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Theoretical formulation and history of the problem of the sociology of gender relations

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Abstract

The article deals with the social aspects of the development of gender sociology in Russia and in the West, the history of gender sociology, differences between the terms "gender" and "sex", the direction and the measurement of gender sociology, the history of gender sociology, dimension of gender, patterns of differentiation of male and female social roles, power relations between men and women as one of the crucial principles of social organization. The article presents the opinions of famous scientists in the field of sociology of gender – T. Laker, Robert Stoller. The author of this article considers psychological, social and cultural aspects of "gender", the main directions of gender theory: philosophical, feminism, the theory of social construction of gender. The term "gender" of American researcher J. Scott, which has not won universal acceptance, is very popular in the twenty-first century. It enters into the professional thesaurus of sociologists. Anastasia Posadskaya introduced the concept of "gender" in Russian language in the early 1990s. The author talks that in Russia gender sociology is in its infancy: there is an intensive discussion of the basic concepts; some of the problems first posed in Western sociology are reconsidered in relation to the socio-historical and political conditions of the post-Soviet society. Many foreign textbooks and scientific works devoted to gender issues are being intensively translated, and personal works in this field are published. In recent years, numerous independent studies have been carried out, analyzing the social relations between the sexes and the specificity of the social roles of men and women directly. *Russian scientists* actively participate in international forums on the status of women and gender issues.

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Keywords

Sociology, gender sociology, society, gender, genderology, social roles, T. Laker, gender identity.

Introduction

Gender sociology is one of the branches of sociology, the subject of its study are the patterns of female and male social roles differentiation [Titarenko, 2003]. Studies of gender sociology are aimed at the unequal relationships between men and women that have developed historically.

Note that the term "gender" in contrast to the term "sex" is ambivalent and can be translated most accurately as "social sex", since it focuses on social rather than on biological differences between the sexes.

Within the framework of gender sociology there are various theoretical and practical approaches, empirical researches, but at the same time they all recognize that gender and power relations between men and women are one of the key principles of social organization.

For example, T. Laker addressed the issue that there was only the male sex, and the female one was considered to be its underdeveloped form.

In 1968 Robert Stoller introduced the concept of gender. Thus, unlike his predecessors, Stoller singled out the concepts of "sex" as biological sex and gender as social sex.

Gender is constructed and interpreted by the society as a social model of women and men and it identifies and determines their status and role in society and its institutions i.e. politics, economy, education, family, media, etc. Gender systematizes and creates differentiations in the status of women and men in society through a relationship of power and subordination.

Gender identity means to what extent the representatives of a particular gender feel men or women.

With the development of science it became evident that the only clear and significant biological difference between men and women lies in their role of the reproduction. Sex includes anatomical, biological differences between a man and a woman, "gender" includes psychological, social and cultural aspects.

Sex and gender boundaries are fundamental, since many differences between a man and a woman are caused by reasons that are not biological in their nature [Giddens, 2005].

In Western sociology the term "gender sociology" is rather rare. Such concepts as "gender relations" and "gender studies" are used instead.

Sociology of gender

Sociology of gender is a special sociological theory that examines and structures the development and social interaction of two gender communities: male and female.

Their interaction with each other in specific historical, economic, political, social, spiritual, legal, information, cultural conditions is studied.

Many sociological theories present a gender aspect, i. e. the sociology of childhood, the sociology of management, the sociology of labor and employment, the sociology of the family, etc.

The object of the study of gender sociology is men and women as two large socio-demographic groups that differ in social status (position in society), role functions, psychological traits, behavior and consciousness. Researchers are interested in the historically established relationships between men and women and the corresponding image of social reality.

The subject of gender sociology is the social status of men and women in society and its genesis under the influence of certain conditions: cultural, economic, historical, political, spiritual.

Directions and dimensions of gender

Gender sociology studies the division of labor on the basis of sex, mass cultural symbols and socio-psychological stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, and their influence on different aspects of the life of society.

At this stage of development of gender sociology there are three main directions of gender theoretical thought:

- traditional philosophical (interpretation of gender relations and gender inequality);
- feminism (the problem of overcoming the gender oppression of women and their struggle for their rights);
- the theory of the social construction of gender, which is based on the concept of the research objective and the subjective reality, according to which the most important functions are informative, applied (empirical), managerial, prognostic.

Sociologists have always recognized the very fact of the presence of differences in the social roles of women and men, social inequality, and researchers have always sought to identify and explain the causes of unequal relations between men and women from the point of view of socio-psychological, socio-economic, socio-cultural aspects.

Gender can be considered in terms of the following dimensions:

- individual – through gender identity and gender socialization;
- structural – as a real position of men and women in the structure of social institutions, including economics, politics, culture, religion, education, family, medicine;
- symbolic or cultural, proceeding from the fact that the images of "a real man" and "a real woman" is included in every culture in a concrete historical time.

Sociologists, ethnographers, historians, anthropologists, psychologists and educators have long established preconceptions about the typically masculine and typically feminine: what in one culture and in one society can be considered typically masculine behavior (occupation),

a character trait, in the other society can be defined as typically feminine. In considering gender issues, it is necessary to take into account the cultural aspect and national differences and affiliation.

Gender is formed from the person's birth and continues to develop throughout his life. Parents, in raising children, dealing with them, use completely different styles of communication, with an emphasis on having a boy or a girl, but often parents believe that they do not discriminate between boys and girls. Since his birth a person falls under the influence of gender object system: depending on the sex of the baby a colour of a stroller is chosen, as well as clothing and toys.

In the process of socialization and self-identification of an individual in the family (parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, other relatives), in education (teachers, lecturers, pre-school teachers), in culture, especially mass culture, since it has a major impact on a person's position in society, his behavior, relations to other people (media, books, theater, cinema, show business), promote gender stereotypes in the minds of children, the younger generation, form certain rules of behavior and create ideas about the "real man" and "real woman". Introduced in the minds of individuals gender norms are supported by cultural mechanisms, for example, through gender stereotypes in media. In modern society the level of culture is very low, thus it is necessary to rethink it through filling with higher ideas, otherwise the cultural potential of society will become poorer.

Gender perspective

The term "gender perspective" in sociology emerged in the 1970-ies. It appeared due to the formation of opposition research of the relationship between the sexes. Gender approach in sociology is commonly understood as the analysis of relations of power organized on the basis of cultural-symbolic of sex determination. Cultural-symbolic definition of sex (what is called gender) is a mixed characteristic of status arising from the mixing of many features of an individual and/or group. Thus, gender mainstreaming is one of the variants of the stratification approach, which explores the thesis of the unequal distribution of resources on the basis of assigned gender, about the relations of domination-subordination, exclusion and recognition of people whom society considers to different gender categories. Gender becomes a "useful" multi-level category for social analysis, which "operates" on the level of analysis of identity, interpersonal relations, system and structural level.

In the West, the study of the gender approach originates from the 1970s, as the cognitive practice of women's movement of the second wave and as a criticized theory of socialization, and is therefore largely determined by the laws of development of the latter. Studies are based on the adaptability of the theory of socialization to the problem of social relations between women and men.

Thanks to the American researcher J. Scott in the mid-1980s a new term entered professional thesaurus for sociologists – "gender", which has not won universal acceptance, but is very popular in the XXI century, as the gender sociology is considered to be one of the most promising and progressive branches of modern sociology. In contrast to the term "sexus", indicating only the anatomical differences between men and women, and the term "genus", indicating the grammatical phenomenon, according to J. Scott the term "gender" focuses on those social peculiarities of men and women which develop as a result of their activities in a society, and which, ultimately, determine the originality of their behavior and position in society without removing or denying sex differences.

Gender in Russia

The notion of "gender" was introduced into the Russian language in the early 1990s by Posadskaya Anastasia. In Russia, gender studies began to develop in the late 80s – early 90s, during the formation and emergence of the first feminist groups and women's organizations that promote independence, and the first publications and translations of articles on gender issues began to appear in mass media. The article by A. Posadskaya, N. Rimashevskaya and N. Zakharova entitled "How We Solved the Women's Question" was published in 1989 in the magazine "Kommunist" [Захарова, Посадская, Римащевская, 1989] and became a kind of a manifesto of the initial stage of a new direction in science and the social women's movement, which later, in 1994, with a helping hand from the English publishers of the book "Women in Russia" [Barbara Alpern Engel, 2004], was called "A new era of feminism in Russia".

Historians date historical events and phenomena by mentioning them in written sources. And if you look at the history of the development and the emergence of gender studies in Russia (the former USSR) from these positions, the beginning of the emergence of studies on gender begins in 1990, when a laboratory was created in the Institute of Socio-Economic Population Problems within the Academy of Sciences; in the official name of which the term "gender" was used for the first time. Later this scientific unit became known as the Moscow Center for Gender Studies (MCGS). For this reason, 2000 and 2010 can be considered jubilee as today's Russian gender studies are a quarter of a century. From the historical point of view, twenty-five years is rather a very short time, but for our country and our science, these were the years of colossal changes concerning the emergence and development of new democratic institutions, one of which can be rightly considered as gender studies.

Conclusion

Speaking about the sociology of genderology, it must be remembered that the researches of Russian scientists are inferior to the western ones, there is a significant gap in the theory and

practice of this field. But, gender sociology is gaining popularity in Russia, higher education institutions are introducing courses to study it, to acquaint students with traditional social problems through the prism of gender problems and gender asymmetry that takes place in all spheres of public life. The study of gender relations has become an integral part of most social and humanitarian sciences.

In Russia, gender sociology is in its infancy: there is an intensive discussion of the basic concepts, some of the problems first posed in Western sociology are reconsidered in relation to the socio-historical and political conditions of the post-Soviet society. Many foreign textbooks and scientific works devoted to gender issues are being intensively translated, and personal works in this field are published. In recent years, numerous independent studies have been carried out, analyzing the social relations between the sexes and the specificity of the social roles of men and women directly. *Russian scientists* actively participate in international forums on the status of women and gender issues.

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Теоретическая постановка и история проблемы социологии гендерных отношений

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Аннотация

В статье рассмотрены социальные аспекты развития гендерной социологии в России и на Западе, история гендерной социологии, отличия терминов «пол», «род», «гендер», направления и измерения гендерной социологии, история возникновения гендерной социологии, измерения гендера, закономерности дифференциации женских и мужских социальных ролей, властные отношения между мужчинами и женщинами как один из решающих принципов организации общества. Приведены мнения известных ученых в отрасли социологии гендера Т. Лакера, Р. Столлера, психологические, социальные и культурные аспекты «гендера», основные направления гендерной теоретической мысли: традиционно-философское, феминизм, теория социального конструирования гендера. Термин «гендер» американской исследовательницы Дж. Скотт не завоевал всеобщего признания, но очень популярен в XXI веке, введен в профессиональный тезаурус социологов. Понятие «гендер» было введено в русский язык в начале 1990-х годов Посадской Анастасией.

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Ключевые слова

Социология, гендерная социология, социум, гендер, гендерология, социальные роли, Т. Лакер, гендерная идентичность.

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