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DISCOURSES' TRANSFORMATION OF WORLD RELIGIONS AND GENDER INEQUALITY AT THE END OF THE XX – BEGINNING OF THE XXI CENTURIES

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Abstract. *Purpose.* Explore the sociocultural reasons for the transformation of discourses of religion and gender in modern political systems. *Theoretical basis.* In philosophy, as in other sciences, the feminist direction emerged and took shape within the framework of liberalism as an emancipation project with the main goal of political equality. Although this path - unlike the radically separatist - is modernist, it, like a thousand years ago, forms a stable opposition with the essentialist attitudes of world religions. Within the framework of the social constructivist methodology, gender is defined as the cause and result of the interactions of power and inequality of women. As gender discourses change, systems change, but world religions today reproduce inequality, supporting traditional gender systems. *Scientific novelty.* At the beginning of the XXI century. Gender is less and less a component of unchanging identity and more and more a product of interactions with other people, social institutions and social structures. Thus, gender is a constantly created property of situational interaction, and not a role or a sign. The concept of gender in theology opens up a huge field for interpretation, showing a slight tendency to change, and is still identified with the transcendental and supernatural as masculine and natural and physical as feminine. *Findings.* The causes of gender inequality are difficult to comprehend for a strictly rational reflection environment. Women's inequality cannot be fully reduced to a system of norms and laws. Theology associated with early Christian teachings shows particular stability in the interpretation of women as “invisible” and apolitical, taking advantage of the Old Testament ideas about the nature of women, while also offering no explanation for the “invisibility” of women in their purely private sphere.

Keywords: nature; spirituality; theology; gender order; ideology; culture

Introduction. In the feminist ontology of the twentieth century philosophy of religion is viewed primarily as the “end of the opposition of spirit and matter” (Hein, 2005). Researchers prove: the spirituality of women is always associated with their gender, a woman plays, in essence, only a material role, while the father

“animates” offspring. The latter leads to the formulation of the Christian view: the spirit is so related to matter as a man is to a woman (Hein, 2005: 340). However, feminist theologians represent a different point of view, arguing that the views of the Fathers of the Church on women do not have the right to exclusive power in the judgments of the theologians (Park, 2019). Nevertheless, the idea of K. Keller that “...для феминистской теологии нет иного выхода, кроме как двигаться в неопределенное пространство за пределы старого патриархата и позднего нового редукционизма” (Keller, 2006: 275).

In general, feminist theory today considers gender relations as socially organized relations of power and inequality. According to M. Kimmel, power is a central issue in the theory of gender, within the framework of which problems of differences and domination can be explained (Kimmel, 2006: 151). The most important achievement of the feminist approach to the study of gender inequality is that scientists began to follow the “prescribed routes” of Christian theology to a much lesser extent. However, the scientific knowledge characteristic of the patriarchal system and rooted in the foundations of religion still has considerable power of conviction and influence, which largely determines the relevance of this article.

The concepts of public and private spheres, originating in classical ancient philosophy, and in our time continue to be used as indisputable in most works of modern scholars and theologians. However, neither Jesus Christ nor the Apostle Paul mentions the separation of soul and body in a human being. An important argument resorted to in modern discussions is based on the premise that there is a solid basis for separating the personal from the political. Feminist scholars argue that if such marginalization continues in the future, it will irreparably damage the integrity, clarity and persuasiveness of the philosophical theory itself (Okin, 1991).

Purpose

The study of religion discourses in gender transformations of sociocultural and political systems of the late XX and early XXI centuries.

Presentation of the main material

Gender differences in the political system – a historically established phenomenon, determining the role and place of women in the system of power relations.

Sometimes these differences are called “gender gap”, and in this broad meaning the term is used in interdisciplinary areas of research (Evans, 2016).

It is known that the appearance of women in the political structures of western and developing countries is associated with the general process of empowering various social groups in liberal democratic systems. However, despite the impressive results of the struggle of women for their civil rights, equality is still a goal that has not been achieved. In modern scientific debates on political and civic life, gender is often ignored, implicitly implied, at best. However, for the sake of objectivity, it

should be noted: nowadays, the new “credo” of western countries is exposing the basis of the liberal “social contract” (Kamens, 2019)

There is no doubt that the phenomenon of extremely complex gender equality has many forms, which is why it is so important to pay attention to those who use categories and concepts, as well as their motives for the representation of categories in certain interpretations and contexts.

Feminist philosophers deny the fact that philosophical methodology can exist completely independently of ideology. As a result, quite often the question arises: to what extent is this or that methodology fundamental, consistent with the dominant political ideology of the culture to which the researcher belongs. At the same time, scientists stress: the concept of “gender” is multifaceted and many-sided. Gender is both a social construct and a system of relationships; gender is both quality and behavioral identification of a person in a certain social situation. Gender is both a basic identity and an analytical category (Ksenofontova, 2008: 15). However, it is very important that gender is not a subject of scientific research, but a methodology that is applicable when analyzing any culture and civilization in different historical periods.

At the end of the last century, the Ukrainian state found itself in a situation of the need to reform the Soviet gender order that existed before this time. The proclamation of the ideals of democracy actualized the discourses of gender equality, while at the same time preserving the Soviet approach to the “women's” issue; the church focused its attention on persistent appeal to traditional gender values. The choice, as we know, was made in favor of liberalism and democracy. However, even today the overwhelming majority of men (women less) perceive masculinity and femininity in a clearly stereotyped structure. That is why, despite the adoption of laws and acts aimed at gender equality, so few women succeed in public space. “From the time of the Greeks to the French Revolution, and later, three main male spheres were closed to women: Religion, Army, and Politics”, – claim J. Dobi and M. Perro (Zavershinskaya, 2007: 85). And if the “doors” of the army and politicians are open for Christian women today, then Religion, as in early Christian times, is the sphere of men.

Women and today are not so much “serve” as “subservient”; women are not just the “silent majority”, they must be in “silence”. However, with regard to the texts of the canonical Gospels, then, according to the researchers, their teachings dealt a severe blow to the pagan view of the appointment of a woman as a producer of offspring. In the Gospels, universal spiritual equality of people is one of the basic ethical principles.

At the beginning of the XXI century, the problems of reconstructing the history of women in Ukraine are concentrated mainly around several narratives, including the narrative about Beregynia, which is based on the idea of the imperishable matriarchal order of gender relations in our country. As you know, this process was

marked by the active use of Beregynia's image in the rhetoric of political leaders, support for the church and clear attempts to incorporate this narrative into a new national metanarrative (Kis, 2008: 157). The historical mission of the woman is filled with images that allow to merge the notions of femininity, Christianity, motherhood and nation, thus building the core of the concept of Beregynia. Under the name Beregynia, many pseudoscientific ideas about gender relations in Ukrainian society have been "scientifically" legitimized, – writes O. Kis, – however, they still actively circulate both in scientific and near-scientific circles. Undoubtedly, the influence on the identity of cultural traditions cannot be ignored, since a nation is always a cultural community. (Gnatenko, 2008: 53). Nobody argues with the validity of this statement. Many works are devoted to the specifics of gender relations in Islam, the history and traditions of the behavior of men and women in the world of Islam, and detailed coverage of this issue is beyond the scope of this article. However, we emphasize: the norm of behavior and morality are determined by the Islamic tradition with strict adherence to the principles of Muslim dogma set forth in the Koran. Touching on the problem of polygamy, a characteristic feature of a Muslim marriage, scholars notice that in modern reality far from all men enjoy this sharia privilege both due to the influence of democratic forces and for economic reasons. (Krylova, 2010: 122).

These problems are inextricably linked with the category of equality, which today is one of the most difficult philosophical categories. The concept of gender equality in the third millennium still has many opponents using the old fundamentalist approaches; this is why attempts to mobilize new epistemology and ontology in the theory of feminism are, today, one of the tasks of feminism as a science and movement for the equal rights of women (Vlasova, 2018).

Analysts often argue that many of the problematic issues of equality could be resolved if women had a higher level of political participation. Despite the fact that women constitute half of the world's population, they occupy only 22% of the seats in the parliaments of the whole world. Absence of women can be traced at all levels of government - local, regional and national. But why is it so important that women participate in politics? Studies that analyzed the role of women in leadership positions in Bolivia, Cameroon, and Malaysia found that women, unlike men, are more likely to invest in family, community resources, health, education, and poverty reduction when prioritizing spending items. Perhaps that is why women are less represented in business and entrepreneurship and are mainly engaged in the healthcare, education, social security and administrative sectors.

The World Economic Forum team in their annual report Global Gender Gap Report presented the ranking of countries in terms of gender equality. In 2017, 144 countries took part in the study, each of which evaluated the nation's desire for gender equality based on four key criteria: economic involvement and opportunities for women, education, sex ratio at birth and life expectancy, and political participation

of women of society. According to the listed indicators, the leader of the ranking is Iceland (9 once in a row) with a minimal gap between the participation of men and women in all important areas of public life at the level 87,8% (where 100% means absolute gender equality). Since 2006, the country has managed to overcome 10% of internal gender inequality. The top three also includes Norway (83%) and Finland (82,3%). The worst situation with gender equality is observed in Syria (56,8%), Pakistan (54,6%) and Yemen (51,6%) (WIF GGGR, 2017).

Ukraine in the ranking took 61st place with 70,5%, Russia – 71 (69,6%), Belarus – 26 (74,4%), Armenia – 97 (67,7%), and Georgia – at 94 place (67, 9%).

Although today women occupy 22% of parliamentary seats in the world, this figure is significantly different when comparing continents and countries. For example, in the parliaments of Europe most women in Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Iceland, Norway (40 – 44%). Least of all – in Hungary, Romania, Cyprus and Malta (10 – 13%). However, higher rates of sexual equality are recorded not in Europe, but in Africa and South America, although the figures there are very different: from 58% in Rwanda up to 8% in the Democratic Republic of Congo and 6% in Nigeria. Similar situation in South America: in Bolivia, women occupy more than half of the seats in parliament (52%), while in Brazil – only 11%.

Findings

Due to the cross-cultural nature of gender (race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexuality) in modern globalization processes, the gender system includes a variety of behavioral narratives, increasingly related to the discursiveness of personal preferences. The instability of the gender order in the stable patriarchal systems of religion brings to the forefront the analysis of religious differences represented in changing political systems and power discourses. In official state discourse, these trends, while not being explicit, tend to appear implicitly in their respective contexts. It is necessary to emphasize: despite the processes of formation of postmaterialistic values in modern societies, gender transformations in world religions, reflecting the laws and regulations of the patriarchal order, represent discourses related primarily to traditional spiritual values, which are reflected in the corresponding gender systems.

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