ABSTRACT

GENDER IN SOCIOLOGY TEXTBOOKS

Kirsti Lempiäinen, Department of Women’s Studies, University of Tampere, Finland

Presented at Gender and Power in the New Europe, the 5th European Feminist Research Conference, August 20-24, 2003, Lund University, Sweden

In my Ph.D. thesis "Sosiologian sukupuoli" (Gender in Sociology, forthcoming 2003) I argue that gender in Finnish sociology is constructed more often as a relationship than as a sexual difference. A big part of sociological texts present a kind of "genderless gender" which is the explicit gendered order, by which I mean that gender is for instance rarely - if ever - discussed. But this is just the first impression. In a closer reading the texts reveal a masculine order or gender neutrality which in some moments invites male subjects into the text body but only seldom gives space to female subjects. I am particularly interested in conceptualising gender, and I divide the conceptualisations into five categories: socio-biological, functionalist, materialist, cultural and social analysis. The latter conceptualisation refers mainly to feminist sociological knowledge and the theoretical developments done within it. I argue that the epistemic gender in the texts creates a continuum between female subjects and male subjects and thus gender is thought of as segments, not as differing positions.