

# AUTONOMY VS INTEGR DEBATE

Q A v I debate in G/studies has an imp contribution to development of field of knowledge

a Write a note on autonomy vs integration debate in gender studies

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Important debate

whether or not institutionalization of women's studies as an autonomous dept in universities > better sustains development of women

OR

Incorporation & integration of women's studies into traditional disciplines as a purely academic subfield is a better option for their development

- Women's studies > understanding of self as educational arm of women's movement signified engagement in politics of knowledge
- connected teaching + res research to social & political change.
- offered feminist politics an institutional location

By end of 1960s

↓

teaching women's studies started in <sup>some</sup> US unis

↓

teaching institutionally anchored in so-called women's studies centres.



↓  
model inspired other countries to start such centres

↓  
research + teaching profiles focusing on women & gender relations in  
+ research → interdisciplinary perspective

parallel to these developments, gender studies unfolded within many disciplines.  
• discipline after discipline → <sup>critical</sup> feminist's spotlight targeted established research traditions

- defined women's as "the other" ⇒ deviant sex position
- human being "man" acc to it.
- women history, literature, ~~art~~ work, objects of research with framework of literary studies, anthro, socio etc.

In 1970 → first woman studies programme approved → San Diego State Uni  
currently → 700 w/s courses colleges ..

- National women's studies association → 1977  
"Is women's studies an academic discipline" → title of a session at its first annual meeting (1979).

1972 → <sup>feminist studies</sup> women's studies & women's studies newsletter was published

1975 → signs → interdisciplinary journal in women studies → established

Florence Howe ⇒ helped establish feminist press as 1970  
by Paul Laurence

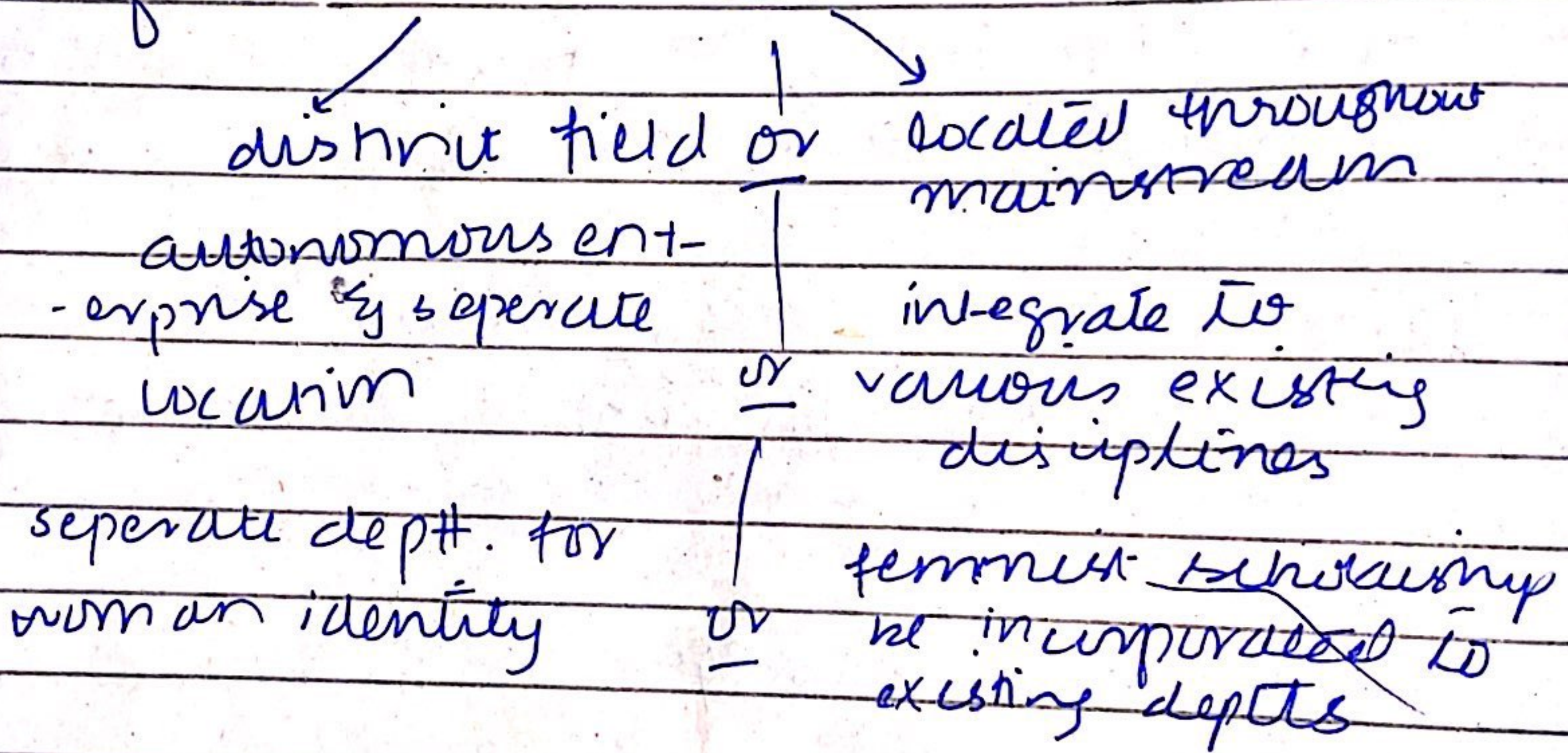


As w/studies programmes established, practitioners debated merits of autonomy v integration debate.

There can be 2 approaches:

1. **mainstreaming** → mainstream women st to existing disciplines  
→ incorporate feminist perspectives into existing curriculum.
2. **autonomous** → creating separate women studies programmes

• v imp > regarding institutionalization of women's studies



TWO debates on location of women studies in unis  
Integrationists vs separatist postures

Debate b/w researchers in centres of disciplines → INTEGRATIONISTS VS AUTONOMISTS

dev. of feminist research is possible via centres

↓  
devlp. possible through the disciplines



# Faculty arguments

## pro - Autonomy

- decisions of hiring resources
- " position in uni position
- cultivate distinct feminist methodologies + theories
- ~~develop~~ position
- develop professional identity
- " power base

Imp to legitimize feminist scholarship & its future

- Integration means w/s will be co-opted by same institutions that excluded women

- w/s is a unit, studied as whole - NOT PARTS
- scattered in other disciplines
- ENTITY IN ITSELF

separatist viewpoint → if pol sci made a separate discipline, it doesn't mean economists, sociologists & philosophers will stop dealing w its issues

- separateness in traditional academic depths confers power, & does NOT siphon it away

## pro - Integration

- autonomy will lead to academic "ghettoization".
- ↳ reduce impact of w/s across institutions
- imp to
- take steps in every discipline
- ↳ challenge gender blindness
- transform disciplinary epistemology & methodology
- include feminist perspective in each canon.

- scholarship & identity to be created in existing disciplines

- w/s when diffuse into "mainstream"

of curriculum → real change → woman centered

- separatism equals segregation

proponents of this position uphold



Goal of both sides: Transform gendered nature of knowledge production.  
One fears "ghettoization" (Integr) & the other "dilution" (Autonomy)

Gloria Bowles & Renate Klein's 1983 anthology *Theories of Women Studies* explores this debate.

w/o necessarily intending it, proponents of separatists program have raised the issue of separatism - an issue that pervades any woman centered reality from all female meeting to philosophical position of abortion as a woman's right.  
[Portugal & Culley, *Gendered Subjects*]

pro-auto → highly unlikely established disciplines will <sup>change</sup> in a pro autonomy way until autonomy of w/s established e.g. Religion depts won't be doing sociology of religion until sociology hadn't establish autonomously w/ own methods & contents  
why separatism perceived positively for traditional disc like sociology & psychology but negatively for w/s.

→ reason: MEN WILL NO LONGER HAVE ACCESS TO WOMEN.

"Access is one of the faces of power. The slave who excludes the master from her but thereby declares herself not a slave."



traditional male content & methodology  
will have access to field → women centered  
values, women method eliminated.

Integration disguises reality of "dilution" /  
assimilation

Advantage of autonomy → feminist perspective  
not lost or de prioritised.

After decade WS is:

- still marginalised.
- has shadow structure
- lacks funds compared to "surface structure  
of traditional subjects".

most extend aut & integ can coexist  
depttment can cultivate feminist  
scholarship + integrate to disciplines

Jean Fox O Burr concluded.

"both a discipline & an interdisciplinary  
field"