



Feminism and the Changing of Sociological Perspectives on Women

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Abstract: Women are part of society. Therefore, it is a precondition that they become part of discussions in sociology. How does this discipline see women? This paper aims to respond to two research questions: How did sociologists, particularly in the classic era, talk about women? What is influence of feminism to the study on women in sociology? To answer these two questions, I conduct a library research by reading and analyzing literatures relevant to the topic. Some aspects that become my attention are the perspectives of classic sociologists on women, respond of feminists to them, and changes that happen in sociology as the result of those feminists' challenges. My reading on those literatures shows that in its early development, sociologists perceived women as inferior individuals in society. Feminism, in particular the second wave of feminism brings significant influences to those views. Sociology at present time places women in more egalitarian position. Studies on women in sociology also develop significantly.

Keywords: women, sosiology, feminism

Abstrak: Perempuan adalah bagian dari masyarakat. Sehingga, sudah semestinya mereka juga menjadi bagian dari perbincangan di dalam sosiologi. Menarik untuk diperhatikan bagaimana disiplin ini membicarakan tentang perempuan. Tulisan ini dimaksudkan untuk menjawab dua pertanyaan penelitian: pertama, bagaimanakah pandangan para ahli sosiologi tentang perempuan di awal kelahirannya atau dapat dikatakan pada periode klasik. Kedua, adakah pengaruh feminisme terhadap perubahan pandangan disiplin ini terhadap perempuan dan studi tentang mereka. Untuk menjawab dua pertanyaan ini, penulis

melakukan studi kepustakaan dengan membaca dan menganalisis beberapa literatur yang relevan. Aspek-aspek yang penulis perhatikan adalah pandangan para sosiolog klasik tentang perempuan, respon feminis terhadap pandangan tersebut, serta perubahan yang terjadi pada sosiologi sebagai akibat dari respon yang diberikan oleh para feminis. Dari penelusuran literatur tersebut, penulis menemukan bahwa feminisme memberi pengaruh pada bagaimana sosiologi memandang perempuan. Jika pada masa klasik para sosiolog terlihat memandang perempuan sebagai individu yang inferior di masyarakat, maka feminis melalui kritik mereka telah mengubah pandangan tersebut menjadi pandangan yang lebih egalitarian pada saat ini. Studi tentang perempuan pada disiplin ini juga berkembang pesat.

Kata Kunci: perempuan, sosiologi, feminisme

Introduction

Study on women and their social lives, which is now mostly known as gender studies has been developing quickly, not only in sociology but also in other disciplines such as anthropology, communication studies, politics, law, education, literature, and international relations. The word gender is then embedded to these disciplines: sociology of gender, anthropology of gender, gender and communication, gender and politics, gender and law, gender and education, gender and literature, and gender and international relations. Even archeology conducts study on gender. Study of Nastiti¹ entitles “Position and Roles of Women in Ancient Javanese Society (The Eight to Fifteenth Century)” is one example. This study looked at ancient artifacts of Javanese people in order to understand the role of women in ancient time of Indonesia.

Attention of these disciplines to study women is certainly rejoicing. It is a fact that society consists of men and women, therefore, discussions or discourses on both gender is unavoidable. It will be strange if we talk about society without mentioning one of them, particularly in the context of modern times, when changes in society happen so quickly. Women have participated in many areas of public life. Their roles in society cannot be ignored. Their participation in society is even demanded, resulting changes in the life those individual women, their families, communities, state and nation, even the globe. As reflected in Winkler’s argument: “without gender as a

¹ Titi Surti Nastiti, “Kedudukan Dan Peranan Perempuan Dalam Masyarakat Jawa Kuna (Abad VIII-XV Masehi)” (Jakarta: Fakultas Ilmu Pengetahuan Budaya Universitas Indonesia, 2009).



central analytic category, social life—work, family, the economy, politics, education, religion—cannot be adequately studied”².

Women, like their men counterparts now study or work everywhere, close or far from home, their ordinary domain. Statistics released by katadata³, for instance, showed that in the first quarter of the year 2019, number of Indonesian migrant workers reached 64,062; 19,597 (31%) are men and 44,465 (70%) are women. How is their families’ lives when they are away? How are their lives in their workplaces abroad? These kind of questions will direct us to conduct interesting and important research on sociology. This paper aims to explain the changing of sociological perspectives on women: how classic sociology talked about them, what are responses of feminists toward those perspectives, and what are the influences of feminism to the perspectives of sociology on women at the present times.

Using library research method, I find that discourse on women in classic sociology place women in inferior position to men in society. It reflects subjective views of sociologists on women. But, those views are changing gradually. Feminism, particularly the second wave contributes significantly to the changing. Even though debates on positions of women in society are still going on until now, more egalitarians views can be seen clearly. Researches on women also develop quickly. Topics of the researches are also varies, applying various methods, theories, and perspectives. As a result, society have more understanding toward the problems faced by women. Although there are many problems remain, but improvement for women condition are also present.

Method of Research

This research is a library research. According to George⁴, library research is “identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/ expert opinion on a research question”. In addition, Rasmuson Library⁵ defines library research as “the step-by-step process used to gather information in order to write a paper, create a presentation, or complete a project. ... The research process itself involves identifying and locating

² Celia Winkler, “Feminist Sociological Theory,” *Historical Developments and Theoretical Approaches in Sociology*, accessed January, 12, 2018, <https://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/C04/E6-99A-21.pdf>,

³ “2014-Maret 2019, Penempatan Pekerja Migrant Mencapai 1,55 Juta,” Katadata, accessed January, 22, 2020, <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2019/07/30/2014-maret-2019-penempatan-pekerja-migran-capai-155-juta>,

⁴ Mary W. George, *Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 6.

⁵ “Library Research Process,” Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, accessed July, 12, 2019, <https://library.uaf.edu/lis101-research-process>

relevant information, analyzing what you found, and then developing and expressing your ideas”.

Surely, there are many references or resources that I can use in this research. Discourses on women in the discipline of sociology are a lot, conducted by academics either in Western countries or Indonesia. Therefore, it is impossible for me to read all the references and use them for this research. What I do is stop my searching and reading when I am able to explain the answer for my research questions. In other words, I end my research when I have reached the aims of the research. This is in accordance with argument of George⁶: “library research is not a mystery or a lucky dodge, but an investigation you control from start to finish...”. I need to explain here, that for perception of classic sociologists in particular, I do not use their original books. I use secondary resources.

Women in the classic sociology

Classic sociologists explained their views about society by applying positivism. They use phenomenon from the nature to explain the live of people, including women. What matter is what they observe from their surrounding. When they talk about women, they did not ask those women directly, but what they think about themselves. They say from what they see empirically. As a consequence, their views on women can be subjective, or being unfriendly. There are many factors behind what they see. To put it another way, seeing something from a distance is not the same from seeing it closely. Particularly when the views of those sociologists were used to see the life of women at contemporary time. Below are statements made by classic sociologists on women:

1. Charles Darwin, the founder of evolution theory, in Bergman⁷ stated, “women are biologically inferior to men”, “the average of mental power in man must be above that of women”. Therefore, “women are evolutionarily inferior than men”. According to Burgman, in his opinion on women, Darwin has ignored cultural, environmental, and historical aspects of women’s social roles.
2. August T Comte: women constitutionally are inferior to men. Their maturity ends in their childhood. Women will become subordinate of men when they marry. Divorce should be non-existence for women, because they are slave of spoiled men. Equality between men and

⁶ Mary W. George, *Elements of Library*. 1.

⁷ Jerry Bergman, “Darwin’s Teaching of Women’s Inferiority,” accessed January, 14, 2018, <http://www.icr.org/article/darwins-teaching-womens-inferiority/>

women will ruin their family and society⁸. Comte also see women as more loving, caring, humane, and sympathetic compare to those of men. He assumed men as stronger in capacity of intellectual and in handling practical works. They are good of being planner and adviser for changes to happen. Women, on the other side, is suitable for being guardian of morality. Comte did not believe on the existence of equality between men and women⁹.

3. Herbert Spenser talked about women in two aspects. First is organic aspect which stresses on balance. In this aspect, according to Spencer, women's role is to create balance in the family. Second is linear development aspect. For Spencer, society develops in linear way. The development will be disturbed when social movement exists in the society. Women's movement is one of the social movements that can be a disruption for the linear development of society. Ollenburger dan Moore, as cited from Schewendinger dan Schewendinger, noted that Spenser even said that it is a stupidity to educate women to compete with men in business and politics. Their brains are smaller than those of men, and their bodies are weaker¹⁰. But according to some authors, Spenser's opinion on women is inconsistent. At first he supported the women's movement that fight for equality between men and women in society. As explained by Beeghley, in Spenser's view there is no principal that can explain why half of humans cannot participate fully in society. He even stated that women's rights are one of indicators for a society to be called as civilize or not¹¹. But, Spenser later on showing contradictory attitude. He did not agree with participation of women in society. He even disagrees with the idea of giving right to vote and to stand for parliament to women. According to Gray, his personal failure to have good relation with women brings about his antipathy attitude toward the progress that women are able to make in society. "[His] personal disappointment and frustration in

⁸ Caspar Hewett, "August Comte-High Priest of Positivism," accessed January, 20, 2018, <http://www.thegreatdebate.org.uk/Comte1.html>.

⁹ Mc Graw Hill, "Classical Sociological Theory: August Comte Chapter Summary," accessed January, 15, 2018, http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072824301/student_view0/chapter3/chapter_summary.html.

¹⁰ Jane C Ollenburger and Helen A Moore, *Sosiologi Wanita* (Jakarta: PT Rineka Cipta, 1996), 3.

¹¹ Leonard Beeghley, "Spenser's Theory of Kinship Evolution and the Status of Women: Some Neglected Considerations," in *Herbert Spenser: Critical Assessment*, by John Offer (London: Routledge, 2002), 275.

- his own relations with the opposite sex... enabled him to legitimately revenge himself¹².
4. Emile Durkheim: women are a creature that fundamentally “*associal*”. They are part of the nature not the society. The distance between them and the society leads them to have distance with attitudes of humanity. For Durkheim, the best level to describe women is uncivilized primitive, and the worst level is they are animal that do not have human character. “Women are uncivilized primitives at best and nonhuman animals at worst”¹³.
 5. Karl Marx: he wrote only a little on oppression and violence that are experienced by women. It mainly focuses on oppression experienced by female working class. According to Marxists.org, his writing on women lead to confusion and many interpretations¹⁴.
 6. Frederick Engels: theoretically, Engels is the best friend of Marx. He always in support of Marx’s theories. But, in the case of women, Engels talk more than Marx, particularly in her writing *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and The State* that influence the opinions of Marxist followers¹⁵. In his writing, he often quoted the finding of Lewis Henry Morgan who explained types of family of Indian society in Asian and Indian family of animals such as people in America by applying analogy between family of human and family of animals such as bird and gorillas. Engels tried to critically evaluate Morgan’s view, whether Morgan’s views are rational or not. From this view, Engels made steps for evolution of human family, starting from *consanguine family* to *Punaluan family*, to *Pairing family*, and to *Monogamous family*. In this step of development, Engels did not critically talk in detail about women’s position, only discussed about the condition of men and women in each type of family¹⁶.
 7. Max Weber: according to Winkler, Weber’s view on women is more complex. His understanding is based on his opinion on rationalization. For Weber, rationalization and secularization can replace traditional social hierarchy. Therefore, subordination of

¹² T.S. Gray, “Herbert Spenser on Women: A Study in Personal and Political Disillusion,” in John Offer, *Herbert Spenser: Critical Assessment* (London: Routledge, 2002), 261.

¹³ Jennifer M. Lehmann, “Durkheim and Women,” accessed January, 12, 2018, <http://sites.middlebury.edu/individualandthesociety/files/2010/09/durkheim-and-women.pdf>.

¹⁴ “Karl Marx on Women (1818-1883),” Marxists.org, accessed January, 20, 2018, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/subject/women/index.htm>

¹⁵ “Frederick Engels (1820-1895),” Marxists.org, accessed January, 2, 2018, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/subject/women/index.htm>.

¹⁶ “II. The Family,” Marxist.org, accessed October, 1, 2018, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/ch02.htm>,

women by men can be avoided if rationalization exists. He believed that domination of men toward women in patriarchal family can be replaced by the lower bargaining power that can be got from contract marriage. From Weber's opinion, it can be seen that his view on women is more moderate than previous sociologists. In Winkler's view it is supposedly because of the influence of his wife, Marianne Weber who is also a social theorist. Even so, in Winkler's view, Weber is not totally free from the opinion that women are weaker than men physically and intellectually¹⁷.

The opinions of classic sociologists above, clearly placed women in inferior position compare to men. How do feminists react on these opinions?

Responds of Feminist toward the opinions of classic sociologists

Views of sociologists in the early development of sociology resulted in unseen role of women in the discipline as well as in society. Hence, it is hard for women to participate in social life, in developing their potencies, and in maximizing their contributions and usefulness they can share to their surroundings. As Smith in Borland¹⁸ stated:

...because women have historically been the caregivers of society, men have been able to dedicate their energy to thinking about abstract concepts that are viewed as more valuable and important. Women's activities are thus made invisible and seen as "natural," rather than as part of human culture and history.

Virginia Wolf in Ollenburger dan Moore, even stated that sociology in its early development was a science that belong to men. These men had already got infectious, affected by poisoning or disease, that is the disease of misogyny when talking about women¹⁹. Jane Adams, an American sociologist said, women's values are more respectable than men's values, and a society that is developed by women's values will be more productive, peaceful, and fair. This is because of women's mothering instinct, making them more prominent. They like peace. Her statement was based on her experience that she got from "Hull House", a name of community housing complex that she built with her friend Ellen Gates in slum area of Chicago in 1889.

Hull House was socially funded house, a settlement for immigrants that coming from many European countries. Majority people who stayed in this house were women. In this settlement house, she established kindergarten,

¹⁷ "II. The Family"

¹⁸ Elizabeth Borland, "Standpoint Theory," accessed July, 12, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/standpoint-theory#ref1201414>

¹⁹ Ollenburger and Moore, *Sosiologi Wanita.*, 3.

child care centre, employment information centre, library, English course, and civic education as well as other activities that can help everyone living in the house to be able to live well in society. Many social movements were also discussed in this house because this house is open for any organizations to held meetings. In this settlement house, she tried to create egalitarian atmosphere. Hull House had helped her to write many publications of her academic works. The Hull House had resulted in her achievement for getting Nobel price for peace in 1931²⁰.

But, Terry R Kandal suggested different perception, saying that feminists who criticized sociology as a discipline that dominated by men's view need to evaluate their perceptions. For him, those who criticize sociology as science that is dominated by views of men need to reexamine their critiques. He claimed that those feminists who made the critiques have not indepthly evaluated the attitudes of classic sociologists on women. Most of feminists critiques looked only on surface, making to much generalization, and just referred on references that were not based on history, particularly when talking about sexism in classical sociological theories.

Furthermore, Kandal said that basically feminism was established at the same time as the establishment of classical sociological theories. Founded at the same historical period. Both feminism and classic theories of sociology appeared as reactions to the significant changes in society as a consequence of industrial revolution. At that time, women who usually worked at home then worked in industrial sector which was owned by capitalists. Both spheres have different roles. Hence, women who worked in industrial sector were forced to choose which one of both rules, either capitalist' or family's rules. Here many questions around rules for women then came up. Therefore, it is not true to say that women's movement is initiated from their intention to get the right to vote. Women's questions are far beyond this topic²¹. From this question, Kandal implicitly criticize those feminists who wanted to challenge perspectives of classic sociology. They needed to look at social context at that time.

Challenge that is raised by Kandal to the mainstream opinion of feminist on the perspectives of male sociologists on women in classic era as well as on the reason for the establishment of feminism, reflects that not all sociologists will easily agree with feminists' ideas. Debates on theories or methods in doing sociological research, for instance, will occur. This situation will surely affect the progress that feminism can make to influence perspectives of sociology on women. I will try to look at what are the effects

²⁰ "About Jane Addams," Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, accessed February, 8, 2017, <http://www.hullhousemuseum.org/about-jane-addams/>.

²¹ Terry R. Kandal, *The Women Question in Classical Sociological Theory* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1988), 3-5

that feminism can make to the development of sociology as a discipline at the present time. But, I will look at first on how sociology talked about women in the 1960s, era in which feminism gained momentum, known as the second wave of feminism.

Women in perspectives of sociology in the Second Wave of Feminism and the establishment of sociology of gender

In the study of women, gender, and feminism, term the second wave of feminism appeared in the 1960s. In the first wave of feminism which happened in the late 19 century the focus of feminism is on to gain right to get access to education for women to get the right to vote in the election, which is more known as suffragist movement. But, as I explained before, Kandal said that this opinion was not really true. In his opinion, the establishment of feminism was in the same time as sociology. In that moment women asked how was the compatibility between rule in the family and the rule in the industry where they worked. But most of feminists writing said that the establishment of feminism was started from their struggle to the right to vote in the election.

In the second wave of feminism focus of feminism was on equality such as the elimination of discrimination against women²². Encyclopedia.com shows that in the second wave of feminism, women activists or feminists went further to struggle for issues in equality in the workplace, sexuality, and making political actions in order to put women's issues in patrilineal society can widely be discussed in the wider society²³.

Indication for the happening of second wave of feminism was the reaction showing by women activists in the United States toward book written by Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. In this book, Friedan talked about lies that intentionally hidden, being untold, saved within the mind of wives of white middle class American men. They were trapped in boring situation and experiencing lack of chances to actualize themselves. They were the who have everything: "nice houses, lovely children, responsible husbands". But inside their hearts, they felt emptiness, dying in domestic works. Friedan furthermore said, "they were too socially conditioned to recognize their own desperation"²⁴. Women who energized by reading book of Friedan and were supported by workers' association then worked to lobby

²² "History and Theory of Feminism," accessed January, 25, 2018, http://www.gender.cawater-info.net/knowledge_base/rubricator/feminism_e.htm,

²³ "Feminism, Second Wave." Encyclopedia.com, accessed January, 27, 2018, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/feminism-second-wave>,

²⁴ Elinor Burkett, "Women's Movement: Political and Social Movement," Encyclopedia.com, accessed January, 27, 2018, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/sociology-and-social-reform/social-reform/womens-movement>.

and demanded federal government of America to give equal payment and ended discrimination particularly in the work place.

Like the first wave of feminism, the second wave also perpetuated political and social movements to guarantee equality between men and women be implemented. However, more than those movements, the second wave of feminism also touched philosophical or thinking aspects. It has been successful to introduce new discipline within sociology. As Wharton²⁵ stated: sociology of women which is now called sociology of gender was established in the second wave of feminism. Similar statement came from Glazer: “[T]he sociology of women and gender emerged in the United States under the impetus of the re-emerged, world-wide women's movement that began in the mid-1960s”²⁶. According to Giddens, the discipline has significantly influenced intellectual or academic discourses, especially in social sciences. He said: “[t]hroughout the social sciences, and in many other fields, feminist authors have forced a rethinking of pre-established notions and theories”²⁷.

One view of the movement, particularly at the universities or research institutions, sociology has ignored women. As Glazer explains, “[f]eminist scholars have been concerned with women's invisibility and distorted presentation in sociological analysis, and with women's marginal position in the universities and colleges, and in professional activities”²⁸. There are very few researches in sociology that make women as their subjects. Activities that are done by women have got less attention. Hence sociology is criticized as being ignorance to women. Jessi Bernard in Wharton stated that “sociology reflected a “male bias”, generating knowledge most applicable to men’s lives rather than to the lives of women and to society defined more broadly”. She even went further by asking can Sociology become a science of society rather than a science of male society”²⁹.

This kind of critique gradually change the view of sociology. The word gender is used more oftenly. The existence of variations between men and women is presented better. Unlike in the era of the first wave of feminism when sociology was full of male perspectives, at the present time, sociology has accommodated women’s perspectives. Women can now talk about themselves and the experiences that they have passed. As stated by Smith, “[t]he women’s movement has given us a sense of our right to have women’s interests in sociology, rather than receiving as authoritative the interests

²⁵ Amy S. Wharton, *The Sociology of Gender: An Introduction to Theory and Research* (West Sussex: 2012), 5.

²⁶ Nona Glazer, “Sociology of Women and Gender,” *International Review of Modern Sociology* 11, No. 1/2 (Jan.-Dec. 1981): 175, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41420785>.

²⁷ Anthony Giddens, *Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 185.

²⁸ Glazer, “Sociology of Women.”

²⁹ Wharton, *The Sociology*, 5.

traditionally represented in a sociology put together by men”³⁰. Non-positivism or interpretative approaches is also escalated in the researches of sociology. As Wharton said: “We recognize that the social world we study is complex and that this demands multiple forms of knowledge gathering, some of which may be unique to the social (as oppose to the other) sciences. Models of science that work well for those the natural or physical world are not always applicable or desirable for studying the social world”³¹.

In addition, feminist theories from liberalist, socialist, Marxist, radicalist, post colonialist feminism point of views contribute to the development of sociology and certainly sociology of gender. As stated by Walby: “Feminism has had very significant implications for the intellectual content of almost all aspects of sociology, including epistemology, methodology, concepts and theory; and the analysis of the economy, polity, violence and civil society”³². Later, there is a new terminology appeared in sociology to enrich research on women and gender called sociology of feminism. This branch of sociology talks more deeply on what are the causes of women’s lack of participation in society, is it because of their physical body or freedom of thinking of male sociologists without looking at women’s physical body. For some femisnists, physical function of female’s body is not necessarily natural but socially constructed³³.

A part from that it is necessary to thoroughly analyse how big or how fast is it the influence of feminism toward the changing of view of sociology on women. It is surely not easy to be measured. Furthermore, it is important to know whether or not those feminists who initiate the thinking to develop or renew sociology to be more gender neutral, are having similar perspectives or not.

Feminist perspectives on theories and methods in the study of women in sociology

I have mentioned earlier that feminism has significantly influenced the development of sociology. Various perspectives and methodologies are used in the study of women in sociology, enriching this discipline. However, there are still challenges on the way. Questions such as what theories can be used in the study of women? Can the researchers use any non feminists’ sociological theories? Are there any specific theories used in studying

³⁰ Dorothy E. Smith, “Women’s Perspective as A Radical Critique of Sociology,” in *Feminism and Methodology*, ed. Sandra Harding (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 85.

³¹ Wharton, *The Sociology*, 5.

³² Sylvia Walby, “The Impact of Feminism on Sociology,” *Sociological Research Online* 16, no. 3 (2011): 21.

³³ Anne Witz, “Whose Body Matters? Feminist Sociology and the Corporeal Turn in Sociology and Feminism,” *Body & Society* 6, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X00006002001>

women's lives? If there are specific theories that can be used to study women? Are those theories considered to be in the same level or credibility with sociological theories? Can the researches on women and are conducted by women be objective? Is it true that research on women using male sociological perspectives considered to be subjective? Are there any differences between sociological researches in general and feminist' researches?

These kind of questions arise because of the fact than men have better position in theories of sociology compare to women. In reality, it looks that men have more contribution in developing sociology than women. There are no female names among classic or grand teorists of sociology. Female names such as Betty Friedan started to arise in the 1960s. Looking at her biography, it can be seen that Friedan is not a sociologist. She is a graduate of Psychology Department of the Smith College, USA³⁴.

There is also debates among feminists themselves. Most of feminist theoriests came from the White middle class women from Western countries such as UK, US, Canada, and Australia. Feminists or women activists who come from non-Western background say that they have different experience. Therefore, theories that come from those Western feminists are not necessarily relevant to the other women, particularly those who live in developing or under develop countries.

Furthermore, there is also differences among feminists in term of their politic or ideological point of views³⁵. In the context of political movement to free women from any oppression and subordination, the first perspective arises was liberalist feminist. This perspective was then responded by socialist and Marxist feminists. Perspectives of feminist continuously developed, appearing other perspectives such as radicalist and post colonialist feminists. Their political perspectives influence their thinking on the strategies adopted to free women from oppression or exploitation. According to Eisenstein³⁶, these many perspectives sometime cause fragmentation in feminism, hence it cannot reach clear ending.

In the context of methodology, there are many critical questions: does sociologist feminists have specific methodology applied for their research, different from those used in sociology in general? If they have, what is that methodology? Is the methodology accepted as equal to the research methodology usually applied in sociology? What is the paradigm behind the methodology they used? These kind of questions are also responded

³⁴ "Betty Friedan," Biography, accessed November, 15, 2019, <https://www.biography.com/activist/betty-friedan>.

³⁵ Valerie Bryson, *Feminist Political Theory* (Newyork: Paragon House Publishers, 1992) and Rosemay Tong, *Feminist Thought: A Comprehenship Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1995).

³⁶ Hester Eisenstein, *Contemporary Feminist Thought* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1985), xiii.

differently among feminists. Harding³⁷, for example, perceives that stressing on the experience of women is the core characteristic of feminist methodology. But, experience in this context does not mean explaining the live of women traditionally, but their struggle in politic. It does not solely mean struggle to gain power or political positions elections, but more to the struggle they do everyday to be free from subordination or oppression. Meanwhile, Reinharz states that in taking about femisnist methodology, she does not want to talk first about what kind of methods that a researcher does in order for her/his research is categorized to be feminist research but would rather to open views about research methods. She prefers to ask question: “What is the range of methods feminist researchers use?”

Those diiferences among feminists, according to Hirsch dan Keller would weaken the effort to put gender analysis or study on women forward:

[f]rom the very beginning of our attempt to do theory as feminists, it was already evident not only that there were major differences, and conflicts, among us, which we needed not only to recognize but to deal with; it was also clear that these internal differences and conflicts had the potential capability of disrupting the collective effort of gender analysis³⁸.

Even, meaning of feminism becomes on of the topics debated. As Winkler stated, “[d]efining feminism has always been a tricky undertaking... Even the origin of the term “feminism” is in dispute”³⁹. But in my view, these differences also reflect the creative thinking of sociologist feminists in responding to the various challenges that women have in society and their experiences in dealing with those challenges.

Different perceptions among feminists about the issues important for women, political agenda to bring women out of the oppression, as well as in research methodologies for studying women are an ordinary phenomenon. Women are not a homogeneous entity, hence problems related to women are also vary. Those feminists who study women’s lives and experiences are also different one another. It can be said that in studying women, both the researchers and the objects of studies are not homogenous. Therefore, it can influence the ways the researches conducted as well as the theories or perspectives used. As O’Neil argues, “[t]here is no single way to do research”.

³⁷ Sandra Harding, “Introduction: Is There A Feminist Method?,” in *Feminism and Methodology*, edited by Sandra Harding (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 6-13.

³⁸ Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller, “Introduction” in *Conflicts in Feminism*, edited by Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (Routledge: New York, 1999), 3.

³⁹ Winkler, “Feminist Sociological.”

Conclusion

There are changes in sociology in dealing with the study on women. In the classical era, sociologists talk more about the traditional roles of women in society, but later it is challenged by sociologist feminists. Women can do many things in society. Experiences of women is really important in the study of women. Feminists thinking and political ideology are continuously influence the development of research on women in sociology as well as in other disciplines. Study on women is then getting more varies in both the theories and methods used.

But, there are still challenges ahead, not only in the study but also in the life of women. As part of social sciences, questions on what theories a researcher used to analyze findings and the methodologies applied are still very crucial. Doubt on the objectivity of feminist theories and methodologies are still existing. Can experience of certain women be used to talk about experience of other women?

Study on women in sociology therefore is still a contested area. However, the critiques made by sociologist feminists toward sociology or vice versa will enrich sociology. Critiques on how sociology study women's lives and experiences in fact have influenced sociology as well as other discipline to examine their paradigm, theories, and methods applied in developing the disciplines. Studies on women have also influenced the way society think about women. Study on women in sociology will continuously grow not only in term of variation of topics but also in methodologies and theories used.

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