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Q: Write a comprehensive note on the autonomy versus integration debate in gender studies.

## Introduction

"To be or not to be - that is the question."

The autonomy versus integration is a long-standing debate within gender studies. It discusses whether gender studies should stay independent or be integrated into other disciplines, such as political science, law, sociology, and literature. This debate emerged in the late 1970s during the institutionalization of women's studies.

## Autonomy: The case for independence

Proponents, especially radical feminists, argue that women

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studies should remain independent. They present the following arguments:

## Key Arguments for Autonomy

### 1-A New way of understanding oppression:

Scholars such as Sandra Cayer, assert that women's studies present a new way of understanding women's oppression. Therefore, it should not be integrated with other male-centric disciplines.

### 2-Feminist Activism and Research:

Renate Duelli Klein asserts that women are responsible for spreading awareness about women's subjugation. Therefore, it is important that feminism has a separate academic space for feminist activism and research.

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### 3- Better Representation of Feminist Expression:

Peggy McIntosh argues that feminists can better express themselves through their own writings, arts, and theories—without the influence of non-feminist disciplines.

### 4- Preservation of Liberation Agenda:

Scholars, such as Susan van Dyne, argue that integration would make the liberation agenda of feminism ineffective. She further asserts that it would dilute its transformative power.

### 5- Visibility and Recognition:

A separate discipline of women's studies will earn it recognition and visibility.

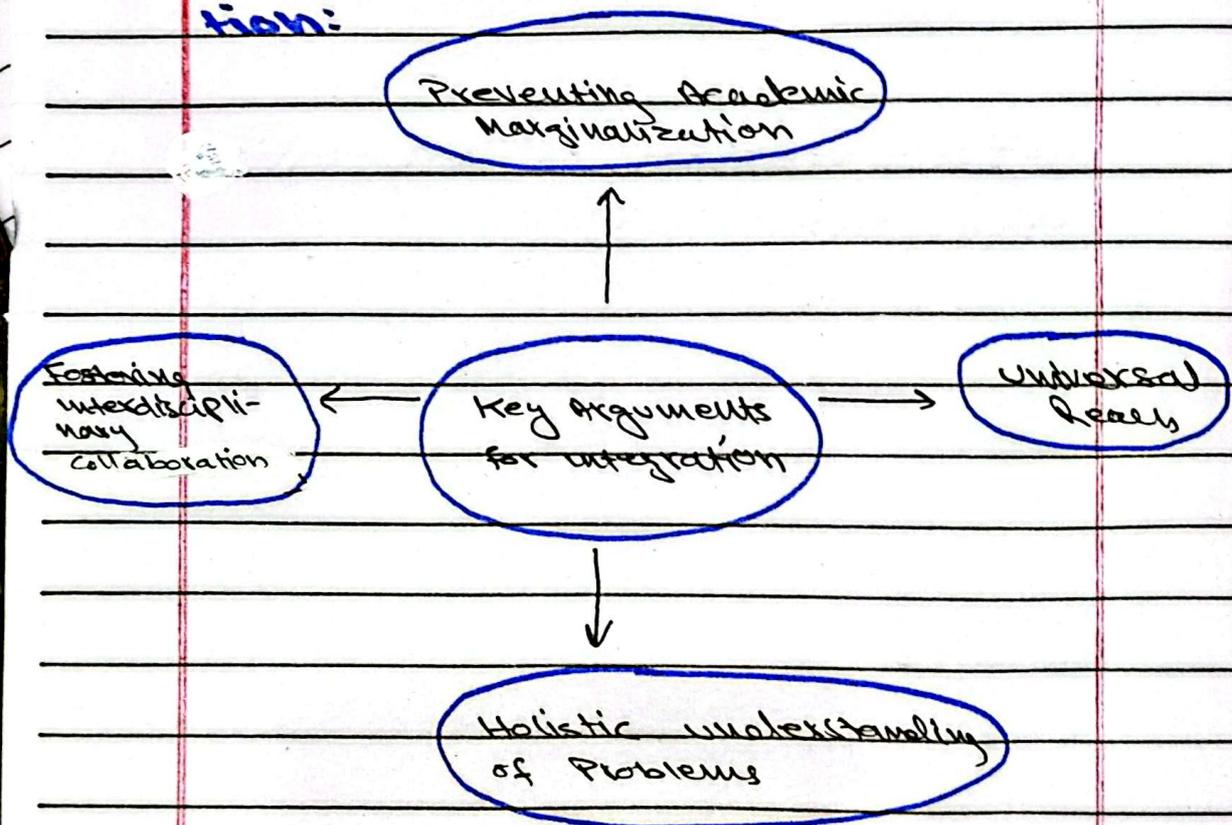
### The Case for Integration:

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Proponents of integration argue that gender studies should be integrated to achieve a holistic understanding and institutional reforms.

### Key Arguments for Integration:



### 1- Preventing Academic Marginalization:

Integrationists contend that mainstreaming gender studies will prevent it from being

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ignored by the society.

## 2-Universal Reach Through other Disciplines:

Merging gender studies with reach even those students who would not otherwise choose gender studies as a specialized course.

## 3-Holistic understanding of ISSUES:

Mainstreaming gender studies with disciplines, such as law, economics, and political science will allow it to develop a holistic understanding of issues including wage gaps, and exclusion of women and other genders from leadership roles.

## 4-Fostering Inter-disciplinary Collaboration:

Merging gender studies with disciplines such as law, sociology,

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and political science, will help in addressing gender related problems. For instance, gender-based violence, exclusion from leadership role, and unequal access to employment require insights from law, sociology, and political science.

### **A Joint Approach: Possible Solution**

Modern scholars hold that autonomy and integration are not mutually exclusive. Gender studies can have distinct, independent department for specialized research. Simultaneously, it can be integrated with other disciplines to spread the feminist narrative to every corner of academia and knowledge.

### **Conclusion:**

In essence, the autonomy versus integration is a long-term

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ling debate within gender studies. Some argue that gender studies should remain independent while others hold it should be integrated.

However, modern scholars believe autonomy and integration can co-exist.