Ukrainian feminism as a factor of social changes

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ABSTRACT
The article discusses the theoretical foundations of Ukrainian feminism, substantiates its practical significance for social changes in society. The subject of research attention is the individual and collective dimensions of feminism, the influence of this important social phenomenon on the value evolution of Ukrainian society. Attention is focused on the goal-rational and value-rational dimensions of the women's community, its moral and normative foundations. The role of the Ukrainian life world in the value demarcation of Ukrainian women from imperial sociality is understood.

Emphasis is placed on the European social prerequisites of Ukrainian feminism, its consistency with liberal and communitarian ideas. The fundamental methodological approaches of representatives of postcolonial studies and critical social theory are analyzed. The national specificity of Ukrainian feminism as a social alternative to the distorted imperial forms of sociality is noted. Synthesized are theoretical and practical approaches that interpret feminism as a complex social phenomenon that has rational and sensual components. The reasons for the predominance of sensuality in the conditions of total alienation and its conditioning by historical factors are explained.

Introduction
The issue of Ukrainian feminism has been in the focus of domestic researchers’ attention for a long time. This phenomenon is part of the theoretical and practical heritage of social critical theory, the subject of post-communist and post-colonial studies. It is worth noting the significant impact of Ukrainian feminism on the “social fabric” of society, which has suffered from the consequences of colonial expansion for centuries. The focus of attention is on the instrumental and moral-normative significance of this social phenomenon in overcoming gender and social hierarchies, in reproducing the special social mission of the woman as a protector of Ukraine, a guardian of the hearth.

Equally important is the fact that, at the social level, Ukrainian feminism became a practical factor in the general emancipation of Ukrainian society in the 20th century. Fundamental, in this context, is its appeal by various representatives of Ukrainian feminist camp to the European principles of legal equality, which are the basis for the formation of a civilized society.

One of the important problems of this theoretical exploration is substantiation of the Ukrainian feminism’s role in the social delegitimization of imperial colonial markers, in the formation of an alternative to imperial sociality, civil communication space. Emancipation of women, as an important component of democratization of social processes, the dichotomy between social freedom and clientelism, is an important research task, which is organically combined with justification of the fundamental principles of ethical transformation - an important prerequisite for the development of civil society in Ukraine. Attention is focused on the ideological and functional foundations of women’s community as a factor in the social development of Ukrainian society.

The specifics of Ukrainian women’s unique experience are analyzed, which is an important prerequisite for the formation of women’s life world, practices of social disobedience to colonial intervention. The purpose of the study is to outline the fundamental principles of opposition to the imperial model of alienated sociality, dehumanized reality, the consistent struggle of Ukrainian feminists with markers of imperial patriarchal orders in the 20th century (Russia, Austria-Hungary). The search for that socio-cultural a priori, which allows, at different times intervals, Ukrainian women to fight for preservation of women’s dignity, to protect the Ukrainian language, culture, and national memory, is relevant.

It is extremely necessary, in the conditions of modern military confrontation with the aggressor, to understand the specifics of the principal women's community confrontation with the imperial system, socio-cultural separation from the colonial past. A large array of theoretical sources provides an opportunity to understand the prerequisites of mental and value demarcation.

A powerful Ukrainian social reflection to Ukrainian feminism is complemented by a European source base, which is fundamental for this study. A substantial array of literature permits a better understanding of European social markers’ influence on the "crystallization" of civil
society in Ukraine as a social opponent of the imperial discourse.

Research methods

In the process of analysis, the axiomatic thesis of the postcolonial studies’ representative G. Spivak regarding the total violence of the colonizers, the destructive role of the imperial power, which for a long time tried to deprive Ukrainian women of the "having a say" by mechanically incorporating them into the patriarchal system of social coordinates, is methodologically important for the study.

Subordinates – colonized peoples, social groups with a subordinate status – do not have access to speech, even when they seem to represent themselves (Spivak, 1988: 13). In this context, it seems undeniable that violence and exclusion against women appear as a direct result of "external colonization" (Etikind’s term), which for a long time has been trying to perpetuate the patriarchal imperial discourse in Ukraine, creates unnatural obstacles for free authentic communication to communities that are social antagonists to the discourse of the colonizers. A large body of literature shows that Ukrainian women came to the forefront of social and public activism somewhat late, borrowing European experience. A notable intellectual phenomenon for Ukrainian feminism was the theoretical legacy of Mary Wollstonecraft, dedicated to the protection of women's rights in European societies. These studies actualize worldview issues related to the problems of civil society: problems of socialization and education of women in a dehumanized society, integration of society based on the value priorities of social humanism. Here it is worth highlighting the contribution of the feminism classics in distinguishing the private and public spheres, as necessary components of the modern society’s development. In this context, it is quite appropriate to consider "Mary Wollstonecraft's philosophical project" as actually the first comprehensive philosophical project of the feminist concept substantiation. The American researcher not only professionally analyzes the liberal feminist discourse, it is established that the leading socio-philosophical discourse does not create the necessary prerequisites for gender equality in a colonized society. The priority here is the thesis that the reproduction of the Ukrainian "women's life world" is part of the general problem of overcoming the practices of dehumanized society. As a result of the "colonization of the life world by the system" (Y. Habermas’s term), Ukrainian womanhood found it extremely difficult to return to its own cultural and social origins, to its own authenticity, through the path of evolution.

We can talk about the importance for our study of Y. Habermas and N. Fraser’s ideas, which influence the awareness of feminism as a factor of civil society. A unique European social institute, which is aimed at the development of the public and private spheres, the combination of an individual project of the social liberation of women with a focus on horizontal democratic forms of cooperation, the formation of a European model of “good life” (Bellah, 1991).

The experience of the “blocked” women's life world (L. Kostenko’s term) is important for research primarily due to the awareness of the gradual design of important national and social priorities, the strengthening of women’s responsibility in the 20th-21st centuries for the fate of Ukrainian society as a whole.

The theoretical tools of critical social theory are very productive here and allow us to consistently develop the non-Marxist discourse of “social alienation” and justify the ways of social emancipation. The theoretical approaches of post-colonial and post-communist representatives' studies are also involved, which in combination are a priority for understanding this discourse.

Results and Discussion

Ukrainian feminism as a strategy of human dignity

Understanding the specifics of Ukrainian feminism at the turn of the 19th and early 20th centuries, we can determine its fundamental feature. This is an attempt to
combine individualism and associative, network, communitarian forms of solidarity and mutual assistance. The well-known Ukrainian researcher A. Kolodiy rightly notes that “female individualism opposes gregariousness, ... a woman’s individual independence, this is to her own area of work very easily merges into the most diverse associative forms and interests... I have never met such a clear and reasonable analysis of the rights and interests of ... the community as in women” (Kolodiy, 2002: 152).

A similar position can be found somewhat earlier in Y. Lypa, who noted the uniqueness of female individualism and its connection with “appreciation of the group, community, common life” (Lypa, 1994: 154).

In this context, the combination of the traditional roles of mother and wife with its modern form of realization as a creative, dynamic, active person, the embodiment of the desire to live a “full” life, seems quite understandable.

We can agree with the opinion that women at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries became the social group that most painfully felt the influence of imperial clientelism and was fully interested in the implementation in society of ideas related to the liberalization of the empire’s patriarchal life, social mastering of social discipline practice, the practice of limiting the social functions of men.

As O. Kobylanska notes in this context, Ukrainian feminism involves the rejection of patriarchal practices of the past and “focusing on women as an effective force in the historical process and in one’s own life” (Kobylanska, 1995: 36). The well-known feminist writer focuses her attention on the fight against practices that provided for the existence of women exclusively in the domestic, private sphere.

In this context, the feminist refutation of the dominant discourse of power at that time is very important: the traditional marginalization of women in the imperial space. The idea of gender equality, the practice of social freedom, individual and collective self-determination brought together representatives of intellectual centers of various political preferences – from Lesya Ukrainka, a supporter of social democratic views, to the more liberal Olena Pchilka.

In the Ukrainian social space, starting from the second part of the 19th century, there was a common intention to protect individual autonomy, to recognize the free space of individual and collective freedom in public life, and to deny patriarchal imperial stereotypes.

Symbolically significant was the recognition by certain Ukrainian feminism circles of the Enlightenment importance as a new discourse, the “adult state of humanity” (I. Kant), an enlightened way of thinking, which, coming into conflict with the dimensions of social clientelism characteristic of the Russian Empire, lays the foundations for the formation of “pragmatic feminism” (term of M. Bogachevska-Khomyak), as a worldview basis for the development of civil society. At the heart of this new phenomenon is the focus on one’s own strengths, which will contribute to a woman’s professional improvement, improvement of her working conditions, and educational development, which is the basis for career growth for her.

Within the framework of modern discourse, a question arises regarding the prerequisites of a qualitatively different practical life, which was often made impossible by the social practices of colonization. And above all, the total exploitation of women in the Russian and Soviet empires. “Women everywhere tried to do something practical. But women’s work in the empire is very exhausting, and it happens ... there is neither energy nor desire to do anything ... exhaustion is complete” (Bogachevska-Khomyak, 1995: 14). Despite significant obstacles, it was important to approve, within the free women’s movement, a clearly defined social strategy for the functioning of women in modern society, which provided for powerful civic activity, industrial and commercial activity, cultural and educational work.

Ukrainian feminism immediately acquires a European value nature. It appears as a strategy for acquiring human dignity, an imperative unconditionally connected with the dimension of the common good, fundamental to civil society. In this context, I. Lebid-Vinnytska notes that “women’s organizations in Ukraine are not just organizations that try to liberate women. They are trying to take over, first of all, a significant part of general civic activity” (Lebid-Vinnytska, 1981: 2-3).

Borys Grinchenko, who was a convinced fighter for legal and gender equality, played an important role in the popularization of the civil movement “Russian women in Bukovina”. One of the founders of the Ukrainian national movement insists on the system-forming role of Ukrainian women in the educational project, “the pivotal importance of their role in the life of Ukrainian society” and the need to recognize their comprehensive rights: political, civil, and social (Smoli, Stepankov, 1966: 112).

In this context, the connection between theoretical discourse and social practices of public self-determination is methodologically important for research. We observe the first manifestations of women’s struggle for their rights in the 60s and 70s of the 19th century. Within the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, the social and legal principles of women’s active participation in the public sphere were discussed. A network of educational organizations was created in Ukrainian territory, which took care of national self-awareness issues, the participation of women in the political process was discussed.

Thanks to the activists of the women’s movement - Lesya Ukrainka, Khrystyna Alchevska, Marko Vovchok, Olena Pchilka, Olga Kobylayska, Natalia Kobrynyska – the women’s movement in Ukraine became an important component of the Ukrainian society self-organization.

This movement worked not only to create conditions for the individual freedoms of Ukrainian women, but also to implement fundamental, extremely important ideas necessary for Ukrainian nation-building. It involved women in the general European process of modern legal equality recognition, formed their special anti-colonial identity, formed the communication ability of women to restore the social unity of the Ukrainian community, which historically suffers from the consequences of social destruction, through linguistic means.

It is referred to the empire’s destruction of the Ukrainian elite, language, two world wars, famines, that is, about events that called into question the very existence of the Ukrainian community. In the conditions of the total challenges of the 20th century, the ideological basis of the women’s movement is a consistent socio-ethical, ultimately, political position regarding the combination of individual freedom and social protection, ethical position for and civic position, which are the foundations of a civilized society.

An important role here was played by issues of social rights, social care, finding a balance between individual freedoms, free commercial activity and social protection practices. However, the problem was that within the imper-
rial social field, the possibilities of practical denial of the social humiliation of women were limited. For most of the 20th century, the Ukrainian woman existed mainly within the limits of total social control and subordination on the part of the metropolis. In such conditions, she felt doomed, relaying the image of social suffering.

The discourse, which is organically inherent in the client society, produced the only possible traditional triangle of "victims - mothers - housewives" for Ukrainian women. In this context, one can agree with the opinion of one of the recognized theorists of Ukrainian feminism, Marta Bogachevska-Khomyak, who states that in a situation of total hopelessness, "the rights of a woman merge with the duties of a mother, and a woman as an autonomous unit does not exist... there is a woman in the service to the state that she did not build" (Bogachevska-Khomyak, 1995: 332).

We can talk about the stability of the social alienation state of women in the Russian and Soviet empires. While working full-time, the vast majority of women were simultaneously responsible to the state for her child-rearing and almost all domestic work. The Ukrainian woman was deprived of the opportunity to create within the limits of her own culture and was forced to exist within the limits of traditional binary oppositions, which were produced by imperial society: own/foreign, center/periphery, us (Ukrainian women) versus them, representatives of the empire.

In this context, the existential and ontological conflict with repressive sociality is quite logical, which can be traced both in the fates of social leaders of Ukrainian women and in the everyday life of ordinary Ukrainian women. In the 20th century, Olена Teliga, Zinovia Franko, and Alla Gorska were subjected to physical and moral torture, whose experience of being in a different culture became a terrible tragedy for them personally and for the entire Ukrainian society. Lina Kostenko, the intellectual leader of the Ukrainian nation in the 20th century, also felt moral violence from the empire.

Thus, we can claim that the identity of Ukrainian women was formed under the influence of the traumatic experience of Russian expansion into the private and public life of people. In this context, it is worth noting that the very concept of "lived experience" belongs to Simone de Beauvoir, who clearly distinguishes between male and female experiences of publicity and privacy. The subjective experience of Ukrainian women is the subject of research by the Ukrainian feminist O. Stiazhkina, who draws attention to the important dimension of subjectivity for civil society, which is very useful in the context of a woman's existence in the space of "social anomie". Well-known researchers of feminism, S. Hitlin and Glen Elder note that the concept of experience organically coexists with dimensions of capacity. From the ability of the individual and the community, which are the objects of colonization, to get rid of their own social infantilism and make free choices. "Structures of dominance can be better understood if we can understand how we remain agents even when we are deeply, violently oppressed" (Elder, Hitlin, 2007: 45).

In this context, within Ukrainian feminism, basic types of resistance to imperial alienation were formed, which served women as a kind of protection against colonial Russian intervention and the colonization of Ukrainian life. This is an existential resistance – a pre-reflective, emotional ability to challenge social dictates, an imperative that was organically combined with a powerful national identity.

It is worth recalling here not only the well-known examples of the struggle against the Soviet power of Elena Teliga, Alla Gorska, Lina Kostenko, Nadia Svitychyna, Halyna Zubchenko, who laid the worldview foundations of decolonization, but also the existential experience of the struggle in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in Romania of Olga Kobyljanska. Her consistent struggle for the recognition of women's dignity was combined with high standards of national identity. Therefore, the feminist discourse in Ukrainian conditions had its own national specificity.

Ukrainian woman as a leading force of decolonization in the public and private spheres

As a result of colonial imperial policy in the 20th century (famines of 1921, 1932-1933, 1946, mass repressions of the 30s and 70s of the 20th century), the social core of Ukrainian society was significantly broken by the Soviet and Russian repressive system. One part of the most active men was destroyed, and the other was turned into passive clients of the Soviet version of the "welfare state, became adjusters, small "screws" of the system, "one-dimensional persons" (Marcuse's term), passive executors of someone else's will.

Women, in the conditions of Soviet imperial sociality, were forced to take responsibility not only for the fate of the family, but also for the preservation of Ukrainian identity as a whole. To a large extent, the task of preserving the community was solved, however, the problem is that the patriarchal society, including the post-Soviet society, quite often blamed women for the lack of rational principles that are important for modern society.

At the first glance, such a point of view seems quite logical, because the prevailing paradigm of rationality in modern times seems to have no alternative and provides women with opportunities to ensure gender and legal equality. However, the emotionality of a Ukrainian woman has its own logical explanation. It is rooted in the experience of Soviet colonialism.

As a result of the long-term absence of social balances between men and women in Ukrainian society, there really was a predominance of sensual principles in everyday experience, which served as the basis for decision-making. In this context, it is no accident that feminist discourse from the communitarian positions of Aristotelianism criticizes certain aspects of rationalist orientation, when feelings are interpreted as the embodiment of exclusively irrational experiences. This position is to provide a more complete clarification of feelings, to legitimize them in an impersonal society.

Oksana Lyaturylnska notes that it is extremely important for the Ukrainian community to overcome "the fear of alienation, which... is often based on rational principles.... If goodness and beauty are concentrated in the Ukrainian people, reason is no longer so necessary for them" (Lyaturylnska, 1971: 47). The poet appeals to the Ukrainian traditions of romanticism, which is the basis of the Ukrainian spiritual principle and argues with the European tradition of rationality.

It is quite natural that in a totalitarian society, which has never achieved gender equality, feelings are unevenly distributed between men and women. Excessive emotionality of women quite often arises as a result of long-term social dependence of women and the lack of communication mechanisms in the imperial society to limit physical and moral violence. According to the ideas of Ukrainian feminists, excessive female emotionality is not...
an evidence of irrationality, but is connected with a certain criticality regarding the distortion of imperial sociality itself. Ukrainian women are “part of the society in which they exist”, states Oksana Kis (2008: 124).

The problem of recognizing the role of the woman in Ukrainian society is inseparable from providing society with real opportunities for high-quality, unhindered advancement in the sphere of politics, economy, social sphere, and education. In practice, however, we observe a lack of opportunities for self-expression of Ukrainian women until the second half of the 20th century, a lack of high-quality “social elevators”. Opportunities for the realization of identity in power structures were also minimized.

The self-expression of Ukrainian women for a long historical time was limited by the patriarchal culture of Russian society, the specifics of the imperial social order. Within its limits, Ukrainian women were forced to perform roles that were not typical for them, and female emotionality was a certain social compensation of an oppressed social group.

Tamara Gundorova (2002) and Oksana Zabuzhko (2002) record the subordinate and extremely uncomfortable position of Ukrainian women in the imperial model of sociality, noting that the limited and servile roles of Ukrainian women in imperial society — victim, sexual, suicidal, infernal, etc. — are a factor of social exclusion of community, a factor that makes it impossible to reproduce social trust and solidarity in society and instead provokes social subordination and sycophancy (Taran, 2002).

We can talk about the value antinomy between the Ukrainian life world and Russian colonialism. The Soviet imperial historical sociality was built on a specific model of objective rationality, which was combined with the social exclusion of a number of communities and groups, violence that was incompatible with the dimensions of value rationality. In this context, such a model did not meet the demands of national and cultural self-expression of Ukrainian women, which were natural for maintaining the worldview foundations of personality development.

Impersonal sociality inhibited the processes of “communicative action” (Habermas’ term). We are talking about social practices in which the actions of women in society are coordinated not only with the help of economic calculations regarding individual success, but also through acts of human speech and worldview understanding. We observe a fundamental antinomy between the value principles of communicative action and the instrumental requirements of the imperial bureaucracy — the “system” that tried to use a woman as a tool of legitimization of the old order.

The social reality of colonial practices contributed to the permanent destruction of a woman’s personality. On the one hand, we observe ideological control, enslavement of spiritual and physical principles. The figure of a woman, under the influence of alienated sociality, loses the integrity characteristic of Ukrainian culture. The disintegration of the feminine is recorded, as T. Gundorova notes, not only by grammatical forms, but also by “seeing oneself from the outside, seeing oneself from the inside, seeing oneself as another body” (Gundorova, 2013: 34).

The Ukrainian researcher states that “all attempts to articulate the human personality and combine it with the body’s biological shell... create only a number of combinations in a colonized society, because... there are no conditions for spiritual and physical development” (Gundorova, 2002: 12). There is a lack of a basic concept for the social integration of the community, a sense of one’s own “home”, that point of support that would provide an opportunity for authentic communication within civil society.

It is obvious that the problem of women’s alienation in the imperial society and overcoming it in the process of decolonization obviously prompts a more detailed understanding of the ideas of A. Sen (1981), M. Nussbaum (2007) regarding strategies for overcoming the social exclusion of women in post-totalitarian societies, which are often deprived elementary prospects in the countries of the “third world”.

Providing opportunities for free self-expression and participation in the political process, development of a networked communicative society is that important part of a woman’s existence, which is directly related to ensuring her dignity. This concept obviously has liberal and traditional connotations, which are becoming a priority for civil society.

Conclusions

Summarizing the above, it can be stated that Ukrainian feminism has become a moral safeguard against social alienation, which is directly related to the dimensions of Russian and Soviet colonialism. The formation of this social phenomenon took place under the influence of European liberal ideas of modernity, existential and ontological self-determination of Ukrainian women, which is connected with the powerful process of European social emancipation. The recognition of the ideas of feminism took place under the influence of the enlightenment paradigm, the new social and legal reality. An important tool of social progress in this context became the defense of women’s integrated rights, recognition of their social dignity.

In the process of understanding the issues of feminism, attention is focused on the role of rationality as a factor in the social transformation of the Ukrainian community, a factor in the crystallization of “pragmatic feminism”. And also on the antithesis of rationality – emotional factors, which also influenced the development of Ukrainian society and were a natural reaction to total imperial violence.

It has been established that Ukrainian feminism is gradually acquiring its own national specificity, becoming a factor of decolonization, a factor in the development of civil society. It combines liberal ideas of individual social freedom with the social direction of women to the common good of the community, synthesizes individual and collective dimensions for institutional development. The philosophical prerequisites of the feminist theoretical vision and the social strategy of opposition to the clientelistic social order – social paternalism, built exclusively on the principles of hierarchical loyalty – are analyzed.

Social opposition to this phenomenon was accompanied by the creation of a horizontal social space, a communicative social reality, which was based not only on rational principles. The role of emotional, worldview principles in the process of social emancipation is substantiated. The determining role of the Ukrainian life world in the protection of public and private foundations of community life, in the social integration of Ukrainian society is fixed.

The main concept of Ukrainian female identity, which is an important philosophical and socio-cultural phenomenon, is fundamentally incompatible with the dimensions of repressive imperial sociality, with the forceful forms of subordination and total forms of social control inherent in it. It is emphasized that the fundamental modernization
Український фемінізм як чинник соціальних змін

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В статті осмислюються теоретичні засади українського фемінізму, обґрунтовується його практичне значення для соціальних змін в суспільстві. Предметом дослідницької уваги є індивідуальні і колективні виміри фемінізму, вплив цього важливого соціального феномену на ціннісну еволюцію українського суспільства. Фокусується увага на ціпераціональних та ціннісно-раціональних вимірах жіночої спільноти, її морально-нормативних засадах. Осмислюється роль українського життєвого світу в ціннісному розмежуванні українських жінок з інопланетною соціальністю. Наголошується на поширюванні соціальних індикаторів, що характеризують соціальні та економічні зміни, які впливають на національну специфіку українського фемінізму як соціальної альтернативні викривленим імперським формам соціальності. Синтезовані теоретичні і практичні підходи, які осмислюють фемінізм як складний суспільний феномен, який має раціональні і чуттєві компоненти. Пояснюються причини переважання чуттєвості в умовах тотального відчуження, її обумовлень історичними факторами.

Ключові слова: фемінізм, соціальні зміни, український життєвий світ, форми соціальності, національна специфіка українського фемінізму

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Проблеми комунікативної реальності як дискурсивного соціального простору