

The Radical Black Feminism Project

Rearranging a Critical Sociology

Introduction:

Brewer considers Black feminist sociology (BFS) to be transforming the terrain of traditional critical sociology by questioning the status quo, challenging colonial knowledge, and centering the knowledges of Black women (p. 46). Radical Black feminist sociologists look critically at existing systems of oppression and the interrelated nature of capitalism, racism, and heteropatriarchy. By doing so, radical Black feminism (RBF) aims to dismantle systems of racism, sexism, and capitalism.

Disassembling the Mainstream

Traditional critical sociological analyses often undertheorize how racism and sexism are entrenched in mainstream knowledge production. RBF sociologies investigate and name systemic oppressions of race, class, and gender to explain how they intertwine. **Ending one system of oppression necessitates ending all of them.** For example, Brewer explains that the anti-Black roots of capitalism also foster unequal gender dynamics. Black women experience multifaceted exploitation and under the racialized gender dynamics of capitalism.

Praxis

By "incorporating resistance into theorization", RBF sociology practices social change in academic institutions and through community activism (p. 48). It is important to promote and validate Black women's knowledge to broaden critical sociology's perspective on how social structures affect a person's agency. Informed by anti-capitalist sentiments, radical Black feminists understand the frameworks of colluding oppressions by working within affected communities. The "radical Black feminist sociological approach is to **think, reflect, resist, and organize** for fundamental social transformation" (p. 48).

Terms to Know:

- **Undertheorize:** to not think, research, and write literature critically about a community or issue (p. 49). Brewer says critical sociology consistently undertheorized race as contextualized by gender and class.
- **An insurgent frame:** A political frame that opposes the dominant system of epistemology and violence (p. 47).

Conclusion:

The "exploitative logic" of global capitalism unfolds on all structural levels and threatens the survival and well-being of Black lives and the lives of other people of color (p. 52). BFS and the RBF movement require critical conceptualizations of intersectionality and the forces that inhibit social change. Ultimately, the collaborative project of RBF has **"an eye on emancipatory possibilities"** that envisions the world through an insurgent frame (p. 53).

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