

复旦博学 社会学系列

女性主义研究方法

孙中欣 张莉莉 主编

Feminist Research Methods



Edited by Sun Zhongxin and Zhang Lili

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第二版 陈思贤 王敏 主编

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序

妇女与社会性别学在国际上成为一个学术领域已经有 30 多年的历史。进入 21 世纪,这个学术领域不仅在英语世界发展势头不减,也在亚洲、非洲、拉美、欧洲非英语国家迅速发展。各个传统学科领域中都有与妇女和社会性别相关的专门刊物,更有许多跨学科的妇女与社会性别学刊物。高校从本科专业到硕士博士点不断增长,为这个新兴学科培养专门人才。蓬勃发展的社会性别学学术理论和方法已融入国际人文社会科学界主流,其标志性核心概念“社会性别”(gender)已成为各个传统学科领域中一个常识性的概念和分析范畴,在研究和教学中被频繁地使用,也被不断地丰富发展。

由于妇女与社会性别学是女权主义者开创的学科,又由于中国从 20 世纪中叶以后对女权主义的历史和现状缺乏了解,所以造成了中国学界对妇女与社会性别学在国际学界蓬勃发展状况的陌生和对这个新兴学术领域丰富内容的隔膜。在改革开放 20 多年后的今天,中国学界主流依然很不了解何为“社会性别”,妇女与社会性别学尚未成为一个被认可的学科领域。

为了推动妇女与社会性别学在中国的发展,缩小中国学界与国际学界的差距,2002 年,美国密歇根大学、中国香港中文大学和中华女子学院三方联合举办了首届中国妇女学研究生班,面向全国高校教师和研究人员。2006 年,密歇根大学与复旦大学联合举办妇女与社会性别学博士生班,继续进行以系统学习社会性别理论和方法为基础的师资和科研人员的培训。为了便于更大范围内的师资培训、

高校相关课程发展和有兴趣的读者自学,我们从这两个研究生班的多门课程中精选阅读材料,编撰一套“社会性别学丛书”。《女性主义研究方法》为该“丛书”的第一册。因所选各篇原作均为英文,本册编译为双语教材,以便于读者掌握英语核心词汇,提高与国际学界的交流能力。

在此对参与了此书的选材、翻译、编撰、联系版权等工作的众多中美学者表示衷心的感谢。女性主义学术的发展是一项集体的事业,只有更多学者的共同参与,妇女与社会性别学才可能在中国有长足的发展。作为一种参与行动,我们也希望读者能对这套丛书的每一册提出反馈意见。敬请通过以下网址转达您的意见和要求:

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王 政

2006年6月于密歇根大学

前 言

这些年,越来越多的国内高校和研究机构开始开设妇女和性别研究课程,妇女研究的实践成果也日益丰富。与此相对应,对于女性主义理论和方法论的知识需求也日益增长。本书的宗旨是为国内妇女和性别研究领域的学者和学生提供女性主义研究方法的知识。

本书各章探讨社会科学中的女性主义研究方法,以及女性主义研究者在实际研究活动中面临的种种挑战。这些章节还将关注实证材料的获取、个体经验的运用、研究对象的选择、结果的可推广性等问题。比如个体的经验是否能作为实证材料,女性主义研究是不是必须以女性为研究对象,研究成果能否推广到其他情境或另外的群体。

本书第一章选取了 Harding 在她 1987 年的著作《女性主义与方法论》(*Feminism and Methodology*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press) 中的导言,该章探讨了女性主义方法论最基本的议题。从第 2 章到第 9 章,分别具体介绍了 8 种研究方法,包括访谈研究、调查法(问卷法)、实验研究、评价研究、质性研究、民族志研究、跨文化研究和行动研究。本书的最后一章(第 10 章)提供了运用女性主义方法进行研究的一个例子。

从研究的数据特点来看,这些研究类型可归为定性、定量两大类。访谈研究、质性研究、民族志研究、跨文化研究、行动研究(从方法论层次上看)属于定性研究范围;问卷调查、实验研究、评价研究可大致认为是定量研究。实际操作上很多研

究可能既需要获得定性材料,也需要收集定量数据。从数据分析来看,我们也会看到在研究当中,有些定性的数据也可以作定量分析,而定量的数据也可以作定性分析。所以定量和定性的划分并不是绝对的。

本书涉及多种研究方法。具体选取什么样的研究方法,取决于我们所设计的研究问题和研究目标。比如:如果了解现实中存在的问题,可以采用访谈或调查法;检验变量之间的因果关系,需采用实验法;评价一个项目,可开展评价研究;如果想记录并解释妇女的生活,可选择质性研究或民族志研究;对比不同社会文化背景下妇女的状况,可开展跨文化研究;想落实一项有益于妇女的新方案,需采用行动研究。研究者应首先搞清楚自己感兴趣的研究问题,然后针对研究问题选择合适的研究方法。

应该说明的是,对于不少研究者来说,在实际应用过程中,可能不是只采用一种研究方法,而是两种或多种研究方法并用的。在第10章所附录的研究案例是采用民族志研究方法对一个受暴妇女庇护所的研究。举这个例子,并不是表明它对方法的运用是完美的,而是希望通过对前面多种女性主义方法知识的学习,来对这个举例有能力进行批判性审视,看哪些地方作者做得比较好,哪些地方还有待改进。

读者在自己的教学和研究过程当中,也还应该可以举出大量本土研究的例子。本书希望通过各章的阅读、思考和学习,可以深入探讨女性主义对传统的社会科学研究方法(方法论)和社会科学研究策略(方法)的质疑与挑战,从而帮助学习者找到适合自己研究需要的研究策略,设计出符合研究规范并体现女性主义研究特点的研究计划,并能在具体的研究过程以及研究成果当中体现女性主义方法论的基本考虑。

本书是以英文和中文翻译双语出版的。本书的读者对象可以是大学和研究机构从事妇女和性别研究的研究者,也可以是对研究方法感兴趣的读者群,还可以是在大学本科和研究生阶段的学生。本书也可以用作“女性主义研究方法”相

关课程的双语教材。我们所选用的文章是概述女性主义某一特定方法的文章,希望教师在教学过程中可以选用国内本土利用该方法的具体研究实例来作更具体的讲解。

本书的主编以及主要的翻译人员分别来自美国密歇根大学、中国北京师范大学和复旦大学。Carol Boyd 教授是密歇根大学妇女与性别研究中心(the Institute for Research on Women and Gender)的主任。北京师范大学的张莉莉教授在妇女研究的实践以及教授研究方法课程的经验丰富。我也曾在复旦大学连续两次开设“女性主义研究方法”课程。

我们三人合作本书的机缘来自两年前中华女子学院和香港中文大学、密歇根大学三校合作举办首届妇女学研究生班。当时我和张莉莉教授担任了 Carol Boyd 教授“女性主义研究方法”课程的中方合作教授。今年暑假,在复旦大学和密歇根大学合作举办的中国首届妇女与社会性别学博士生班上,我有幸继续担任 Carol Boyd 教授“女性主义研究方法”课程的中方合作教授。两次参与硕士研究生和博士班的课程,都让我们从 Carol Boyd 教授精彩的授课中受益良多。Carol Boyd 教授是这门课程的总设计师,她首先为这门课程选定了大量的阅读资料,因为篇幅的限制,我们不可能保留全部的阅读资料,所以我和张莉莉教授只是结合国内的需求以及学生的反馈,作了筛选和重新组织章节的工作,另外也担任了重新翻译校对的工作。

对于社会学科的任何学科来说,研究方法都是非常重要的。希望读者和我们一样能从阅读本书各章节的过程当中受益。

孙中欣

2006年8月于复旦大学

内 容 提 要

本书为大学本科及研究生女性主义或妇女研究课程及妇女或女性问题培训项目的双语教材，全面论述了女性主义研究方法，包括访谈研究、调查研究、实验研究、评价研究、质性研究、民族志研究、跨文化研究和行动研究等，旨在为读者提供性别问题研究中各种常用的研究方法，并着重于社会学的女性主义研究及其在研究实践中所面临的种种挑战的分析，帮助读者找到适合自己的女性主义研究方法。

本书用作高等院校社会学专业本科生、研究生教材，也可供妇女问题研究者参考。

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1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction: Is There a Feminist Method?

Sandra Harding

Over the last two decades feminist inquirers have raised fundamental challenges to the ways social science has analyzed women, men, and social life. From the beginning, issues about method, methodology, and epistemology have been intertwined with discussions of how best to correct the partial and distorted accounts in the traditional analyses. Is there a distinctive feminist method of inquiry? How does feminist methodology challenge — or complement — traditional methodologies? On what grounds would one defend the assumptions and procedures of feminist researchers? Questions such as these have generated important controversies within feminist theory and politics, as well as curiosity and anticipation in the traditional discourses.

The most frequently asked question has been the first one: is there a distinctive feminist method of inquiry? However, it has been hard to get a clear focus on the kind of answer to this question that we should seek. My point here is to argue against the idea of a distinctive feminist method of research. I do so on the grounds that preoccupation with method mystifies what have been the most interesting aspects of feminist research processes. Moreover, I think that it is really a different concern that motivates and is expressed through most formulations of the method question: what is it that makes some of the most influential feminist-inspired biological and social science research of recent years so powerful? I shall first try to disentangle some of the issues about method, methodology, and epistemology. Then I turn to review briefly (or to introduce, depending on the reader) the problems with thinking that attempting to “add women” to existing social science analyses does all that should be done in response to feminist criticisms. Finally, I shall draw attention to three distinctive characteristics of those feminist analyses that go beyond the additive approaches. I

shall try to show why we should not choose to think of these as methods of research, though they clearly have significant implications for our evaluations of research methods.

Method, Methodology, Epistemology

One reason it is difficult to find a satisfactory answer to questions about a distinctive feminist method is that discussions of method (techniques for gathering evidence) and methodology (a theory and analysis of how research should proceed) have been intertwined with each other and with epistemological issues (issues about an adequate theory of knowledge or justificatory strategy) in both the traditional and feminist discourses. This claim is a complex one and we shall sort out its components. But the point here is simply that “method” is often used to refer to all three aspects of research. Consequently, it is not at all clear what one is supposed to be looking for when trying to identify a distinctive “feminist method of research.” This lack of clarity permits critics to avoid facing up to what is distinctive about the best feminist social inquiry. It also makes it difficult to recognize what one must do to advance feminist inquiry.

A research *method* is a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence. One could reasonably argue that all evidence-gathering techniques fall into one of the following three categories: listening to (or interrogating) informants, observing behavior, or examining historical traces and records. In this sense, there are only three methods of social inquiry. As the essays in this collection show, feminist researchers use just about any and all of the methods, in this concrete sense of the term, that traditional androcentric researchers have used. Of course, precisely how they carry out these methods of evidence gathering is often strikingly different. For example, they listen carefully to how women informants think about their lives and men’s lives, and critically to how traditional social scientists conceptualize women’s and men’s lives. They observe behaviors of women and men that traditional social scientists have not thought significant. They seek examples of newly recognized patterns in historical data.

There is both less and more going on in these cases than new methods of research. The “less” is that it seems to introduce a false sense of unity to all the different “little things” feminist researchers do with familiar methods to conceptualize these as “new feminist research methods.” However, the “more” is

that it is new methodologies and new epistemologies that are requiring these new uses of familiar research techniques. If what is meant by a "method of research" is just this most concrete sense of the term, it would undervalue the transformations feminist analyses require to characterize these in terms only of the discovery of distinctive methods of research.

That social scientists tend to think about methodological issues primarily in terms of methods of inquiry (for example, in "methods courses" in psychology, sociology, etc.) is a problem. That is, it is primarily when they are talking about concrete techniques of evidence gathering that they raise methodological issues. No doubt it is this habit that tempts social scientists to seek a unique method of inquiry as the explanation for what is unusual about feminist analyses. On the other hand, it is also a problem that philosophers use such terms as "scientific method" and "the method of science" when they are really referring to issues of methodology and epistemology. They, too, are tempted to seek whatever is unique about feminist research in a new "method of inquiry."

A *methodology* is a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed; it includes accounts of how "the general structure of theory finds its application in particular scientific disciplines."¹ For example, discussions of how functionalism (or Marxist political economy, or phenomenology) should be or is applied in particular research areas are methodological analyses.² Feminist researchers have argued that traditional theories have been applied in ways that make it difficult to understand women's participation in social life, or to understand men's activities as gendered (vs. as representing "the human"). They have produced feminist versions of traditional theories. Thus we can find examples of feminist methodologies in discussions of how phenomenological approaches can be used to begin to understand women's worlds, or of how Marxist political economy can be used to explain the causes of women's continuing exploitation in the household or in wage labor.³ But these sometimes heroic efforts raise questions about whether even feminist applications of these theories can succeed in producing complete and undistorted accounts of gender and of women's activities. And they also raise epistemological issues.

An *epistemology* is a theory of knowledge. It answers questions about who can be a "knower" (can women?); what tests beliefs must pass in order to be legitimated as knowledge (only tests against men's experiences and observations?); what kinds of things can be known (can "subjective truths" count

as knowledge?), and so forth. Sociologists of knowledge characterize epistemologies as strategies for justifying beliefs: appeals to the authority of God, of custom and tradition, of "common sense," of observation, of reason, and of masculine authority are examples of familiar justificatory strategies. Feminists have argued that traditional epistemologies, whether intentionally or unintentionally, systematically exclude the possibility that women could be "knowers" or *agents of knowledge*; they claim that the voice of science is a masculine one; that history is written from only the point of view of men (of the dominant class and race); that the subject of a traditional sociological sentence is always assumed to be a man. They have proposed alternative theories of knowledge that legitimate women as knowers.⁴ Examples of these feminist epistemological claims and discussions can be found in the essays that follow. These issues, too, are often referred to as issues about method. Epistemological issues certainly have crucial implications for how general theoretical structures can and should be applied in particular disciplines and for the choice of methods of research. But I think that it is misleading and confusing to refer to these, too, as issues about method.⁵

In summary, there are important connections between epistemologies, methodologies, and research methods. But I am arguing that it is *not* by looking at research methods that one will be able to identify the distinctive features of the best of feminist research. We shall next see that this distinctiveness is also not to be found in attempts to "add women" to traditional analyses.

Problems with "Adding Women"

In order to grasp the depth and extent of the transformation of the social sciences required in order to understand gender and women's activities, one needs to recognize the limitations of the most obvious ways one could try to rectify the androcentrism of traditional analyses. Feminist researchers first tried to "add women" to these analyses. There were three kinds of women who appeared as obvious candidates for this process: women social scientists, women who contributed to the public life social scientists already were studying, and women who had been victims of the most egregious forms of male dominance.

In the first of these projects, scholars have begun to recover and to reappraise the work of women researchers and theorists. Women's research and

scholarship often has been ignored, trivialized, or appropriated without the credit which would have been given to a man's work. One of the notorious examples of this kind of sexist devaluation in the natural sciences is the treatment of Rosalind Franklin's work on DNA by her Nobel prizewinning colleagues.⁶ How many other outstanding women social and natural scientists will we never have the chance to appreciate because they, unlike Franklin, had no close friend capable of setting the record straight?

However, there are severe problems with imagining that this is the only or most important way to eliminate sexism and androcentrism from social science. Obviously, one should not expect to understand gender and women's roles in social life merely through learning about the work of women social scientists in the past. Insightful as these "lost women" were, their work could not benefit from the many feminist theoretical breakthroughs of the last two decades. Moreover, these women succeeded in entering a world which largely excluded women from the education and credentialing necessary to become social scientists. Thus their work was constrained by the immense pressures on them to make their research conform to what the men of their times thought about social life. Such pressures are still very great, as we will see all of the essayists in this volume argue. Fortunately they often succeeded in resisting these pressures. Nevertheless, we should not expect their research projects to produce the kinds of powerful analyses that can emerge when women's and men's thinking is part of a broad social revolution such as the women's movement has created. What remains amazing is the intellectual courage and frequent flashes of brilliance exhibited in the thinking of these social scientists in spite of the social, professional, and political constraints they faced.⁷

A different concern of feminist social research has been to examine women's contributions to activities in the public world which were already the focus of social science analysis. We now can see that women, too, have been the originators of distinctively human culture, deviants, voters, revolutionaries, social reformers, high achievers, wage workers, and so forth. Important studies have expanded our understanding of women's roles in public life both historically and in other cultures today.

This focus still leaves some powerfully androcentric standards firmly in place, thereby insuring only partial and distorted analyses of gender and women's social activities. It falsely suggests that only those activities that men have found it