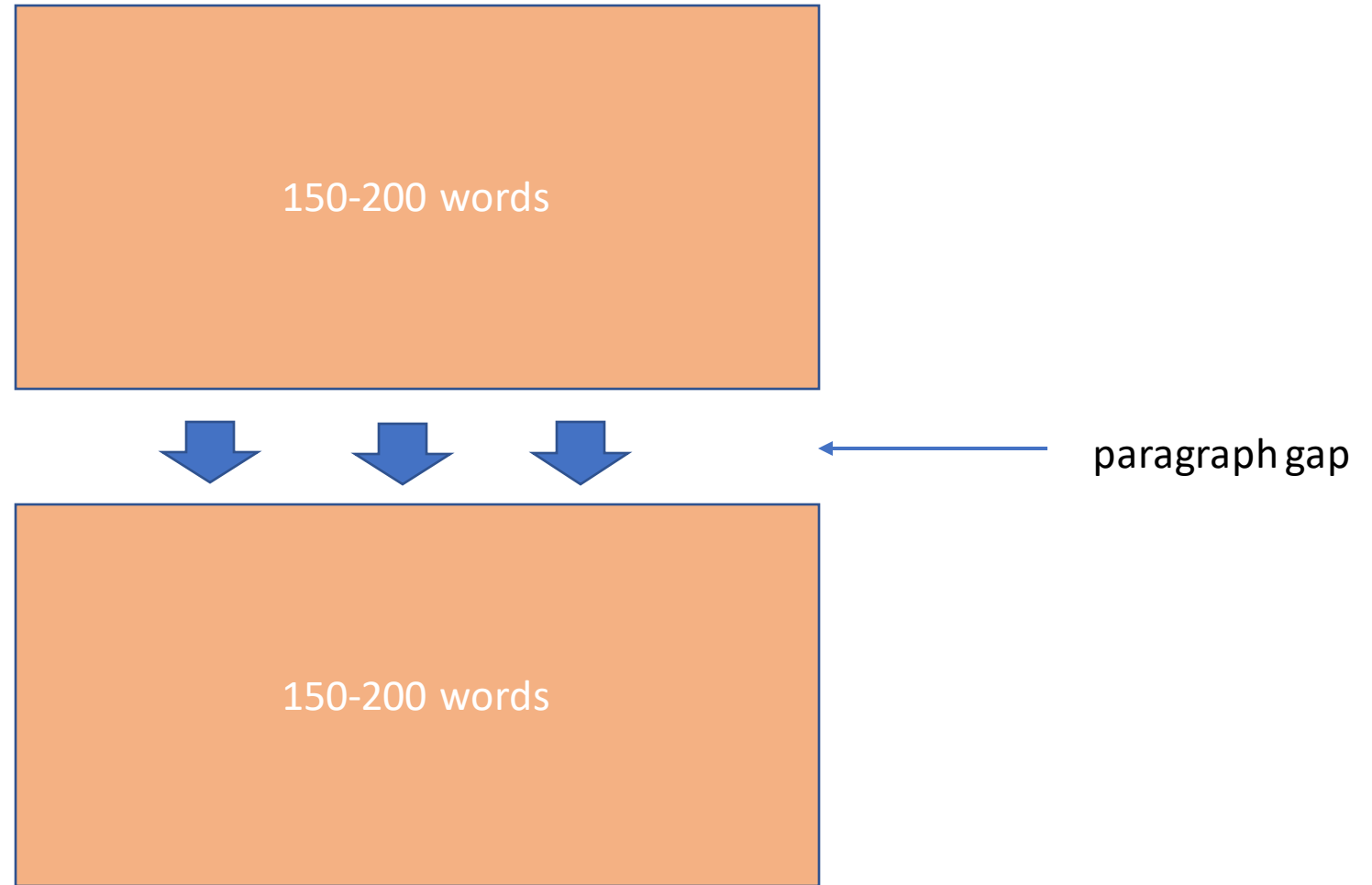
Don't change
meter!!! 😊

Sacrificial Dance of the Chosen One (Danse Sacrale)



The image shows a page of musical notation for the 'Sacrificial Dance of the Chosen One' (Danse Sacrale) from Stravinsky's 'The Rite of Spring'. The score is written for piano and features a complex, mixed meter. The tempo is marked '♩. 126'. The piece begins in 3/16 time and changes to 5/16, 3/16, 4/16, and 5/16 throughout the excerpt. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The dynamic marking 'sempre sf' (sempre fortissimo) is present in several measures. The score is arranged in four staves, with the first two staves in treble clef and the last two in bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat).

Paragraph Transition



Paragraph Transition

assuring **legato paragraphing**,
smooth paragraph transitions,
and avoiding **staccato paragraphing**
(paragraphs short and disconnected)


smooth, connected, with a flow,
coherent, stable, without gaps

legato is a technique of playing/writing

[Legato and Staccato Playing - YouTube](#)

▶

X



#2: Slur and Staccato

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. The title is '#2: Slur and Staccato'. The score is written for two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. A slur is placed over the treble staff, indicating a legato phrase. The bass staff contains several notes, some of which are circled in red. A red arrow points to the first measure of the treble staff, and a red 'X' is placed to the left of the first measure of the bass staff, indicating a staccato or disconnected phrase.

Paragraph Transition Example

Slur

Ask: does my page have a slur?
does my thesis have a slur?

What is keeping my paragraphs together?

Challenges of the trans turn

When sociological and anthropological research about 'non-normative' sexualities in Eastern Europe started intensifying, especially in the wake of Kulpa and Mizelińska's (2011) ground-breaking volume *De-Centring Western Sexualities*, many of us were concerned about what 'LGBT' might mean in our non-Western geo-political environments. Disclaimers were sometimes needed to warn against the potentially misleading nature of the fast-spreading acronym. Not only did that string of identity letters (growing longer over the years) place together gays and lesbians who, both in the post-Yugoslav space and transnationally, have often opted for separate liberatory trajectories, but it also included two groups of people, namely bisexual-⁵ and transgender-identified persons, that at the time, were hardly visible, especially in terms of activist representation.

In other words, the T began circulating within Eastern European activist networks before becoming more firmly anchored in a corpus of political, social, legal,⁶ and economic claims. Mizelińska and Kulpa account for this 'inclusion before coming into being' (p 14) by arguing that there was a 'temporal disjuncture', a fissure that has opened up between Western, Anglo-American (or, as they also say, perhaps *only* American) lexicons forged in long-term activist struggles, on the one hand, and Eastern European non-heterosexual and gender-transformative mobilisations, on the other. While the history of trans emancipation in the West indeed justified the broadening of non-cis-heteronormative politics into 'LGBT'⁷, in Eastern European contexts, the T was in the beginning not only a 'purely discursive invocation' (p 14) but also an example of the process through which Western categories lose some of their political content as they are removed from their places of origin and transferred/translated into new social settings.

In the post-Yugoslav space, more specifically, the LGBT activist shell also started acquiring its T substance around 2005 even though the acronym had been used already from the beginning of the century as it 'felt like "the right thing to do"' (Hodžić, Poštić, and Kajtezović, 2016, p 37) in anticipation of more visible trans activists.⁸ The 2005 conference *Transgressing Gender: Two is not Enough for Gender (E)quality*, which took place in Zagreb, Croatia, was particularly relevant for initiating regional debates about gender diversity and inaugurating a period of dynamic activist engagement.⁹ This development has been also reflected in our series of interlocking books about post-Yugoslav feminist anti-war and LGBT activism: the necessity and the wish to pay more attention to trans-related topics rather than subsume them under the wider 'LGBT' label first led to a footnote (Bilić, 2016b), then to a chapter (Hodžić, Poštić, and Kajtezović, 2016), and steadily grew to such an extent to require an entire volume.¹⁰

Paragraphing in the Analysis

Example

Dealing with gender binarism

Throughout our interviews, gender binarism appears as the dominant issue that group members have to negotiate both in their personal lives as well as in group meetings. In this regard, legal regulation reflected entrenched perceptions about the social world being divided into two genders which have largely persisted up to this day coloring the operation of the group. As one respondent states (personal communication, December 2019):

A considerable number of trans people in Serbia are interested in entering into transition, getting a diagnosis quickly, starting with hormones, doing surgeries and then blending into the society ... Normally they do this because they want to protect themselves and decrease discrimination. In Western countries, there is a huge number of those who want to go into the process of gender affirmation, but there are also those who do not want to modify their bodies, but do want to change their gender identity. I personally have not done any medical interventions, my transgender identity comprises me using masculine pronouns and a name which is considered masculine in my environment.

The adherence to the idea of gender binarism would perhaps not be so strong within the group were it not reinforced by the dominant psychiatric discourse encountered, in one form or the other, by many TGNB persons across the region. As one group member states (personal communication, December 2019):

... psychiatrists are, in principle, promoting the following view: you have gender dysphoria, you have the so-called F64 diagnosis and the cure for that is surgery... once your surgery is done, that diagnosis disappears, meaning that you are no longer trans... you are then a man or a woman... but it's not like that only in Serbia... we recently had a regional meeting and many people said that those who would admit to their psychiatrists that they were non-binary would unnecessarily prolong their hormonal treatments and the whole procedure... it is similar with non-heterosexual information ... maybe it is now a bit better than it used to be, but it is still like that... interestingly enough, psychiatrists still tend to ask you also about your sexual orientation ... like who you go out with... even though that is completely irrelevant...

The fact that many people do not only sever their links with their psychiatrists, as one group member pointed out above, but also stop coming to group meetings once their gender-affirming surgery has been completed, testifies to the power of binary gender conceptions among group members. They seem less interested in being associated with the Belgrade trans collective when they start feeling more secure about being a man or a woman (there is currently only one person who continued to attend the meetings after surgery). The pressure to conform to the gender norm – which

Analysis vs Discussion Example

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Irrespective of the fact that it may still be unsure about how to confront the challenge of reproducing gender norms that are at the root of gender-related oppression, the Geten self-help group represents a crucial convergence point for TGNB people in Serbia and the wider region. In the local milieu still characterized by high levels of transphobia, there is probably no place with such a concentration of trans-related knowledge. In this regard, the group goes beyond immediate empowerment to constitute an epistemic community engaged in developing a critical and analytical perspective vis-à-vis the norms of medicine as well as in continually negotiating and acknowledging embodied trans experience. While the group for the time being lacks wider social visibility, the experience of its members has informed the legal solutions that Geten has proposed to destabilize gender norms and advance the social status of TGNB people in the country. With the legal weakening of the psychiatric dimension in TGNB lives, it is to be expected that official institutions providing trans (mental) health care will increasingly turn to such community initiatives for information and advice.

Updating mental health services is particularly important in a period in which transgender has officially ceased to be regarded as a mental health disorder, and clinical understanding of transgender has shifted from a male/female dichotomy to a spectrum. In their *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People*, the American Psychological Association (2015) states that a non-binary understanding of gender is fundamental to the provision of affirmative care for TGNB people. The Association calls for psychologists and other mental health professionals to take a leadership role in ending transphobic discrimination. Although significant advances in this direction have taken place over the last few years, Serbia, along with many of its neighbors, has structural rule of law difficulties which distort law implementation. New nondiscriminatory and trans-affirming legal solutions are, nevertheless, crucial and it is to be expected that the bill about gender identity and the rights of intersex persons, proposed by Geten, should be adopted in the near future. It will constitute a platform upon which community-generated knowledge can be shared among all interested parties. Activist organizations' alternative forms of mental health care and support, which are in synchrony with the global movement for gender and non-heterosexual liberation, can help to transform mainstream mental health policies rendering them more sensitive to the needs of TGNB individuals.

Finally, this article has provided an insight into how the medical model informs everyday life and mental health of a group of TGNB people in Serbia gathered around a self-help initiative. Given that this area is still underdeveloped, our research has only begun to map the most significant topics that need to be examined in more detail. We would emphasize the

Adagio Thesis and adagio writing

- Slow thesis (tempo)
- Taking time, assuring concentration, flow, and stability
- To compose – composition – composure

[Bach – Concerto for oboe & violin BWV 1060 Alicja Matuszczyk – oboe, Julia Iskrzycka – violin - YouTube](#)

Ask: How should a text look like to sound like this?

The oboe and the violin –
two intertwined voices

Think in terms of your Analysis – a voice of
argumentation and a voice of substantiation (a
voice that gives substance)

See/hear how the strings provide the structure
mostly through *pizzicato* playing
(playing a string instrument with a finger)

The image displays a musical score for the Adagio movement of J.S. Bach's Concerto for oboe & violin BWV 1060. The score is arranged in three systems. The top system features the Oboe part, which begins with a melodic line in the treble clef, marked 'Adagio'. The middle system shows the Violin part, which is currently silent, indicated by a whole rest on the staff. The bottom system contains the Piano accompaniment, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a rhythmic pattern of chords and single notes, characteristic of pizzicato playing. The tempo 'Adagio' is written above the first staff, and the composer's name 'J.S. Bach' is in the upper right corner.

Research
question 1

how come?



5

Speaking Separately: 2015 Belgrade Lesbian March and Its Antecedents

After a contentious and often-violent decade, 2015 proved to be an *annus mirabilis* in Serbian and post-Yugoslav non-heterosexual and trans activist organising. That year not only witnessed a relatively smooth unfolding of the Belgrade Pride Parade but the streets of the Serbian (and former Yugoslav) capital also welcomed, until then unprecedented, Lesbian March and Trans Pride. This surprising diversity testified, on the one hand, to the vital currents of LGBT activist engagement that survived, among other unfavourable circumstances, high levels of both institutionalised and socially widespread homophobia. On closer inspection, though, such an abundance of activist endeavours concentrated in a relatively short period of time pointed to an emotionally charged “underworld” of tensions, frustrations, and challenges that local activists faced in their efforts to advance the (heterogeneous) cause of LGBT emancipation.

In this chapter, I draw upon a variety of empirical sources to reconstruct the 2015 Belgrade Lesbian March exploring how lesbian separatism—the most radical form of lesbian activist organising (done “by women for women” and therefore excluding men)—entered the Yugoslav space. I contextualise this unusual public gathering, the first of its kind in

Research question 2 how come?

6

(Post)socialist gender troubles: transphobia in Serbian leftist activism

Bojan Bilić

Towards the end of September 2020, as the world was bracing for the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, I received a Facebook notification that invited me to like the freshly established Lesbian and Gay Solidarity Network (Lezbejska i gej solidarna mreža, LGSM), a leftist initiative stemming from the need for 'radically different forms of LGB organising'¹ in Serbia. In spite of a conspicuous shortening of the acronym that had finally, after decades-long struggles, started doing justice to all of its four commonly used letters, I was curious about this new arrival to the often obscure and conflict-ridden domain of Serbian activist politics. As I plunged into the group's 'manifesto', I quickly found myself agreeing with the wish to resurrect the importance of class in our social analyses, emphasise women's liberation, permeate engagement with feminist principles, and rescue non-heterosexual emancipation from the jaws of elitism and hegemonic impositions. Alas, my enthusiasm began to subside as I read that gays and lesbians are a 'minority' whose right to 'same-sex attraction' should have precedence over sexual practices or fetishes of any kind. Queerness, which I thought could serve as an antidote to the painful legacy of the region's reified identities, was not spared either: instead of being seen as a tool devised with the promise of giving us access to badly needed breathing space, of loosening the identitarian noose around our non-normative lives, it was condemned as a means for 'justifying rotten coalitions with heterosexuals' and a 'fiction' to be banished from the knowledge that nourishes our mobilisations. By the end of the collective's programmatic statement I could not help feeling a sense of both disappointment and frustration as I learned that 'social pressure to engage with persons of the opposite sex' and hormonal and surgical interventions which 'aim at "correcting" the body' are little more than 'new and perfidious forms of old conversion therapy'. It took me a bit of time to get my head around such a discursive manoeuvre that did not only relegate trans² people (the missing T!) to a pseudoscientific practice, but also drove yet another, particularly destructive, stake through our already fragile coalitional hearts and endeavours.

Research question 3

What is the purpose/meaning of...?

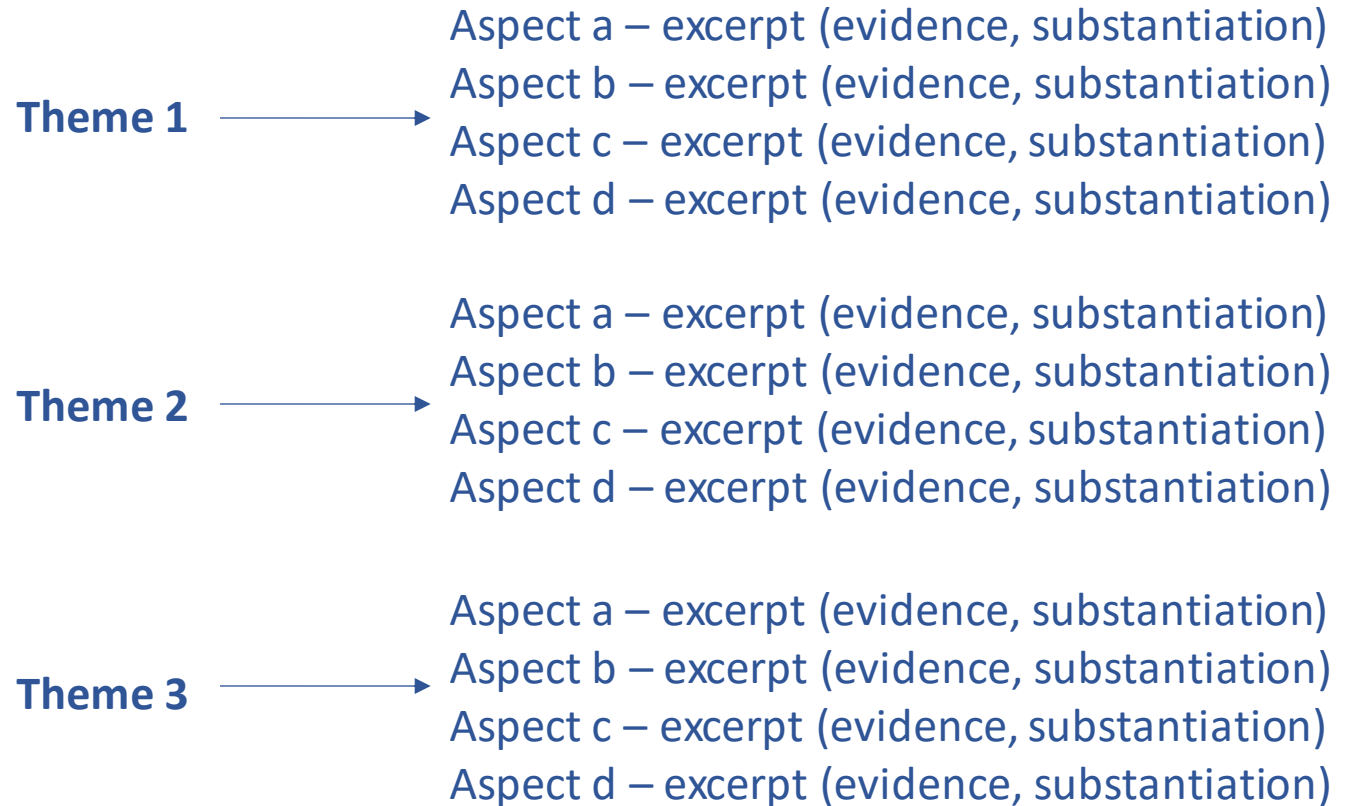
Transgender and non-binary persons, mental health, and gender binarism in Serbia

Jelena Vidić and Bojan Bilić

Over the last three decades Serbia has been characterised by profound and occasionally violent social change.¹ In such a politically dynamic milieu little attention has been paid to trans issues and there are for the time being no systematic studies exploring the entanglements between transgender and gender non-binary (TGNB) persons, trans activism, and mental health. Our chapter starts filling this lacuna by combining both quantitative and qualitative data and offering an account of mental health-related challenges faced by trans people. After three introductory sections in which we provide an overview of research on TGNB mental health, describe the interface between transgender lives and the Serbian legal and health systems, and briefly present the history of transgender activist organising in the country, our analysis unfolds in three inter-related streams: first, we offer descriptive statistics arising from a 2019 survey about TGNB persons' needs and experiences: there we argue that in spite of legal and medical advancements, the right to gender self-determination is contentious and dependent upon the highly centralised health system which is still inadequately equipped to serve the population in question. In the second part, we draw upon the first author's year-long experience as a psychotherapist working with transgender clients in an activist organisation providing psychological support outside of the public healthcare system and gender medical team (thus not having a gatekeeping function). We examine some of the most recurrent issues that appear in individual clinical work with trans people emphasising how social status and geographical location modulate non-normative gender expression and the capacity to deal with the accompanying mental distress. In the third, final part, we turn to the transgender self-help group operating within the framework of the Belgrade-based activist organisation Geten (formerly known as Gayten-LGBT²). Above and beyond its empowerment function, we claim that this group constitutes an epistemic community that generates embodied knowledge about transgender lives that still lacks wider understanding

Analysis

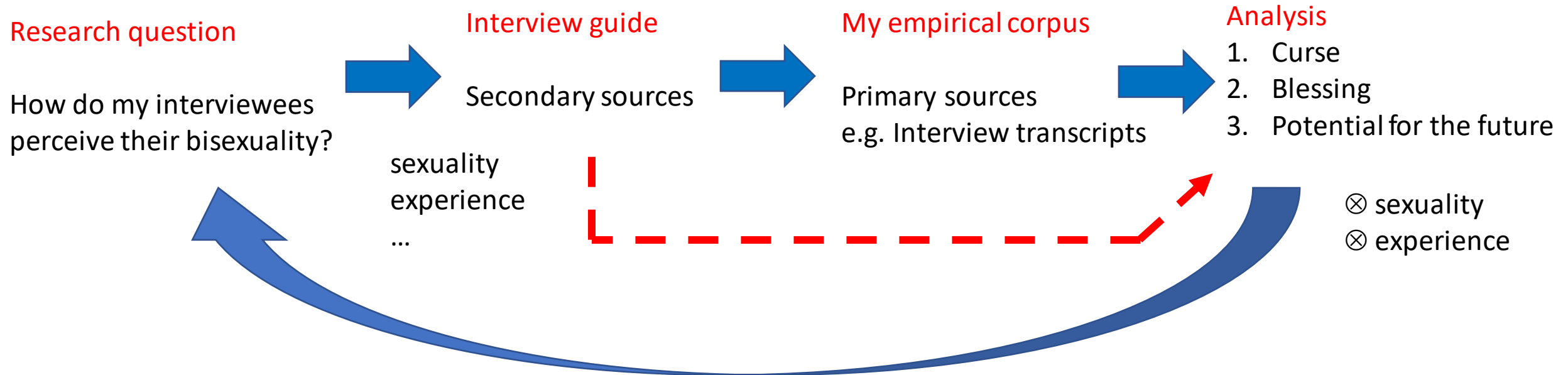
Thematic/content analysis Example



Research Question-Analysis Connection

You have an argument only if this connection is strong.
Always ask: “is my analysis answering my research question?”

Example:



FIVE LOOKs (Gordy)

- Look below the surface
- Look for diversity
- Look into the past
- Look at how people live
- Look at the research

Methodological point 1

- own your research and be present and visible in it, not trying to appear as a super-knowledgeable expert, but rather as a vulnerable and at the same time resilient and curious explorer who is not afraid of his/her doubts and does not try to artificially eliminate them, but acknowledges them, addresses them and makes them become an integral part of research, an element that pushes research forward and opens channels of communication with others.

Methodological point 2

- as social scientists we need to ask ourselves who and what has been marginalised, what has been erased or repressed so that one particular interpretation of the social reality could become dominant. Our task is to dig deep through the social surface and to give voice to those people, interpretations, perspectives, visions that have been silenced or excluded.

Methodological point 3

- politically focused collective enterprises are parts of long-term social processes and, as such, they never appear in a political and social vacuum.

Methodological point 4

- It is, in principle, good to give your research a comparative dimension. Comparative research design produces richer and more dynamic knowledge. It may also prevent you from 'exoticising' because it will show you that similar phenomena, similar practices exist or are possible in other places.

Methodological point 5

- Triangulate

Triangulation – having more sources of data (not only interviews, but interviews, focus groups, participant observations, documents, images, datasets...)

Methodological point 6

- if you are criticising something, it does not mean that you support its opposite!
- it is important to avoid generalisations and essentialisations!

Methodological point 7

- Keep in mind that social movements are systems of tensions – people struggle for power within them, they are not linear or homogeneous

Methodological point 8

- “Standpoints of the subjugated are not innocent positions” – if someone lives under oppression, it does not mean they are necessarily good. Constructive criticism is a sign of respect!

Methodological point 9

Start anywhere.

John Cage

Thank you!

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