

Liberation Psychology and Prostitution of Women

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Abstract

In this paper the differences of approach in research on prostitution of women, which generate deep controversy both in academia and in the social intervention models are analyzed. Epistemological similarities between the tenets of Liberation Psychology and gender approaches in the analysis of social problems concerning women are analyzed. The Liberation Psychology epistemological provides a useful framework to address the complexity of prostitution, from the analysis of power dynamics operating in it. His focus areas of analysis allow the two issues in dispute, the focus of prostitution of women: a) the subjectivity of prostituted women who demand a commitment to improving their living conditions, b) structural aspects generate oppression and demand a transformation of reality. Methodological plurality of its approach opens a wide range of possibilities for the diversity of disciplines involved in an intervention aimed at empowering women in prostitution. Finally, critical elements that Liberation Psychology can contribute to the controversy about prostitution of women are proposed.

Keywords: Prostitution of women; Liberation psychology; Epistemological issues; Gender studies

Abbreviations: F: In Favor; A: Against

Defining Epistemological Options in Research on Prostitution of Mujeres

The study of prostitution raises epistemological issues underlying the controversy over research results from different approaches [1-3]. On the other hand, the theoretical analysis of scientific research and gender, highlighted the importance of critical reflection on the epistemological position adopted when issues concerning women [4-7]. How this issue affects the production of knowledge has been widely debated since the philosophy of science [8-11]. The controversy over the way the point of view taken determines the observed, highlighted the importance of explaining the “values and interests” who investigates. The problem of prostitution can be considered, in a way, a paradigmatic case of this effect of “point of view”. Reflections on prostitution dependent “part of the problem,” you gain greater prominence, and this in turn depends on where the researcher is located. This issue, widely discussed in philosophy of science, has appealed to cognitive psychology whose research explain the mechanisms by which reality is unthinkable without these constraints the approach taken [12,13].

The prostitution of women is a very complex variable Intersect by converging on the phenomenon: economic, psychological... and not least structural, political, social, ethnic, gender issues raised in other studies [14,15]. No wonder, therefore, that depending on the observer's point of view, we find a historic moment approaches very different to the same phenomenon [16,17]. Given this divergence, different options open for research. Three possibilities or basic attitudes may be considered: (a) argue why own point of view is the “right”; (B) discuss why the own point of view is the “right”; and (A) argue that only one point of view “committed” to the problem, makes it possible to understand and legitimizes theorizing. These researchers' attitudes wired differently with different epistemological and methodological possibilities considered from the perspective of gender [18,19]. So, for the position (a) are preferable centered epistemologies “objectivity”: “facts” can be Gathered Independently of “values”, and That careful observers “can be” impartial “. For the position (b), is more convenient centered epistemologies “subjectivity” partial, personal, intuitive knowledge comes from the consciousness of a subject Knowing situated in a specific social context. And for the position (A), is more

appropriate epistemology offered the dialectic methodology: all Attempts to produce social knowledge of political life are the politically-committed but can still be scientific in the sense of connecting thoughts and experience to underlying realities.

A fourth possibility crossed by the values of postmodern skepticism emerged in the 70s, with implications for the study of the problems of women. Since postmodernism, the only possible position to reality is the “relativism”, as modern life creates impossible fragmented identities to integrate into a unified scientific discourse. This question, therefore, whether there can be a single point of view, when the social experience of women is crossed by social class, race and culture. We are therefore, a dispute that has an important place in the epistemological discussions on the relationship between science and gender studies [9]; but this is still a “question for epistemology”, which it is for the philosophy of science [5]. For the purpose at hand, adopt the Ramazanoglu position and [18], who believes that relativism is only one logical possibility and not a useful epistemology. However, a reflection on how to approach the study of such a complex prostitution of women problem cannot ignore these issues. Hence the reflections rose already in the 80s by the philosophy of science since gender approaches, they remain in force and continue to generate discussions on how to study issues affecting women. In this sense, are still relevant questions Sandra Harding formulated over 20 years ago: Can be used with emancipatory purposes sciences that are so intimate and clearly immersed in Western, bourgeois and masculine projects? [5]. from a gender perspective the historic character of scientific constructs is assumed, which are structured the same values that determine how to define the problems and build the meanings of social reality. Scientific Productions are therefore steeped in the dominant social values, unless

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the epistemological critique possible to adopt new types of analysis and new methodological approaches that overcome.

From a gender perspective, the guiding principle of any research program on prostitution of women must be the empowerment of women in prostitution and symbolically of all women. It is under this approach, as the prospect of Liberation Psychology (LP) can contribute to the study of such a complex subject, providing useful hermeneutical for that purpose. Is it possible to propose a program of research on prostitution emancipation of women, overcoming the different ways of observing and position before it? The divergent speeches determined by the focus mode prostitution, wield their contribution to the empowerment of women, as a legitimizing argument their positions. Differences emerge in successive discursive levels, as the forms to be taken by empowerment. Elucidating on This question implies therefore include an analysis of power relations operating in the phenomenon of prostitution [20,21]. This involves incorporating both the problem of structural poverty and marginalization of the vast majority of women in prostitution, and the analysis of the order of domination that underlies the sexual use of prostituted women's bodies by men prostituyentes. The focus of the LP [22-25] is useful for this purpose because it allows addressing prostitution from this complexity, as the core of its historical and dialectical approach lies in the analysis of power dynamics that characterize all human relationships.

A Tour of the Hermeneutical Principles of LP

The LP begins to take shape during the seventies, coinciding with the epistemological and methodological crisis of social psychology, before questions meant of critical theories. This intellectual crisis in the social sciences was the result of a social crisis that demanded answers to the problems affecting the majority, and could not find in the social sciences rather than futile and irrelevant answers. The socio-political situation in Latin America favored the emergence of an intellectual current criticism, which led to the work of Martin-Baro at the University of Chicago. That experience will emerge developing a new epistemological framework for psychosocial research, soon was widely disseminated in the Latin American environment [19]. However, it was not until the late twentieth century and early twenty-first, when this orientation begins to take interest in Europe [26,27] and the US [28-31].

The starting point for the LP approach is organic conception of social problems, defined as processes in different interconnected levels: personal, relational, and community. His analytical framework has been applied in the past decade to research numerous social problems, producing interesting results in the search for alternative models to understand them. Examples are the application to the study of social oppression [30], racial oppression [32], the effects of globalization [33], immigration [34], social movements [35], the cultural colonization [36,37], the implementation of Human Rights [29], or psychotherapy with traumatized or stigmatized groups [37-39]. Your analysis capabilities have also recently begun to loom in the field of gender studies [40]. In all, the spotlight is in the conditions of oppression experienced by social groups that marginalizes social structure, imposing daily experiences of stigma, violence, poverty or fear. And is that the experiences of marginalization, as has highlighted the psychological research, enrolling in the individual psychologies producing a confluence between the social legitimacy of segregation, and assimilation by marginalized people a vision of their own devalued self [41]. Hence the release involves transforming the social structures that oppress marginalized groups, and also transform the subjectivity of people.

This transformation of reality that rescues LP aim of social science is only possible compromise with the groups affected by structural oppression. It is this commitment that legitimizes theorizing about the problems. LP for conflict between "objectivity" and "commitment" is a false dilemma. In the words of [42] is a 'delusion', as the possibility of observing reality without a compromised position is just that: an "illusion of objectivity." There is no neutral position on the issues; the supposed "neutrality" is also a position, and is generally the position of groups with greater social power. The observer may not be aware that their view is influenced by a certain position; but does not prevent their unconscious influence: only shows the absence of critical reflexivity to make it explicit. The Cartesian opposition between "objective knowledge" and "subjective knowledge", still in force in areas of academic research, it is simply impossible for the LP.

This position of the LP is articulated in two ways: (a) a new perspective, and (b) a new praxis (Martín Baro, 1986). The new perspective will adopt the point of view of the oppressed; see the psychosocial processes from the standpoint of "dominated" instead of seeing them from the hegemonic side of "dominator". It is not that who investigates think for those screened, or solves their problems; it is a new research ethics: theorizing from the experience of those who suffer problems. This does not mean that there is a reality regardless of the point of view of the investigation. Certainly our place determines the observed, but the historical conditions are determining reality. What we observe as it has a double conditioning: personal position from which it is observed, and the reality as it occurs in their historical conditions. Hence, to acquire new knowledge of the problems is not enough settle in the perspective of those who suffer, but also need to be involved in a new praxis. This new practice is defined as a transforming activity of reality, and she in turn will enable us to meet as it is experienced by those who live there. New perspective and new practice will be for the two principles that validate the methodologies of approach to reality. And to these epistemic principles, participative research or action research will be the privileged form [43]. With it, the research itself becomes transforming action of reality [44], making it very convenient for the principles of the LP. What is relevant for the LP, as noted, it is therefore the epistemological framework; hence methodologically eclectic adopt a position. Traditional techniques such as surveys and quantitative analysis can be combined with techniques most recent psychosocial such studies and qualitative analysis or textual analysis. All methodology is valid if it serves the objective.

Thus, from the LP scientific hermeneutics have only two options: stay "(pseudo) neutral" describing the oppression, or provide tools for liberating transformation of reality at different levels: structural, organizational and individual [42]. Obviously, the choice of the LP puts the horizon of research on the welfare of the people and social justice for all social groups [43]. From all this it follows that the analytical axis in research must be the relationship between people and social system, power dynamics being the most relevant to an understanding of these interactive processes category. Power, understood as capacity building and opportunities for well-being [23], it is an indispensable resource in the process of liberation of the people. Thus focusing social problems provides two categories of analysis, which are most relevant to the study of prostitution of women: (a) the dimension of vulnerability and social exclusion that are doomed its practitioners, and (b) how women develop a critical view of the conditions that oppress and seek ways to transform them. These two dimensions provide an adequate tool for an epistemological framework that incorporates the dialectic between disempowerment (vulnerability and exclusion) and empowerment (critique of the conditions of oppression and resource management to

overcome). The basic principles to guide research in the framework of the LP.

Articulated around Three Axes

1. Take as a case study of human action: what matters for the LP are “human actions” understood as “behaviors and social significance of such conduct” [41]? The social meaning thus becomes the focus of interest: who benefits the behavior? What effects? How affects people? What serves interests groups are benefiting? What hurt? These are the key questions for research. The behaviors are no longer the focus of analysis, breaking with the prevailing behaviorist psychological theory models, since the same behaviors can have very different social meanings. Actions are not the behaviors deprived socio-political significance, which should interest in the research of social problems in order to contribute to the liberation of people. The adoption of this “under investigation” shall be accompanied by strong criticism of prevailing psychological currents as behaviorism, which calls “reactionary” to leave outside the scope of precisely the most relevant study to understand the asymmetric processes of social interaction.

2. Ideologies everyday experience: ideologies means in the context of the LP rescue the original experience of groups and individuals, and return it as objective fact [41]. Social structures have very powerful means to create opinion, to define reality and attributing meanings to experiences. This power definition is useful to the dominant interests and the interest shown by the control of the mass media. His way of framing actually it has a persuasive power that well known political agendas and cognitive science explained from different perspectives [45]. The ideology within the LP reports a “false consciousness” of reality, induced form to tell the story of those in power. The psychological mechanisms of persuasion are well known and used, and not just in advertising. Creating subjective reality is created, as shown constructivism [46]. Ideologize experience then involves disclosing the social interests that are “objectively” benefit from the behavior of people, regardless of the subjective consciousness to have it who generate benefits for others. In other words, it involves deconstructing hegemonic narratives imposed on the subjectivity of people.

3. Providing conditions for empowerment: it is the investigation believes facilitators contexts so that people can develop their strengths, and get as far as possible, the autonomous management of one’s life [42]. The LP adopts the term “awareness” from the pedagogical theory of Paulo Freire [47], to refer this process. By “awareness” people acquire analysis tools to give themselves to their own experience meanings. Overcoming the meanings constructed by others (those in power to define reality), and construct their own meaning to personal experience, it is part of the process of liberation of oppressed groups. Only from the “awareness” can be empowering: the ability to decide and manage his own life. Social constraints limited the real possibilities of improvement, as in all areas of life; but the extended experience, understanding will enable management decisions from a self-released.

The main contribution of the LP is the ethical commitment to the object of study: not to be theories that define the research problems, but are to be problems-such as are experienced by its protagonists, which claim theorizing that contributes to understand, explain, and overcome transforming reality.

Implications of the Principles of the LP for Studies on Prostitution

Few social phenomena divided public opinion and produce debates as prostitution. Unlike what happens in academic and policy

on major social issues, focusing on how they should be addressed debates, confrontation on the issue of prostitution occurs within the definition, questioning whether be considered a problem [48]. The epistemological and methodological diversity in the approach to prostitution, divided the studies into two irreconcilable positions: those who argue why regulate it through legislation is better for women, and argue why regulation is absolutely inadmissible, since prostitution is itself a violation of human rights. Both positions reividican adherence to himself postulated to contribute to the empowerment of women [48], coinciding in what has been called first [15] discursive level. The analysis [49] on the debate between these positions in the Spanish context, perhaps not very different from other countries, provides interesting insights for analyzing the differences. While regulationist positions emphasize the “subjective” prostituted women experience as the most important problem, the abolitionist positions consider that this experience has to be analyzed under the “structural” aspects of the phenomenon. The epistemological principles of the LP will be useful to examine the implications of prioritizing one or another focus in the analysis. The emphasis on “subjective” experience focuses the specific needs of women affected and focuses its efforts in the fight against stigmatization; while the devastating effects they have on the women involved [50] do not occupy a central place in the analysis. Its main objective is to improve the living conditions of those who “choose” to prostitution as a means of survival. Prostitution, since this way of defining the problem, is a choice within a limited framework of possibilities in an unjust society not only for women but for all oppressed groups must accept unwanted lifestyles. The regulation, in this light, is seen like an instrument to improve the lives of those who are forced to prostitution.

In the position that emphasizes the “structural” nature of prostitution, the “subjective” experiences only make sense and meaning under the analysis of the objective conditions of oppression, which determine the lives of women pushed into prostitution as the only possibility of survival. The aim must be from this perspective, the transformation of reality by changing the conditions of oppression and domination that underlie the phenomenon of prostitution. Regulation because it is absolutely unacceptable, as would legitimize and contribute to the maintenance of this system of domination.

In what way you can bring the LP critical to the analysis of the objective consequences of adopting either approach in the study of prostitution? Consider the implications of the LP for regulationist positions that emphasize the “subjective experience”. If the action is “something else” that behavior, analysis of the subjective experience of women should include in its object of study the social meaning of it. And how include social significance in understanding the subjective experience? Facilitating conditions in which it is possible to analyze the socio-political dimension of experience. The structures of domination in unjust systems hide their interests and define the reality of the most convenient way to keep; not only in the case of prostitution, but in all processes. Access to the structural dimension means having categories of analysis that make visible these hidden interests and that expand the understanding of the experience itself. In this way, empowerment is provided to significant experiences, and also to disable the stigma imposed by those in power to stigmatize. Empowerment occurs visible the oppression, and oppression is made visible by analyzing the benefits it produces for others. If this is done consciously, it is possible to relocate the experience. What is meant by repositioned the experience? For example, experience is relocated when prostituted women attribute to themselves the secondary benefits obtained with prostitution (survival), and no other actors-easing this

possibility-benefit or profit from it. It is this a central issue in the LP because release requires analyzing the effect of the experience of oppression in self-consciousness [42,51]. The devalued self-image is one of the effects of oppression, explains the theory of social identity [52]. Oppression produces the self-devaluation own self a devalued self-concept, self-esteem deficit. As a result, persons subject to social oppression tend to attribute the achievements to external agents and failures themselves because the social position occupied determines the self-devaluation [53]. Hence, a way to enable the empowerment of facilitating the redefinition of experience, reflexivity create spaces that facilitate recognition of own strengths to survive in a world that oppresses and offers few opportunities to those without power. Recognized in other positive aspects such as the role of provider for those who depend on the income from the Prostitution is also a way to generate a more empowered vision of self. This is the effect of the internal allocation of achievements, as opposed to external attribution that develops in conditions of vulnerability and low self-esteem. The external attribution, distorts the true nature of the relationship, it makes seeing generosity on the other where there is only an interested relationship; further deepens vulnerability; disempowering.

The social meaning of behavior as contextualized experience in power dynamics, and allows its protagonists more empowered to develop an understanding of what they live. Amplification of consciousness is a condition of freedom. If the conditions imposed are not controllable reality for those trapped in it, the consciousness of oppression does allow management instead empowered limits. Ideologize everyday experience within the LP means to rescue the original experience of groups and individuals, and return it as objective data; Therefore, a research program or social intervention on prostitution should not leave the impact on the subjectivity of prostituted women off. Ideologize experience and uncover the interests that are benefiting from prostitution, you should occupy an important place in their objectives. How to own women affects prostitution? Who gets benefits, how many and what kind of benefits? Who is harmed and what kind of harm? What interests are served? For this LP it is the focus of research committed to reality: expand the field of consciousness incorporating the structural dimension. Only here can be placed in a position more empowered to make vital decisions that concern oneself and to transform reality itself. Each researcher / to find a way to achieve it in their objectives and/or hypotheses, and adopt methodologies and techniques that best suit the particular object of investigation. The important thing for the LP, again, is the liberating hermeneutic epistemological approach and that it is clear.

In what way you can bring the LP critical elements for research that emphasizes the structural dimension of prostitution? The analysis of the socio-political implications of social research problems, occupies an important place for the LP coinciding with gender epistemology [18]. But the LP may also contribute to this approach incorporating subjectivity of prostituted women as a category of fundamental analysis. Human action, as an object of study, places the individual at the center of analysis: the individual women with their motives and needs. The criticism of the system cannot ignore the real conditions of women found in prostitution an option for survival. Transforming the system is a long way, and real people living in a particular time. Therefore, Ideologize everyday experience has immediate implications, which go through include finding workable alternatives in the historical present. The new approach proposed by the LP involves looking prostitution as they see the women involved, giving them a voice and hear their motivations, their difficulties, their needs and aspirations. The "new practice" involves a commitment to research-intervention is a

transformative element of reality and improve the living conditions of women. This transformative commitment is also a way of embodiment in desideologador reality principle of the LP as already stated.

The social Representations: a Useful Approach to Prostitution from the LP

If the power dynamics are the focus of research for LP, the study of social representation [53-56] provides a useful resource to display these dynamic operating in the way that is socially constructed marginalization [57] Similarly, it is a useful resource for analyzing how social discourses are modified to incorporate syntonic arguments with changes in social values [58]. The social representations of prostitution possible to reveal the historical forces that impact the thoughts and actions of people, and that reproduce the dominant values and resistance to social change [59]. What are the shared beliefs about prostitution? What meanings support the positions taken? Whose interests do they serve? What are its effects? These are questions that can find an answer through the study of social representations. Analyze the arguments and discursive strategies used in everyday communication, can unravel the social values that are perpetuated in the individual psychologies to resist social change [60].

In what ways can be used to study social representations to a better understanding of the dynamics of power in prostitution? One way to explore these dynamics is through research on how the social meanings of prostitution [61] are built. In a recent study on the analysis of emerging discourses in discussion groups with Spanish university students, they present different positions in the social debate were found, but with a common framework for defining the problem [62]. This common framework definition which occur speeches reveals the structural fund in which the problem is defined. The conflicting discourses agree arguments focus on these elements: 1) the economic and labor, 2) question the social role of prostitution for some people to have sex, 3) the moral, 4 issue) problem freedom, and 5) the stigma. Depending on the position taken, the argument is built in either direction; but the debate occurs around these lines of analysis and not others. The absence of some elements in the debate, such as gender issues, highlights how some elements of the problem are invisible in the public debate, and under what definition ignores that prostitutes are mainly women and those who go into prostitution are primarily men? What are the effects of this invisibility? What hidden interests? Regardless of the answers offered by the research, the question is why in the social imaginary, this aspect is invisible [63-65]. Present two models of social representation called "hegemonic" and "emancipation" and that can be explored through speeches. The dominant model is characterized by a discourse that uses conventional arguments, and which remain invisible important aspects of the problem. By contrast, the emancipatory model is characterized by a permanent renegotiation of the ideas to be discussed in a search for the focus to be expanded. The social representation of prostitution seems to fit the hegemonic model [14]. From the context of the LP, the relevant question that emerges from the results is what interests are key beneficiaries of this framework definition of prostituidores hidden gender and prostituted.

As part of the LP, other forms of analysis are possible from methodological eclecticism. The use of quantitative techniques can provide results that deepen the knowledge of the weight of the different contents of the representation in the social imaginary. The arguments that emerge in speeches can be converted into questionnaires by psychometric techniques and administered to large samples with a purpose. Statistical analysis of the data, which allow you to explore

and what arguments are irrelevant discriminant to determine the positions taken [15]. The weight of the different arguments, to move to the favorable or regulation would tell position, can reveal the deep and surface levels of discourse. Are all relevant issues, around which articulates social representation of prostitution? Are they equally important to define a position on it? This makes it possible to approach the way in which social constructions are part of individual psychologies. In the study cited above, the discriminant analysis of twenty arguments that emerged in the speeches to prostitution, identified a function discriminate in which only four arguments were found to have predictive value on favorable or contrary position to regulate, three arguments "Please [F] and an argument" against "[A]. These four arguments were in order of importance: 1) [F] a social function for some people to have sex; 2) [F]: regulate bring economic benefits to the country; 3) [F]: women have the right to choose freely; it is not degrading; and 4) [A] should not be legalized because it legitimizes something that is unethical. The economic-labor factor of prostituted women did not appear in the discriminant analysis as an argument; nor the consequences for their health. Women as objects of argument, only emerging in third place; but the argument does not focus on your wellbeing, but in the freedom of choice (without analyzing who favors the "choice"). The strongest arguments, both of which come first in the discriminant function, are the (male) sexual needs first, and the benefits that could be obtained with fiscal taxation if it is regulated as a profession. The issue of gender discourse absent can visualize the dynamics of hidden power in the case of prostitution of women, central nucleus of research for the LP approach. In short, the LP is a useful tool for generating knowledge about how to operate the dialectic of approach and to propose new research on how Ideologize the problem of prostitution of women.

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