

<Research Note>

**The Ethical and Gender Aspects of War and Peace: Possible
Research and Teaching Trajectories**

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SUMMARY

The present paper deals with two key issues of our world. It is devoted to the discussion of the place of ethical and gender aspects of war and peace in research and teaching agenda in the coming years. Authors pay special attention to the fact that the new framework, which is emerging as a result of innovative scholarly approach to the topic, is the reflection of the contemporary challenge to the very foundation and properties of the morals and gender relations.

1. Introduction.

Honesty, Openness, Unselfishness, Love – at the individual, interpersonal and international levels – are the principles, which allow us to establish peaceful inter-group communication and to resolve many of those conflicts that are making a significant impact on peoples' lives. The morals are the ground for all kind of human activities, and there must be little doubt that our future at large depends on the level of each person's adherence to moral principles. As numerous historical examples show, an armed solution to the conflict can only put an end to the violent phase of conflicts but not to resolve them. This is particularly clear when we examine the cases of ethnic conflicts. The cardinal change of psychological and moral atmosphere, the formation of the principles of global ethics in the system of interstate and interpersonal relations should facilitate the achievement of the final goal of the elimination of such conflicts. The global ethics are based on the idea that our future safety depends on the changes in human culture. However, the modern state of human culture can be determined as one in a deep crisis, and, primarily a moral crisis. This observation is of the major global ethics' humanitarian value.

2. The Issue of Ethics in Postmodern Social Discourse

Since the cultural crisis is considered also an ethical one, philosophers are keen to develop the principles of social ethics, which can be regarded as a core of global ethics in "post-modern" ("post-industrial," "informational," etc.) societies. At the same time, the issue of ethics in modern technocratic thinking is, perhaps, one of the most crucial. Therefore, the search for the "existence" of ethics leads to the generation of theories, which, in accordance with the principles of ethical projects of the present, are focused on the revealing of new ways of practical application of rationality and the "protection of the disappearing public sphere." The problem of the "desolation of public space" is solved by Jürgen Habermas (Habermas 1993) in his model of the communicative ethics, which shows that the only possible way for the existence of ethics is through a communicative community, or, in other words, within the space of thinking, in which the communications of two or several individuals is carried out.

One way to examine the issue of the ethics of communicative discourse is to reconstruct Kantian ethics and to renew the dialogue between the individual and the general, private and public. As Habermas suggests, the post-modern ethical thinking can be based on the reconstructed theory of Kantian practical reasoning, in case it is considered not a mental ability of an individual to reach moral truth alone, but the ability to communicate by means of the establishment of a new parity of rational realization and values.

At the same time, there is another point of view. It is represented by A. MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1997), J. Grey (Grey 1997) and by some other philosophers as well. These authors show that in light of the failure of the modern moral project it is necessary to search for a pre-modern moral tradition as the latter is capable of giving rationality to post-modern moral positions and obligations. A. MacIntyre equals this tradition to Aristotelism, M. Foucault (Foucault 1983) to early Christianity ethics, and P. Kozlovski (Kozlovski 1988) to Christianity, etc.

Various post-modern ethical theories implicitly include a common thematic structure. This is shown in the context of reasoning on ethical prospects and within the framework of the post-modernity with a retrospective view of the Kant's project of moral philosophy, which brings quite a major disagreement nowadays.

3. Rethinking Bauman's Concept

A significant contribution to the post-Modernity ethical theory development was made recently by sociologists. Here, Z. Bauman's (Bauman 2001) concept is of special interest to us. Using the framework proposed by this concept, the overcoming of Kantian interpretations of the links between the real and the due, directed at the substantiation of their full break, becomes possible within a framework of ethics of love. Kant did not make his ethics the ethics of love, as he believed that love is only the empirical state of person's dependence of his mood and his inclination. This is the reason why Kant loses his freedom and his ability to be rational.

Kant did not consider love a "transcendental" feeling caused by the highest values. However, it is precisely the latter approach that might provide us with an opportunity to combine the internal and the external, freedom and necessity. Therefore,

it should come as no surprise that post-Kantian ethics are presented by a great number of the philosophical systems. They try to comprehend the phenomenon of love as the highest feeling. Love, being an emotion, nevertheless, leads the individual toward highest values and connects the individual to the general. This is how formal duty compulsoriness is eliminated.

On the background of universal criticism of the rational reasoning, in which the latter is accused of intellectual inadequacy and ethical inconsistency, the attempt of Z. Bauman and other sociologists and philosophers to develop some principles of the post-modern ethical theory on the basis of the sense of responsibility and love is of our particular interest. This is because Bauman deals with the foundation of human interests and logics of social institutions.

In the post-modern world, according to these sociologists, the public space is grasped with private interests and objectives that push away anything that cannot be translated into language of personal interests. Hence, it becomes particularly clear that the aim of the post-modern ethical theory is to develop a social ethical theory containing a value-normative substantiation of such social virtues as civilization, responsibility, love, and tolerance. This theory must be capable of filling up the democratic institutions with responsible citizens, in order to create and to fulfil the public space.

4. Towards a Better Understanding of the Morals as a Way to Safer Future

The daily reality inevitably proves that safety and steady development of a family, the smallest human cell, as well as of the entire mankind, depend on the strength of moral values and customs. A society-wide acceptance of the moral values and customs is a key target. In many respects, the scientific philosophical and sociological understanding of the character and dynamics of the processes may facilitate the achievement of this target for those who are involved in the political decision-making.

The major feature of contemporary sociopolitical life of the Russian society can be understood as the coming of a new stage in the country's development. During this stage, Russia is faced with an opportunity to maintain the current trajectory of a steady development. Recent sociological surveys have shown that experts and common people alike would like to see the continuation of the policy of opening up of Russia to

the outside world. At the same time, the majority of respondents believe that their own security, the security of their relatives and the security of their countries, have decreased after the demise of the Soviet Union.

For the majority of respondents, terrorism is the major concern in the area of security. In this respect, however, whereas experts called for the use of social and political means to cope with the terrorist threat, the common people respondents would prefer the use of force. These latter respondents believe that the ethical system of values built on the principles of domination and submission in social attitudes has collapsed. Indeed, there is an urgent need for new global ethics understood as a strategy to build the attitudes based on the following principles: refusal of logics and values of competition; transition to principles of responsibility, cooperation and love; strengthening of the universal commonalities in all types of ethics; refusal of violence and conflict; the coordination of interests within the system “Individual - Society – Nature” on the principles of harmonization and social consensus; refusal of the anthropocentric model and the transition to a biospheric model of life.

Following the line of our above discussion, it seems to be possible to argue that the post-modern social theory can be linked to the sociopolitical reality through the assumption that a safer future for mankind can be achieved by the formation and the development of not a general formal individualistic ethical system, but of a new “public” socially-useful ethics, which combines moral requirements like responsibility, tolerance and love, and which overcomes the dichotomy between universalism and particularism in the global space, expanding the moral circle up to the holistic positions.

5. Global Ethics and the Gender Approach

For the creation of a new postmodern ethical theory, there is one serious issue which we should take into consideration. It is impossible to create a new ethical theory without taking into account gender relationships in the society. It is because contemporary social changes call for new notions of men and women, their behavior and roles. Therefore, global ethics, based on principles of love, tolerance and other core democratic values, can be formed only in accordance with the ideas of gender equality, popularized through the educational system.

Modern gender studies have not reached a common denominator in the understanding of gender itself, because they are represented by different scientific trends, based on research of diverse relationships between men and women in sociocultural space. This has led to the fact that the notion is used in a variety of meanings in a variety of contexts by researchers. Nevertheless, all of them agree that there are three basic tenets of gender theory, in which gender is interpreted as:

- 1) a social construct (formed during socialization and by individuals themselves through gender identification);
- 2) a basis for social stratification (gender, as well as class, race, nationality, age, is a basis for stratification);
- 3) a cultural symbol, metaphor (through the notions of masculine and feminine).

In our view, all the three interpretations above do not, in principle, contradict each other, but instead contribute to our understanding of such a complex sociocultural phenomenon as gender. All the three definitions of gender above are drawn upon in this article. The first two meanings of gender are implied when we discuss the structure of society and social processes; and the concept of gender as a cultural symbol is essential in the analysis of culture. In general, gender can be defined as a “complex sociocultural process, in which the society makes the distinction between roles, behavior, mental and emotional characteristics of men and women” (Voronina 2001: 30).

6. Gender Approach in Peace Studies

If the study of all factors (cultural, social, political, legal) aimed at the elimination of war that can be connected with violence and aggression and that impede the full realization of human rights and freedoms is understood as the one of the major objectives of peace studies, then, from the perspective of a gender approach, it is necessary to expand the notion of a “human” by adding gender attributes: that is, the attributes of Man and Woman. Without these, “human” would be only a very abstract concept: This elaboration will provide us with a more profound and concrete definition of “peace studies” — “studying all factors (cultural, social, political, legal), aimed at

elimination of war, connected with violence and aggression, that impede full realization of human rights and freedoms of men and women.”

If we define peace as the full realization of human rights (or of physical and mental human potentials) in the way proposed by Johan Galtung (Galtung 1969), then the above addition proves to be quite significant. This is because rights (or physical and mental potentials) of men and women are realized differently, though this difference may not be apparent on the declarative level of official documents.

The advantage of the gender approach in peace studies is that it enables us to consider interests of both socio-gender groups of society, men and women. In order to promote the welfare in modern Russia, it is important to emphasize that “events that take place in the society, influence men and women differently and cause different reactions” (Sukhareva 2006: 71). It seems impossible to build a truly democratic society without taking the gender dimension into account, because such a society should by definition be based on principles of the priority of human rights. Yet, as we emphasized earlier, “humans” are not abstract beings, but they can only be men and women, and human rights can only be those of men and women. Hence, the success of the transition towards democracy in society can be directly linked to the issue of the equality of interests, advantages and opportunities of men and women.

7. Gender Education in Modern Russia

The application of the gender approach in various areas of society (legal, spiritual, political, economic) in Russia is not possible without gender education. The social institutions of education are among the key mechanisms of gender education. Education is not only a prerequisite to advance the social status of a person. It is also an important method of socialization. This process ensures the acquisition of norms and rules of behavior, including gender stereotypes, i.e. notions of how men and women should act in society. Therefore, educational professionals — teachers, mentors and tutors — should be one of the primary models and interpreters of these standardized patterns of behavior. The others are family, peers and media. Despite of a number of changes in modern Russian society, the traditional notions of roles of men and women that are based exclusively on biological differences between people still prevail.

Without including gender approach into educational system, it would not be possible to overcome traditionalism that hinders the development of modern Russian society and further to promote democratic values. One of its advantages over traditional gender-role approach is that it lowers the level of gender stereotypization and enables to depart from the traditional patriarchal models of sociocultural structure (Klyotsina 2003: 381).

The theories of feminism have made a significant contribution to the understanding of the issue of violence. Despite their differences on causes of violence and ways of its elimination, they agree that violence as such is a direct consequence of androcentrism. The notion of androcentrism refers to a deep cultural tradition, which reduces the human subjectivity to a single masculine norm, interpreted as a universal objectivity, while all other forms of subjectivity - especially feminine - are considered to be a deviation or pathology. In other words, androcentrism is a men's view of the world, posing men's concepts, values and ideals as universal social norms and models of life. This allows some researches to use the notion of "men's civilization" in describing traditional and modern culture.

In addition to androcentrism, feminists introduced into the scientific discourse such concepts as "patriarchy," "sexism," "masculinity." All of them facilitate revision of modern societal and cultural foundations, as well as the factors that hamper achieving of peace and the factors that contribute to it. In particular, feminism also relates present day global problems to androcentrism and masculinity, because the way modern society interacts with nature (rude, cruel, violent, arrogant) is quite similar to men's behavior style, orientation and ideology. One Russian researcher called a patriarchal regime a "criminal-pornographic exhibition" (Klimenkova 2001: 135). Indeed, no one would deny that men are main consumers of pornography; most pedophiles and sexual deviants are also men. In no way the authors has any prejudices against men, because it is their strong belief that men are the hostages of what they have been creating for many centuries, and also shares the opinion that "women are discriminated not by particular men, but rather by patriarchal culture (which in its turn also discriminates men but in other forms)" (Klimenkova 2001: 137).

8. The Structure of Violence from the Perspective of Gender Approach

If we apply the classification of violence types (direct violence / structural violence), proposed by Johan Galtung (Galtung 1969), it is not out of place to say that the first one is a manifestation of aggression, and the second one of discrimination (both of women and men). Structural type of violence usually affects women – it is caused by the fact that core features of modern society, essentially patriarchal, hinder “full realization of women’s physical and mental potentials” (Galtung 1969). Besides, as it is a common idea that because women are the “weaker sex”, men behaving violently towards women are unfair and dishonest (“unmannish”); but because this form of violence is considered to be socially permissible for men, it still affects women. For this respect men’s violence towards women doesn’t disappear, it is camouflaged – that is, it is structural violence.

At the same time, direct violence, the physical one (i.e. warfare of all kinds), is usually exercised by men towards men themselves. If we take into account the fact that in various social institutions (e.g. military, sport) men are encouraged to exercise violence, the direct form of violence can be classified as specifically men’s (masculine) way to deal with social problems (economic, political) and find their way in social reality.

At the bottom of such sociocultural structure lies gender asymmetry, peculiar both to Western and Eastern culture types, moulded by “gender asymmetric socialization” (Sukhareva 2006: 1), which affects specific men’s and women’s modes of aggression. According to the latest research results, girls exercise violence mostly in verbal and indirect forms, and boys physically and directly (Sukhareva 2006: 3).

Researchers also determined factors that cause divergence in boys’ and girls’ modes of aggression – they are gender stereotypes of parents, educators and students themselves; boys- or girls-oriented games, toys and teaching materials; books they read, animations and movies they watch” (Sukhareva 2006: 2).

As school is one of the major socialization institutions and educators are one of the major socialization agents, their respective influence on imprinting gender-based aggression types is considered to be quite significant. In this context, a research by Sukhareva demonstrated that “aggression modes, originating in family, get their further

development in school. Teachers have their own gender stereotypes concerning aggressive behavior of children. Though most of them believe that aggression both by boys and girls is unacceptable, they tend to react differently depending on the sex of aggressor” (Sukhareva 2006: 9).

A distinguished Russian researcher Tatyana Klimenkova designated violence as “a birth-mark, a curse of the patriarchal regime” (Klimenkova 2001: 37). It appears that one of the decisive steps in overcoming violence (and subsequently war) and achieving peace is implementation of gender education, especially in teacher training institutes, since pedagogy as a system of upbringing and education is in many instances responsible for the future generations.

9. The Sociological Surveys as the Indicator of the Perspectives of the Elimination of Violence

The question to what extent it is possible to develop gender-oriented education in Tomsk schools (i.e. what are the actual foundations for it) was answered by the results of a pilot research, conducted by Social Studies and Gender Research Laboratory of Tomsk State Pedagogical University. Interviews of teachers proved the main hypothesis of the study to be irrelevant. It was expected that young teachers (up to 35 years old) would be more loyal to gender approach in education, because the young generation is less subject to conventional gender stereotypes and biases, than the older ones, and most of them accept the ideal of gender equality. The researchers expected that as educators the young teachers would stick to the following principles:

- blurring rigid patterns of gender-based behavior
- neutralization of sex distinction
- supporting the free choice of gender identity or types of activity based on personal interests of a particular person
- undesirability of separate education
- necessity of sex education, etc

However, especially young teachers (unlike their middle aged and elderly

colleagues) turned out to have a more conservative position on the issues in question. In our opinion, despite deep changes that are taking place in all spheres in today's Russia, the research results prove what many researchers have been pointing out as a tendency towards restoration of traditionalist inter-social paradigms of relations between men and women. Or rather, it comes as no surprise, if we take into account a vigorous propaganda of "classical" patterns of men's and women's behavior, and the absence of a national gender policy suitable to new social processes. The reason of such a state of affairs (or, perhaps, its consequence) is the very absence of gender education. As to the fact that many elderly teachers (above 50 years old) tend to line up with the gender approach principles in school education, one can speculate on that. Most likely, this is due to the influence of Soviet-style gender approach in particular, and Soviet policy on gender and interrelation of sexes and their respective roles in society in general.

10. Concluding Remarks

The conclusion drawn from the research results seems to be quite contradictory: the task of disseminating gender education in Tomsk schools (considered as one of possible ways to achieve global peace) appears to be rather problematic, but still necessary, because teachers' stereotypes influence socialization patterns of boys and girls (future men and women). What this actually means is that the major work on developing gender education and proving its influence on elimination of violence based on discrimination on sex, race or nationality, is still to be accomplished.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that the morals, maintaining new content, changing the very foundation and characteristics of gender relations, relevant to the modern society, can be a basis of safe future of the humankind.

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