

Mirjana Adamović

ŽENE I DRUŠTVENA MOĆ

Plejada
Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu
Zagreb, 2011.

Summary

This book is concerned with the research of social power of women in two ways: theoretically, by considering the corpus of sociological and gender theories of power and empirically, by conducting qualitative analysis of interviews on the sample (N = 45) of women managers employed in the public, private and civil cultural sector of the Republic of Croatia.

The first, theoretical part indicates that women's (non)power is placed within the androcentric world view which is deeply rooted in the foundations of the Western culture. The subjugation of women in the antique period was one of the elements of social integration, and was justified by the values allocated to the characteristics of "female nature" which included passivity, weakness and subjection of women to the natural determinism. Then, this adopted doubt in the ethical and intellectual abilities of women to conduct public affairs was further perpetuated in philosophical concepts which occurred much later historically.

Furthermore, in the part where we analyze the sociological theories of power, we have shown that power is a complex theoretical problem as well as that there are difficulties about its definition. The older theories of power, regardless of dealing with the static or dynamic view of society, at the core of their interests have a public sphere (political, economic) and collective power centres. These theories did not perceive women as a major social potential or agents who should have had noticeable share in the government. However, some of the older theories see women as an important social factor but exclusively in private, family area.

The contemporary sociological theories have shown interest in studying the subject, gender and identity (Giddens, Touraine, Bourdeu itd.). Considering all social power concepts it has been concluded that the theory of Michel Foucault and his notion of power as a "capillary" has had the greatest impact on gender theories. That theoretical approach has followers on at least two levels: the level of sex, gender and politics analysis (J. Butler and J. W. Scott) and on the level of the attitude towards the liberal state, political theory and norms. According to hypothesis that power is not just subordination but an activity and modality of becoming the Subject has been accepted, it was concluded that the contemporary gender theories differ from those who saw power through bimodal, patriarchal matrix (de Beauvoir).

Women subject is represented by different sub-feminisms, so it could be said that feminism is not homogeneous because some theories are still advocating a "bimodal"

interpretation of power and maintaining an essentialist approach, especially in the case of marginalized, diasporic and post-colonial requests.

This book also shows how feminism as a social movement was strongly associated with the theory and influencing the practice of everyday life, language, education, policy and legislation. Insisting on the importance of feminist education, the institutionalization of women's/gender studies and rich publishing productions was called the "cultural triumph". It was concluded that the "cultural triumph" together with the development of trans-state activisms and trans-civil societies are one of the fundamental pillars in spreading feminism.

The global mobilization of women has affected the implementation of gender legislation and it is simultaneously a result and a response to the globalization processes. The criticism is addressed from the standpoint of a possible customer relationship of feminist experts toward the demands of other women and the ways in which "policy differences" are being formed by the government instruments.

Analysis of the policy, economy and culture show how women managers are not equally distributed and that women have not got the same power, rights and options for action. The division of labour in the private and public sector, the division between male and female occupations and salaries, analyzed from whatever theoretical point of view, show women's marginalization. It can be seen that education and women's employment do not automatically lead to a higher social power. Accession to the governing elites is disabled in a variety of ways. Stereotypes about managing characteristics of women are often in conflict with corporate values.

In the narrow focus of this book are women managers employed in the cultural sector of the Republic of Croatia. Analysis of the sex/gender stratification in the public institutions has shown that women are in a higher percentage (54%) employed than men. However, analysis of particular activities has shown that women were more employed in libraries, colleges and cultural centres, museums and museum collections and archives, which was called the "female asymmetry", while men were significantly more numerous among professionals in theatres, on radio and television, the joint staff of radio and television, the cinema operator and orchestras, which was called "male asymmetry." It was concluded that some subsectors of culture are resisting to a higher representation of women due to traditional division of occupations and higher economic power.

The analysis of distribution of managerial positions in the public institutions has shown that women are underrepresented (32.3%) in institutions that are founded by the Ministry of Culture. A similar situation exists in the institutions that are founded by the City of Zagreb (33.3%). It was concluded that the public cultural sector is operated by the state and its elites who are acting according to patriarchal structure, which is also the case in the field of economy and politics.

The analysis of ownership/co-ownership of private companies in publishing also showed asymmetry – according to various sources, women are the owner / co-owner of the private publishing companies by 21.4% to 24.4%, although this sector in total employs more than 50% of women.

The display of the results of the qualitative analysis of interviews revealed the following:

The hypothesis according to which the majority of respondents (two thirds of the sample) are aware of the importance of sex / gender in managing is confirmed; the respondents also said they do not feel equal with male colleagues in the business. One of the interesting discourses that has been found in this study has shown that some of the respondents felt they were in a superior position towards men in the performance of cultural activities thanks to communication skills, the culture of communication, opportunities to work in more areas, their patience and different principles in comparison to men.

The hypothesis according to which managers achieve atypical career patterns is confirmed. It was affirmed that flexible working hours are a significant motivator for the reconciliation of work and family life, especially with the managers employed in the private sector.

The hypothesis that management power (autonomy, the ability of decision making) has the distinct, sector internal and external organizational constraints is confirmed. At each level the restrictions are the most visible in the management power of women employed in the public sector. The substantial, external constraints are especially present in the managing of the civil sector because of the still present distrust toward funding their programs by the government.

The hypothesis, according to which in the family lives of managers patriarchal practices that reflect in the distribution and organization of a household and parent responsibilities are retained, is confirmed. The attempts of changing those practices have not proved effective.

The assumption that the evaluation of the feminist initiative will be positive because of the higher education of the respondents is not confirmed. Although there has been found the discourse that positively evaluates feminist initiatives, the antifeminist discourse was found very important and was prevailing in the sample.

Furthermore, the two proposed interpretation models of benefits and barriers of women's career development consist of the following elements. The model of advantages was constructed upon the benefits of adopting positive (educational) values in the family, the benefits of flexible working hours, opportunities to achieve a parallel career; essentialist argument according to which there are women's "predispositions" for cultural work and interpretation of cultural subsystem as "social niches protected from the influence of patriarchal structure". The hindrances model included: recognition of gender inequality in achieving business ambitions; lower reputation of the cultural sector in the society; external constraints of managerial power; recognition of patriarchal structure in the society and the negative assessment of social atmospheres and cultural politics. Except for the first hindrance in this model, the rest are of structural nature. The conclusion of this book goes in the direction of the thesis according to which encouraging the development of private and civil sectors can help the overall cultural sector development and visibility of women. Also, for greater representation of women in the management elites in the public sector gender poli-

cies changes are needed. The “state feminism” may not be only of maternal nature, but should take into account the diverse categories of women. The study is concluded on the attitude that gender power theories are not interested in women who are relatively well incorporated into the system, and that women’s cultural elite who has been in the focus of this research does not meet typical problems of women in work and family.

Key words: culture, women managers, gender power, theory of power, management, women