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Chapter

Feminisms in Social Sciences

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Abstract

Feminism is a social and political movement that aims to advance gender equality and challenge the patriarchal power structures that marginalize and oppress women. Feminist theory has become a significant perspective in the social sciences, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, and political science. Feminist theory has made significant contributions to the social sciences, challenging traditional views of gender, and highlighting the importance of studying women's experiences and perspectives. Feminist scholars have provided important insights into the ways in which gender intersects with other forms of oppression and have advocated for policies and practices that promote gender equality and social justice. This chapter is based on desktop research, shows the concept of feminism in social science domain. The fundamental concept of feminism is the belief in gender equality and the rejection of patriarchal power structures that oppress and marginalize women. Feminism is a social, political, and cultural movement that advocates for the empowerment of women and the recognition of their rights as equal members of society. This chapter provides the general outlines of feminism in social sciences with reference to postmodern era and feminism, postmodernism and feminisms, history of feminist's theory, major characteristics of feminisms in social science domain, the founding scholars of feminisms, social science and feminisms theory, sociology and feminisms contemporary development, environmentalism, and feminism a new direction of new movement, interconnectedness of environmentalism, feminism, and its influence on social sciences, the feminist approach to organizational analysis and the organizational sociological view.

Keywords: feminism, social sciences, sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, gender equality, environmentalism, ecofeminism, organizational analysis

1. Introduction

Feminism is a social, political, and cultural movement aimed at achieving gender equality, challenging, and dismantling gender-based oppression and discrimination, and advocating for women's rights on the grounds of social, economic, and political equality to men. Feminism can encompass a range of beliefs and practices, but at its core, it seeks to promote women's empowerment and challenge patriarchal norms and structures that limit women's opportunities and choices. Feminism also recognizes that gender intersects with other social identities, such as race, class, and sexuality, and seeks to address the unique experiences of women who face multiple forms of oppression [1–6].

Feminism is based on the idea that gender is a social construct that has been used to justify the subordination of women. Feminist theorists argue that gender is not an innate characteristic but is instead a set of social norms and expectations that are imposed on individuals based on their sex. These norms and expectations can lead to gender-based discrimination and inequality in all aspects of life, including education, employment, healthcare, and politics.

Feminism also recognizes the intersections of gender with other forms of oppression, such as race, class, and sexuality. Intersectionality is a key concept in feminist theory, which acknowledges that individuals experience multiple forms of oppression that cannot be separated from one another [7–11].

The fundamental concept of feminism is the belief in gender equality and the rejection of patriarchal power structures that oppress women. Feminism recognizes the importance of challenging social norms and expectations that reinforce gender inequality, and advocates for policies and practices that promote the empowerment of women and the recognition of their rights as equal members of society.

1.1 Postmodern era and feminism

Most importantly, feminism approach has been considered mainstream knowledge in the postmodern era.

The postmodern era is a period that began in the mid-twentieth century and is characterized by a rejection of the grand narratives of modernism and an emphasis on the fragmented, complex, and pluralistic nature of contemporary society. In the postmodern era, there is a recognition that reality is not fixed and objective, but is instead constructed through language, culture, and social relations.

Postmodernism is a cultural and intellectual movement that emerged in response to the failures of modernism, which was characterized by a belief in rationality, progress, and the ability of science and technology to solve social problems. Postmodernism challenged these assumptions, arguing that there is no universal truth or objective reality, and that knowledge and meaning are contingent on historical and cultural contexts.

In the postmodern era, there is a focus on diversity, difference, and the plurality of experiences and identities. Postmodernism has influenced a wide range of fields, including art, literature, architecture, philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies. It has also been associated with critical theory, feminism, postcolonialism, and other social and political movements that seek to challenge dominant discourses and power structures [12–28].

There are many scholars who have played important roles in challenging the traditional knowledge base system.

Jean-François Lyotard: A philosopher and literary theorist who is known for his work on the postmodern condition and the fragmentation of knowledge in contemporary society.

Jacques Derrida: A philosopher and literary critic who is known for his development of deconstruction, a method of analyzing language that reveals the hidden assumptions and contradictions of texts.

Michel Foucault: A philosopher and social theorist who is known for his work on power and knowledge, and for his critique of institutions such as prisons, hospitals, and mental health facilities.

Donna Haraway: A philosopher and feminist theorist who is known for her work on cyborgs, animals, and the boundaries between human and non-human entities.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: Philosophers who are known for their collaborative work on topics such as rhizomes, the body without organs, and the politics of desire.

These and many other scholars of social science have significant contribution for postmodern knowledge creation including supporting and empowering the feminism theory.

1.2 Postmodernism and feminisms

Postmodernism and feminisms share a critical approach to the dominant discourses and power structures of society. Both reject the idea of a fixed, essential identity, and emphasize the importance of diverse experiences and perspectives.

Feminist postmodernism emerged in the 1980s as a response to the limitations of traditional feminist theories, which often essentialized women's experiences and identities. Feminist postmodernism emphasized the role of language, discourse, and cultural representation in shaping gender identity and inequality. It argued that gender is not a fixed biological category but is instead a social construct that is constantly being constructed and reconstructed through cultural practices and discourses [12, 14, 20, 23, 26].

Feminist postmodernism also challenged the idea of a universal female identity, arguing that women's experiences are diverse and shaped by intersecting factors such as race, class, sexuality, and nationality. It emphasized the importance of recognizing and valuing these differences, and of challenging the power structures that privilege certain groups over others.

Postmodernism and feminist postmodernism have had a significant impact on feminist theory and practice, influencing the development of innovative approaches such as intersectionality, postcolonial feminism, and queer theory. These approaches emphasize the importance of understanding the complex, multiple, and intersecting ways in which gender, race, class, and other factors shape individual and social experiences [12–28].

2. History of feminist's theory

“The history of feminist politics and theory is often talked of as consisting of three ‘waves.’ First-wave feminism is associated with the women’s suffrage movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. First-wave feminism was characterized by a focus on officially mandated inequalities between men and women, such as the legal barring of women from voting, property rights, employment, equal rights in marriage, and positions of political power and authority. Second-wave feminism is associated with the women’s liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. While seeing themselves as inheritors of the politics of the first wave which focused primarily on legal obstacles to women’s rights, second-wave feminists began concentrating on less ‘official’ barriers to gender equality, addressing issues like sexuality, reproductive rights, women’s roles, and labor in the home, and patriarchal culture. Finally, what is called third-wave feminism is generally associated with feminist politics and movements that began in the 1980s and continue on to today. Third-wave feminism emerged out of a critique of the politics of the second wave, as many feminists felt that earlier generations had over-generalized the experiences of white, middle-class, heterosexual women and ignored (and even suppressed) the viewpoints of women of color, the poor, gay, lesbian, and transgender people, and women

from the non-Western world. Third-wave feminists have critiqued essential or universal notions of womanhood, and focus on issues of racism, homophobia, and Eurocentrism as part of their feminist agenda” Patricia Hill Collins [29] (<https://routledgesoc.com/profile/feminist-social-theory> Retrieved March 25, 2023). Whereas the Fourth Wave of Feminism describes the feminist movement that emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This wave builds on the achievements of the previous feminist movements, but also addresses new issues and challenges faced by women in the contemporary world. The Fourth Wave of Feminism represents a continued evolution of the feminist movement, with a focus on intersectionality, digital activism, and an expanded set of issues affecting women and marginalized groups in the contemporary world.

Feminist theory has a complex and varied history that has evolved over the course of many centuries. Here is a brief overview of the major historical developments:

The Enlightenment (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries): During this period, writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft argued for women’s equality and advocated for their right to education.

First-wave feminism (nineteenth and early twentieth centuries): This movement focused on women’s suffrage, or the right to vote, and the basic legal rights of women. Key figures included *Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton* in the United States and *Emmeline Pankhurst* in the United Kingdom. The first-wave feminism movement focused on achieving legal rights for women, such as the right to vote, property rights, and reproductive rights. This movement was largely centered in Western Europe and the United States.

Second-wave feminism (1960s and 1970s): This movement focused on a wider range of issues, including reproductive rights, workplace discrimination, and sexual violence. Key figures included *Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and bell hooks*. The second-wave feminism movement focused on challenging the ways in which gender inequality was produced and maintained in a range of social and cultural domains, including the workplace, the home, and popular culture. This movement was global in scope and influential in shaping the development of feminist theory and activism.

Third-wave feminism (1990s and 2000s): This movement sought to address the shortcomings of second-wave feminism, particularly its lack of diversity and inclusivity. Key figures included *Audre Lorde, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Rebecca Walker*.

The third-wave feminism movement focused on the intersections of gender with other forms of social inequality, such as race, class, and sexuality. This movement emphasized the importance of individual agency and empowerment and sought to challenge the ways in which gender oppression was experienced and expressed in diverse and complex ways.

Fourth-wave feminism (2010s and onward): This movement is characterized by its use of social media and digital platforms to advance feminist causes, as well as its focus on intersectionality and the experiences of marginalized groups. Key figures include *Malala Yousafzai, Tarana Burke, and Emma Watson*. The postmodern and postcolonial feminisms challenged the idea that there is a single, universal experience of women’s oppression, and instead emphasized the importance of recognizing and challenging the ways in which gender inequality is shaped by race, class, and colonialism.

The *intersectional feminisms*, which have emerged more recently, seek to understand and challenge the ways in which multiple forms of social inequality, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability, intersect and shape experiences of oppression and privilege.

Throughout these various waves, feminist theory has explored a wide range of issues, including the gendered nature of power and oppression, the ways in which gender intersects with race, class, and sexuality, and the impact of feminist movements on society as a whole.

These movements have had a significant impact on shaping societal attitudes and norms related to gender and gender equality and have helped to advance the cause of women's rights and gender equality around the world. Although the goals and strategies of these movements have evolved over time, they all share a commitment to challenging and transforming systems of gender inequality and oppression.

3. Major characteristics of feminisms in social science domain

Feminisms in the social science domain refer to a range of theoretical and political perspectives that focus on understanding and addressing gender inequalities in society. Some of the major characteristics of feminisms in social science include:

Recognition of the social construction of gender: Feminist scholars in the social sciences argue that gender is not a fixed biological category but rather a social construct that is shaped by cultural and historical factors.

Focus on intersectionality: Feminist social science recognizes the importance of intersectionality, or the interconnectedness of multiple forms of oppression such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability [29, 30].

Critique of patriarchal power structures: Feminist social science is concerned with analyzing and challenging patriarchal power structures that perpetuate gender inequalities.

Emphasis on diversity and inclusivity: Feminist social science seeks to promote diversity and inclusivity by valuing and centering the experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups, particularly women and gender minorities [31–33].

Action-oriented: Feminist social science is often action-oriented, seeking to apply research findings to inform policy and social change efforts that promote gender equality [34, 35].

Emphasis on reflexivity: Feminist social science recognizes the importance of reflexivity, or self-awareness, in the research process. This involves critically reflecting on one's own social location and biases as well as acknowledging the ways in which power relations shape research [36, 37].

Interdisciplinary approach: Feminist social science draws on multiple disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, political science, and psychology, to understand and address gender inequalities in society [38, 39].

4. The founding scholars of feminisms

There is no one single founding scholar of feminisms, as the movement has been shaped and influenced by numerous thinkers and activists throughout history. However, some of the key figures in the development of feminist theory and activism include:

Mary Wollstonecraft: An English writer and philosopher who wrote "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" in 1792, arguing that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men.

Simone de Beauvoir: French writer, philosopher, and feminist thinker who lived from 1908 to 1986. She is best known for her book “The Second Sex,” which is considered a seminal work in feminist theory and is often credited with inspiring the second wave of feminism. In “The Second Sex,” de Beauvoir argues that women are not born, but rather made into a subordinate category by society. She suggests that women have historically been defined in relation to men, and that this has limited their opportunities and perpetuated gender inequality. She also argues that women must reject traditional gender roles and work to achieve greater social, economic, and political equality. De Beauvoir’s work had a significant impact on feminist theory and the broader feminist movement. She challenged traditional views of femininity and masculinity, and helped to popularize the idea that gender is a social construct. She also argued that women must work together to achieve social change, and that feminist solidarity is crucial to overcome gender inequality. In addition to her work in feminist theory, de Beauvoir was a prolific writer and philosopher. She wrote novels, essays, and memoirs, and was a close friend and collaborator of Jean-Paul Sartre. She also wrote about topics such as existentialism, ethics, and politics, and was widely regarded as one of the leading intellectuals of her time.

Betty Friedan (1921–2006): An American writer and activist who wrote “The Feminine Mystique” in 1963, which is often credited with sparking the second wave of feminism in the United States. Friedan criticized the idea that women’s primary role was to be wives and mothers and argued for women’s rights to education and employment. Other works include- *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women’s Movement* (1963); *The Second Stage* (1981); and *The Fountain of Age* (1993).

Audre Lorde: An African American poet, essayist, and activist who wrote about the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality in her work. Lorde was a key figure in the development of black feminist theory.

Bell Hooks: An African American author, feminist theorist, and cultural critic who has written extensively on the intersections of race, gender, and class in her work.

Dorothy Smith was a Canadian sociologist and feminist scholar who made significant contributions to the field of sociology through her development of feminist standpoint theory. She was born on July 6, 1926, and passed away on June 3, 2022.

Smith’s work challenged the traditional and often exclusive perspective of mainstream sociology, which tended to view the social world from the standpoint of those in positions of power and authority. Instead, she argued that sociologists needed to consider the experiences and perspectives of those who are marginalized or oppressed, particularly women.

Smith’s feminist standpoint theory suggested that the experiences and perspectives of women are crucial to understanding the social world, and that women’s experiences are shaped by social structures and institutions that perpetuate gender inequality. She argued that women’s standpoint is not just a matter of personal experience but is shaped by the broader social context in which they live.

Smith’s work had a significant impact on feminist theory and social research, and she was an influential figure in the development of feminist sociology. She authored many books and articles throughout her career, including “The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology” and “Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People.”

In recognition of her contributions to sociology and feminist theory, Smith was awarded many prestigious awards throughout her career, including the John Porter Tradition of Excellence Book Award from the Canadian Sociological Association and the Jessie Bernard Award from the American Sociological Association.

Patricia Hill Collins is a sociologist and a prominent scholar in the fields of race, gender, and social inequality. She was born on May 1, 1948, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and is currently a Distinguished University Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Collins is known for her work on intersectionality, which is the idea that different forms of social oppression, such as racism, sexism, and classism, intersect and interact in complex ways to shape individuals' experiences. She has also written extensively on the experiences of Black women in the United States and has argued that understanding the unique experiences and perspectives of Black women is crucial to developing a comprehensive understanding of social inequality.

Collins has authored numerous influential books and articles throughout her career, including "Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment," which is considered a foundational text in the field of Black feminist theory. In this work, she argues that Black feminist thought provides a unique perspective on the world that challenges traditional theories of knowledge and power.

Collins has received many awards and honors for her contributions to sociology and feminist theory, including the W.E.B. Du Bois Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award from the American Sociological Association and the John Hope Franklin Award from the American Philosophical Association. She is widely recognized as a leading scholar in the fields of race, gender, and social inequality, and her work has had a significant impact on the study of social issues and social justice.

Judith Butler is a philosopher and gender theorist who has made significant contributions to feminist and queer theory. She is best known for her work on the concept of gender performativity, which suggests that gender is not a natural or fixed characteristic, but rather a socially constructed identity that is created through repeated performances of gendered behaviors and expressions.

Butler's work has been influential in challenging traditional notions of gender and sexuality, and in advocating for the recognition and protection of marginalized identities. She has also written extensively on topics such as power, violence, and political resistance, and has been a prominent voice in debates around feminism, queer theory, and social justice.

One of Butler's most famous works is the book "Gender Trouble," which was first published in 1990. In this book, Butler argues that gender is not an innate or biological characteristic, but rather a social construct that is constantly reinforced through our actions and interactions. She suggests that the idea of binary gender categories, such as male and female, is limiting and oppressive, and that we need to explore alternative ways of thinking about gender and identity.

Butler's work has been both celebrated and criticized for its complex and often challenging ideas. However, her contributions to feminist and queer theory have had a profound impact on the way we think about gender and identity and have opened up new avenues for thinking about social justice and political resistance.

Nancy Chodorow: Her most highly acclaimed book, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, first published in 1978, has won numerous awards. Chodorow's more recent books include *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (1989), *Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities: Freud and Beyond* (1994), and *The Power of Feelings: Personal Meaning in Psychoanalysis, Gender, and Culture* (1999).

Raewyn Connell (formerly R. W. or Bob Connell): books, including *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture* (1977), *Class Structure in Australian History* (1980), *Gender*

and Power (1987), *The Men and the Boys* (2000), and *Masculinities* (1995), *Southern Theory* (2007).

Kimberlé Crenshaw: a legal scholar and critical race theorist who is known for coining the term “intersectionality” and for her work on the intersection of race, gender, and other forms of identity-based oppression.

Sara Ahmed: a cultural theorist and feminist philosopher who has written on topics such as queer phenomenology, affect theory, and the politics of diversity.

Angela Davis: a political activist and scholar who has written extensively on issues related to race, gender, and social justice, and who has been involved in movements for civil rights and prison abolition.

These scholars and activists have made significant contributions to the development of feminisms and have shaped feminist theory and practice in diverse ways. These are just a few of the many scholars and activists who have contributed to the development of feminisms throughout history.

5. Social science and feminisms theory

The social sciences, including sociology, psychology, political science, and economics, have all been influenced by feminist theory and have in turn influenced the development of feminist theory.

Feminist theory is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry that seeks to understand and challenge the ways in which gender inequality and the oppression of women are produced and maintained in society. Feminist theorists draw on a range of disciplines and perspectives, including sociology, psychology, political science, economics, and philosophy, to analyze the ways in which gender intersects with other forms of social inequality and to develop strategies for challenging and transforming existing power structures and norms [1–6, 40–44].

In sociology, feminist theory has influenced the study of gender and gender inequality and has led to the development of new theories and perspectives on gender and society. For example, feminist theory has challenged the idea that gender is a natural and biologically determined aspect of identity and has instead emphasized the social and cultural construction of gender and the ways in which gender is shaped by power and inequality [45–48].

In psychology, feminist theory has influenced research on gender and the experiences of women and has led to the development of new theories and perspectives on gender and the psychology of women. For example, feminist psychologists have challenged the idea that women are inherently less competent or less capable than men and have instead emphasized the ways in which gender stereotypes and gender-based discrimination impact women’s experiences and opportunities [49, 50].

In political science, feminist theory has influenced research on gender and politics, and has led to the development of new theories and perspectives on the ways in which gender shapes and is shaped by political institutions and processes. For example, feminist political scientists have challenged the idea that politics is a purely male-dominated domain and have instead emphasized the ways in which women’s political participation and representation are impacted by gender-based discrimination and unequal power relations [51].

In economics, feminist theory has influenced research on gender and the economy and has led to the development of new theories and perspectives on the ways in which

gender shapes and is shaped by economic processes and institutions. For example, feminist economists have challenged the idea that the economy is gender-neutral and have instead emphasized the ways in which women's economic opportunities and experiences are shaped by gender-based discrimination and unequal power relations [52–54].

Overall, feminist theory has had a significant impact on the social sciences and continues to shape and inform research and thinking in these fields. By challenging existing assumptions and power structures, feminist theory has provided new and innovative perspectives on a range of social, cultural, and political issues, and has helped to advance the cause of gender equality and the empowerment of women [49, 50, 52–54].

6. Sociology and feminisms contemporary development

In contemporary sociology, feminist theory continues to play a significant role in shaping research and scholarship. Here are some key developments in the intersection of sociology and feminisms:

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is a key concept in feminist theory that highlights the ways in which different forms of oppression, such as sexism, racism, and classism, intersect and shape individuals' experiences. Contemporary feminist sociology has continued to explore intersectionality, examining the ways in which different forms of oppression interact with each other to produce unique experiences of oppression and privilege [55, 56].

Global feminisms: Feminist sociology has increasingly focused on issues of globalization and transnationalism, examining the ways in which gender operates across national borders and in diverse cultural contexts. This has led to the development of a variety of "global feminisms," which seek to address the unique challenges faced by women in various parts of the world [57, 58].

Queer theory: Queer theory is a theoretical framework that explores the ways in which gender and sexuality are socially constructed and intersect with other forms of identity. Feminist sociology has increasingly engaged with queer theory, examining the ways in which gender and sexuality are fluid and complex and how they intersect with other forms of identity [59–62].

Political activism: Feminist sociology has continued to be closely connected to political activism, with many feminist scholars and activists working together to advocate for gender equality and social justice [63–65]. This has led to a variety of initiatives and movements, such as the #MeToo movement and the fight for reproductive rights.

Overall, feminist sociology continues to be an important and dynamic field, exploring new questions and challenges as they arise and working to create a more equitable and just society for all.

7. Environmentalism and feminism a new direction of new movement

"Ecological feminism is a feminism which attempts to unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement in order to bring about a world and worldview that are not based on socioeconomic and conceptual structures of domination" [66].

Environmentalism and feminism have been intersecting for many years, and the relationship between these two movements has been growing stronger in recent years. The intersection between environmentalism and feminism is often referred to as ecofeminism, which recognizes the links between environmental degradation and the oppression of women and other marginalized groups [9, 66, 67].

Ecofeminism argues that the root cause of both environmental degradation and gender oppression is a dominant culture that values and prioritizes the interests of the powerful over the needs and well-being of marginalized communities, both human and non-human. This approach recognizes that environmental issues are not just technical or scientific problems but are also social and political issues that require collective action to challenge and transform the existing power structures and norms [68–73].

One of the key arguments of ecofeminism is that the oppression of women and the exploitation of the environment are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. For example, the destruction of the environment can lead to displacement, loss of traditional livelihoods, and exposure to hazardous chemicals and pollutants, which disproportionately affect women and other marginalized groups. Additionally, women have historically played a crucial role in the preservation and management of natural resources and have often been at the forefront of environmental activism and advocacy [68, 72].

Ecofeminism provides a new direction for environmental and feminist movements, which recognizes the importance of intersectionality and collective action in addressing the challenges of environmental degradation and gender oppression. By acknowledging the links between these two issues, ecofeminism offers a more holistic and inclusive approach to environmental and social justice and has the potential to mobilize a wider range of communities and constituencies in the fight for a more just and sustainable world [68–73].

8. Interconnectedness of environmentalism, feminism, and its influence on social sciences

Interconnectedness of environmentalism and feminism has given a new direction and movement on social political, economic, and psychological field especially on women empowerment, social justice, inequality, and equity in general.

The interconnectedness of environmentalism and feminism has led to the emergence of a new direction in social and political movements that recognize the links between environmental degradation and gender oppression. Ecofeminism is a theory and movement that highlights the connections between the domination of nature and the oppression of women, and the need to challenge and transform the power structures that sustain both [7–11].

At the heart of ecofeminism is the recognition that the exploitation of the environment and the oppression of women are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The destruction of natural resources can lead to the displacement of marginalized communities, and exposure to hazardous chemicals and pollutants, which disproportionately affect women and other vulnerable groups. Additionally, women have historically played a crucial role in the preservation and management of natural resources and have often been at the forefront of environmental activism and advocacy [68–73].

Ecofeminism offers a more holistic and inclusive approach to environmental and social justice, recognizing the importance of intersectionality and collective action in addressing the challenges of environmental degradation and gender oppression.

In terms of social science and feminism theory, ecofeminism builds on and extends the insights of earlier feminist theories, such as liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, and radical feminism. Ecofeminism recognizes the limitations of these earlier theories in addressing the intersections of gender and environmental issues and offers a more nuanced and complex approach to understanding the interconnections between social, political, economic, and ecological systems.

Ecofeminism also draws on the insights of social science disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, and geography, to understand the social and cultural dimensions of environmental issues, and the ways in which gender shapes these dynamics. The theory and movement have also been influenced by developments in ecological science, such as the recognition of the interdependence of ecosystems and the importance of biodiversity [9, 66–74].

Ecofeminism offers an analytical overview of the social, political, economic, and psychological influences of environmental degradation and gender oppression, and the need for a more holistic and inclusive approach to addressing these challenges. The theory and movement recognize the interconnectedness of social, economic, and ecological systems, and the importance of intersectionality and collective action in achieving a more just and sustainable world.

9. The feminist approach to organizational analysis

The feminist approach to organizational analysis is a critical perspective that examines gender-based power dynamics in the workplace. It challenges traditional organizational theories, which have been based on a male-dominated perspective and have largely ignored the experiences of women in the workplace.

Feminist organizational analysis focuses on the social construction of gender, the gendered nature of work, and the impact of gendered power relations on organizational practices. It aims to uncover the ways in which gender shapes organizational culture, policies, and practices, and how these in turn affect women's experiences in the workplace.

One of the key insights of feminist organizational analysis is that gender is not just an individual characteristic, but a social construct that is created and reinforced through social interactions and institutional practices. This means that gender is not simply a matter of biology, but is shaped by cultural norms and expectations, and can vary across time and place.

Feminist organizational analysis also draws attention to the ways in which gender intersects with other forms of social inequality, such as race, class, and sexuality. This intersectionality perspective recognizes that individuals may experience multiple forms of discrimination and oppression, and that these intersecting identities can have a compounding effect on their experiences in the workplace.

Another important aspect of feminist organizational analysis is its focus on challenging and transforming existing power relations in the workplace. This includes addressing issues such as the gender pay gap, unequal representation of women in leadership positions, and sexual harassment and discrimination.

9.1 The organizational sociological view

Organizational sociology is a subfield of sociology that focuses on the study of organizations, including their structure, culture, behavior, and social dynamics. It examines how organizations operate and how they are shaped by social and cultural factors, as well as the impact of organizations on individuals, groups, and society as a whole [45, 46, 48, 75–77].

Broadly organizational sociology studies the organizational behavior in social context including:

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** With a growing awareness of social justice issues, many organizations are focusing on creating more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces. Organizational sociologists are studying how organizations are implementing DEI policies and programs and the impact of these initiatives on organizational outcomes and employee well-being.
- **Digitalization and technology:** The increasing use of digital technologies and platforms in organizations has significant implications for work and employment. Organizational sociologists are examining how digitalization is changing work practices, organizational structure, and the employment relationship.
- **Globalization and multinational corporations:** Multinational corporations are becoming increasingly powerful and influential in the global economy, and organizational sociologists are studying their impact on societies and cultures around the world. They are examining how multinational corporations operate across different national contexts, the role of cultural differences in organizational behavior, and the implications of these factors for organizational strategy and effectiveness.
- **Workplace democracy:** The idea of workplace democracy, or giving employees more say in decision-making and governance, is gaining traction in some organizations. Organizational sociologists are studying the potential benefits and challenges of workplace democracy, as well as the different models of participatory decision-making in organizations.
- **Sustainability and corporate social responsibility:** There is growing pressure on organizations to be more environmentally and socially responsible. Organizational sociologists are examining how organizations are responding to these pressures, the impact of sustainability initiatives on organizational outcomes, and the role of organizations in addressing social and environmental issues more broadly.

9.2 The organizational sociological view on feminist

The organizational sociological view on Feminist approach emphasizes the importance of gender equality in organizations. This approach recognizes that gender-based power inequalities exist in many organizational settings and seeks to address these imbalances through critical analysis and social change. The organizational feminist approach incorporates the main essence of organizational sociology and beyond that, searches how, why, what, and in which way these approaches incorporate the gender perspectives in day-to-day organizations operation.

From an organizational sociological perspective, Feminist approach can have significant implications for organizational behavior and outcomes. The approach challenges traditional gender roles and stereotypes, recognizing that gender is a social construct that is created and reinforced through cultural norms and practices. It emphasizes the importance of creating gender-inclusive organizational cultures that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Feminist approach also emphasizes the importance of addressing structural barriers to gender equality in organizations. This includes issues such as the gender pay gap, unequal representation of women in leadership positions, and sexual harassment and discrimination. Feminist scholars argue that these barriers are not simply individual problems, but are deeply embedded in organizational structures and practices, requiring systemic change.

Furthermore, Feminist approach recognizes the intersectionality of gender with other forms of social inequality, such as race, class, and sexuality. It recognizes that individuals may experience multiple forms of discrimination and oppression, and that these intersecting identities can have a compounding effect on their experiences in the workplace.

Overall, the organizational sociological view on Feminist approach highlights the importance of creating gender-inclusive organizations that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. By challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes and addressing structural barriers to gender equality, it opens up new possibilities for creating more equitable and just organizational cultures.

Within the feminist organizational sociological view, Arlene Daniels 1975:349 states that “The women’s movement contributes far more to sociology than a passing interest would. The development of a feminist perspective in sociology offers an important contribution to the sociology of knowledge. And through this contribution, we are forced to rethink the structure and organization of sociological theory in all the traditional fields of theory and empirical research” (as cited by [78]). Daniels captures the notion of feminist movements, which I think presents a major turn, not only to change the directions women face in the twentieth century onwards but also to provide a ground for the development of feminist scholarship. Adding to this notion, Tracy, and Thorne [79] brings an important account of how sociology developed by the privileged western, white, upper-middle-class, straight men (page 306). This hegemony of the male began to be challenged; however, it was not a strong stand until the feminist movements began at an organized level. The foundation developed through the first wave of feminist movements. The first wave had influence on the women’s stand to some extent; however formally this stand became more visible only in the 1960s. Since then, various feminist scholars have challenged the one-sided view of society (privileged western, white, upper-middle-class, straight men), including postmodern thinkers.

I agree that the feminist movement has made a significant contribution to sociology, particularly in terms of developing a feminist perspective that challenges traditional sociological theory and research methods. The feminist movement has also played a critical role in bringing attention to issues of gender inequality and discrimination, which has led to greater awareness and understanding of these issues within the field of sociology. It is important to recognize the limitations of traditional sociological theory and research, which has been shaped by the perspectives of privileged western, white, upper-middle-class, straight men. By incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences, including those of women and marginalized groups, we can create a more inclusive and accurate understanding of society.

This challenge brought a new way to examine society. Academicians began to examine society more openly and flexibly, which helped to develop new thoughts and theories relating to feminism, racism, etc. Within sociology, scholars began

to see society deeply through feminist perspectives¹ (Dorothy Smith, Marjorie DeVault, Gisela Bock, and Susan James). Organizational sociology has developed new perspectives (rational, natural, and open system (primarily) and environmental, demographic, ecological, etc., more recently). At first, the women's standpoint in the organization was not much focused upon, as discourse dealt more often with women's freedom as individuals as the feminisms movement began to examine the women's stand in every sector of social life including formal and informal social organizations, scholars began to see the women's role in organizational structure. Several authors in feminist scholars have contributed to organizational theory development. In this essay, I will only focus on Martha Calas and Linda Smircich's contribution to organizational theory building. They primarily examine women's standing in organizational management and apply a postmodern perspective to analyze the organization based on the perspectives developed by Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida, Jurgen Habermas, etc.

Martha Calas and Linda Smircich state that organization theories—once they are presented as knowledge—guide organizational participants in their efforts to understand and control organizations. In this sense organizational scientists “make” organizations as much as we study them ... Thus, having a socially conscious organizational practice may depend first on having a more socially conscious organizational scholarship ([80], pp. 223, 234).

These authors' approach to organization study is particularly based on postmodern notions of thought. They analyze organizations from various perspectives and provide a detailed account of the functionalist liberal way to postmodern power dynamism. I think Foucault's notion of power politics and social change through knowledge is a relevant ground for them to examine organizational dynamism. Because of the changing faces of organizations within modern neo-liberal socio-economic scenarios, it is hard to develop universal principles for organizational management. Calás and Smircich's analysis goes beyond traditional sociological scholarship which was silent about women's standing and roles in the organization and elaborates on how women are ignored, or at least passed over, in organizational power politics. Another aspect they have analyzed is the impact of colonialism on the developing world's organizations. In the following paragraphs, I will examine how these two authors view feminism in organizational management and what they have contributed to organizational theory development.

I agree that the authors' approach to organizational study is heavily influenced by postmodern thought, particularly Foucault's notion of power politics and social change through knowledge. They provide a detailed analysis of organizational

¹ “A vision of feminist social justice emerges in the writings of contemporary American women writers Toni Morrison, Joy Harjo, Barbara Kingsolver, and Adrienne Rich. Their collective bodies of work envision a world that does not devalue and separate people, a world connected to ideals of justice grounded in the interrelationships of words and deeds. These writers argue that we need to create a new way of seeing and interacting with the world around us, recognizing our individual responsibilities for creating better communities, questioning government actions, and seeking, above all, a society that sustains people regardless of gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, or access to resources. As such, these writers variously articulate what we propose as a feminist vision of justice—one which asserts that interdependence, responsibility, respect for and relationship with the environment, and an ethics of care are the foundation for a more reasoned and reasonable practice of justice” Riley Jeannette; Torrens Kathleen; Krumholz Susan (2005), *Contemporary feminist writers: envisioning a just world*, *Contemporary Justice Review*, Volume 8, Number 1, March 2005, pp. 91–106(16).

dynamics, which moves beyond traditional sociological scholarship and highlights the role of women and marginalized groups in organizational power politics.

Calás and Smircich's analysis of feminism in organizational management is an important contribution to the development of organizational theory. They argue that traditional management theories are based on a functionalist liberal perspective that ignores the role of gender and other forms of diversity in organizational dynamics. They show how women are often excluded from positions of power in organizations and how this exclusion is perpetuated by organizational structures and cultural norms.

Furthermore, Calás and Smircich highlight the impact of colonialism on the developing world's organizations, which often perpetuate neocolonial power dynamics. They show how organizations in the developing world are often organized around Western ideals of management and ignore local cultural values and practices.

Overall, Calás and Smircich's analysis is an important contribution to the development of organizational theory. They provide a critical perspective that challenges traditional management theories and highlights the importance of diversity in organizational dynamics. Their work also demonstrates the importance of understanding the impact of historical and cultural contexts on organizational dynamics.

Calás and Smircich [81] state that the word "feminism" cannot contain the notion of the strength of the feminist theory, because it includes several perspectives, hence it should be "feminisms." This minute correction encapsulates the seriousness of their stand. Another point they state is that feminist theories go beyond 'women's issues' where they examine feminisms as critical and political issues, which have been embedded in society since earliest times and can be seen in every aspect of social, economic, and political spheres. They argue that feminist theorists should situate themselves as a part of any project "in research" to articulate the real grounds of tension. Authors are not satisfied with the existing theory of feminism which according to them are not necessarily in sequential order. They state that theories of feminism built on, responded to, and changed as a result of different dialogs—boundaries between them are "blurry and blurring." They look into existing organizational theories through feminist perspectives and evaluate how feminisms contribute to organizational theory building in the context of existing liberal, radical, psychoanalytic, Marxist, socialist, poststructuralist/ postmodern, and third world/(post) colonial perspectives.

Calás and Smircich [81] explain each of these categories, which provide an important basis for how organizations can be analyzed and explained. The following paragraphs give a brief account of such points, developed by Calás and Smircich, which can be used in studying social organizations. Similarly, their liberal perspective is based on the functionalist/positivist approach, which mostly examines sex and gender as a variable, not a framework for organizational analysis. At the *individual and psychological level*, this approach examines the sex and gender differences in leadership, power, job stress, satisfaction, organizational commitment, sex stereotypes, androgyny, recruitment, selection, and performance appraisal. It also examines the glass ceiling, organizational demography, career building, and social networks and evaluates whether organizations provide equal opportunity and take affirmative action without discrimination against the women workers in the organizations. Calás and Smircich are analyzing the situation of women in organizational management around 1996, and where women stand more than ten years later is not presently clear.

Likewise, the radical feminist approach uses case studies and ethnographies to examine organizations, and search for innovative ideas of alternative organizations

that may arise for the creation of “woman space.” Calás and Smircich [81] illustrate Koen’s five alternatives to increase women’s role in organizations such as participatory decision-making, rotating leadership, flexible and interactive job designs, and equitable distribution of income, interpersonal and political accountability. However, the question is whether it is possible in the real ground to apply these principles or not. Here questions arise, such as who heads the organization for whose interest? While most organizations still operate with the traditional functional system of governance, whether this new radical approach can take a forward step? These authors are silent about the implementation part. Another approach they reveal is psychoanalytic. Here, they state that organizational study should examine whether women have equal advantages in the organization or not, in terms of leadership and teamwork capabilities. This approach “considers the consequences of women’s different psychosexual development for their roles in organization and management” ([81], page 224). The psychoanalytic aspects of the organizational study have been little considered in practice. Many scholars have analyzed organizational behavior; however, they have seldom adequately represented the essential differences governing women’s standpoint and roles.

Calás and Smircich [81] next elaborate on the Marxist approach, where they criticize capitalism and patriarchy together: “work organizations are important sites for analyzing the ongoing reproduction of sex/gender inequality as they expose the intersections of patriarchy and capitalism” ([81], p. 226). They state that the socialist approach to organizational research examines the case studies of “women in the organization.” In this approach organization studies do not distinguish individuals from private and public life: “families and societies are mutually constituted through gender relations” ([81], p. 227). This approach is opposite to Max Weber’s notion of the bureaucratic model. As Kilduff and Mehra note: “Feminist postmodern researchers seek to represent women as subjects rather than objects and to give voice to the narratives of those who violate what Cassell [82] referred to as the “principles of the incarnate social order” (Kilduff and Mehra, p. 472). However, traditional bureaucratic expositions reject this notion. Feminist scholars criticize the traditional organizational model because it focuses on power in the hierarchical order which is silent about the women’s stand in the decision-making process. I think an alternative model can be proposed based on dialectical classification (in terms of gender, sex, race, ethnicity, and country of origin) and where organizations can be analyzed in the context of sex/gender, north, and south, or as a power struggle.

Calás and Smircich further explore the subject from the poststructuralist/postmodern perspective. This approach is based on power relationships (as Foucault illustrates). They state that postmodern feminist ethnography “subverts many images about what it is to be a gendered self-belonging to particular ethnic groups within particular life circumstances; as well as what counts as theory and where the boundary is between the empirical and the theoretical” ([81], p. 231) and note poststructuralist study of “secretaries as a social group and their discursive constructions in the day-to-day relationships of power” ([81], p. 231). Calás and Smircich’s postmodern approach examines women’s role in the organization in terms of power politics. In the bureaucratic web, power is considered a major aspect to manage the operation of the organization. In this context, to study organizations from any perspective, it is important to see how the organization is structured and who makes the decisions. The authors propose a final approach, the study of the third world’s perspective, which is still an innovative approach that focuses on how the organization or agency formed and how knowledge is created within it. The western scholars dominate organizational study. Scholars are silent about the developing world situation on “how organizations are created, operated, and how they function.”

Another silent feature is the changing face of the developing world's organizations in the postcolonialism condition. Calás and Smircich highlight this issue and state that knowledge developed by third world women is still not for them (as I have observed, too often the benefits of financial and another aid benefit disproportionately the donor country rather than the recipient). Chandra Mohanty [83] examines how western eyes see women of color in the United States. She states "I would like to suggest that the feminist writings I analyze here discursively colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/ representing a composite, singular 'third-world woman' - an image which appears arbitrarily constructed but carries with it the authorizing signature of western humanist discourse" ([83], p. 63). Her focus was to see how third world women are examined from western eyes. She argues that the third world is facing western hegemony in many ways. Mohanty's notion is valid even to propose alternatives in the feminist discourses. This sector needs to be examined more deeply through a comparative study of how southern women are changing their stand in society. Women's participation in the decision-making process is limited. Calás and Smircich insist that the western world needs to explore more about women's role in the southern context.

Calás and Smircich are considered feminist and postmodern organizational theorists (Joanna [84]). They examine organizations in two major frames (1) feminisms and (2) modernism and postmodernism. From the feminisms perspective, they bring the notion of how identity makes difference in organizations² due to sex, class, and culture. The identity issue not only applies in the organizational setting but equally works with other social behavior. In the organizational setting, Calás and Smircich bring three basic points about identity i.e. it constitutes a racial term and condition of employment, it is a form of race-plus discrimination, and it reflects racial stereotyping. The question arises, then, how to address such an issue. Here the authors lack clarity.

It is worthwhile to evaluate what Calás and Smircich have added to organizational theory. In this context, Joanna Brewis's [84] summary of Calás and Smircich's organizational theory is useful to quote.³ Calás and Smircich present a valid argument to

² In their article "Identity Performance," Calás and Smircich state "A person's experiences with and vulnerability to discrimination is based not just on a status marker or difference (call this a person's status identity) but also on the choices that person makes about how to present her difference (call this a person's performance identity)" Everyone performs identity. Though we may not recognize that we are doing it, by making choices about what we wear, how we talk, how we walk, and how we structure a conversation...we are performing identity (ies) Different intersections of identities can bring varying amounts of privilege and oppression. It is not addictive but is contextual, relational, and historical. For instance, we do not try to determine who is oppressed more: an able-bodied upper-class, black gay man or a working-class white woman that uses a wheelchair... (71).

³ Joanna Brewis states "(1) revealing 'the inner workings and assumptive basis' ([85]: 649) of existing organization theory, identifying the arbitrary discursive limitations within which it operates; (2) focusing on the fixing of meaning in organization theory and therefore on how our scholarship represents some phenomena, interests and groups and marginalizes others (while implicitly or explicitly making much more universalist claims); (3) seeking to make space for non-traditional voices in organization theory, whilst being aware of the difficulties in attempting to speak for these Others; (4) disavowing notions of enduring truths about organizations; (5) acknowledging the 'real-world' power of organization theory and considering how it might best be undertaken; (6) creating localized, temporary and subjective accounts of organizations which are sensitive to how they 'realize' their subject matter; and (7) acknowledging that writing on organizations exists to be read, and that the author is 'just one interpreter among other readers'" (1999: 653 as cited from [84], p. 80).

apply postmodern perspectives in the organizational study (see Endnote 23). I am not a fan of the postmodern approach, but in researching the place where women stand in organizations, their points provide some assistance.

In the context of the postmodern approach to organizational research, Foucault's power dynamism is the major ground for Calás and Smircich. However, the postmodern approach⁴ itself is not universally accepted in organizational research. Calás and Smircich [81] advocate postmodern thought, in their words: "Insofar as postmodern perspectives allow for questioning conventional approaches to theory development, the argument goes; they provide incisive analyses showing the inner workings and assumptive basis of those theories. At the same time, however, the elusiveness of theory under postmodern premises prevents those who articulate postmodern perspectives from theorizing other, alternative views, because they do not have any 'solid ground' from which to speak" ([81], p. 649).

Foucault's power dynamics are a major ground for feminist postmodern approach to organizational research. Their work challenges traditional approaches to theory development and highlights the importance of questioning the assumptions that underlie conventional theories.

However, I see the postmodern approach to organizational research is not universally accepted. Some critics argue that the elusiveness of theory under postmodern premises makes it difficult to develop coherent and testable hypotheses. Moreover, the postmodern approach has been criticized for being overly skeptical and rejecting the possibility of objective truth.

Despite these criticisms, I believe that the postmodern approach has made an important contribution to organizational research by challenging traditional assumptions and providing new insights into the complexities of organizational dynamics. The postmodern approach encourages researchers to examine how power is constructed and contested in organizations, and to question dominant narratives about organizational life [12–28]. While the postmodern approach may not provide a single, objective truth about organizational dynamics, it can help us to develop a more nuanced and critical understanding of the social and cultural factors that shape organizational life.

Overall, the feminist approach to organizational analysis offers a valuable framework for understanding and addressing gender-based inequalities in the workplace. By highlighting the gendered nature of organizational practices and challenging traditional theories and assumptions, it opens up new possibilities for creating more equitable and inclusive organizations.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study of feminisms in social sciences has evolved significantly over the years and has contributed to the development of critical approaches to

⁴ Kilduff; Mehra state "Within the social sciences in general, the specter of postmodernism has aroused widespread anxiety. Postmodernism has been viewed as an enterprise that calls for the death of all scientific inquiry; the end of all new knowledge; the dissolution of any standards that may be used to judge one theory against another; a banishment into utter relativism wherein a clamor of fragmented and contentious voices reigns" (see Pauline Rosenau's 1992 balanced review of these concerns and Stanley Fish's [1996] recent discussion of misunderstandings of postmodernism) (p. 454). Calás and Smircich [86] have a slightly different perspective than what Kilduff; Mehra have highlighted.

understanding society and social issues. The postmodern era and feminist postmodernism have played a significant role in shaping contemporary feminist theory and practice, emphasizing the importance of recognizing diversity and difference in experiences and identities.

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of feminism in social sciences, covering a broad range of topics from the history of feminist theory to contemporary developments in sociology and environmentalism. The major characteristics of feminism in social science and its impact on organizational analysis were also highlighted, as well as the significant role of founding scholars in shaping feminist discourse.

Feminisms in social sciences have also influenced the development of novel approaches to understanding organizational structures, environmental issues, and political and social movements. By challenging traditional male-centric knowledge bases and power structures, feminisms have opened up new avenues of inquiry and have provided important insights into the complexities of social life.

Moreover, the chapter emphasizes the interconnectedness of environmentalism, feminism, and their influence on social sciences. The emergence of eco-feminism as a new direction for the feminist movement is a significant development that highlights the importance of recognizing the interdependence of gender, social justice, and the environment.

Overall, this chapter demonstrates the ongoing evolution of feminist thought in social sciences and the significant contributions it has made to our understanding of gender, society, and the environment. As we continue to explore new directions in feminist theory and research, it is clear that the intersectionality of these fields will continue to shape our understanding of the world around us.

It is important to recognize the value and significance of feminist theories and approaches in understanding social issues and addressing inequalities. By incorporating feminist perspectives into our work, we can better understand the diverse experiences and perspectives of those we work with, and work toward creating more just and equitable societies.

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