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YOUTH GENDER DIFFERENCES IN MORAL REASONING ON GENDER MORALITY IN THE LIGHT OF THEORIES BY KOHLBERG AND GILLIGAN

Sadusha Redzic

Faculty of Philosophy in Pristina seated in Kosovska Mitrovica, Department of Sociology, Kosovska Mitrovica, Serbia
redzichfilfak@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper presents a comparative analysis of data obtained by in-depth interviews in the sociological study of gender morality, through the prism of theories on the relationship between morality and gender. The reference framework of the paper consists of theories on gender socialization and the learning of gender roles, as well as the theories of the learning of morals. A revision of theories that deal with the relationship of gender and morality, by Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan, is followed by an overview of several reference research results in Serbia and abroad. The following section contains an analysis that includes only selected positions from a broader qualitative research conducted with the students from the University of Niš, in order to compare their moral reasoning on certain aspects of gender morality in respondents of both sexes. Since Kohlberg's and Gilligan's theories serve as a narrow theoretical framework, I use them in the analysis to interpret the data obtained by an autonomous research on youth gender morals. At the same time, I attempt to verify the two theories, looking for arguments to support one or the other.

Key words: morality, gender, sexual morality, Kohlberg, Gilligan

РОДНЕ РАЗЛИКЕ МЛАДИХ У МОРАЛНОМ ЗАКЉУЧИВАЊУ У ПОЛНОМ МОРАЛУ У СВЕТЛУ КОЛБЕРГОВЕ И ГИЛИГАНИНЕ ТЕОРИЈЕ

Апстракт

Рад представља приказ упоредне анализе дела података добијених дубинским интервјуом у социолошком истраживању полног морала, кроз призму теорија о односу морала и пола. Референтни оквир рада чине теорије о полној и родној социјализацији и учењу родних улога, као и теорије о учењу морала. Након прегледа теорија које разматрају однос пола и морала: Лоренса Колберга и Керол Гилиган, следи преглед резултата појединих референтних истраживања у Србији и иностранству, а потом анализа, која укључује само одабране ставове из ширег квалитативног истраживања урађеног са студентима нишког универзитета, у циљу

поређења моралног резоновања о појединим аспектима полног морала код испитаника оба пола. Како Колбергова и Гилиганина теорија служе као ужи теоријски оквир рада, у анализи су коришћене за интерпретацију података добијених аутономним истраживањем полног морала младих. Уједно, на овај начин, проверавамо њихове две теорије, тражећи аргументе који би поткрепили једну, или другу.

Кључне речи: морал, пол, полни морал, Колберг, Гилиган

KOHLBERG AND GILLIGAN ON GENDER DIFFERENCES, GENDER MORALITY AND REASONING

With respect to the attitude that “accepting sociological bases” contributes to reducing the role of biological factors in the human psyche in favour of social factors (Osovska, 1971, p. 33), being a sociologist, in considering the relationship of gender morality and gender I seek and find a foothold in the theories of gender socialization and the learning of gender roles, primarily in the interactionist and the cognitive development theories, and especially the one proposed by Wilhelm Reich (1982, 1990), as well as the theories on the learning of morals¹. The most important theories for this paper are the ones that deal with the relationship of gender and morality – specifically those proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg and by Carol Gilligan. They represent, together with the abovementioned theories, a narrow theoretical framework: they are used to interpret the data obtained by an autonomous research on youth gender morals. At the same time, in this way, I attempt to verify Kohlberg’s and Gilligan’s theories, seeking arguments to support one or the other.

Lawrence Kohlberg, a representative of the cognitive-development approach, inspired by Piaget’s structuralism, found through longitudinal studies of the structures and forms of moral judgment and cross-sections of different cultures that the development of moral consciousness passes through three levels, each of which contains two stages (necessarily from

¹ The sources of morals are of anthropological and social nature, and we learn about the morals through the process of socialization, in which, according to the authors, the most acceptable one is the holistic theory. A holistic explanation of the development of morality was given by James Rest, a follower of the cognitive-developmental approach to the study of moral development. However, recognizing the shortcomings of separating cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects of morality, he proposes a holistic approach to its study. He believed that these three dimensions are not “empirical clusters”, or theoretically pure analysis units, and that research shows multiple and diverse relationships between them, so they should not be separated. He is interested in both moral behaviour and the circumstances that produced it. That is why he is trying to figure out what has happened in the mind of a person who has acted morally in a situation (Стојиљковић, 2009, p. 81).

lower to higher, without “skipping”, with possible stagnation).² Progress is reflected in the redefinition of moral concepts and attitudes, so that each successive level includes a better cognitive organization (because it incorporates the achievements of the previous levels, makes new demarcations, and organizes a more comprehensive and better organized structure) and provides a more differentiated, integrated, and more general and universal definition (for more, see: Миочиновић, 2004, pp. 42-43; Стојиљковић, 2009, pp. 55-60). Therefore Kohlberg concludes that moral reasoning does not differ significantly in its development from other ways of thinking (Kohlberg, 1990, pp. 51-63). In fact, he takes the universalist position, considering that the moral development as he sees it is characteristic of all people, in all cultures, and that basic moral values are the same everywhere. He investigated twenty five aspects of morality through all six stages. Just like Piaget, he was trying to learn why respondents considered an act good or bad, and what they thought should be done in a situation, ignoring the content of the opinion. People at different stages may be voting for the same values, but for different reasons, which points to a different structure of thought (Миочиновић 2004, p. 28; Стојиљковић, 2009, pp. 42-44).

Using longitudinal research, Kohlberg found that the level of moral knowledge and judgment grows with the age of respondents, not automatically, but in line with the maturity of the subject and the way in which he or she constructs the operations of moral thinking as an active participant in this process (Чабаркапа, 2009, pp. 380, 386). Kohlberg named the levels of moral development preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. At the preconventional and conventional levels a child’s moral content is determined by culture or particular circumstances, while at the postconventional level a young man or a woman shapes the moral concepts, which are clearly defined, comprehensive, and harmonized (Kohlberg, 1990, p. 63).³ Kohlberg sees the stages of moral development as

² The stages occur in a fixed (constant and universal) sequence and represent structural units (an organized, consistent system of thought), hierarchically integrated (lower stages are involved in higher ones, but through a reorganization of thought, which replaces the previous organization), and each is fairly more adequate than the previous one (better integrated, with better distinction between moral and immoral and higher reciprocity in dealing with others) (Миочиновић, 2004, pp. 42-43; Стојиљковић, 2009, pp. 55-60). In addition, the stages are defined not so much by age, but by experience, while intelligence, although a necessary condition for the development of morality, even as highly developed, does not necessarily correlate with high levels of moral reasoning or behaviour (Стојиљковић, 2009, p. 60).

³ Initially, a child (until the age of nine or ten) accepts cultural codes of right and wrong, but interprets them with the help of the consequences for behaviour (to avoid punishment, to gain reward) and submits to the authority of the person who imposed the rules and has the option of physical coercion. The human meaning and value of

“a successive sequence of different notions of justice”, and equates morality with justice (Стојиљковић, 2009, p. 51).

Kohlberg as well as Piaget see a child as an active participant in the processes of interaction and believe that the diversity of experiences and the nature of the interaction determine the size of changes in the development of moral reasoning. The child develops moral judgment by actively participating in social relations and organizing his or her experience with them (Стојиљковић, 2009, p. 53). However, there are indications that Kohlberg valued the skill of putting oneself in another’s position more than the interaction itself (Миочиновић 2004, p. 53).⁴

The importance of Kohlberg’s work for this research is in his “discovery” that most of his female respondents reason morally in the first stage of the conventional level, and the male respondents on the second. With his associates, among other things, he examined the influence of culture (and culture-specific gender roles) on the so-called “private speech of the child” (which in fact has to do with cognitive development, and thus with moral

the act are not in play. At the second stage of morality on the pre-conventional level, what is considered to be correct is pragmatically an act that brings benefit and meets one’s own need or the needs of others, and reciprocity is perceived as an exchange.

At the first stage of the conventional level (between ages nine and twenty) “being good” means doing what others like, approve of, or what helps them (the aim is to gain approval and avoid disapproval of others). The acts are then judged on the basis of the doer’s intention. The second stage links correct behaviour with the notion of duty and respect for authority; this is where the feeling of guilt is developed.

The post-conventional level (which may be reached after age twenty, or may never be reached) in the first stage introduces the awareness of the relativity of a personal point of view. It is characterized by the evaluation of social arrangements (as an element of duty) and the general welfare. The rights and standards set by the society are the measure of moral reasoning of the act. The second stage is characterized by decision-making according to one’s own conscience and chosen ethical principles that are logically justified, general, and stable: universal principles of justice, solidarity, and respect for the dignity (Kohlberg, 1990, pp. 63-65). In a word: “Behaviour at stages 1-2 of the development depends on the assessment and prediction of whether a certain act leads to a punishment or approval. At stages 3-4 moral conduct is determined by valid accepted social norms, while at stages 5-6 an individual acts in accordance with the internal principles he or she formulated as a person, which ensure compliance and consistency of his or her activities in all situations” (Чабаркапа, 2009, p. 386).

⁴ There are situations (conditions) that may encourage the development of moral thinking: encouraging a person to take the other’s position (as a precondition for the development of morality), encouraging logical thinking through reviewing alternatives and logical argumentation, and making moral decisions and implementing them in everyday situations contribute to learning responsibility; pointing out the contradictions and inconsistencies in behaviour and opinion with discussions about fairness help in their resolution; exposing views from a higher stage indicates a better resolution of dilemmas and contradictions and opens the way to a new stage; while respect and fairness in the immediate surroundings encourage the development of moral judgment (Миочиновић, 2004 p. 28; Стојиљковић, 2009, p. 61).

reasoning) on a sample of nineteen boys and fifteen girls of preschool age from America and Norway. He and his associates found that gender influences the “private speech” of children (Kohlberg, Yaeger and Hjertholm, 1968). However, it was shown in another study that the level of moral reasoning (measured over solving Kohlberg’s dilemmas) of girls and boys varies with age: at a younger age it is negligibly higher in girls and later it is significantly higher in boys. Furthermore, the level of moral reasoning in girls and young women is not dependent on the level of moral reasoning of parents (of both sexes), while in boys it tends to be the same, but the tendency decreases with maturation. For this paper it is essential that Kohlberg and associates found that the levels of moral reasoning in girls (except at the youngest age) are lower than in boys. The correlation between age and the level of moral reasoning was 0.32 for girls and women, and 0.51 for boys and young men (Haan, Langer & Kohlberg, 1976, pp. 1205-1206). Researching the moral reasoning of students in different cultural, social, and educational conditions, they found that the differences in the levels of moral reasoning may be related to differences in socio-cultural background and educational approaches (Bar-Yam, Kohlberg & Naame, 1980). Results of another longitudinal study have suggested a connection between moral judgment and age, socio-economic status, education, and IQ (Colby et al. 1983), which, applied to the category of gender in terms of the socio-economic status and education, places females in the background as the marginalized group. Thus, he claims that between male and female moral reasoning there is an essential qualitative difference in favour of men.

In any case, one thing is to look for differences in morality between women and men, and quite another is to try to assess the level of morality. Thus, Kohlberg’s findings are challenged, among others, by Dawson (Leslie Dawson) and Gilligan. Dawson (Dawson, 1992, according to Dawson, 1995), as opposed to Kohlberg, finds that female students of business studies have higher ethical standards than their male counterparts when it comes to situations that involve attitude towards others (not in situations concerning the conscience of only one person, though). Carol Gilligan believes that Kohlberg narrowed the domain of moral to fairness and neglected the morality of care and responsibility as a complementary ethical orientation (this may imply that Kohlberg’s levels of moral reasoning are not culturally neutral). Women do not show less morality than men, it is only manifested in another way: as opposed to men, who are guided by rules and responsibilities (ethics of justice), women derive their obligations and responsibilities from interpersonal relationships (ethics of care and responsibility), in accordance with traditional division of labour and roles according to gender. Accordingly, the traits that are considered desirable for a woman suppress her moral judgment to a stage “lower” than the stage of the majority of men. The very selection of moral dilemmas and the way of scoring are influenced by Kohlberg’s male bias,

Gilligan believes, and his results are the consequence of this (Стојиљковић, 2009, p. 114).

Carol Gilligan had a feminist reaction to the teachings of her predecessor and professor: the existing stereotypes that separate women and men, attributing emotionality to the former and expressivity and instrumental skills to the latter, also separate love from work, and represent the reflection of an unbalanced concept of maturity, separating an individual from his or her relations with other individuals, which directs us to the autonomy of the work area, rather than the interdependence of love and caring. A female experience and construction of social reality is different than a male experience, and so is their conception of morality⁵, which is why Gilligan writes about a “different voice” of women (Gilligan, 1985). The exclusion of women from direct participation in society puts them in a position of the object of consensus and attitudes imposed by men, on whose care and support they depend and whose last name they carry (Gilligan, 1982, p. 67), while different paths of the development of moral reasoning in genders are the result of different gender socialization and gender roles of boys and girls (Dawson, 1995).

Gilligan, in search of a possible linguistic criteria for the development of morality of women, asks whether a female construction of morality rests on a linguistic structure different from the one used by men and whether these linguistic structures should be given the same methodological value in examining the nature of moral development (Gilligan, 1982, p. 70). In conversations with her respondents, she noted that what they considered to be morally good was helping people, selflessness, kindness, and respect for the obligations and responsibilities toward others. She spoke to girls and women about abortion as a moral dilemma.⁶

⁵ She believes that women’s sphere of ethics is different than men’s, that they do not develop the type of ego that men do: inexorable, impersonal, and independent of its emotional roots, and at the same time they are attributed a lower level in terms of justice, succumbing to emotions in reasoning, and that they are not ready to face big challenges in life that require urgency as men are. Of course, all this affects the modified formation of a female super-ego in relation to men (Gilligan, 1985).

⁶ Namely, birth control and the possibility of abortion permit women to take control over their own fertility and open up a dilemma about the choices that they make themselves. A woman can become independent and active. Her identity and moral reasoning are no longer subordinate to her reproductive function, she assumes control over it. However, this places her in a conflict situation, because of the traditional conventions of femininity, especially the moral equivalence of good with self-sacrifice. Therefore, the conflict, or rather the ambivalence, between the self and the others, becomes a major problem for women: to be ‘good’ – compassionate, virtuous, meeting the needs of others, or to be ‘bad’ – independent, powerful, ‘deceiving themselves’. The solution which is to be found should not hurt anybody – otherwise it would not be moral a one (Gilligan, 1982, pp. 70-71). This is why Gilligan interviews girls and women who are facing a decision (a moral dilemma): whether to have an abortion or not.

Through the study, she draws a conclusion that conventions that shape the moral reasoning of women differ from those that shape the moral reasoning of men. Likewise, the way of perceiving morality is different between genders. Women's design of moral problems produces a problem of caring and responsibility in relationships. This leads to the development of moral thinking oriented toward understanding responsibilities in relationships, in contrast to the concept of morality as justice, which links this development to the logic of equality and reciprocity in relationships, the rights of human beings and the rules to follow, which is characteristic of men. This stems from the fact that the morality of women is connected on a particular level with their maternal role, which involves selflessness and concern about beings who depend on them. Therefore, the care for themselves and their very survival may in this context be interpreted as selfish. Hence, the care is equated with good, and selfishness with immorality, even though this attitude has caused (or assumed) inequality and imbalance (disequilibrium) in a relationship in which a woman is the provider of care, and the other person is the recipient (which is one of the possible perspectives of the "ethics of care") (Gilligan, 1982, pp. 73-74, 85). Women construct moral problems through the prism of a conflict of responsibilities, passing "through three perspectives" marked (or rather delimited) by conflicts, which require a more complex understanding of the relationship with people and responsibilities. Each perspective carries a critical reinterpretation of the conflict between selfishness and responsibility. Thus, the moral reasoning of women develops through three stages, only seemingly similar to Kohlberg's stages (characterized and delimited by 'transitions' through conflict resolutions – moral dilemmas, similar to other structuralists who dealt with moral development): from the initial concern for their own survival (which implies selfishness), through focusing on the responsibility to others and to the good, to reflective understanding and acceptance of the principles of nonviolence (non-injury) and the ethics of care ("the concept of responsibility and care") as an appropriate prism through which the conflict resolution occurs in interpersonal relationships. Thus, women's concepts of themselves and of morality are closely linked.⁷

⁷ Gilligan's scheme of moral development is presented somewhat differently compared to Kohlberg's:

- a. The original focus is on themselves (own survival) in the first (i.e. preconventional) level of development. However, the problem occurs in dealing with others. What about them? Through the transition, the moral concept of responsibility to others is revealed as a basis for establishing a balance in human relations.
- b. With the detection of the maternal concept of morality (which seeks to provide protection to an inferior and dependent being) enters the second stage, which is characterized by equal care for others and the good. This involves self-sacrifice. It is a conventional female definition of good, unlike preconventional selfishness. However, this relationship is unequal (unbalanced), because the woman is the giver, and others

Hence Gilligan assumes that Kohlberg's model of the development of moral reasoning, developed by questioning boys about moral dilemmas, is not applicable to female beings. In addition, with her theory of ethics that has interpersonal relationships, responsibility, and care as central problems (instead of justice as a concept and the rules of conduct), she is trying to prove how wrong Kohlberg was in forming his stages of the development of moral reasoning working with boys and concluding, by applying the same criteria to girls and young women, that they are inferior (deficient or deviant (Gilligan, 1985)) with respect to men in terms of the development of moral reasoning. She also recognized that the development of moral reasoning is conditioned by a complete maturation of a person, and not primarily by the development of cognitive skills (Dawson, 1995). Kohlberg's model relies on the development of logic (formal thinking), and Gilligan's on the maturation of personality and empathy.

But if Kohlberg was wrong to initially interview only boys⁸, Gilligan is also wrong for interviewing only girls and women about the moral dilemma of abortion, if she already wanted to establish a qualitative difference between women's and men's ethics. She, as well as Kohlberg, took a big step forward in the study of morality, introducing "a different voice" of women in the theory and study of morality, and raised issues of substantive importance to moral philosophy, and thus to other disciplines that deal with it: if there is "a different voice", the theory of morality must take it into account, as well as the associated coherent group of moral attitudes, introducing the objective and subjective, the impersonal and "purely personal" into the study (Blum, 1988, p. 473).

are recipients of care. This problem is a prelude to a transition that leads to the third stage. One should be responsible, not only to others, but also to oneself, while not being selfish. The criterion of judgment is no longer 'good', but 'the truth' (the truth is that the woman herself is a person to whom she should be responsible): it is no longer important how others would see her, but how she will judge herself and her actions.

c. Now one needs to establish a balance in the relations with other people, to find a balance between selfishness and responsibility. The contradiction between individual needs and conventions is now solved under the principle of non-violence (non-injury). The principle is universal (so one might say postconventional), but it is applicable on a subjective level through the revision of the intention and consequence of the act. Postconventional reasoning takes into account the responsibility and the principle of non-violence (Gilligan, 1985, p. 105).

⁸ In some (initial) studies, Kohlberg personally interviewed only boys, and that could be criticized, but in other studies he also interviewed girls.

THE RESULTS OF RELEVANT RESEARCH

A group of authors (Murray, Feuerstein & Adams, 2002) state that there are numerous studies that support Gilligan's theory, but that there are also the ones that do not prove it, and some of them have shown that both men and women combine moral orientations of fairness and caring. What matters is whether the respondents in the research were presented with a moral dilemma of public importance, or the one relating to the private, intimate, life of the individual (it is important whether this is real or hypothetical). It is clear to a sociologist that the answers of the respondents of both genders depend on the context in which the moral dilemma has been raised. Certain studies on the development of morality concepts show different development structures with two genders.⁹

Snežana Stojiljković (Стојиљковић, 2009, pp. 205-209) examined the possible association between intelligence, empathy, and basic personality with moral reasoning of adolescents, taking into account the gender of the respondents. She found that gender does not significantly affect the development, the process, and the conclusions of moral reasoning of adolescents, so both boys and girls equally resort to the standards of conventional and postconventional morality, but she finds some specifics regarding the structure of sensitive sides of personality and the dimensions of personality. For example, females take into account interpersonal relations in the immediate environment more, they tend to affectively and empathically react to emotional states and the position of other people, and they consider relationships between people from the point of trust, caring, and mutual harmonization to a greater extent. They are emotionally more unstable and emphatically sensitive, which is due to the sensitivity of the vegetative

⁹ First of all, in terms of Gilligan's theory, "female conception of morality" requires a way of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract. The very concept of morality of caring directs the development of morality to understanding the responsibilities and obligations. The concept of morality as justice ("male conception"), on the other hand, links the moral development to understanding the rights and rules. However, the structural approach of studying the development of morality points to the possibility that the differences between the sexes later in life diminish, despite the differences in early socialization and gender roles that are learned through it, because women, faced with their roles in the business world adopt the masculine conception of morality, and the results learned during socialization are annulled (Dawson, 1995). Again, the author of one study (Trevino 1992, according to Dawson, 1995) has attempted to 'measure' moral reasoning and predict behaviour (in the workplace) putting male and female respondents in six hypothetical moral situations at work. Her findings, compared to Gilligan's theory, refute the theory of the annulment of what is learned during early socialization, because they show that women and men bring different ethical standards to the business environment. Namely, when women make moral decisions, they do so with greater consideration of interpersonal relationships and feelings, but according to the established rules and rights.

nervous system. This is why women are more prone to moral reasoning on the basis of fitting into the role of a compassionate and good person who cares about others (based on the appreciation of the expectations of others). Their moral reasoning on the conventional level is prompted by affection and empathy, in the sense that it is determined 'within', by the 'emotional processing' of the material. Young men, although their moral reasoning at the conventional level is also largely determined by empathy skills, which are prompted by the characteristics of the central nervous system and directed to the outside world and other people, ascribe a little more importance to the landmarks from the social environment. For them, both empathy and extraversion contribute to adopting the point of view of others and positioning in line with the standards set by the social environment, while this function is performed by empathy and emotion with girls (at the conventional level). Postconventional reasoning is more conditioned by the cognitive abilities in boys and girls.

Similar results were presented in a research by a group of authors (Gibbs, Arnold & Burkhart, 1984, pp. 1042-1043), who examined a possible correlation between genders and levels, as well as expressions of moral reasoning, in order to make a progress in relation to studies that relied exclusively on the levels of moral reasoning set forth by the structuralists.¹⁰

It is worth asking whether gender influences the shaping of gender morality.

The phrase 'sexual revolution' was coined to describe changes in gender morality that occurred in the 1920s. It is used to denote a number of changes over a long period of time (including the famous 1960s, as well as the assumption that it is ongoing), which represent an overcoming of traditional gender morality. Changes in the economy (in terms of the imperatives which are placed), the emancipation of women through participation in work, a huge breakthrough of knowledge about human sexuality, the development of contraceptive devices and their widespread use, the law-permitted abortion, and the emancipation of young people and their independence make the sexual revolution(s) possible (and necessary). The sexual revolution of the sixties brought the most good and freedom in

¹⁰ They found no difference in the levels of moral reasoning among respondents of both sexes (aged 11 to 21) but that, at the second level of conventional reasoning, there is a significant difference in favour of girls when it comes to the role of empathy in moral reasoning and its explanation. They also found that women demonstrate a greater conscientiousness at conventional levels than men do (in the sense of respect for interpersonal approval or disapproval, self-esteem, self-evaluation, pride, honour, integrity, and the like, which is in contrast with Freud's view that women have a lesser super-ego). Girls and boys showed almost the same level of responsibility in moral judgment. Therefore, the authors conclude that there are no gender differences in the levels of moral reasoning and development, but in orientations toward somewhat different contents of morality.

gender behaviour to young people and women, since the indulgence in sexual relations no longer required a commitment in the form of marriage (Ehrenreich, 1983, according to Scott, 1998). The feminist movement of the seventies, among other things, contributed to the acceptance of the idea of equality between the genders and in gender relations. Contraception and abortion contributed to the development of premarital and extramarital relationships, and occasional intimate relationships with no strings attached, as well as to the increase in births out of wedlock (particularly in juvenile mothers) and divorces. Numerous studies show that young people are more inclined to reject the traditional standards of gender morality than older people (Harding, 1988; Thornton, 1989, according to Scott, 1998).

One study suggests that the gap between the reasoning of the genders is being bridged through the transformation that accompanies modern moral dilemmas related to marriage and family (Gerson, 2002). It focuses on a specific situation of a generation of young people entering adulthood, who grew up in families with fathers and mothers who 'broke the ice' with gender stereotypes, changing attitudes about work and family life, and who now live in a society with many non-traditional family forms that seriously question gender inequalities. Gerson believes that women's pursuit of economic independence and the need for greater involvement of men in parenting and partnership in marriage (the pressure that they should become oriented toward caring for others)¹¹ create moral dilemmas¹² (How to achieve all that?) from which gender moral strategies stem. While the society, according to this moral dilemma, still divides people into men and women, into two gender and moral categories, the choice between caring for others and for one's own needs, tensions between family and work, public and private, independence and dedication, young women and men seek ways to balance their own development and commitment to others. They cannot, however, rely on offered social gender categories, because they are too rigid to provide a solution, they do not have an institutional support from the society, and they face numerous social barriers in the creation of gender-neutral strategies. Consequently, Gerson asks: how do individuals choose between the need for independence and the need to build relations with dedication to others?

The young develop moral strategies that are challenging traditional notions of gender, making gender boundaries vague with their identical aspirations. For example, they usually do not believe that individuals should have to choose between family (commitment) and work, but they

¹¹ One should bear in mind that both sexes are able to choose partners and to freely enter fluid or short-term sexual relationships, to decide whether to enter into a marriage and whether to have children (Gerson, 2002).

¹² They are of moral nature because others morally evaluate such choices, forcing a new generation to change or reproduce the prevailing moral codes (Gerson, 2002).

want to evenly balance those two areas of life, not giving up on any of the two; they want a community where both partners earn money, because they see the benefits; they feel that their working mothers had a better picture of themselves than the unemployed women, and thus were better mothers; they value family-oriented fathers highly, because they believe both parents should support children economically and emotionally; many young men (two thirds) are sceptical of traditional male identity built around work; over a half of young people do not consider divorce a bad option, because it is better to be alone than with a bad partner; they want a lasting relationship with a single partner, and have high expectations of it (they want a balance between dedication and support, sharing, and autonomy), but they are aware that this is difficult to achieve. They have the same ideals, but different outcomes of the adjustment to the fact that they will not reach these ideals: the majority of men (six out of ten) prefer 'modified traditionalism' (counting on traditional privileges, they see themselves as the sole or main breadwinners, while expecting the woman to carry the bulk of the household work); women are more prone to autonomy (before they allow that they themselves and their children economically depend on others). However, both men and women have largely adopted the maxim that shows their attitude toward the dedication/independence moral dilemma: if you do not take care of yourself, you will not be able to take care of others.

In a great number of studies, some of them show differences in morality between the two genders, and some of them do not register them (which is certainly partly to be explained by applying differently 'set' methodological instruments). In any case, young generations carry a great potential for spontaneously balancing gender roles and equal relationships between the sexes. Whether these opportunities will be realized depends primarily on the socio-cultural conditions in which the young people live.

The researcher, of course, must be aware of the problems of studying morality through interviews. Exclusively verbal statements on moral content can be problematic, because there is a possibility that they have no influence on the actual behaviour, i.e. it may happen that the respondent does not express the values that really shape his or her behaviour. The testimony that we get does not tell us what the respondent really thinks when he or she finds themselves in a moral situation, and it may even happen that they accept values they do not understand or whose consequences they do not understand. He or she can give moral meaning to the non-existing act (Pharo, 2006, p. 131). Likewise, two can aspire to the same goal, but for completely different reasons, with divergent motivations (Weber, 1989, p. 214), and this observation by Weber was the inspiration behind this study for the review of the individual statements of the respondents of different sexes through Kohlberg's and Gilligan's theories.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The original research from which the results are presented in this paper is much wider in scope.¹³ In-depth interviews examined the attitudes of male and female students of the University of Niš. The research deals with the sexual morals of young people regarding gender, and only the parts suitable for a comparative analysis in terms of Kohlberg's and Gilligan's theories are presented here.

Even during the interviews, it was noticeable that, when replying to individual questions, the male and female students reason seemingly differently while making moral judgments, even when their opinions are similar in direction and intensity. The analysis showed that there is a basis for this observation to be further reviewed with reference to Kohlberg's¹⁴ and Gilligan's theories as a reference.

¹³ It has been conducted for a PhD thesis. The sample included male and female students of all faculties of the University of Niš (two from each faculty: the Faculties of Occupational Safety, Philosophy, Medicine, Technology, Civil Engineering and Architecture, Economics, Electronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Law, Science and Mathematics, Pedagogy, Sport and Physical Education, and Arts). The study was of a qualitative nature. Its main objective was to describe the sexual morals of young people, revealing their views. The next objective was to assess the sexual morals from a perspective of gender using a comparative analysis of data obtained from male and female respondents. The assumption of the research is that there are (no longer) differences in the perception of sexual morality among young members of both genders, which is a consequence of centuries of unequal position of gender groups and of girls and boys (no longer) being governed by different ideas and values in their reproductive habits. The task of the research, therefore, was: 1) a detailed description of the normative-value structure of the sexual morals of students; 2) a description of their gender socialization; 3) a description of the reproductive practices in order to unmask the relationship of the ideological structure and everyday practices; and 4) a description of their experience and evaluation of sexual morality of the environment to which they belong, to obtain insight into the level of conformity with public opinion. This information is required in order to compare sexual morality of male and female students, in order to verify the existence/non-existence of presumed differences, i.e. to check the assumptions about the (non-)existence of a double morality for men and women. In-depth interviews examined the following aspects of sexual morals of the young: the conditionality of gender socialization by belonging to a gender group, whether belonging to a gender group influences the attitudes about marriage and the family, the separation/connection of sexual and reproductive functions, as well as attitudes about breaking marriages, whether belonging to gender groups affects attitudes about sexual maturity, as well as the conditionality of attitudes about sexual relations in terms of belonging to gender groups. Therefore, an instrument was made according to this structure and divided into themes and questions, which can be found in the PhD thesis, in the section about the theoretical and methodological framework of the research.

¹⁴ If necessary, I will review their theories, with a due emphasis that Kohlberg's theory can be directly proved/disproved only by examining peers of both sexes (in different age groups), while respondents of both sexes in this study are sometimes

Thus, there is a noticeable subtle difference between male and female students in the manner they expressed views about an example of unusual gender socialization that served as an introduction to the interview¹⁵, which may refer to the use of Kohlberg's and Gilligan's theories. Although there are no significant differences between the attitudes of young men and women, with both showing extremely negative attitudes, the intensity of moral outrage over the "confusion about sexual identity" was stronger in male than in female students. The respondents of both sexes used the terms typical of moral reasoning, but the male students reported stronger disgust in comparison to the female students. On the one hand, this difference could be a confirmation that the departure from gender identity to the identity and the role of the opposite sex in our culture is more easily tolerated for women, than for men (Buloh and Buloh, 2004, p. 81). It is possible that this is one of the reasons why some male respondents showed visible and intense disgust and revulsion toward the educational model from the example, while female respondents, even when they considered it undesirable and bad, were not as dismissive. According to Kohlberg's theory, the interpretation would point to a slightly lower level of moral reasoning among women, whereas according to Gilligan's theory, it would confirm the tendency of women to connect with the morality of interpersonal relationships, to give it a personal touch, caring and intimate. Indeed, before classifying the reasoning of young men into a higher level of moral reasoning in relation to the reasoning of women (although this is not specifically about the manner and the course of reasoning, the differences can be evaluated on the basis of the terms used), what should be emphasized are the words used by male students (such as 'shame', 'embarrassing', 'evil', 'nothing good', or 'disgust') concerning right and wrong – in the impersonal context, and the words used by female students ('foolish', 'stupid', 'abnormal', or 'shocked') in connection with right and wrong – but in a more personal context, which refers to the expression of intimacy in communication. Again, according to Kohlberg, this would be an indicator of lower abstractness of female moral reasoning, but according to Gilligan – an indicator of a different orientation of women. The above

separated by four years of age (and study) and in some cases even more. Therefore, the notes presented in this paper should not be seen as the ultimate reference to Kohlberg's theory or its implementation, but rather as a reference to the possibility of linking research data with it, and as an inspiration for a possible further investigation which would be directed by it.

¹⁵ A newspaper article about a child whose parents hid the sex from him, so as not to affect his socialization. The boy was left to choose between the gender roles of boys and girls. *Pet godina skrivali pol deteta, oblačili ga i kao muško i kao žensko [Five years of hiding the child's sex, dressing him as both man and woman]*. <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Svet/302704/Pet-godina-skrivali-pol-deteta-oblacili-ga-i-kao-musko-i-kao-zensko> (22 Jan 2012)

concerns only the statements that are negative; regarding responses that show tolerance and agreement with the process of socialization, the respondents of both sexes show an understanding of freedom given to the child by the parents, and support the ability to grow unencumbered by gender stereotypes.

The difference between male and female students regarding the used terms is noticeable in their comments on the use of gender attributes for the sake of passing the exams and other similar situations. (It is) wrong, prostitution, greed, pathetic, not good, unjustified (behaviour), it should not happen – are words used by female students; terms specific to a bit higher moral reasoning were used by male students according to Kohlberg: not (going) in the right way, because she uses sexuality (for other) goals, wrong, inappropriate means, not good, (they should be) honest, highly immoral. They used the following expressions as well: I do not have a positive opinion about it, it is not the way (to achieve something), rude, and expressions used by the female students were: wrong, she sells herself (for some reason), benefit. Taking into account that the criticized behaviour pertains to women, this difference could be due to a lack of solidarity and understanding among the students towards their female colleagues, as well as their feeling of frustration and grievance since benefits from such conduct are unavailable to them. Girls may have been a little softer for exactly the same reasons, which could point us to Gilligan's theory and a larger share of empathy in reasoning. On the other hand, according to Kohlberg, young men clearly show a higher level of moral reasoning, but only under the condition that we exclude the context of solidarity; however, from all of the above it is clear that this would not be the right choice.

Some male students as well as some female students used the term 'function' when describing marriage: in terms of joint functioning of partners (a female student), but also in terms of the function of marriage for individuals and society (a male student). While the female student sees the functionality of marriage through concrete human relations, the male student does so through observing the reproductive function of marriage for the individual, on the one hand, and for the community, on the other, which is an interpretation in accordance with Gilligan's theory.

The attitudes of respondents of both sexes on the influence of parents in choosing a partner are virtually the same. However, when it comes to those who think we should also listen to parents, male and female respondents explain their attitude differently: she would not want a conflict with her family or partner due to animosity between them, and he believes that parents can choose a good partner for him. This, again, is explainable by Gilligan's and Kohlberg's theories. The girl imagines herself as a part of a face-to-face interaction with parents and husband, while a young man has a remarkable (even extreme) trust in parents. In essence, both are focused on achieving a good future life, but the female student considers her family ties very

strong, and cannot imagine a good life with a partner without their approval. She expresses caring as a moral quality according to Gilligan's theory. The same pursuit of the good life lies behind the male student's reply, but the centre of his response rests in his personal happiness with a partner (but the fact that she was chosen by parents means that she actually suits them).

Male students who have a negative attitude towards the practice of "borrowing a father"¹⁶ show a greater emotional charge than the female students, since, hypothetically, a man is the one being 'foisted' a child who is not biologically his (and it turns out that 'his' woman is not only his). Their comments and disgust are substantiated by anger towards a specific person who would make them feel disappointed and hurt. On the other hand, if we took Kohlberg into consideration, female students with a negative attitude show a higher level of moral reasoning, since, although abhorrent of what they regard as immoral, they point out abstract principles: lie (deceit) and truth, benefit, injustice, good and bad.

When it comes to homosexuals, tolerant girls and those who approve of homosexuality use terms such as: freedom, (the right to) privacy, and non-threat (feeling that they are not threatened by homosexuals), while young men use terms such as an open mind and (lack of) bias. Here, Kohlberg's scale would show a higher level of moral reasoning among girls, since they call for abstract, universal principles, and young men call for a fight against prejudice. However, the girls seem to do so out of consideration and caring toward others (the right of others to freedom and privacy), and stress that they do not feel threatened, while with the boys it seems that we find an orientation primarily to their own judgment (they emphasize in the first person 'I have no prejudices', 'I am open-minded'). This supports Gilligan's theory.

Permissiveness with respect to prostitution is differently expressed by male and female respondents. The male respondents believe that prostitution should be legalized to control (protection against sexually transmitted diseases) and protect the prostitutes themselves (from exploitation and abuse), and the female respondents are lenient to people who prostitute themselves if they are forced into it or treat it as work as any other. These respondents show different levels of moral reasoning according to Kohlberg: some are afraid of concrete bad consequences (sexually transmitted diseases), while others are thinking about the final status and the protection of prostitutes, which represents a slightly higher level of reasoning. The views and the arguments given by female respondents refer to the application of Gilligan's theory, since they show an understanding and compassion for people who are, owing to circumstances, forced to do

¹⁶ Women from childless marriages in the past resorted to relations with other men in order to conceive (Ђорђевић, 1984, pp. 238-246)

that type of work. For example, one female respondent put herself in the shoes of a mother who needs money for her child, and admitted that, if there were no other solution, she would earn money in this way, while male respondents did not show this kind of compassion or understanding for similar specific situations, even though one respondent himself emphasized that prostitutes are ‘victims of human misery’ (generalized, in an abstract sense), which is also explained by Gilligan’s and Kohlberg’s theories. According to Gilligan, the girls show compassion and understanding as persons, in relation to other persons in a hypothetical situation, while young men think in general terms. According to Kohlberg, this may be the evidence of a higher level of moral reasoning (more abstract), but, according to Gilligan, the evidence of qualitative differences that cannot be measured on a scale and set to the upper/lower position.

The views of the respondents of both sexes on adultery are similar and range from a permissive attitude (with a phrase: it is better not to do it) through a negative attitude (which acknowledges that there are reasons/conditions due to which it sometimes happens) to a negative and exclusive – an extremely negative attitude. They perceive it as bad because it represents hurting other people and use terms such as contempt, betrayal, deception, humiliation, and immorality,¹⁷ so it leads to a guilty conscience and contempt as typical moral sanctions. Some students argue for the negative attitude towards adultery through the bad practical consequences it can cause (in terms of complications of living with a partner and children), and here they exhibit lower levels of moral reasoning according to Kohlberg’s scheme.

The following attitude is also interesting for analysis, as an example of the levels of moral reasoning – M2:

“I think it is normal for parents to care for female children a little more (advise them not to marry either too soon or too late), because the males are in a slightly better position (if pregnancy occurs, the man only pays alimony and often avoids responsibility, although this should not be the case, while a girl changes the entire course of her life and is left with all the responsibility, so she has to be more careful).”

This attitude and the attitudes of some female respondents indicate the level of moral reasoning that takes the actual consequences of a particular act, which may be aggravating in life, as a benchmark for good/bad. Similarly, a male student who mentioned honesty as a moral category and as an argument for identical upbringing, linked it with a possible occurrence of jealousy between a brother and a sister due to different rules imposed, so he essentially reasons taking into account the

¹⁷ The moral offense is “the subject’s behaviour contrary to moral norms (more precisely, its disposition)”. The offense may be heavier or lighter (Лыкин, 1974, p. 205), but in this case the norm of respect for other human beings is evidently violated.

specific negative consequences of a different upbringing, and not, as some male and female respondents, freedom as a principle. In this case, Kohlberg's theory could not be applied successfully to prove a higher level of moral reasoning of males, particularly because the respondent is a senior student. One female junior student, like him, talked about a 'rebellion' of girls due to different levels of freedom that are given to them in comparison to the freedom that parents allow young men, and believes that it is a negative consequence of unequal treatment of children of different sexes. Here, the following attitude may be pointed out for the analysis of the degree of moral reasoning:

M2: "I would raise both children the same, since I wish them both a good life and a good marriage. I could not teach them to love, but I could give them general guidelines that would help them identify the right person and cope with marriage in a better way. I cannot do too much. I can only explain to them what is good and what is not from my perspective. I can point out what is more appropriate to do, but they are independent persons who ultimately decide what to do."

The male respondent shows a higher level of moral reasoning. Marriage, gender relations, and specific situations are subordinated to more general principles, correctness, and a good life in general. We can also cite the example of a female respondent Z4: "What is right is right for both of them", who, in a laconic manner, expressed a great truth about the need for equality between the sexes and the desire for righteousness, which is an abstract category of moral reasoning.

We conclude that, although the data was not gathered in a way that would allow a direct verification of Kohlberg's theory, it seems that girls do not reason at a lower level than boys. The results of Kohlberg's research should probably be attributed to the instrument used. Individual differences (which are sometimes large even among the members of the same sex) should be attributed to the environment (family first), so Gilligan's explanation is more likely. In fact, both girls and boys strive or not strive for moral goals at an approximately equal level when asked about the issues of gender morality. Sometimes there are no differences, and sometimes they appear in the manner of reasoning, not in the final goal (response): both sexes often give the same final answers, only the arguments or terminology of explanations are sometimes different, because girls tend to give priority to interpersonal relationships and care. Therefore, we conclude that, in accordance with Gilligan's theory, we can speak of different 'voices' of girls and boys, rather than of different levels of their moral reasoning. Another question is whether this is indicative of a need for further investigation of the assumptions that men and women actually function differently in qualitative terms, but with the same result: both sexes are ultimately socialized for the continuation of the species (in a way they are shaped by their culture), or, in other words: people's urge for the continuation of the species is socialized with the same outcome for men and women.

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РОДНЕ РАЗЛИКЕ МЛАДИХ У МОРАЛНОМ ЗАКЉУЧИВАЊУ У ПОЛНОМ МОРАЛУ У СВЕТЛУ КОЛБЕРГОВЕ И ГИЛИГАНИНЕ ТЕОРИЈЕ

Садуша Реџић

Универзитет у Приштини са седиштем у Косовској Митровици,
Филозофски факултет, Департман за социологију, Косовска Митровица, Србија

Резиме

Ауторка, као социолог, тражи и налази упориште у теоријама о полној и родној социјализацији и учењу родних улога, пре свега интеракционистичкој, когнитивно развојној, као и теоријама о учењу морала. Најзначајније теорије за овај рад су оне које разматрају однос пола и морала - Лоренса Колберга и Керол Гилиган. Колберг и сарадници су пронашли да је ниво моралног расуђивања код девојчица (осим у најмлађем узрасту) нижи, него код дечака. Они налазе да већина његових испитаница морално резонује на првом стадијуму конвенционалног нивоа, а испитаници на

другом. Стога Колберг тврди да између мушког и женског моралног расуђивања постоји битна квалитативна разлика, и то у корист мушкараца. Нека од његових истраживања показују да ниво моралног расуђивања девојчица и дечака варира са старошћу: у ранијем узрасту је занемариво виши код девојчица, а у каснијем значајно виши код дечака. Истражујући морално расуђивање ученика у различитим културним, друштвеним и васпитним условима, пронашли су да разлике у нивоима моралног расуђивања могу бити повезане са разликама у социо-културној залеђини и васпитним приступима. Керол Гилиган сматра да је Колберг сузио домен моралног на правичност, а занемарио моралност бриге и одговорности као њој комплементарну моралну оријентацију (ово може да имплицира и да Колбергови нивои моралног расуђивања нису културно неутрални). Жене не испољавају мање моралности од мушкараца, већ је испољавају на други начин: за разлику од мушкараца, који се руководе правилима и дужностима (етика правде), оне своје обавезе и одговорности изводе из интерперсоналних односа (етика бриге и одговорности), у складу са традиционалном полном поделом рада и улогама. Тако особине које се сматрају пожељнима за жену потискују њено морално расуђивање на стадијум „нижи“ од већинског стадијума мушкарца. Након анализе ставова добијених дубинским интервјуом у истраживању полног морала младих, закључујемо да се, у складу са Гилиганинином теоријом, пре може говорити о различитим „гласовима“ девојака и младића, него о различитом степеновању нивоа њиховог моралног закључивања. Резултате Колберговог истраживања вероватно треба приписати коришћеном инструменту. Пре би се могле индивидуалне разлике (које су понекада велике и код припадника истог пола) приписати окружењу (најпре породичном).