

Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca

Faculty of Sociology and Social Work

Doctoral School of Sociology

DOCTORAL THESIS

SUMMARY

An oppression of their own. Empirical evidence on internalized misogyny, and its connection to homophobia and racism

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Summary

The motivation for the present study lies in the discrepancy I have observed over the years between the reality of gender inequality in Romania and the attitudes women seemed to hold about this topic. As the data on the gender pay gap, domestic violence, together with statistics on rape or the hampered access to education are all one click away, Romanian mainstream media keeps telling women that equality has been achieved for decades and that feminists should take a break, as their voices are not welcomed as the conversation on gender equality is outdated. More than that, the oppression of women has planted its roots so deep that women themselves are part of the oppression.

The thesis will provide an overview of the historical stages of women's status in Romania, along with data on the current situation. The thesis provides a review of attitudinal change theories, power structures and feminism, along with an on-date presentation on the current status of women in Romania and it provides a mapping of sexist, racist and homophobic attitudes in order to have a clearer understanding of how people internalize misogyny.

The paper will focus on gender issues as a social construction, part of the theoretical section being dedicated to the conceptual clarification of the notion of gender. An important position in this conceptualization work is occupied by Sally Haslanger's theory of gender, which focuses on how people are integrated into a certain power dynamic, with Haslanger adopting a similar methodology to deal with other identity categories (e.g. race). This intersectional approach will help us to deal more accurately with the complicated relationship between women's internalized misogyny and their attitudes toward racial or sexual minorities.

At the methodological level, the research will use a mixed methodology to provide not only new data in studying the phenomenon of internalized sexism, but also new research tools for this field. We will use two empirical studies. The main study is based on a sample of women pursuing university studies, and includes a questionnaire and an experiment (using the IRAP method - Implicit Relation Assessment Procedure), to test both explicitly and implicitly the attitudes of women in such a way as to overcome the influence. socio-cultural baggage that prevents an honest assessment of gender issues in the Romanian context. We will be able to

analyze how internalized women's misogynistic prejudices are internalized, how these internalized attitudes support women's systemic discrimination and inhibit their emancipation, and how internalized sexism interacts with racism or homophobia. The second study will include both girls and boys attending secondary school (high school and high school). Given that at this age women do not face discrimination in the workplace or in the public sphere, this study focused on the attitudes of the subjects towards the victims of sexist abuse. For the second sample, we also used male subjects, because the subjects did not yet fully fix the gender attitudes at their age, and on the other hand we focused on a narrower category of phenomena than the first study, and the level of The internalization of sexism could not be evaluated with the same clarity as in the first study.

The present study has showed that women indeed internalize misogyny. More than that, women are more likely to express gender bias when they are not OK with people of other sexual orientations, making us think that the core concept of the thesis was not general prejudice as we first assumed, but heteronormative masculinity and femininity. The racism the respondents exhibited brought an unexpected twist, as it did not shift significantly with overall the attitudes on gender and sexuality (although, admittedly, anti-Roma racism did increase as the subjects displayed lower levels of positive attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people). This seems to indicate that, within the limits of our Romanian case-study, women do not seem to associate patriarchal and heteronormative discrimination with racial discrimination. Thus, while women who are more conservative when it comes to gender and sexuality will tend to have more anti-Roma views, more liberal women will still display racist attitudes.