

Critically explore the claim that women have been excluded from the history of SO...

[Sociology](#), [Feminism](#)



Critically explore the claim that women have been excluded from the history of sociology. Feminism and Classical Sociology 1999 <http://uregina.ca/~gingrich/o28f99.htm> Feminists, third world or post-colonial analysts, identity theorists, writers with new approaches to sexuality, and post-modernists argue that the classical approaches are incomplete, misleading, or inadequate. Feminists and analysts of sexuality argue that classical sociologists were male writers with a male centred and conventional analysis of women, family, and sexuality. One general line of criticism of feminists is that women are absent from the social analyses and social world of classical sociology. The language and analysis of classical sociologists is that of men, male activities and experiences, and the parts of society dominated by males. Marx, Weber, and Durkheim were typical of nineteenth century European writers who assumed that the social world was primarily that of male activities. Women generally became restricted to the private sphere of household and family, and had limited involvement in political, economic, or even social public life While some women were involved in more public activities, there were movements to restrict the participation of women in public life — for example, factory legislation and the family wage. First, women in late nineteenth century England were not recognized as individuals in either the legal or the liberal theoretical sense. Men still held formal power over the rest of the family, and women were mostly excluded from the public sphere. Mill and Taylor, along with some early United States feminists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, argued that the equality of women required full citizenship for women. This would include giving women enfranchisement. After 1865, when Mill was in the English

Parliament, he fought for women's suffrage. He also fought "to amend the laws that gave husbands control over their wives' money and property." He also supported the campaign for birth control information to be available, and was active in other campaigns that were aimed at assisting women and children. (Eisenstein, p. 128). Patriarchy is a system of oppression and domination of women by men Helen Roberts and Diana Woodward Changing patterns of women's employment in sociology: 1950-80 *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Dec., 1981), pp. 531-546 Blackwell Publishing <http://www.jstor.org/stable/590132?seq=4> Moving on to more recent surveys of the profession, it becomes clear that there has not been a substantial improvement in the employment of prospects for women in sociology, although the subjective situation of women sociologists has probably been improved through the support of Women's Caucus and increased attention to sexism in the subject matter of sociology. (531) The cumulative evidence of the invisibility of women in knowledge which has been constructed primarily by men, from a male perspective and about men, makes salutary reading (531) In all the social sciences and some of the physical and natural sciences there has been documentation of the way in which women have been omitted and excluded from the production of knowledge (531) Page 531 "As early as 1972 in her paper 'My Four Revolutions', Jessie Bernard was asking not what sociology can do for women, but rather what women (and sympathetic male colleagues) can do for sociology. "The applied fields in which women are encouraged to specialize are the least prestigious areas and those least likely to be considered as appropriate preparation for an academic career. (535)

Spender, D. (1985). *For The Record*. London: The Women's Press Limited

In the late 1950s men were the sources of public knowledge about women. It was men who formulated the theories about women, who made the pronouncements and proffered the advice on how women should live their lives. It was mainly men who wrote about women in the academic press and who talked about women in the media. It was men who were primarily in charge of the women's magazines which Betty Friedan believed to be so influential in shaping women's lives. (7) (For the record) Seldom that women were allowed to speak for themselves, and when Betty Friedan forged the opportunity, what they had to say came as something of a shock, for if you were to believe the public image about women you would have expected to find behind every suburban door a housewife devoted to her role as wife, mother, homemaker, a woman who was supremely happy and fulfilled, enjoying an unprecedented, perfect life. (7) (For the record) Spender, D. (ed). (1981). *Men's studies modified*. Oxford: Pergamon Press Limited

Most of the knowledge produced in our society has been produced by men; they have usually generated the explanations and the schemata and have then checked with each other and vouched for the accuracy and adequacy of their view of the world. They have created men's studies (academic curriculum), for, by not acknowledging that they are presenting only the explanations of men, they have 'passed off' this knowledge as human knowledge, for men have often made their own knowledge and their own sex, representative of humanity; they have, in Mary Daly's terms, presented false knowledge by insisting that their partial view be accepted as the whole (Daly, 1973; 8) (1)

Fundamental to feminism is the premise that women have been 'left out' of

codified knowledge; where men have formulated explanations in relation to themselves, they have generally either rendered women invisible or classified them as deviant. (2) Men's views come to be legitimated as the view for the whole society (3) Women have experienced social changes primarily as shadow mates of men. Women are seldom presented as having affected social changes or as having said or written much of lasting value. (11) Elsie Clews Parson (1913) discusses what she hears as different actual, stereotypical, and socially respectable speech for women and for men. Similarly, Lillian O'Connor (1954) writes of her search for the texts and evidence of the reception of the speeches of pioneer women orators. (12) As Pamela Fishman (1978) demonstrates, women do the interactional work, while men retain the control of topics and turns of talk. In the case of history, it was concluded that women were remarkable chiefly by their absence. More or less the same was true of scholarly writing. The fact that women's contribution to society had been ignored in the past made it easier to deny women's contribution in the present; it also helped to perpetuate woman's poor self-image. (55) One of the first women to insist that all women made an active contribution to history was Mary Beard (Beard, 1946). (55) (Critic of Beard) Hexter argued that historians were concerned with the process of change and that since women did not play a decisive role in such processes, they were not the legitimate subject of history. (55) Women often took a back seat during times of crisis (in strikes or revolts) and played little part in the labour movements that were studied. Their most common form of work in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, domestic service, was passed over by historians eager to explain the transition to factory

production. To social historians, the working class was defined implicitly as male. (55) there was little information available as to what women did in the past: how many worked and whether they were married or single, how much they earned, how they coped with their children, their own bodies, in widowhood. (57) women are now a respectable topic of enquiry and some establishment journals regularly publish pieces on women's history and review books in the field. (69) it has often been remarked that women have had to prove themselves better than men in any chosen field before gaining acceptance. (70) While contributors asked to assess the impact of feminism on such disciplines as medicine, physics or theology might find themselves writing rather a short chapter, there can be no doubt that although the impact of feminism on sociology has not been as significant so far as some might hope, it has been all too significant for others. (73) At any time when Bowlby's views on maternal deprivation were at their height, women sociologists were writing on women's two roles (Myrdal and Klein, 1954). At a time when studies of the working class meant studies of working class men, Margaret Hewitt (1958) was writing on wives and mothers in Victorian industry. Even earlier, Jephcott (1949) had written on Girls Growing Up and Margery Spring Rice's Working Class Wives (1939) remains a classic. (73) For good historical reasons (by which, of course, one means bad historical reasons), the founding fathers are founding fathers and not founding mothers. (75) With problems of sexism in both the theory and methods of the subject, it is hardly surprising that much of the basic literature leaves something to be desired. It is not without significance that an introductory booklet for the social sciences produced by the BBC in 1969 was entitled

Man in Society, that many sociology courses in the late sixties and early seventies had similar titles, and that courses on the sociology of work meant men's work, and preferably the work of working class men in the factory.

(77) DEVELOPING FEMINIST SOCIOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE: PROCESSES OF DISCOVERY Linda Christiansen-Ruffrnan. Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, <http://www.universitadelledonne.it/english/halifax.htm> Notes on women exclusion in society The patriarchal heritage - or the historical and socially reproduced assumptions of male authoritative control of knowledge, power and resources - has biased sociological knowledge and disciplinary practice as has the social, economic and geo-political location of most sociological work. It has shaped ideological, cultural and structural patterns in both blatant and subtle ways, blinding men and women to its power. the power of patriarchy in my own life: it has silenced me along with others, obliterated women's diverse realities and steered our societies in unjust ways, often without disclosing itself. Sometimes I find hard to imagine how I could have become a sociologist, conducted theory and research with biased tools and earned a PhD at an elite school while so blind to patriarchal distortions. Yet, even as we uncover new facets of patriarchy's complex social relations of ruling, patriarchal knowledge is still heard as truly authoritative, and appealing, even by those women - and men - made invisible, depersonalized, or ridiculed - and harmed - by its power. Moreover, the intellectual, like the social, is rooted in contemporary knowledge paradigms that are fundamentally patriarchal and colonial. Feminists challenge all sociologists to uproot their biased knowledge base and to envision another sociology. I was so colonized by patriarchy, however, that I was not conscious of sociology's

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patricentrism and misogyny Before women's studies women were seldom mentioned, and then only as functional to men. No body of social knowledge named'; embraced or reflected women's realities Information related to women was not knowledge or worthy of study, and any conceptual possibility of socially active women was erased, ridiculed and met other forms of resistance. Nothing was available to cite in the standard " theory" section, and the few rich original feminist writings raised too many questions and did not fit the formula for abstraction. Feminists also worked to eliminate sexist language and to change the portrayal of women in social knowledge and policy In sociology, the association of " work" with employment rendered invisible many types of women's unpaid work, and GNP/GDP eliminated women's subsistence, agricultural work, women's community work, women's work in fishing enterprises and housework from the economy. " Class" and " production" reflected the patriarchal reality of their origins and failed to include women's experiences. we found that sexist biases distorted knowledge creation at all stages of the research process... Patricentric concepts and indicators as well as population and sampling decisions excluded women by design Recognition of biases, assumptions and alternative methodologies led to the blossoming of women's studies Brodrribb, 1987 women were seen as different enough to be excluded from samples in research studies, but not different enough to be excluded from generalizations and inferences in results, which were seen as applicable to all human beings We found how both the patriarchal heritage of contemporary society and the deep-rooted patricentric and colonialist biases in sociological concepts and assumptions shape conceptual and

methodological decisions. As well, we saw how the positivist, hypothesis-testing research process reproduces flawed, patriarchal knowledge because of its starting point in existing patricentric concepts and theories.

Nevertheless Eichler (1992) reminds us of the " Unfinished Transformation." Sociology still requires richer and fuller conceptualizations of sociology's key concepts such as class, and new inclusive foundational concepts. Feminist scholarship such as Bella's 1992 analysis of women and Christmas are useful in showing how patricentric dichotomies such as " work" versus " leisure" discount women's realities. At the end of the century, we still have not achieved feminist friendly sociology: an equal and legitimate focus on women and women's experiences; an absence of patriarchal concepts and assumptions, even in feminist work; and encouragement for a variety of appropriate methodologies, including those designed to change structures of knowledge and society. Sociology's subject matter, methods, concepts, models, theories, assumptions and institutional practices are in need of a major overhaul. We are challenged to create knowledge which includes the multiple perspectives of women and men around the world. In 1970 institutions treated women in a clearly discriminatory way. For . example, I was hired as a sociologist at a lower rank and at \$2000 less or only 83% of the salary of my male counterpart. (The author speaking)