

THE PERSPECTIVE OF FEMINIST SOCIOLOGY - SOURCE OF HUMAN DIVERSITY

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Abstract

In this article, the focus is on some aspects of the feminist problem area, the purpose of the investigation being "new", in this respect. Therefore, the investigation topic is distinct for feminist research. The claim that feminism has in sociology important results in grounding some critical positions against the major sociological theories, proposing interesting theorisations of gender or bringing to the fore seemingly minor/invisible themes in traditional sociology, is, to a large extent, accepted, which is also noted in our study.

Keywords: sociology, feminism, paradigms

1 INTRODUCTION

Sociology has always been concerned with the source of human diversity and inequality in society, with logic and consequences behind the similarities and differences between people, with how certain differences turn into social inequalities.

The women's entrance into the academic and scientific world, the political mobilisation of women (the feminist movement) in this century have changed, or at least shaken, power relations, conceptualisations of power, allowing traditional patterns of thinking to be questioned also from the perspective of "gender myopia" and social sciences.

Feminism was initially more modest in sociology, not aspiring to theoretical paradigm shifts. At an early stage, feminism sought rather to rectify the exclusion of women and gender issues, to draw attention to and attempt to correct the one-sided perspective from which sociology was made. Feminism strove to correct gender blindness by criticising certain research tactics, trying to make the scientific community aware of their distorted effects. Feminism also reclaimed a whole range of experiences by bringing them to the forefront of research.

Feminist researchers were like archaeologists who, as they began to uncover the map of the realities of women's lives, recognised how hidden, inaccessible, distorted, misinterpreted, ignored, were the facts about women's lives.

The main concern of feminist researchers in social sciences was therefore, in the first stage, to "add women" where they were obviously missing. Thus, there has been a marked increase in the number of studies on women sociologists' contributions in the past, on women's contributions to public life, and on women as victims of various forms of male violence. All these retouches were temporary and partial solutions.

2. THE FACETS OF FEMININITY

The victimisation of women created a false image and studying the contributions of women sociologists in the pre-feminist period did not provide theoretical revelations on the mechanisms of the social construction of the masculine and feminine in different societies and eras.

The strategy of "adding women" turned out not to be, in fact, a feminist-oriented strategy. This is said because women have reappeared in studies and research primarily in their traditional roles or as victims of individual and institutional violence, without any attempt to grasp the theoretical underpinnings of these realities, without any real gender responsiveness of approaches.

The reform of feminism in sociology called in an early study for an emphasis on qualitative methodology. Thus, it led to discussions on the domestic work in the sense of "alienated manual labour"¹ or "as a way in which the capitalist economic system takes over female labour power in the service of social reproduction"² and not simply as an aspect of women's expressive role within the institution of marriage or family.

The qualitative study of domestic work can lead to an alternation of the traditional conception regarding work and family life and heterosexuality. Another example can be given in relation to motherhood. Through qualitative research, motherhood has been taken out of the shackles of traditional conceptualisations and reconceptualised with a focus on the experiences of 'taking care' and working as a mother. There began to be discussions about the 'universal capacities of maternal thinking' or the perpetuation of motherhood in the processes of gender division and socialisation of children.

Naturally, in this process of reconceptualization there were also exaggerations. The terms 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' have been extrapolated, which led to the identification of two major paradigms. The excess of the qualitative approach often brought women back to strictly expressive roles, initially criticised by feminism for their one-sidedness and prescriptiveness.

The feminist critique has not been very imaginative about the ways in which quantitative research can serve women sociologically, sometimes ignoring the importance for women of 'counting' in sociology.

Contemporary feminist studies and research have increasingly given up to such dichotomous approaches, emphasising both qualitative and quantitative

aspects in research, often approaching the problem from the perspective of the concrete operations of data collection, processing and presentation.

CONCLUSION

From the perspective of the traditional sciences, phrases such as feminist sociology, feminist research appear as a contradiction in terms in that they imply simultaneously the problematization of gender inequalities and social change. And yet, in recent decades, more and more arguments have been made in favour of the idea that research generated, guided, stimulated by feminist principles is plausible, useful and desirable.

It should be noted that feminist attempts to create an epistemology of their own are in line with contemporary trends in the human sciences, which are in search of appropriate solutions for understanding the current phenomena.

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