

ISCKMC 2020**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****APPLICATION PRACTICE OF THE GENDER REGIME
CONCEPT TO SOCIETIES OF TRANSITIONAL TYPE**

Maria Ilinichna Miroschnichenko (a)*, Vera Anatolievna Zhuravleva (b),
Nadezhda Petrovna Paletskikh (c), Jurij Ivanovich Budnikov (d),
Vitalij Semenovich Tolstikov (e), Galina Timofeevna Kamalova (f)

*Corresponding author

(a) South Ural State University, 76, Lenin ave., Chelyabinsk, 454080, Russia, mmi74@yandex.ru,

(b) Zlatoust Branch of South Ural State University, 16, Turgenev str., Zlatoust city Chelyabinsk region, 456209,
Russia, zhuravlvera@yandex.ru,

(c) State Historical Museum of the Southern Urals, 100, Labor str., Chelyabinsk, 454000, Russia, palenad@mail.ru,

(d) South Ural State University, 76, Lenin ave., Chelyabinsk, 454080, Russia, bui1951@mail.ru,

(e) Chelyabinsk State Institute of Culture, 36a, Ordzhonikidze str., Chelyabinsk, 454091, Russia,

(f) South Ural State University, 76, Lenin ave., Chelyabinsk, 454080, Russia, kamalova_galina@mail.ru

Abstract

The article discusses the experience of practical application of the R.W. Connell's concept in the study of transitional societies using the example of early Soviet society (from October 1917 to the mid-1930s). The author undertakes a comparative analysis of the terms' definitions (defining concepts) as "gender regime", "gender order", "gender composition", "gender model" from the standpoint of formal logic. Comparison of the identified essential features made it possible to conclude that their intersection impedes to clearly distinguish one phenomenon from another. The result is that the peculiarities of early Soviet society, which is classified as a transitional, were identified: frequent cardinal transformations of the content and orientation of sociocultural processes were carried out during every four to six years; basically, the violent change of economic order took place rather quickly. This entailed significant shifts in the social composition of population and changes in the status of social groups. The change of fundamentally different economic policies was accompanied by worldview leaps: from the idea of the family withering away to its strengthening, from allowing abortions to their ban, from social upbringing declaration of all children without exception to rejecting this idea, from abolitionism to prohibitionism with regard to prostitution, etc. It was determined that several mutually exclusive types of gender contracts coexisted in the Soviet country until the mid-1930s in society. They were substantially determined by national and religious preferences. Particular behavioral gender models have historically developed and acted in the environment of monasticism, Old Believers, Islam, Cossacks, and Mennonitism.

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1. Introduction

The organization and functioning of gender centers, a sustained interest in gender issues and the emergence of a great variety of special and interdisciplinary, theoretical and specific gender studies are undoubtedly a triumph of the gender approach, which as a methodological concept emerged and began to be affirmed since the mid-1980s.

Continuous discussion of the growth process, trends, results, prospects of gender and women's studies is taking place in the domestic historical science and abroad (Pushkareva, 2013). Pushkareva and Zolotukhina (2018) analyzed the main tendencies in women and gender studies of the Russian past. The origin and development of women studies in India in the mid-1970s is traced in the article by Krishnaraj (2018) "The First Women's Studies Research Centre: A History of Women's Studies and its Progenitors", published in "Indian Journal of Gender Studies". The analysis of works on the women history of China, written in English, French, German and Italian, is carried out in the Yates' (2009) monograph "Women and Gender in China Studies. Women in China from Earliest Times to the Present: A Bibliography of Studies in Western language". The monograph is provided with an extensive list of these works.

The choice of a specific methodological basis, historical or other research, always implies the analysis of social or physical reality through the prism of its inherent conceptual apparatus. In this regard, the plurality of concepts of the recently spread gender approach generates a number of complexities for the researcher. The emergence of private gender concepts was accompanied by an abundant reproduction of new terms (Pushkareva, 2007). Careful consideration and application of the rules of formal (two-valued) logic indicate that the essential features of a number of gender concepts contain common elements, due to which these definitions turn out to be rather vague.

The issue of the gender studies subject (essential characteristics of gender phenomena, including significant features of gender terms), still occupies a substantial place among the problems in the view of scientists. Thus, Deepa Sreenivas in his paper "Between Politics and Discipline: Gender Studies in an Institutional Setting" published in "Indian Journal of Gender Studies", emphasizes the meaningfulness of methodological certainty for the implementation of empirical gender research (Sreenivas, 2015).

The article "European Identity and Gender Equality Policies: Shaping the Practice of Gender Expertise" in "Journal of Research in Gender Studies" by Enderstein (2017), discusses comparative analysis of ideas about the term content of "gender equality." Based on the experience study of the gender equality policy, which was carried out in the states of the European Union for sixty years, the author revealed the peculiarities of its perception, depending on the originality of European identity in the EU countries.

The article "The Humanities as Heuristic: Coordinating the Sector" was published in "Cultural Studies Review"; its author Turner (2019), noting the significance of the humanities, set the task of defining national research priorities.

To our mind, the intensification of discussions about the conceptual apparatus of gender theory should be among the priorities in historical science in Russia as one of its most important methodological constitutes.

2. Problem Statement

The paper raises the problem of the concept applicability of gender regime in its entirety with regard to the transitional societies study on the example of the early Soviet period (October 1917 – the first half of the 1930s) with its conglomerate of social communities. It is proved that the categories of “gender regime” and “gender order”, proposed in 1987, were developed with the expectation of an established modern Western society; that the perception of the “Soviet gender contract” as monolithic and dominant generates difficulties, inconsistencies, discrepancies. The ways to eliminate them are offered.

3. Research Questions

The research subject is the heuristic potential of the gender regime concept by Connell (1987); as well as the essence, causes of occurrence and ways of overcoming the contradictions that arise in the study of transitional societies through the prism of such basic categories as “gender regime” and “gender order”.

To conduct a relevant comparison and indicate the commonality of indispensable and sufficient features in defining the concepts of “gender composition” and “gender model” with essential features of the terms “gender regime” and “gender order”; to explain the differences in comprehending the term “composition” in Connell’s (1987) and Russian scientists’ view.

To characterize the originality of transitional societies (on the example of Soviet Russia/USSR society from its establishment time until the mid-1930s); to identify the objective conditions that define the benefits of sociocultural analysis of gender phenomena through the concepts of “gender composition” and “gender model.”

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the paper is to analyze the productivity of “gender regime” and “gender order” definitions in the study of societies being in an unstable, transitional state; to reveal the features and dynamics of the gender composition development in Soviet Russia/USSR by 1935.

5. Research Methods

Traditional methods of historical science, such as the method of historical and typological analysis consenting to group objects according to certain criteria, comparative historical and retrospective were used in the study, the theoretical and methodological basis of which was gender methodology. The hierarchy of the major gender categories was carried out on the basis of general scientific logical methods (analysis and synthesis), with respect to the rules for the definition and division of concepts; the types of their compatibility were determined.

6. Findings

Authors of specific historical regional studies, as a rule, rely on the basic concepts of “gender order” and “gender regime” when choosing a gender approach as a theoretical and methodological foundation (Tartakovskaia, 2007). The realizing of “gender composition” as a set of gender ideology, gender role and gender identity, and a “gender model” as a set of rights and responsibilities, as well as statuses and activities determined by them, was also widely accepted (Petrova, 2007).

The terms “gender order” and “gender regime”, in addition to the previously proposed concepts of “gender system” and “gender composition”, were introduced by Australian sociologist, Raewyn Connell, a professor at the University of Sydney in the book “Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics” published in 1987 (Connell, 1987). We make the point that the name of Connell is sometimes translated as Robert Connell in contemporary Russian historiography (Tartakovskaia, 2007). According to Connell (1987), “gender composition” is a real historical process of interaction and formation of social groups, the course of which is determined by a combination of three factors such as gender ideology, gender role and gender identity. “Gender order” implies a set of patterns of overbearing relations between men and women at the institutional, ideological, symbolic, and daily levels. Within the framework of the established gender order, Connell (1987) identifies the dominant “gender contract” determining the position of women and men in the systems of production and reproduction.

It should be borne in mind that the categories “gender order” and “gender regime” were proposed to characterize established gender systems, since R. Connell's theory was developed in relation to the conditions of a stable Western society in the mid – second half of the 1980s. However, the early Soviet period, from October 1917 to the mid-1930s, cannot be qualified as a period with an established gender system. This system, while maintaining a number of basic common features, was in a state of constant transformation.

Essential features of “gender composition” and “gender model” concepts intersect with substantial signs of the Connell's (1987) “triad”. The famous “triad” of R. Connell includes labor, power and cathexis – the basic characteristics of gender relations, described through the prism of “gender order” and “gender regime” concepts.

Consider these features, which turned out to be common when formulating these definitions.

The first feature in the “gender regime” is labor. Nevertheless, the “gender model” includes such an essential feature as activity, and labor activity is the most considerable constituent of human activity. The “gender composition”, in turn, comprises behavioral mechanisms as activities. The major activity at all four levels of the “gender order” is an activity in the production and reproduction system.

The second part of Connell's “triad” is power which intersects through the rights and obligations produced either by the power of custom or by the state power generating statuses in the “gender model”, which determines their ideology in the “gender composition”, as well as a part of the institutional and ideological level in “gender order”.

The cathexis phenomenon is always of particular interest. Cathexis is a set of mental, socio-psychological characteristics of a person, characteristics of perception, correlating behavioral mechanisms. Cathexis in its meaning intersects with the “gender model” through the sphere of self-identification in the structure of the individual mental activity. The concept of “cathexis” has an

intersection with “gender composition” through the area of gender identity, which also indirectly influences the four main levels of “gender order” (institutional, ideological, symbolic and daily).

It is characteristic that R. Connell notes the continuous incompleteness and permanent interposition of all three basic elements of gender composition in a state of becoming. In the view of Connell, the word “composition” in the term “gender composition” should be perceived by analogy with a musical composition. The author especially emphasized that it should be seen as “a tangible, active and often difficult process of comprising elements with each other and thoroughly discussing their relationship” (Connell, 1987, p. 18). It follows that the word “to compose” means “to combine parts into a whole”, “to constitute a whole from separate parts”.

However, the term “composition” is perceived in the sense of “formation”, “structure”, or more precisely – “a scheme that conveys a structure” (“a set of elements reflecting structure”) when reading a text translated from English into Russian, in the understanding of Russian scientists who were formed as professionals in a strict academic environment.

The experience of studying Soviet history from October 1917 to the first half of the 1930s, inclusive, demonstrates a number of features of early Soviet society, which allow qualifying it as a transitional type society.

Firstly, national culture, together with religiosity, was initially the main species-forming feature in the worldview. Nevertheless, the gender content transformation of national and cultural meanings was gradually carried out: the national-religious component was replaced by a political, narrow class.

Secondly, abrupt changes in political and economic courses often led to the opposite direction of sociocultural processes. Such changes have repeatedly occurred in the first eighteen years. The modifications included the introduction of “war communism” in the spring of 1918, the transition to a new economic policy in March 1921, and the NEP rejection by 1929, an appeal to a “full-scale socialist offensive along the entire front” from the end of 1930, in the course of which acute social upheavals were associated with the policy of “total collectivization.” The new policy, conducted since 1930, canceled out all the merits of women activism and the delegate past of middle-class peasant females who fell under the Moloch of eviction.

The same “introduction-cancellation” algorithm (permission-prohibition, paternalism-struggle) is typical for a number of processes in the field of gender relations. It includes the proclamation of the family withering away under socialism in the 1920s and the course towards strengthening the family in the second half of the 1930s; permission and prohibition of abortion (1920 and 1936, respectively); the upbringing declaration of all children in public institutions in isolation from their parents in 1918 and the rejection of this idea in 1920-1921; the transition from encouraging the female soldiers movement to fighting against committees of female soldiers since 1920; the implanting of a women delegate movement under the auspices of Bolshevism since 1929 and its liquidation at the beginning of 1930 under the pretext of party apparatus reorganization; the transition from abolitionism (prevention) since 1919 to prohibitionism (prohibition) in 1935 in relation to prostitution (Miroshnichenko, 2015, 2016).

At that time, several historically established mutually exclusive types of gender contracts coexisted independently of each other. The contracts content was mainly designated by national and religious preferences. Particular behavioral gender models functioned steadily in the environment of monasticism,

Old Believers, Islam, Cossacks, and Mennonitism. The closure of churches and monasteries, the destruction of temple buildings, as well as the class elimination led to the fact that the monastic and Cossack female gender roles were the most vulnerable from the beginning of the 1920s.

All the features of the early Soviet period, in our opinion, serve as arguments in the discussion about the preference for using the categories “gender composition” and “gender model” rather than “gender regime” or “gender order” when studying the transformed transitional societies.

7. Conclusion

Therefore, the concept of gender regime contains great research potential. The categories “gender composition” and “gender model” are the most strictly formulated among its basic concepts, which designates their greater universality. The application scope of the categories “gender regime” and “gender order” is limited by the framework of a steady, stable contemporary Western society, similar to that existed within the chronological boundaries of the period of the mid-second half of the 1980s. The use of the term “Soviet gender contract” requires more prudence.

Since the early Soviet society was of a transitional nature, the introduced Soviet gender contract did not have a monolithic character, it was constantly transformed. The Soviet gender contract did not yet become dominant until the mid-1930s, before the strengthening of universalization trends and state control over society.

Reckless use of gender terms, without considering specific historical originality, with regard to the early Soviet period, and indeed to any type of social reality, distorts the social practices reflection in the works of scientists, and complicates the reconstruction of mental gender transformations. In this regard, the creation of a multivolume fundamental, comprehensive, generalizing work on the female society history of Russia, written on the all-Union material, an encyclopedic research, like “General History” or “History of the Great Patriotic War”, would greatly facilitate the work of Russian scholars.

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