

Key Ideas

Marxist Feminism

- Social class more important than patriarchy
- Class inequality = cause of female oppression, exploitation, discrimination
- Patriarchal Ideology (justifies economic exploitation of women)
- Women not a "sex class" (only thing they have in common is their sex)
- Family system benefits Capitalism and Men
- Domestic Labour = form of exploitation (unpaid domestic labour)
- Dual Female Role (family and work)
- Reserve Army of Labour (McIntosh)
- Gender Socialisation (feminine / masculine cultural roles)
- Men socialised into exploitative relationships at work (carry this socialisation over into the home and their relationship to women).
- Do not see men as the "enemy" of women (Radical Feminism)
- Emancipation of women only through overthrow of Capitalism
- Communist society = non-exploitation

Key Names: McIntosh, Coontz and Henderson, Benston, Dalla Costa, James.

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Theoretical Perspectives

Key Criticisms

Marxist Feminism

- Patriarchy predates Capitalism
- Capitalism merely an extension of Patriarchal ideology / exploitation.
- Over emphasis on economic class relationships
- Over emphasis on Capitalist forms of exploitation.
- Under emphasises patriarchal forms of exploitation
- Assumes men and women have similar interests (overthrow of Capitalism)
- Communism as "solution" to female exploitation = very unlikely
- Denies that women have common interests (sex class)

Key Critics: Radical Feminists (Firestone, Millet, Delphy, etc.), New Right (politicians, journalists).

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Theoretical Perspectives

Key Ideas

Radical Feminism

- Patriarchy / Patriarchal Ideology: All societies; Pre-dates Capitalism
- Patriarchal relationships paved the way for Capitalist forms of economic and gender exploitation
- Gender inequality and (male) exploitation. Examples:
 - ✓ Female biology. Men exploit incapacity through pregnancy
 - ✓ Marriage (Institutionalised oppression - Bouchier).
 - ✓ Heterosexual relationships.
- Institutionalized sexual inequality (equality by legal means = impossible)
- Sex class (common interest = freedom from male oppression)
- Men are enemy of women (advocate lesbian relationships / female support groups)
- Public sphere (work) and Private sphere (the home) = dual form of female exploitation not experienced by men
- Technology (eg. freedom from childbirth) = way emancipation can be achieved

Key Names: Firestone, Millet, Bouchier, Delphy

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Theoretical Perspectives

Key Criticisms

Radical Feminism

- Are women a "sex class"? (experiences and life chances of upper class / females significantly different to those of working class females)
- Downplays importance of concepts like class, age and ethnicity
- Unproven assumptions about male and female psychological differences
- Over-state the significance of psychological / biological differences
- Not all gender relationships characterised by oppression / exploitation
- General position of women in society has improved / changed over time
- Is matriarchal society superior and preferable to a patriarchal society?

Key Critics: New Right (politicians, journalists), Marxist / Socialist Feminists (Barratt, Oakley, etc.), Liberal Feminists.

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Theoretical Perspectives