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Gender and Social Network Analysis

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The aim of the presentation is to illustrate the contribution that social network analysis can make, and has made, to sociological gender studies. Nearly absent in the thought of classic sociologists, gender came to the foreground with the first and second waves of feminisms, where not only women became an interest subject of scholarly research, but gender differences, inequalities and biases started emerging in nearly all social domains. While sociological theories of gender can be grouped in three main categories—macrostructural theories, microstructural theories, and interactionist theories—less attention, both theoretically and empirically, has been paid to the essential role that social networks have in forming, reproducing and challenging gender inequalities. Gender differences have however been extensively investigated by social network scholars, especially in the areas of socialization, personal networks, organizations and scientific environments. By reviewing the empirical finding of social network studies, we identify the network mechanisms that contribute to the formation and evolution of gendered social networks in pre-scholar and scholar age, the role of foci in segregating personal relationships of men and women and the resources they can access to, and the consequences that these network structures, and the gendered cultural expectations they carry about, have in organizational and academic settings. By looking at how gender shapes network formations, and how these formations then inform gendered outcomes, we aim to complement sociological studies of gender with the network perspective, therefore specifying further the role of microstructural theories in linking interactionist processes and macrostructural outcomes.

Keywords

Gender, inequalities, social networks

Topics

Other topic not listed

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