

Evaluate the  
contentions of  
standpoint  
epistemology



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\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [CONTENTIONS OF STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY](#) \n \t
3. [FEMENIST EPSISTEMOLOGY](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Contents

- FEMENIST EPSISTEMOLOGY

## **Introduction**

This paper examines the construct of point of view epistemology in the field of societal scientific discipline and discusses whether this remains a feasible extremist position on cognition. The focal point is placed upon the position from the feminist point of view and the application to sociology. The historical content is examined as a foundation to knowledge and this is placed into context in the relationship to knowledge. It is argued as to whether there continues to be a feasible extremist position on cognition, both the pro ' s and con ' s are examined. Decisions summarize these points foregrounding the cardinal issues of the statement.

The construct of ' standpoint epistemology ' is based upon the doctrine of cognition that enables a holistic world-view of the challenges of laden adult females and the vision of how cognition provides a platform for societal activism, transmutation and alteration. It combines the construct of both a organic structure of cognition and a method of carry oning research. The

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feminist point of view provides a call for political action and a reformation docket. Dorothy Smith[ 1 ]was one of the original feminine theoreticians who developed point of view epistemology. Smith focused to a great extent on gender surveies and talked about ' ruling texts ' which examined the power dealings in society and the laterality of work forces in societal societies. Smith made the point that the cognition we have of adult females, together with ' ruling texts ' that define the relationships are wholly opposite to the experiences of how adult females are treated in society. Smith focused in on racism and stated that a common bond existed between black adult females of all states as they had experience of subjugation, bondage and favoritism. ( Johnson 2010 )

Sandra Harding,[ 2 ]within the context of feminine point of view epistemology puts forward two of import claims: ( 1 ) Those societal places within the under privileged categories has less deformation than those embodied within other categories and ( two ) All scientific cognition is socially situated. She in kernel puts forward the statement that the diverseness amongst enquirers creates an epistemological advantage. ( Rolin 2006 ) .

The point of view epistemology has maintained involvement from sociologists over the last 30 old ages. Despite the unfavorable judgment involved it has continued to germinate into a broad array of different positions and point of views. The research is considered to be closely aligned to the materialist position ( the Marxist feminism position ) . This provides the research in a more balanced and realistic stance. Marxist feminism argued a point of view epistemology that embraced constructs of both <https://assignbuster.com/evaluate-the-contentions-of-standpoint-epistemology/>

cognition and power ; as such holding accent more on procedure than that of the mercenary point of view. A point of view as such may be defined as the action that we accomplish from a societal position position. Standpoint research theorists claim that their research is a more complete and strict set of consequences than that of their male opposite numbers. They believe that feminist research suffers from less deformation than male research and as such stands up to better examination. ( Pamela Abbott 2005 ) . Point of view is considered to be an epistemology of passage and as such seeks to happen alteration that aligns with cognition transportation. It has been widely held that the feminist point of view theory, as of today, seeks to happen ‘ epistemic privilege ‘ that supports the female point of position. Harding has condemned the feminist point of view theoreticians “ for trying to show a individual adult females ‘ s position ” ( Harding 2004 ) . The disapprobation is based upon the fact that theorists fail to see the complete diverseness of the female sentiment. In 1991 Harding[ 3 ]stated that there needs to be a reformation of a point of view that portrays more post modernist point of views.

## **CONTENTIONS OF STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY**

In the context of feminist point of view epistemology it is necessary to compare traditional point of views with that of modern positions.

Traditionally it was held that “ scientific discipline holds that nonsubjective, political impersonal enquiry that maximises the power in order to accomplish scientific purposes. ” ( Cassandra L. Pinnick 2003 ) . Harding argues against this point of view saying that objectiveness in scientific research is a

psychotic belief and as such a contradiction ; it is far excessively strict to be nonsubjective. ( Cassandra L. Pinnick 2003 ) .

Abortion is a capable country that contains contentions within the context of ' standpoint epistemology ' . The feminist point of view provides linkages between that of experience and cognition. In order to accomplish a feminist point of view you need to place and see both the battle and rational challenges first-hand. Hence those adult females who accomplish this have a far sounder perspective than the male research worker. In the disdainful topic of abortion, those adult females who have really experienced the job will hold a profound apprehension of the issues, injury and bias of the procedure than that of a inactive perceiver. It is the difference between that of specific experience and that of pure position.

MariAnna[ 4 ]underscores the importance of ' concrete experience ' as an of import beginning of information towards a organic structure of cognition. Sandra Harding stated that ' feminist epistemology ' is characterised by the acknowledgment that adult females are ' agents of cognition ' ( MariAnna 2002 ) . Women in general are seen to be more flexible with a fluidness that enables them to multi-task and accomplish multiple events at the same clip. MariAnna stated that it is of import to separate between that of methods and methodological analysis, it is the latter which has deep roots in the epistemology attack to research. Feminist methodological analysis within the attack to inquiry is profoundly rooted in those feminist beliefs and theories that provide a more holistic and broad scope of believing to the capable affair under reappraisal.

It has been pointed out by Pamela Abbot et Al that there are conflicting countries of cognition within feminism i. e. that of point of view epistemology and the construct of station modernisation. They have become debatable because they aspire to incorporate a grade of integrity. Abbot argued that “ an component of relativism remains in the multiple point of view attacks ” ( Pamela Abbott 2005 ) . That is to state the inquiry remains unreciprocated as to who is precisely “ the concluding supreme authority of truth ” ( Pamela Abbott 2005 ) .

Abbott et al conclude by stating that within the overall research carried out in her book “ mainstream sociology becomes inadequate owing to the systematic prejudice and deformation in male watercourse cognition ” ( Pamela Abbott 2005 ) . They argue that a entire re-thinking is required in sociological cognition that embraces the feminist part. The transmutation is required because historically adult females have non merely been ignored but their input has been both marginalised and distorted within the overall scientific discipline. As such progresss and parts made by female research workers and sociologists need to be examined for integrating within the overall organic structure of cognition and procedure of sociological thought. It is a transformational measure procedure that requires reformation in order that both constructs and inquiries become more centric to the issues of the subject.

Shawn Best[ 5 ]looked at research from the point of view epistemology that examined the power of white women’s rightists and the effort to repress the cognition of black adult females ; the latter of which has been historically regarded as invalid rational cognition. Interestingly he examined white adult

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females in the function of subjugation. In add-on to the construct of racism and power, in the 1990 ' s attending was drawn towards the homosexual and sapphic communities and as such the post-modernist ' Queer Theory ' emerged. This put frontward the statement that ' biological sex ' in add-on to gender was portion of the societal concept. As such the ownership of certain variety meats was the ' type ' that defined the binary world of adult females or adult male. ( Best 2005 ) .

Sirmondo[ 6 ]stated that the cardinal statement of point of view theory is that it is based upon a theory of privilege and non simply another different position. It examines sexual favoritism from the point of view of the female and as such provides a platform in order to go more informed and understand gender issues. As such adult females are in an improved place to see favoritism from a position that eludes males. This becomes more evident when female militants take political actions to turn over male favoritism. He concludes that those people who see societal restraints as oppressive can more easy comprehend those restraints than those who can non see them. ( Sismondo 2010 )

In recent old ages sociologists have been slightly detached in the mainstream doctrine of scientific discipline. It was David Bloor[ 7 ]who commented that societal scientific discipline remains impartial to truth, falseness, reason, unreason, success or failure. The desire for withdrawal has non merely been confined to that of relativism. Others have commented that point of view epistemology may be more of an flight from " the rational quicksand of relativism and untenable district of neutrality and withdrawal " ( lorio 2009 ) . As such the point of view requires a new scrutiny of <https://assignbuster.com/evaluate-the-contentions-of-standpoint-epistemology/>

objectiveness and a motion off from what is considered to be subjective positions.

It is considered that most of the contentions that surround standpoint feminism and postmodern feminism are centered on power and bureau. The station structural women's rightists continue to oppugn the transparence upon the experiences put frontward by adult females. They province that they rely upon the same expressive province of linguistic communication that under pins broad feminism. Many of these standpoint theories operate from the premiss of fixed truth about the penetrations made. It is automatically assumed that experience represents both valid and dependable beginnings of information. These persons with already fixed individualities have limited experience of subjugation. These experiences are articulated in conventional power dealings. These power dealings have a inclination to repair adult females to a specific class. ( Carole Ruth McCann 2003 ) .

By manner of comparing it is utile to analyze the international positions of contention in point of view epistemology. The political activism that is presently taking topographic point in modern twenty-four hours Chile provides a direct response that has been based upon gender experience. Historically Chilean adult females have been branded and placed in a specific place in Chilean society, this being termed ' marianismo ' ( Tetreault 2000 ) . There have been certain unfavorable judgments of postmodernism and the motion towards relativism. This in bend has seen many females hybridize the epistemologies in order to debar the unfavorable judgment. The attack has moved towards analyzing different voices and point of views of feminism. In <https://assignbuster.com/evaluate-the-contentions-of-standpoint-epistemology/>



Chilean society the adult females are deemed to be really civilized and have different positions on a scope of changing capable affair. It is considered that the postmodern women's rightist position has broadened the voice of the Latin American adult female and allowed true feminist positions to be openly expressed. ( Tetreault 2000 ) .

It is over the last two decennaries that there have been important progresss in sociological theory and in peculiar the many alterations in feminist theory. The accent being placed upon the countries of gender, individuality and subjectiveness. Dietz stated that within the many arguments that have took topographic point it has been contested what is the true significance of feminine citizenship ( Dietz 2003 )

## **FEMENIST EPSISTEMOLOGY**

Epistemology basically refers to the scientific discipline of knowing and the acquisition of cognition. It relates to how people understand what they know and draws its beginning from the subjects like sociology and psychological science. The research Fieldss within this country hold given rise to feminist epistemology and the cognition that specifically applies to adult females. As such it becomes an attack that summarises the experience of adult females and incorporating both cognition and experiences into the female voice. More recent uses of the term epistemology illustrate the term has been widened or redefined to include new countries that were antecedently omitted by traditional research constructs ( Alcoff 1993 ) . The historical deductions of female epistemology have been based around clangs that involve female liberalism and the subjugation of adult females in society. The

demand to hold their part recognized and included within the context of the societal scientific disciplines.

Feminist point of view theories by and large put forward the position that gender creates the societal differences in epistemology. The purpose being to obtain a closer comprehension of how important cognition is obtained and how female constructive utilizations can be put forward from fringy point of views. Historically it has been considered that feminist point of view theory has remained subsidiary to the traditional mainstream doctrine of scientific discipline. This has caused women's rightists to experience uncomfortable with both their function and part in the field of scientific disciplines.

( Hirschmann 1997 )

In the diary Hypatia, legion women's rightist empiricists have argued that scientific cognition is socially located and as such there is increasing degrees of convergence between feminist empiricist philosophy and point of view feminism. The latter has become much more elusive in footings of construing point of view claims distinguished from that of positions held by feminine empiricists. Sociologists have stated that feminine empiricist philosophy is more a manner of how scientific claims may be proven as opposed to standpoint feminism which is more related to the survey of scientific discipline as a phenomenon. Both positions are similar in that they strive towards a greater grade of diverseness. ( Intemann 2010 ) .

Jane Flax argues that psycho analysis, feminist theories and postmodern doctrines are all independent methods of idea, with each being understood in a different manner. Each of these has its ain position on societal issues

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and transitional manner of thought. Flax describes women's rightist theory as " a bounded country of rational discourse where general consensus occurs amongst its practitioners " ( Flax 2010 ) . Regardless of this there remains a lively argument on those who are identified as feminist theoreticians. Within this is the importance of analyzing gender and the differentiation of female issues to that of the male sphere. The purpose of feminist theories is that of a recovery vehicle in order to repossess those facets in society that have been suppressed or denied by male dominated point of views. As such feminist values call for transformative believing about such points as values, sense of dignity and the dealing of stereotypes by the compartmentalisation of adult females into specific classes and thereby denying freedom of look.

One of the cardinal points in feminist point of view theory is derived from that of Karl Marx ' s positions on philistinism. Feminists have adopted from this doctrine that the construct of power is the chief manner towards understanding societal society. As such there exists a societal individuality between that of power and gender. The feminist battle with epistemology tends to stand for itself in one of two ways i. e. it is either really closely aligned with postmodernism or aligned with that of epistemology ; the term ' female epistemology ' by and large tends to connote that it is lined to the latter term. This in itself creates a grade of tenseness and struggle between the two forces.

Miranda Fricker stated that we can recognition feminist postmodernism with doing a figure of of import parts to societal scientific discipline. Amongst this is the part to the rational cognition base and doing the general public more cognizant of the complexness of societal individuality. In this sense it is more  
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accurate than that of an ontology that relates strictly to category. ( Fricker 2000 ) .

In current footings it is of import to recognize that a big figure of adult females are employed in scientific discipline, technology and academic places. As such they offer a diverse scope of sentiments on a broad scope of capable affair. The female places tend to hold two distinguishable types of focal point ( 1 ) that engaged with the scientific disciplines and ( two ) that focused upon society. Research workers have emerged from former marginalised groups and as such have had a profound manner of altering the form of enquiry and thought procedure. There are still those nevertheless that holds the sentiment that feminism is a menace to the objectiveness of scientific discipline. Sandra Harding pointed out that if all cognition is socially constructed it will present a major menace and challenge to scientific discipline. For illustration with most scientists “ the impression that their positions of the natural universe are subjective is counter to their professional preparation ” . ( Wyer 2008 )

Holland et al believe that the impression of a feminist point of view tends to be more theoretical and political. The ground being the inability to divide political relations and the epistemology. They have cited peculiar differences appropriate to pragmatism and those influenced by empiricist philosophy. In add-on they believe that point of view women’s rightists are far excessively influenced by constructs of gender. In doing specific opinions or sentiments on capable affair, the women’s rightist needs to hold a superior cognition that the theoretical epistemic place if the research is to be officially accepted. ( Caroline RamazanoCşlu 2002 )  
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Sandra Harding 's [ 8 ]positions on Standpoint Epistemology focused more on the constructs of objectiveness. Harding advocated a new construct of ' strong objectiveness ' , as opposed to that of the weak construct which she referred to as ' objectivism ' . She stated that objectiveness must incorporate all societal values and involvements from the research that is carried out. She was cognizant that certain societal values could adversely impact the research and do possible deformations. As such Harding viewed traditional research constructs and objectiveness as the denial of civilizations best beliefs ( cognition ) , whereas the new version to the full embraces both political and historical beginnings.

Harding believed that her new theory holds cogency, peculiarly from the feminist point of view i. e. adult females are portion of an laden group and as such they approach research jobs in a less arbitrary manner. They are more likely to measure theories that might otherwise be overlooked or denied by more traditional constructs or point of views. Harding provinces that that the point of view has a significant foundation in the empirical experiences of adult females and although this may non represent a foundation of cognition, however it does make a more diverse part taking towards increased objectiveness. As such it might be regarded as a intercrossed attack, between that of objectiveness and relativism. Critics have argued that this is bound to neglect because constructs of hybridization can non adequately cover with issues of generalization and as such it will neglect to separate from that of weak objectiveness. ( Sandra 2001 )

One of the most influential people in the field of point of view epistemology was that of Dorothy E Smith.[ 9 ]Smith is celebrated throughout the universe <https://assignbuster.com/evaluate-the-contentions-of-standpoint-epistemology/>

as a developer of theories and as such she has advanced the academic place from a feminist point of view. Smith developed theories and constructs around the capable affair of gender and peculiarly that of the 'ruling texts' of adult male. She advocated that many texts were compiled from the male position and as such were responsible for specifying gender. She further advocated that such regulations written by work forces determined the regulations of society and defined the manner in which we live and conduct our lives. Amongst the books that Smith referenced were the US Constitution, The Holy Bible and the Communist Manifesto. Smith stated that the opinions defined in many of these books were wholly opposite to the mode in which adult females conducted their lives today. Such obsolescence creates the manner for transmutation of thought and alteration in these countries. - Ryan B Johnson[ 10 ]( Johnson, Standpoint Epistemology Summary 2010 )

The ASA[ 11 ]President Patricia Collins[ 12 ]has besides been highly influential in her plants on point of view epistemology. Collins has excelled as a distinguished black professor lifting through the ranks covering with subjugation that includes race, category and gender. She emphasises this point in her research and negotiations about white privilege in feminist society. She has broadened the treatment of gender to include that of racial factors as black adult females shared a common bond in footings of about cosmopolitan subjugation. Most black adult females could tell from their history a record of subjugation, bondage and favoritism. This created an even stronger point of view than that experienced by white adult females

and had a wider impact than other discriminated groups like homosexuals, tribades and Jews. ( Johnson, Standpoint Epistemology Summary 2010 ) .

## Decision

Alison Wylie[ 13 ]maintained that Standpoint theory is grounded in societal and political idea. As such the impression of cognition and epistemology is nil new. Wylie states the most important parts in the country have been made by Sandra Harding and Nancy Harsock. Standpoint theory continues to hold a profound impact on societal and political thought to this really twenty-four hours. ( Grebowicz 2007 ) . The statements put forward by the female epistemology practitioners focus upon possible prejudice and exclusion by their male opposite numbers. The pattern has earnestly disadvantaged adult females by: ( I ) excepting them from enquiry ( two ) denial of entree to epistemic authorization ( three ) minimizing female cognitive manners and types of cognition ( four ) male laterality that is self-seeking and denigrates female parts as being inferior or undistinguished ( V ) theories of societal phenomenon that render adult females ' s involvements unseeable ( six ) the production of cognition that creates category divisions, creates hierarchies or relegates adult females to that of low-level functions. ( Andersen 2010 ) .

Whilst considerable paces have been made towards the declaration of contentions in point of view epistemology, peculiarly in what we refer to as the Western or first universe environment ; on the planetary scene there still remains a batch of work to carry through. Females still suffer subjugation in such countries as the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Latin America and many

Muslim speech production states. The cyberspace has helped in the creative activity of a planetary forum for adult females to pass on global and speak <https://assignbuster.com/evaluate-the-contentions-of-standpoint-epistemology/>

about experiences, life style, societal interaction, subjugation etc.

Nevertheless despite unfastened entree communicating we are even seeing illustrations of where this is being subverted for political power and exclusion of feminine authorization. Examples being that of China and certain Middle Eastern states. Feminist groups have besides advocated for the acknowledgment of adult females ' s rights on a planetary graduated table. However, when this has been approached as a ' human rights issue ' it has met with resistance from cultural relativists and broad human rights militants. It has been viewed as an effort by western adult females to spread out western cultural doctrine. The relativist ' s statement being that acknowledgment of adult females ' s rights as human rights is linked to that of western imperialism. This position is really ill-conceived because by nature the construct of subjugation, racial favoritism, gender issues etc. are cosmopolitan 1s and as such non confined to the West but are planetary issues for declaration. ( Kim 2010 )

3733