

Die religiöse Identität von Frauen im Spannungsfeld von Zugehörigkeit, Autorität und Autonomie

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Taking some snapshots from everyday religious life in Austria as a starting point, my contribution is a theoretical reflection on women's religious identity in the area of tension between belonging, authority and autonomy. Following postmodern concepts of identity I describe women's religious identity as "threshold identity" resp. as fluid and fragile. This description requires a clarification of the relation between secular and religious identity on one side and religious and moral identity on the other. It becomes evident that the experience of God as a constituent of religious identity exceeds by far the moral identity of the religious self, comprising a special potential of emancipation for women. However, realizing this potential in the sense of empowerment and personal autonomy results in conflicts with male authorities, who as the guardians of religious traditions, have a key function in the construction and demarcation of religious identity. If women's threshold identity goes along with a substantial concept of autonomy, entailing the call for institutional gender justice, it is the challenge of our time in all religious traditions, especially in Christianity and Islam. Here is the crucial point to decide what the religious landscape of the future will look like and whether women of the 21st century will find a home in their religious traditions.