PHI815, History of Integration of Religion and Society

Cerita Buchanan

Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Dr. David Ward

Teaching Assistant

Dave Moser

Write a 5-page essay that analyzes the following items:

a. Introduction of the Present Issue: Begin with a contemporary social issue that

has a (probably unappreciated) history of positive Judeo-Christian response to it.

b. Body Sections:

i. Biblical Worldview Perspective: Locate the issue in the progress of

Biblical revelation and explain the foundations of a Judeo-Christian

perspective. What is a biblical/theological position on this issue based on

sound biblical interpretation?

ii. History of the Issue: Trace the development of the selected issue

alongside the history of Christianity's social impact on it. Summarize the

historical trend at different points in history with an eye to identifying

significant causes of the social problem, identifiable processes at work,

and enduring patterns that emerged. How did the problem/issue originate

and develop? What were the causes of the social problem? What

identifiable sociological or theological processes were at work? What

enduring patterns emerged that recur?

iii. Exemplars of Religion and Society Integration: Present a specific

example (e.g. key leader(s) or movement(s) of socially and intellectually

active Christians) of religion and society integration. If known, discuss

how God raised up the leader or movement.

iv. Applicable Principles: Distill the timeless principles of truth or leadership

derived from the historical examples above. (Develop these based on the

Body Sections #1-#3). Pose possible contemporary applications for the

integration of religion and society in your field of influence.

c. Conclusion: End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis. Discuss what

impact this research had on your sense of calling to change your world.

2. Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of eleven scholarly research sources (two books and the

remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

The Impact of Gender Inequality on Work Life Balance: Theological and Sociological Worldviews

*“When women thrive, all of society benefits, and succeeding generations are given a better start in life.”* Kofi Annan, (2003)

The discourse and realities around the work life dichotomy (paid work and unpaid care and domestic work) are complex and multifaceted, from debates around the gender revolution in the industrialized world, changes in the profile of populations due to longer life expectancy and delayed childbearing, changes in the breadwinner homemaker model, sexual division of labour, proliferation of technology, the permeable nature of private and public lives, productivity, wellness and other factors (Buchanan & Baker, 2020; Charmes, J. (2019).

Work life conflict is built upon a knowledge of paid work, unpaid work (care and voluntary work) and leisure. The discourse however, often refers to work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. Consequently, there are three types of work life conflict ideologies; time based conflict, role based conflict and behaviour based conflict. From these hermeneutical discussions the conflict within the discourse of work begins to emerge. Work is an essential part of social development and our daily lives, it moulds our understanding of self and consciousness and the world in which we live (Tausig, 2013). The nature of work and the meaning it illicit forms the centrality of human existence. Work is divided into productive, reproductive (care) and voluntary/community work (Mohammed 2017, Bailey and Ricketts 2003, Carwell, 2016) all of which adds value to our lives (monetary and non-monetary) and gives a sense of identity and purpose (Resnikoff, 2018)

Critical to this paper is the continued legitimatization of the core responsibility and the inordinate challenges faced by women in paid work outside the home and unpaid care work in their own home and others. The definition, construction and organization of work and labour are often understood and conceptualized through a pervasive hidden system of hegemonic patriarchy often excluding the important female role in the economic and social production of work and an important role in development (Feldman, 2013). ‘Woman’ is problematized in the work life dichotomy. This promotes the social and economic unrecognition, devaluing and/or undervaluing of ‘women’s work’ both in the private and public spheres. These factors continue to promote challenges of work life balance, lack of reliable and affordable care for elderly, children, and the disabled. This modus operandi fuels gender inequality for women and work and a persistence of normative gender roles that perpetuate the male provider and female caregiver model. Gender inequality is viewed as the role based ,strain based and behavior based conflict are associated with work-life balance are correlated with gender inequality (Burkhard, 2022). Breaking through glass ceilings and escaping the sticky floors has been the essence of women’s fight for equality and equity. In this paper, I will explore gender inequality and the subjugation of women and its correlation to work-life conflict and imbalance from a theological and sociological perspective.

From a biblical and theological perspective, and from my understanding of gender inequality and women's subjugation in society, God's purpose for change can be seen. Traditionally, society has considered women as second class in relation to men. In some cultures, discrimination was in relation to restricted freedom of movement, restricted interactions with men, restricted liberties such as owning land and driving and some killed as children as they were considered of little or no value to society or their families and many other atrocities. "In contrast, the actions and teachings of Christ raised the status of women to a level that had never before existed. Jesus defied the cultural norms by accepting and honoring women, as seen in the examples of His response to the Samaritan woman (John 4:5–29), His defense of Mary

in the Mary-Martha incident (Luke 10:38–42), His words to Martha(John 11:25–26), and His appearance to women after His resurrection (Matthew 28:10). The Apostolic Church went on to accept women in prominent leadership roles as seen in the examples of Apphia (Philemon 2), Nympha (Colossians 4:15), Priscilla (1 Corinthians 16:19), and Phoebe (Romans 16:1–2)" (Schimidt, 2004 p. 4). Galatians 3: 26-28 states, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” This influence of Christ's teachings and example have sought to revolutionize women's standing in society and their promotion to influence and leadership. This account of biblical influence is vastly underrepresented in the sociological discourse on women's empowerment. In contrast, some cultures use biblical teachings taken out of context to continue the subjugation of women.

The issue of work-life conflict has its genesis in the entrance of women into the labour force and women’s participation in work outside the home while continuing to carry out all the previous roles of caregiving and community worker (Zhu and Chang, 2019; Moser, 1989). This nuanced view has led to conflict in feminist lobbyists who contend that this notion promotes the view that women cannot multitask and should not be in the labour force, a long battle that was fought for women years ago to be part of mainstream economic development. At the forefront of conceptualizing and theorizing about work is the historical milieu of what constitutes and defines work and the separation of men’s and women’s work through a sexual division of labour. Some authors have taken a classical philosophical approach to theorizing about how women are placed on the periphery of what constitutes work and as support for traditional ‘workers.’ (Phillips, 2009). Phillips (2009) contends that “women in prehistoric cultures were recognised as workers with responsibilities for gathering a variety of foods and therefore, contributing to the family and society.” She makes note of Queen of Sheba, Nefertiti and Nzingha as women who had agency, worked and even led nations. Notwithstanding this, she delineates that from Aristotle and his protégés stems a socio-political thought of “social and biological determinism” that aligns women to “limited cognitive capacities”, without agency, authority and therefore governed by man. Though a very dated understanding of women and placement in society germane to her argument about women’s positioning in work and authority is that these philosophical thoughts continue to pervade the thinking around work and the sexual division of labour.

The gender inequality genesis predates history and can be traced along misogynistic and patriarchal history. Some scholars have said that gender inequality started in pre-historic and/or biblical times. The fight for equality began in the 19th century with the fight for suffrage and other liberties. The biblical impact in the Old Testament aligns with the cultural trends of the time with women as property and in the New Testament, the narrative begins to change to inclusion and acceptance. In more contemporary times, the debate took shape and saw different efforts at gender equality through policy and legislative development. The table below presents some of the efforts over time:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Period/year | International conventions and legislations | Corresponding actions, laws and policies/Situational analysis- Jamaica and the Caribbean |
| **Prior to 1940’s** |  | May 14, 1919-Women’s enfranchisement in Jamaica (though many women were excluded due to prevailing class, race, patriarchal, and economic barriers)**Trade Union Act, 1919****Minimum Wage Act, 1938****ILO ratifications**Compensation) Convention, 1925C26 – Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928C29 – Forced Labour Convention, 1930C50 – Recruiting of Indigenous Workers Convention, 1936C64 – Contracts of Employment (Indigenous Workers) Convention, 1939 C65 – Penal Sanctions (Indigenous Workers) Convention, 1939 |
| **1940’s** | Commission on status of women- 1947Protocol of 1990 to the Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948C095 - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95) | **Women (Employment of) Act-March 2, 1942**(hours of employment 10 and issues of night work and exceptions)Holidays With Pay ActMarch 27, 1947 (what about 1974)January 1, 2009 (amended)to provide for holidays with pay, sick leave, gratuities andsick benefit in any occupationLabour Officers (Powers) ActApril 29, 1943January 1, 1956 (Amended)Factories ActAugust 1, 1943January 1, 2009 (Amended)**ILO ratifications**C81 – Labour Inspection Convention, 1947C86 – Contracts of Employment (Indigenous Workers) Convention, 1947C87 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948C94 – Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949C97 – Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949C98 – Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 |
| **1950’s** | C102 - Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)ILO ConventionDiscrimination (employment and occupation) 1958 (No. 111) | **C100 – Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951**C105 – Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 C111 – Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 |
|  |  | Employment Agencies ActActDecember 2, 1957January 1, 2007 (amended) |
| **1960’s** | Evidence that women disproportionately affected by poverty-focus on women’s needs in community and rural dev, agriculture, family planning and scientific and tech advancement. Focus on advancement of women especially in developing countries- UN | Jamaica membership in ILO 1962- signed on to 26 /31 conventions  C117 – Social Policy (Basic Aims and Standards) Convention, 1962 C122 – Employment Policy Convention, 1964 |
| **1970’s** | **1972**- 25th anniversary, Commission recommended that 1975 be designated International Women’s year**1975**- First international Women’s conference in New MexicoC131 - Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, **1970** (No. 131) | Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act (Labour Relations Code)April 8, 1975January 1, 2010Employment (Termination and Redundancy Payment) ActDecember 9, 1974January 1, 2008 (amended)Employment (Equal Pay for Men and Women) ActDecember 1, 1975January 1, 1975 (revised)National Family Planning Act, August 14, 1970Holiday with Pay Act, 1974**Maternity Leave Act, 1979****ILO ratifications**C138 – Minimum Age Convention, 1973C144 – Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976C149 – Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977C150 – Labour Administration Convention, 1978C152 – Occupational Safety and Health (Dock Work) Convention, 1979 |
|  | UN decade of women 1976-1985 |  |
| **1980’s** | 1980- Women’s conference in CopenhagenFocusC156 - Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)- not ratified by Jamaica | Human Employment and Resource Training ActSeptember 1, 1982January 1, 2003 (amended) |
|  | 1985 Women’s conference in NairobiFocus- |  |
|  | **1987**- follow-up to Nairobi (Commission led UN system’s work on economic and social issues for women’s empowerment) |  |
|  | C156 - Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)C168 - Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168) |  |
| **1990’s** | 1995- Women’s conference in Beijing | C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 |
|  | **1995**- Beijing conference (Beijing Declaration and platform for Action)- marked significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality…this Action adopted by 189 countries (agenda for women’s empowerment ) |  |
|  | **1993**- convention on the elimination of violence against women |  |
|  | C172 - Working Conditions (Hotels and Restaurants) Convention, **1991** (No. 172)C175 - Part-Time Work Convention, **1994** (No. 175) |  |
| **2000’s** | 20th anniversary of Beijing (Beijing +20)C183 - Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) | C189 – Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 –(commitment to empowering women and improve the living and working conditions of domestic workers) |
|  |  | 2018- Bureau of Gender affairs Gender Ambassador Programme in schools Islandwide. |
|  |  | Occupational Safety and Health Act 2017 |

This discourse has a critical piece for Christian scholars. Though not obvious, it points to keys aspects around the theology of work that present a different position from the sociology of work. It also presupposes an understanding of the work life balance and sabbatical rest movement as presented in the bible and exemplified by scholars such as Batac (2023). Importantly, gender equality is another key pillar to the debate. Today, women have more liberties and rights in countries where the bible has a strong influence, though the challenges with misinterpretation still continue to this day around texts that speak to the husband as head of the household and other nuances that do not associate women as equal to men. In Ephesians 5: 22-23 it says, “Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.” Bible messages such as these are taken out of context of culture and time.

Consequently, there are some timeless principles that align within the discourse. Principles of hope, justice, restoration, leadership and equality are some areas for redemptive hermeneutic exploration. In creation, the roles of both men and women were clear, to occupy, work the land and have dominion over the earth and to be help meet to man respectively. The Fall has caused some confusion of roles, responsibilities and purpose and has fueled gender inequality and imbalance perpetuated through historical materialism often explained through Marxist ideologies of work, conflict and power. The redemption through salvation will renew our calling and reposition societal functioning that is balanced, equal and renewed. This exemplifies integration of religion and society.

Gender inequality is still pervasive to this day and has impacted the ability to maintain a good standard of work life balance. There are theological and sociological worldviews that seek to explain the challenges at play and seek to offer solutions for the future. The discourse is a key part of my calling to change the world. It presents an often overlooked area of focus on women's roles in society and how role based, conflict based and behaviour based conflict has impeded women’s ability in family life and spiritual connectedness. The discourse centers back to the concept of work and how gender inequality in that sphere impacts social functioning. This is an area for further exploration as a Christian scholar practitioner.

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