

TOPICAL ISSUES OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

UDC 159.922(378.371)

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THE ROLE OF BIOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS IN DETERMINING GENDER IDENTITY

Purpose. The aim of this article is an analysis of the main versions of the biodeterminist tradition of resolving the issue of the nature of gender identity, as well as identification of the advantages of the new version of biodeterminism, which involves elements of social constructivism. **Theoretical basis.** Social norms determine the extent to which a person has the right to independently determine his or her gender identity, and even more so, to change his or her body according to such gender concepts. Social norms regulate gender relations in society and direct the gender behavior of individuals. However, social norms do not create either the human body, or those biological laws, according to which it functions. **Originality.** The biodeterminist theories of the gender were analyzed from the position of "weak" social constructivism. The role of social norms as a factor of gender self-certification, as well as a factor of control over social interference in the functioning of human corporeality is considered. The role of modern medicine as an increasingly influential institutional means of control over the functioning of human corporeality, and therefore, indirectly, and for the implementation of gender identity self-identification is revealed. **Conclusions.** According to the "weak" social constructivism the gender emerges as an integral result of biological, psychological and social construction. The role of personality in the design of the gender has historically grown, but this role can never exclude the influence of biological and social factors that are increasingly becoming the nature of biological and social technologies. Personality can become a victim of these technologies, but he/she can program them, or at any rate selectively use, combine, or to some extent adjust existing biological and social technologies.

Keywords: gender identity of personality; social norms; biological factors; social factors; corporeality; biodeterminism; social constructivism

Introduction

One of the important varieties of social identity is gender identity. However, in the basis of gender identity, of course, there is also a biological component. Therefore, gender identity should be considered not only as social, but as biosocial. There is a fairly wide range of interpretations of this biosocial nature of the gender identity of a person – from the interpreting the role of the biological basis of the identity of the individual as being determined by the laws common to the whole nature of evolution and the theories of trans-humanism and post-humanism. Extreme variants of reducing gender identity only to a social or just biological basis appear as "strong" solutions to the problem of gender identity, while compromise variants, namely those that are added to the basic nature as inseparable elements of the opposite essence, act as "weak" versions of them. Extreme or "strong" pro-biologist position in the reso-

lution of the nature of gender identity can be seen in the tradition of biological determinism (biodeterminism), while the extreme pro-social position, obviously, represents a "strong" version of social constructivism.

For convenience and rather roughly, all views on the issue of sex and gender may be divided into two large categories. The first category of views in the course of explanation of gender inequality is based on essentialism, i.e. the natural determination of gender differences, postulating Freud's "anatomy is destiny". The second category is described by Beauvoir's postulate "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman", considering gender to be solely a sociocultural construct. It seems clear that said polar systems of views are extreme and one-sided, but at the same time make it possible to study the influence of biological and sociocultural aspects on formation of the gender hierarchy in their pure form.

Biodeterminists place the privileged value on sex: it is the biological sex that doesn't merely identify a human being as a man or woman, but also forms one's gender image and cultural features. American philosopher of science Garland Allen (2015) in *Encyclopædia Britannica* gives more wide explanation of the term "biodeterminism", but he still emphasizes direct biological causation: "...the term biological determinism has come to imply a rigid causation largely unaffected by environmental factors".

The specificity of our study will be that in the study of gender identity its *subject* will be biodeterminism, and its *methodology* – social constructivism.

Social constructivism is a theoretical direction, which states that all social phenomena are the result of social design and reconstruction, that is, the directed action of social forces in transforming reality into a socially significant and socially functional one. (Hejl, 2000, p. 109)

Ukrainian philosopher Mykhailo Boichenko (2018) notes: "social construction is usually perceived as a process and the result of the activities of the social constructor-designer, although it always concerns someone who is more powerful than individual person..." (p. 31).

British linguist Jim McKinley (2015) interprets social constructivism first of all as a socio-cultural strategy, not connected directly with biological factors: "Social constructivist theory asserts that people's ideas coincide with their experiences and that writers build on their socio-cultural awareness as a key point in identity construction".

But even for writers we should suggest that their experience has gender component. This component is totally absent in McKinley's cited article – and unfortunately this is not uncommon for studies in the field of the Arts and Humanities.

Purpose

The aim of this article is analysis of the main versions of the biodeterminist tradition of resolving the issue of the nature of gender identity, as well as the advantages of the new version of biodeterminism, which involves elements of social constructivism.

Statement of basic materials

Social norms and gender identity

The gender identity of a person should be determined taking into account both his/her biological and social characteristics. The problem of gender identity should be considered in the context of solving the question of the extent to which the biological characteristics of the individual should be supplemented by his/her social characteristics, as well as redefined by the social needs of the individual. It is unacceptable to identify the gender identity without consideration of biological determinants; however, it is equally dangerous to treat biodeterminism as giving to the biological determinants an excessive or exceptional importance in defining gender identity.

The struggle for the individual's right to determine one's own gender identity has contributed to a more precise definition of one's social characteristics – political, legal, cultural, etc. This struggle appeared as a denial of traditional social norms and emerged as a social movement for the emancipation of the human body. However, the opposition of the liberated corporeality of the individual to the repression of social institutions does not reveal the essence of social reforms for the recognition of gender identity: as noted by Ukrainian philosophers Mykhailo Boichenko, Olena Yakovleva and Vitaliy Liakh (2018), modernization means first of all adoption of new social order of open access and "at the beginning of the establishing of such new institutions, the personal efforts of their co-authors are critical" (p. 57). To enable that a person to determine and develop his or her gender identity freely, it is necessary to establish new social norms that will protect such a right. The repressive right in this matter should be replaced by a liberal right. Old, traditional law appealed to simplified, superficial ideas about the biological nature of man. A new, liberal right should also be based on biology data as a science, but new, more complex and accurate data (Bazaluk, & Blazhevych, 2016, p. 26). This is primarily about new discoveries in the field of genetics. These discoveries are better than political movements falsifying the false concepts of old biological determinism. The existence of the old prejudices of social Darwinism, racism and other inadequate interpretations of biological determinism should not create the false impression that the conversion to biology as a source of data on a person prevents the establishment of one's adequate social characteristics.

At the same time, the biological component of gender identity was increasingly seen as more pliable than in its traditional interpretation. Sex has already emerged not as a constant, but as a variable, not as a basis for determining the gender, but as a derivative of gender identity. Social norms determine the extent to which a person has the right independently to determine his or her gender identity, and even more so, to change his or her body according to such gender concepts. Social norms regulate gender relations in society and direct the gender behavior of individuals. However, social norms do not create either the human body, or those biological laws, according to which it functions. Thus, if there is a certain social framework for establishing a gender identity, then there is also a certain biological framework for this.

The main branches of biodeterminism in the gender theory concerning gender identity

As Russian biologist-theorist Vigen Geodakian (1994) notes, with the transition of people from mainly biological evolution to mainly social one, the pace of development increased. But having gained the unprecedented opportunity to change the environment, people are forced to change themselves. According to *Geodakian evolutionary theory of sex*, the division into sexes,

more specifically, into conservative and operational components of the human biological system, is the solution of the conflict of simultaneous change and preservation of necessary information. The issue of sex and gender isn't overlooked by *deep ecology*, towards which *ecofeminism* tends in some of its propositions (Shevchenko, 2015). The key concept of deep ecology is ecocentrism, which is opposed to anthropocentrism and closely related humanism. The leading role in ecocentrism, just like in ecofeminism, is assigned to women. However if the latter is currently trying to combat stereotypes generated by essentialism, the former counts on female emancipation as a way to solve the demographic problem. Female emancipation, in the opinion of Russian biologist and ecofeminist Viktor Dolnik (2009), is the most painless tool of reduction of the human population size (p. 172). If ecofeminists stand for female emancipation as such, seeing an absolute value in it, *ecocentrists* focus their attention on emancipation of women from their "natural duty", more specifically, childbirth. Among biodeterministic concepts, the functional brain asymmetry (FBA) hypothesis or lateral specialization hypothesis deserves particular attention. American Professor of Psychiatry Deborah Paula Waber assumed that sexual differences in brain asymmetry may be caused by differences in the speed of physical maturation of sexes (Waber, 1976; Springer, & Deutsch, 1998). Geschwind-Galaburda Hypothesis explains sexual differences as a result of asymmetric brain development under the influence of testosterone levels in the blood of the mother of the child during pregnancy (Geschwind, & Galaburda, 1985, p. 428; p. 521; p. 634). The feminists, especially representatives of radical feminism, in particular "the feminism of special rights" turned to biology more than once in order to give reasons for their own views (Shevchenko, 2016, p. 227). It should be admitted that biodeterminists raise a number of important questions, relating to the specificity of male and female experiences conditioned by anatomy and physiology of each sex. Sexuality, childbirth, emotional experience of one's own body and many other topics found their reflection in the general scientific discourse and in humanitaristics in particular. Moreover, accentuation of attention on a human being who always has a specific sex shakes the established universal androcentrism, describing even an abstract individual as a man.

*The main contradictions between biological determinism
and social constructivism on gender identity*

Summing up the foregoing, the following key polemic aspects between biodeterminism and social constructivism relating to the issues of sex and gender may be singled out:

1. Biodeterminists maintain that participation in the process of reproduction is the primary biological assignment of both men and women. In their opinion, it is secured at the anatomical level and by sexual characters (Males, 2004, p. 110). However, in society, we can observe the control of person over his/her sexual life and emancipation from childbirth.
2. Biodeterminism emphasizes the differences in anthropometric characteristics of men and women. American philosopher of feminism Alison Mary Jaggar (1983, p. 109) stated that mutual casual relations between biology and social customs made the idea of clear demarcation of nature and culture theoretically problematic.
3. The functional brain asymmetry hypothesis tries to explain cognitive differences between sexes and justify the division of gender roles, gender-based occupational segregation and, ultimately, gender inequality with the peculiarities of prenatal development, fluctuation of male and female hormones, speed of sexual maturation, etc. The theory of social construction of gender refutes said essentialism, emphasizing the fact that the majority of differences between men and women are of sociocultural and historical nature, rather than bio-

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logical one. 4. Attaching the decisive role to human reproductive function, biodeterminism is based upon sexual dimorphism, i.e. upon two opposite sexes – male and female. However the concept of sex becomes more complicated and is not limited only by the natural ability to reproduce future generations. The World Health Organization ("Gender, Equity and Human Rights", 2015) emphasizes that it is important to admit existence of people who do not fit into the binary system of categories of male and female sexes. The accent on reproductive processes makes mixed, transitional sexual forms invisible. Famous American feminist, professor of biology Anne Fausto-Sterling (2012) states at least five sexes: women, men, hermaphrodites (herms), feminine pseudohermaphrodites (ferms), masculine pseudohermaphrodites (merms), and a huge, extremely flexible continuum between these five categories. In the opinion of Ukrainian scientist Liudmyla Males (2004, p. 111), sex falls within the number of concepts that disappear. The very fact of discussion of biological and gender foundations of the male and female is the proof of the fact that existence of sex as a binary opposition is problematized. There is a clear change in the sexual culture of people, the socio-cultural status of articles, the transformation of images of femininity and masculinity (Pushonkova, 2015, p. 92). Anthony Giddens maintains that there is no evidence of existence of mechanisms that connect such biological forces with the complicated social behavior of men and women. (Giddens, & Sutton, 2013). One should take into account the latest biological research and development of new biological technologies that open up a new understanding of biodeterminism as opposed to the classical, old-fashioned understanding of it.

*Preventive medicine as a case of intervention in the bodily
integrity of the individual: implications for gender identity*

An important example of the inevitability of involving social norms in defining gender identity is the case of determining the limits of the permissible intervention of medicine in the functioning and the integrity of the human body. After all, the issue of such interference and its limitations on the personality constantly arise during the gender identity. Is the person the owner of his/her body, can society and the state also to some extent interfere with its functioning or interfere with such interference – even if it is a personal interference with his/her own body? French researcher Luke Boltanski interprets the treatment of the disease in accordance with the agreed medical rules as a form of social control over the body:

The rules of conduct that a person has to follow and the totality of which are usually called "preventive" medicine are a manifestation of a certain philosophy and require those who perform them, certain attitude to life, and above all – to the time. Preventive medicine requires social actors to adopt a rational attitude to a disease that is embedded as an opportunity in human life and which can be put under control or overcome. (Boltanski, 1971, p. 221)

Thus, in the best interests of the individual, namely, in order to more reliably protect one's health, society is increasingly anxiously interfering in the physicality of individuals.

For example, medical social institutions recommend mass vaccination as a means of taking control of the spread of certain diseases in society. Thus, the biological processes that occur in the body of the individual, were put under the control of social norms – in the common interests of society and individuals. This approach, the French researcher Robert Castel (1981), calls "risk management". Thus, as French anthropologist Frederic Keck and American anthropologist Paul Rabinow suggest, caring for the health of members of society is turning into a strategy for controlling the population:

Direct treatment of the disease is replaced by a study of the global context, a statistical assessment of the risk of becoming ill... Human bodies are only carriers of these statistical trends that go beyond their boundaries and which they must meet due to adapted behavior. (Keck, & Rabinow, 2016, p. 74)

Is not this a new manifestation of biological determinism? Interference in the affairs of human corporeality – even on medical grounds – looks like a threat to the right of the individual to dispose oneself of one's own body.

The situation is radicalized in the event of the transition of medical issues to the level of competence in genetics. On the one hand, the human genome is the property of all mankind, and information about it and its use are made by everyone – no one has the right to claim private property for such information. On the other hand, personal genetic data is a private property that a person may not disclose and could keep secret. But still, the person has the right also to disclose this information from a conscious will of one's own, and also to consent to the use of this information, as may be possible, and separate own genetic materials for the benefit of other persons – both on a commercial and on another basis. Keck and Rabinow (2016) suggest that the person should be regarded as the construct that one creates on the basis of those multiple variations that allow the human genome as a basic structure: "A gene can become a stage in which the bodies become visible as masks that turn them into an individual. ...the genome... is a certain anonymous structure, on the basis of which real persons can construct themselves" (p. 74). It is no doubt that such a design also includes the possibility of gender constructs. This is also confirmed by the fierce debate about the social norms that should be extended from traditional gender groups to new gender groups (for example, the right to create family with the use of genetic technologies to ensure biological reproduction of this family).

However, it is not necessary to make a direct determination between the establishment of gender identity and genetic data of the individual. As Mykhailo Boichenko and Victoria Pituley (2018) previously noted, "it is possible that the fluidity of social identity with the point of view of social systems is consistent with the fluidity of the identity of the personality, however, it is most likely that these are different types of fluid identity" (p. 80). It may be noted that the German social theorist, Nicklas Luhmann (2005), on the concept of social identity which these authors rely on, also mentioned the level of human self-organization at the level of the organism. Thus, it is more correct to speak of a certain correlation between fluid characteristics of human design at three levels: biological (organism), psychic (personality), social (social systems).

At the same time, the method of self-designing by a person can only be successful if it avoids a conflict with the ways in which biological and social systems construct themselves.

Originality

Social constructivism opens the prospect of a radical rethinking of not only the mechanisms for self-identity, but also the scope of such self-identification. Previously, the biodeterminist theories appeared as opponents of the gender theory and investigated those biological factors that seemed to be unaffected by human influence, nowadays, after decoding the human genome and due to the rapid development of gene and other biotechnologies, biodeterminism determines not so much biological barriers for the implementation of free gender self-identity, as biological means for it. Due to the consistent comparison of the solution of the problem of gender identity from the angle of view of social constructivism and biological determinism, the distinction between "strong" and "weak" social constructivism and the old and new understanding of biodeterminism has been achieved. Social norms should be seen as a factor in gender self-certification, not only through social technologies, but also through the social use of biological technologies.

Conclusions

"Weak" social constructivism views the gender not as a permanent social, biological or socio-biological classification, but as a result of constant design and reconstruction of the personality of his/her gender identity using both social and biological technologies. At the same time, gender is the result of the functioning of all social systems available in society, and in particular the implementation of a special gender policy. Today, the field of medicine appears as the cutting edge of the meeting of the person's efforts to gain his/her own social identity and social pressure of society on the personality to ensure his/her successful socialization. Successful implementation of gender identity is a prerequisite for his/her health and happiness, as well as for the smooth functioning of social systems.

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РОЛЬ БІОЛОГІЧНИХ ТА СОЦІАЛЬНИХ ЧИННИКІВ У ВИЗНАЧЕННІ ГЕНДЕРНОЇ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ ОСОБИСТОСТІ

Мета. Метою статті є аналіз основних версій біодетерміністської традиції вирішення питання про природу гендерної ідентичності, а також виявлення переваг "слабкої" версії біодетермінізму, яка залучає елементи соціального конструктивізму. **Теоретичний базис.** Соціальні норми визначають той ступінь, до якого особистість має право самостійно визначати свою гендерну ідентичність, а тим більше змінювати своє тіло згідно до таких гендерних уявлень. Соціальні норми регулюють гендерні відносини у суспільстві і спрямовують гендерну поведінку індивідів. Однак, соціальні норми не створюють ані людське тіло, ані ті біологічні закони, згідно яких воно функціонує. **Наукова новизна.** Біодетерміністські теорії гендеру проаналізовано під кутом зору "слабкого" соціального конструктивізму. Розглянуто роль соціальних норм як чинника гендерної самоідентифікації, а також як чинника контролю за соціальним втручанням у функціонування людської тілесності. Виявлено роль сучасної медицини як все більш впливового інституційного засобу контролю за функціонуванням людської тілесності, а отже, опосередковано, і за здійсненням гендерної самоідентифікації особистості. **Висновки.** З позицій "слабкого" соціального конструктивізму гендер постає як інтегральний результат біологічного, психологічного та соціального конструювання. Роль особистості у конструюванні гендеру історично зростає, однак ніколи ця роль не може виключати впливу біологічних та соціальних чинників, які все більшою мірою набувають характеру біологічних і соціальних технологій. Особистість може стати жертвою цих технологій, але може сама їх програмувати, або в усякому разі вибірково використовувати, комбінувати або до певної міри коригувати наявні біологічні та соціальні технології.

Ключові слова: гендерна ідентичність особистості; соціальні норми; біологічні чинники; соціальні чинники; тілесність; біодетермінізм; соціальний конструктивізм

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РОЛЬ БИОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ И СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ ФАКТОРОВ В ОПРЕДЕЛЕНИИ ГЕНДЕРНОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ ЛИЧНОСТИ

Цель. Целью статьи является анализ основных версий биодетерминистской традиции решения вопроса о природе гендерной идентичности, а также выявление преимуществ "слабой" версии биодетерминизма, которая привлекает элементы социального конструктивизма. **Теоретический базис.** Социальные нормы определяют ту степень, до которой личность имеет право самостоятельно определять свою гендерную идентичность, а тем более изменять свое тело согласно таких гендерных представлений. Социальные нормы регулируют гендерные отношения в обществе и направляют гендерное поведение индивидов. Однако, социальные нормы не создают ни человеческое тело, ни те биологические законы, согласно которым оно функционирует. **Научная новизна.** Биодетерминистские теории гендера проанализированы с точки зрения "слабого" социального конструктивизма. Рассмотрена роль социальных норм как фактора гендерной самоидентификации, а также как фактора контроля за социальным вмешательством в функционирование человеческой телесности. Выявлена роль современной медицины как все более влиятельного институционального средства контроля за функционированием человеческой телесности, а следовательно, косвенно, и за осуществлением гендерной самоидентификации личности. **Выводы.** С позиций "слабого" социального конструктивизма гендер выступает как интегральный результат биологического, психологического и социального конструирования. Роль личности в конструировании гендера исторически растет, однако никогда эта роль не может исключать влияния биологических и социальных факторов, которые все в большей степени приобретают характер биологических и социальных технологий. Личность может стать жертвой

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этих технологий, но может сама их программировать, или во всяком случае выборочно использовать, комбинировать или в определенной степени корректировать имеющиеся биологические и социальные технологии.

Ключевые слова: гендерная идентичность личности; социальные нормы; биологические факторы; социальные факторы; телесность; биодетерминизм; социальный конструктивизм

Received: 06.11.2018

Accepted: 12.03.2019