
SUMMARY



The book *How to understand gender? The history of discussions and different understandings in the Church* explores different understandings of gender in gender debates and in the Catholic Church. The starting point of this exploration is Gabriel Kuby's *Nova ideologija seksualnosti. Izazovi i opasnosti gender revolucije* (*New ideologies of sexuality. Challenges and dangers of the gender revolution*; original title: *Die gender Revolution. Relativismus in Aktion*) published in Croatia in 2010 (Verbum, Split). Kuby's work serves as a framework of analysis because it is the first book on gender in the Croatian Catholic Church, yet the one that offers a misleading interpretation of gender in the international and European documents: it presents gender within the context of an apocalyptic gender ideology struggle against the Catholic Church and considers legalization of homosexuality as the main objective of the gender revolution.

The book *How to understand gender?* has seven chapters. The first chapter presents the meanings that Gabriele Kuby attributes to gender in international, particularly European documents, and her own interpretation of the Catholic Church's relation towards the concept of gender. The second chapter brings a detailed appreciation of the notion *gender* and its compounds according to two documents. The first document is entitled *100 words for equality. A glossary of terms on equality between women and men*, and was prepared by the *Department of the European Commission to promote equal opportunities*. The second document discussed in the book is entitled *Gender equity and activities of the Church in the world* (*Geschlechtergerechtigkeit weltkirchliches und Handeln*), and is published by the Commission *Justitia et Pax* of the German Bishops' Conference. This approach has three aims: first, a nuanced introduction of the notion *gender* and its compounds; secondly, the appreciation of the meaning of *gender* at the level of the European Union; and thirdly, the juxtapo-

sition of Gabriele Kuby's views of gender with the ones developed within the European Catholic Church.

The third chapter deepens the interpretation of the meaning of the word gender by looking at the various meanings and milestones central to the very emergence and further development of gender as an analytic category and for the gender debate as a whole. The views of gender within the lesbian and gay community are presented separately in this chapter due to the complex relationship that the homosexual groups have had towards the concept of gender.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters are closely related. They analyze the statements and attitudes of the Holy See toward gender (chapter 4), the process through which gender emerged as a code for homosexuality within some Catholic circles (chapter 5), the views of gender in different documents of the Catholic Church and especially the sources of such views (chapter 6).

Finally, the seventh chapter presents the interpretation and use of gender in theology. All theologians discussed in this chapter are Catholic, with the exception of one female author and one ecumenical project presented. The purpose of this chapter is to show that Catholic theologians are in dialogue with theories of gender and that gender is being used as a useful tool for theological research.

The outcome of the analysis presented in this book can be summed up as follows: within the Catholic Church, it is possible to distinguish different approaches to gender, from the Catholic fundamentalists on the one hand, to the Holy See and Catholic theologians on the other hand. For Catholic fundamentalists, *gender* is the key to *gender ideologies* that lead toward a *gender revolution*, which aims to promote homosexuality and an attack on the Catholic Church. The views of gender as developed by the Catholic fundamentalists and theologians close to them are elaborated in the documents of the Pontifical Council for the family and in the most important church document on gender, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

This book indicates that while the Holy See is distrustful of the word gender, it does accept and provide its own meaning for this word. Although gender is interpreted as the outcome of sex, it is distanced from biological determinism. The Holy See differentiates between *gender* and *sexual orientation*, wherein the latter is understood as a way to promote and protect the rights of homosexuals.

Among Catholic theologians, it is possible to identify two groups. One group of theologians does not follow the gender debate and adopts assumptions about gender held by Catholic traditionalists and fundamentalists. The other group of Catholic theologians follows the gender debate, critically relates to certain interpretations of gender and offers their own reflections on the relationship between sex and gender in accordance with the opinion of the Holy See. The second group of theologians employs gender as an analytical tool of theological research and interprets gender as a concept that operates within the framework of heterosexuality. A move from the heterosexual concept is outlined in the ecumenical project *The theological study of sexes in dialogue*, which includes a deconstructive study of sex with the aim of overcoming sex hierarchy. This deconstructive perspective is used as a method and a position rather than as a norm.

This book points out that the understanding of gender in both gender theory and in the Catholic Church is far more complex than what one reads in the work of Gabriele Kuby. The book furthermore argues that the relationship between gender theory and the Catholic Church does not have to be defined by war and hostility but dialogue. In theology, one can identify a shift from feminist to gender research, from gender research to studies of sex, where sex - as in gender theory - has no clear biological meaning as it had before the gender debate. Put differently, the notion *gender* and the notion *sex* both need to be clearly defined and interpreted. Because the shift from gender to sex in theology opens the door for a discussion on transgender and sexual orientations, understanding *gender* as the code for homosexuality steers every discussion in the wrong direction.

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