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Paradigmatic Shifts in the Theory on Patriarchy
Subjectification of "Women"

Şule Toktaş-Çelik

Abstract

In feminist thought, the concept of patriarchy has been used to refer to the systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination. Although the feminist appropriation of the concept as an analytical and political tool has been essential, it has brought by certain theoretical and pragmatic dilemmas as well. In this article, general evaluation of the critiques directed towards patriarchy within feminism has been targeted. Along the lines of these critiques, the discourse of the structuralist approaches centered around the presumption that the gender order constructs and oppresses the "woman" has been questioned. When questioning, it has been argued that women were not passive objects of some externally developing and functioning social order but on the contrary they were the active subjects, the initiators. In other words, as a party to the gender order, women actively determine in every sphere of the social life and initiate by reproducing, resisting and interacting with patriarchy. With this idea, the importance of power and resistance dynamics in the process of placement and subjectification of women in gender relations has been emphasized.

Ataerkillik Üzerine Geliştirilen Teoride Paradigma Değişimleri
"Kadınlar"ın Özneleştirilmesi

Özet

Feminist düşüncede ataerkillik (patriyarka) kavramı, örgütlü bir erkek egemenliği ve kadınların ezilmişliği olarak kullanılagelmiştir. Ancak ataerkilliğin feminizmdeki bu politik ve analitik kullanımı, kavramı vazgeçilmez kılmasına rağmen teorik ve pratik açmazları da beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu yazıda amaçlanan, feminizm içinde ataerkillik kavramına yöneltilen eleştirileri değerlendirmek ve bu eleştiriler doğrultusunda toplumsal cinsiyetin oluşumunda yapısalcı yaklaşımların benimsediği toplumsal cinsiyetçi düzenin "kadın"ı oluşturduğu ve ezdiği söylemini sorgulamaktadır. Bu fikirsel sorgulamada esas olarak kadınların kendileri dışında gelişen ve işleyen bir toplumsal düzenin etkileyimsiz nesneleri değil, aksine oluşturan ve değiştiren etkin özneleri oldukları savunulmuştur. Başka bir ifadeyle, kadınların toplumsal cinsiyet düzeninin bir tarafı olarak yaşamın her alanında yer alan ve gerek yeniden üreterek gerekse direnerek ataerkillik ile sürekli bir etkileşimi ve pazarlığı olan aktif özneler oldukları görüşü ileri sürülmüştür. Bu görüş ile birlikte, kadınların toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkilerindeki konumlanış ve özneleşme süreçlerinde güç ve direniş dinamiklerinin gözönünde bulundurulmasının önemi vurgulanmıştır.

Paradigmatic Shifts
in the Theory on Patriarchy

Subjectification of "Women"

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For more information, see Fox (1988).

"Patriarchy" has long been a concept used in anthropological and sociological studies to refer to the rule of the father in the household. In feminist thought, it has been projected to refer to the systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination (Stacey, 1993: 53). However, it's appropriation as an analytic and political tool has been both essential and problematic (Acker, 1989: 235). To begin with, the concept is inadequate in reflecting the diversities in "reality" due to lack of consistent sets of rules and characteristics in between and among cultures and throughout history (Brah, 1991). Patriarchy is a system of power relations that is not determined solely by gender. It has dynamics of class, ethnic origin, nationality, race, age and religion wherefore all men do not oppress women but some women oppress other women, too. In addition, the insufficiencies of the existing paradigms in the theory on patriarchy -patriarchy as collective male dominance, patriarchy as a self-contained system and patriarchy as sex/gender system- display the necessity for the conceptualization of patriarchy as a mode of constructions and reproductions - that is production of human beings with a gender subjectivity and ideology which eliminates the tautological explanation of the problem of a system without a purpose while retains the notion of a separate system.[1] The categorical approach in the analysis of patriarchy with structures of paid work, housework, sexuality, culture, violence and the state in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women or with relational but discordant forms of public and private patriarchy (Walby, 1989: 214; Walby, 1992: 36) - former functioning in the public sphere and

latter in the household- is critical in two points. First, instead of dissociating analytically independent structures and reformulating a combinative pattern, patriarchy is to be conceptualized as a system of gender relations constituted through processes in which linkages are inbuilt in structures (Acker, 1989: 238-239). Second, such an analytic scheme faces the problem of reproducing the conceptual dualism defined to be constitutive of women's subordination. In order to overcome the above theoretical deficiencies, besides regarding gender and its order as mere constructions, treating it as a process in which the agentic subject is constituted has the ultimate importance (Mahoney and Yngvesson, 1992: 44-45). In this regard, the process of subjectification refers not only to the externally imposed constructions of gender identity but also to the subject's capacity to make meanings of her own "gender" as well as of her interactive and interrelated position vis a vis the gender order. In this context, subjectification of women means the treatment of women as subjects who actively intervene in the constructions of their gender.

Feminist theory, having set out the political, economic and social inequalities in the gender order and the oppression of women within it, dealt specifically with women's subordinate status. However, the notion of inequality and oppression carry epistemological uneasiness. One stance, namely French Feminism, opposed the Anglo-Saxon tradition of the determination of the gender issue by inequality and focused on the level of "difference" and questioned even the category of

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At this point, it has to be specified that women in the order of gender may not initiate in their positioning as rational, autonomous and self-determining individuals. For further information on the discussion of the subjectification of women in the analysis of resistance, see Kandiyoti (1997).

"woman" (Martin, 1988: 26). The issue was taken with regard to the difference of sexes and even the difference among women (Brah, 1991). On the other hand, the discourse on "oppression" is problematic not because women are not oppressed but rather such a discourse objectifies women as passive victims of their destiny who are silent or denied voice of and like "squashed ants," exploited around the rules of some discriminatory hegemonic system (Shaw, 1994: 14). Moreover it is questionable that beyond structures the individuals have no chance to change the overall composition (Eves, 1991: 122). "Woman," no matter how she behaves on the individual level, cannot affect the structure (Wearing, 1990: 37).

In this regard, women are not passive victims of patriarchy (Hart, 1991: 115) like all subordinates of other oppressive systems. Women are social actors who perceive and interpret social institutions and as a party to the dynamics of the gender order, actively determine in every sphere (Shaw, 1994: 14) and initiate by reproducing, resisting or negotiating patriarchy.

By the 1980s, a new approach is witnessed in feminist thought that has reflections on women's studies as well which might be named "dual view" regarding "women" both as victims of male domination and as active agents (Thorne, 1992: 29; Akkent, 1993). Feminists started to examine women as active agents in negotiation with male dominance in order to achieve a more tolerable life (Thorne, 1992: 7-8). This tendency is observable in women's studies in Turkey as well:

> The issue of concern is not to reach the judgment that women under different social conditions are oppressed, but rather to understand how the position of womanhood is determined in specific conditions, the pressures they live under, the means they resort to in order to overcome them ... to explain the position of womanhood not merely by structural factors like household/family forms or modes of production but including the women's own acting strategies... In order to understand how male dominated system functions and how power relations are established, it is also necessary to look at how existing social relations and ideologies are perceived and utilized by individuals. If it is

considered that every social structure enables individuals certain acting spheres, it is necessary to investigate the borders of the spheres opened for women and what women do within these borders (maybe sometimes forcing them). (Sirman, 1993: 249-250)

A vital question which has received insufficient attention in the theorization of patriarchy is, if patriarchy is such an oppressive system, how then has it been able to continue to survive for so many centuries?

Adapting the structural-Marxist conceptualization of ideology and false consciousness onto patriarchal resolutions does not satisfy the question of why women continue to be oppressed and exploited (Eves, 1991; Sawicki, 1991: 220; Kandiyoti, 1997). The theoretical argument that the consent given to the system of oppression by the victims de facto supports the system is not an adequate explanation of the gender relations because the withdrawal of consent would not change the dominant nature of the gender hierarchy (McGuiness, 1993: 113). If it is not consent nor false consciousness but manipulation with different nature, the task of trying to conceive women's stance *vis-a-vis* patriarchy without falling in the trap of functionalism and conservatism becomes highly crucial (Akkent, 1993: 10). When pursuing this task, one must take into consideration that experiences of the oppressed constitute different world views, rather than represent the margins of some dominant perspective (McGuiness, 1993: 113) with the reservations that experiences are not only confined to oppressions but implicate many emotional, psychological and social expressions as well. Also, collective experience is not the mean derivative of individual experiences because perceptions regarding the experiences may vary (Brah, 1991: 172-173).

By the same token, the question in relevance is how women initiate their placement and replacement in male dominance? To understand women's stance *vis-a-vis* patriarchy, consideration of patriarchy as a web of power relations with asymmetries between men and women and even among women clarifies many ambiguities. In this framework, the concern with the form

and channel in and through which men and women derive and realize power may provide an understanding of how patriarchy functions and persists in the face of the wide range of intensive and extensive forms of women's oppression.

The Weberian conceptualization of power is (Krips, 1990: 172): "...the chance of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action." Power according to Giddens is more of a type based on action which has transformative character (Wearing, 1990: 42). Foucauldian sense of power refers to a diffuse pattern of actions (Krips, 1990: 173). Contrary to Weber's notion of power as "having power" that the hold of power rests on certain individuals or groups, power, in Foucauldian terms, is a dispossesable practice (Sawicki, 1991: 220). Power is not a means of the dominating groups but is a dynamic that develops in relations (McGuiness, 1993: 101). Power in micro relations can form a trend that constitutes macro systems of dominance (Sawicki, 1991: 222).

Foucauldian sense of power which had expanded the theoretical discussion on power and had wide influences on the agenda of political sciences can be reviewed in three levels. First, the power matrix that surrounds every individual is not lineal but is complex, diverse and specific (Wearing, 1990: 40). There are multiple forms of power each working simultaneously in concert and at cross purposes (Abu-Lughod, 1990: 48). Second, power is both repressive and productive that it forms knowledge, discourse and subjectivities (Wearing, 1990: 40; Weedon, 1987: 111-113). To grasp power only with its repressive nature does not illuminate why the oppressed ones continue to a purely repressive and coercive form of power (Sawicki, 1991: 221). Third, power is mode of action upon the action of others in an arena of free subjects so there arises the issue of resistance to power since the subjects are free to counter act (Wearing, 1990: 40; Sawicki, 1991: 223). Power is not a zero sum game in which there is a looser and a winner. There is the interplay of resistance, concession, manipulation, trans-formation, negotiation and renegotiation (Wearing, 1990: 37, 42).

In Foucauldian framework, resistance inherently exists where there is an exercise of power (Krips, 1990: 177; Sawicki, 1991: 223).

This is of paradoxical nature since an act may be a strategy of both resistance and of power (Krips, 1990: 178). The limitation that the resistance brings upon power effects the outcome of power relation (Barbalet, 1985: 531). One of the methods in sorting out how power is exerted on is through picking out the various dimensions of the resistance directed against that specific form of power (Wearing, 1990: 42; Abu-Lughod, 1990: 47).

The Foucauldian premise that where there is power there is resistance is important not only in the sense that it calls paradigm shifts in grand, abstract meta-theories of power and dominance to particular situations but also such a position enables scholars and feminists a different formulation of power by which points and methods of application and location of power are captured through the resistance exerted upon a specific form of power and gives clues about how people get caught in them (Abu-Lughod, 1990: 42).[3] Conceiving the nature of power and how it works through resistance would enable an important means in the struggle against oppressions so can inform about the possible ways for other women in how to resist (Wearing, 1990: 38; McGuiness, 1993: 101).

People who are oppressed may not react only by mass movements, riots or revolutionary social struggles. There are other strategies and methods that the oppressed perform such as acts of resistance and deviance pursued on the individual and practical level in daily life (Okely, 1991). There may be covert and unorganized forms of resistance to be of theoretical concern (Giles, 1992; Abu-Lughod, 1990: 41; Gutmann, 1993).[4] Furthermore, not only deeds and actions but silent voices -which are overlooked, ignored or assumed to be not existing- should be objects of study (Hart, 1991: 115). Okely, when pointing to this essential task of making defiant moments visible, summarizes her own attempt as:

> In looking at resistance I am interested in something other than organized protest or sustained mass movements viewed over time. Instead, I focus on the forms in which it may be fragmented and therefore less visible namely moments where resistance crystallizes in isolated individual acts or gestures. They may be subtly woven into daily practice. (Okely, 1991: 8)

3
Male-stream history has overlooked women in history or presumed them unimportant subjects. Feminists, in their attempt to make women visible, outlined history of societies as a history of the subordination of women by men (Balbus, 1987: 111). Accordingly, there was a system or collection of men subordinating women and women were consciously left out of history. The contribution of Foucault has enabled a different stance that history is more than a history of constructions or of victimization (Balbus, 1987; Sawicki, 1991: 224).

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Matthew C. Gutmann criticizes the tendency in academia that focuses on resistance rather than appraisals and rebellions and states that this is of conservative nature and is well adapted to the prerequisites of the new world order (Gutmann, 1993).He argues that the studies on resistance flourishing in a certain period is no coincidence. Regarding the ideology dominant in 1980s (the end of ideologies and collective desire to change the world for the better), his argument seems to capture an aspect of the portrayal.

Literature on women's resistance thereby inherently on the subject of power, cover many aspects of women's lives whose experiences are different from each other. Wenona Giles points out the significance of the impact of political struggles in the arena of work onto the relations with the husbands and to the manipulative appropriation of the wage earned by female domestic workers in the household as a strategy of empowerment (Giles, 1992). The threats of quitting working, refusing to make love or to make visits to the husband's relatives and friends and provoking quarrels are other resistance strategies (Bolak, 1993). Betsy Wearing defines mothers' leisure aspirations as a form of resistance (Wearing, 1990). To draw out a "room of their own", women use strategies like refusal to do housework and cooking, recruitment of fathers in child care and alternate baby care with other mothers. When not doing these, women adopt a consciousness of rights contrary to the victim mentality enforced by the dominant ideology on motherhood.

Lale Yalçın-Heckman exemplifies women's leaving their homes for their father's in cases of crises in the marriage as a strategy of resistance within a broad and complex relational web where women maximize power by utilizing the kin group's (*aşiret*) traditions and norms (Yalçın-Heckman, 1993). Similarly Nükhet Sirman in her anthropological research on Tuz village of the Aegean Region sets out the relational web which women establish as a means of empowerment (Sirman, 1993). About Moroccan women, Bourqia claims that the politics deployed on the women's bodies as a site of social control is in cases counter used by women like expressing desires in cases of illness and pregnancy (Bourqia, 1990). The categorization of human body as a site of power and resistance is also discussed in Western literature. Helen Cixous and Catherine Clement claim that certain psychological disturbances among women like anorexia, hysteria and agoraphobia are signs of protest against the confinement of women's bodies (Bordo, 1990: 13).

Abu-Lughod in her anthropological research on Bedouins found out that the significance of sexual difference itself is a source of power (Abu-Lughod, 1990). The Bedouin women use

the segregation of the gender specific spheres as an arena of resistance. By pursuing the inviolability of their own spheres, they extract strong figures -men- and defuse the imposition of power on them. They have certain micro domains where they feel invulnerable and powerful which are achieved as a result of resistance and negotiation.[5] Another form of resistance among Bedouin women appears in marriages which are organized by the respectfully old. In addition, women develop a "sexually irreverent discourse" that mocks at the male sexuality and masculinity but praises the potency of female sexuality. The folklore lyrics and poetry are means of oral literature through which the sentiments of resistance like anger channeled.

Women may refuse to make love, to cook and to satisfy the other needs and demands of the husbands (Eves, 1991: 121). They may quarrel with their husbands loudly in front of neighbors and relatives in order to embarrass the husbands. They may cast spells on their husbands but when doing it they ensure the eyewitness of the husband so that the husbands fear women's spiritual power. Their resistance may take forms of killings, infanticide and suicide. Togan suggests that sometimes acts of emotions are signs of resistance (Togan, 1997).

Gillian Hart in her research on peasants' resistance in Muda region of Malaysia found out that women's styles of doing politics had been very different from that of men like appropriation of more direct and open strategies (Hart, 1991). In a parallel line of thought, Kaplan points out to the difference of style of resistance between women and men and argues that women have their own political culture and notion of politics (Kaplan, 1990). Women resist in cause of family, children, husband, for the welfare of the traditional life. Martin refers to the same issue and argues that women develop a different notion of politics which is built upon family and community interest excluding self interest (Martin, 1990). Hale Bolak discusses the less direct resistance and negotiation strategies of women who are the primary wage earners within the household (Bolak, 1993).

Having set out different forms and strategies of resistance (and so power), the question at relevance is how to interpret the

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This form of resistance is mentioned by Stirling in research on a Turkish village (cited in Kağıtçıbaşı, 1981: 35). The interesting issue of concern is that Stirling interprets the confinement of women to domesticity in a twofold manner: as a subordination of women and as a sphere of women that appropriates women's forbearance to subordination. Similarly, Bell declares that women may experience their local settings as both offering them opportunities for control and one which control them, their activities and values (Bell and Ribbens, 1994: 234).

subjectification of women with its dynamics of power and resistance. In other words, the concern of how to credit the power and resistance maneuvers of women in the process of subjectification inherits certain analytic dilemmas (Abu-Lughod, 1990: 47):

1) How to credit resistance without attributing it to feminist consciousness and politics and at the same time not devaluing such a resistance?

2) How to credit resistance without attributing it to false consciousness -since such acts conform to and reproduce the oppressive system of patriarchy- or without describing women as cynical manipulators?

3) How to evaluate resistance without claiming that the forms are cultural or that they are the safety valves for the continuation of patriarchy?

Although these analytic dilemmas caution the scholars in feminist theory about the easy celebration of women's strength and creativity in resisting their oppression, they also highlight the essentiality of the paradigmatic shift in the theory on patriarchy towards the subjectification of women where women as active agents are to be regarded not only as constructed subordinate by an external system but also as individuals who interplay with their own definition. This theoretical stance promises an in-depth understanding of the polarity in the dynamics of gender relations.

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Oryantalist Söylem ve Japonya
Meiji Dönemi (1868-1912)
Japon Kadın Hareketi Tarihini Okumak

Mutlu Binark

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Özet

Bu çalışma, kendi boylamımızdan daha "Doğu"da bir kimlik mekanına içkin tahayyüllerimizin
Oryantalist söylem tarafından kurulması ve bu kimlik mekanının ötekileştirilmesi sürecini
tartışma arzusuyla yazıldı. Bu yazı ile amaçlanan, Japon kadınının tarihsizliği tasavvurunda
sabitlenen kimliğini, Batı'yı merkezleyerek, Batı dışında sayılan kültürleri bu merkeze göre,
eksiklikleri ya da olumsuzlukları ile tanımlayan kolonyal söylemden serbestleştirmek
(*decolonization*) için bir adım atmak. Ayrıca, Japon kadın hareketlerinin tarihini, özgül bir
dönemde -Meiji Dönemi- (1868-1912) kendisi için konuşma istemiyle kamusal alana sözünü
taşıyan Kanno Suga'nın kişisel tarihi olarak okuyarak, ötekine içkin tasavvurlarımızın
"aralıkları/çatlakları" olabileceğini göstermek, Japon kadınının özgül tarihini okurken, aslında
kendi-öteki arasındaki sınır kesişmelerine ve bu kesişmelerde gerçekleşecek söylem
pratiklerine duyarlılığın gerekliliğine dikkat çekmek istiyorum. Sanırım, hem kendi
birciciliğimiz içinde, hem de ötekine ait çoğulluğun ortaya çıkartılabilmesi ve biz-onlar
içinde-arasında (*in-between*) bir iletişimin kurulabilmesi için ötekinin tarihini okumak bir
başlangıç noktası oluşturuyor. Bu yazı aslında Japon kadını örneğinde, sınır aralıkları ve
sınır kesişmelerinde var olan söylem pratiklerine duyarlılık demek olan tasavvurun kolonyal
söylemden serbestleştirilmesi girişimidir.

Orientalist Discourse and Japan
Reading the History of Japanese
Women's Movement at the Meiji Era (1868-1912)

Abstract

This article is an attempt to discuss the imagination about Japanese women as other,
constructed in the context of Orientalist discourse. Here, my aim is to decolonize the
imagination about Japanese women, which is fixed in the history-less subject position by
the colonial discourse, which is an act of centering the West through distinguishing it from
the non-Western cultures, who are defined with their distances and negativities to the
center and marked with their absence. Moreover, reading the history of Japanese women's
movement in a particular historical period, the Meiji Era, in which Japanese women spoke
to the public for their own sakes, might show possible cracks of imagining about other. I
assume that the pluralism in-between us and other could be revealed by a reading of the
history of other. Furthermore such a reading could be the beginning of a dialogue with
other. Shortly, this article suggests a new sensibility to the decolonization of imagination,
that might bring out border-crossings/cracks along the borders separating self and other.