I Feminist Social Theories

A. point of view of women

1. situation of women

2. reason for situation

3. possibility of change

4. social location

B. typology of theories.

1. difference

2. inequality

3. oppression

4. structural oppression

C. liberal feminist social theory

1. reformist

a. accepts capitalism

b. political system

c. accepts cultural values: individualism, choice, equality of opportunity

2. assumptions

a. women are fully human

b. rights are denied

3. argument

a. economic, political arrangements unequal

b. socially constructed inequality

i. work: segregation and discrimination

ii. institutions: education, health care, home

c. inequality justified by sexist ideology

d. goal: egalitarian society

4. strategy/tactics

a. raise awareness

b. people will respond positively: innate sense of fairness

c. use the system ( law and politics)

i. law

ii. regulation

E. Radical Feminism

1. radical

a. different, unequal and oppressed

b. system of patriarchy is primary system of oppression

c. women are intentionally oppressed by men

d. “all men”

2. argument

a. patriarchy

i. primary power arrangement

ii. oldest, most pervasive, and most enduring,

iii. basis of all social organization

institutions organized to reinforce patriarchy

family ,economy, education, law etc

b. violence

i. basis of male power

ii. rule of thumb

iii. rape

iv. spousal and intimate partner abuse

v. incest

vi. female infanticide

vii. adultery: punishment

viii. witch hunts

ix. female genital mutilation

x. kitchen accidents

xi. honor murders

c. “in men’s interests”

i. satisfying sexual desire

ii. childbearing

iii. free labor

iv. status symbols

v. emotional support

d. consequences for women

i. dehumanizes women

ii. controls life chances

iii. victimized by violence

e. solutions

F. Socialist Feminism

1. Theoretical goal

a. unite Marx and radical feminism

b. broader answer to women’s oppression

2. Marxian feminism

a. “The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State”

b. women’s oppression: function of capitalism

i. division of labor

ii. structure of family

c. accept Marxist analysis of class relations

d. reject Marxist analysis of patriarchy as only a function of class

3. Radical feminism

a. patriarchy is independent form of oppression

b. not all structures of oppression can be explained by analysis of capitalism

4. Capitalist patriarchy as domination

a. historical materialism

i. re-definition-materialism includes all life-sustaining activities

ii. economy, sexuality, procreation, child care, unpaid domestic labor, emotional care

iii. all of the above involve exploitive arrangement

iv. implications: human beings not just economic producers but producers and sustainers of life

b. subjectivity

i. social construction of subjectivity

ii. reinforces system of oppression

c. complexity of the system of oppression

i. social structure

ii. micro interactions that reproduce oppression

5. Analyses

a.global capitalism and the oppression of women

b. relations of ruling