

Abstract:

This paper reviews the major theories and research on feminist technology studies. (1) The early literature of gender division of labor has moved away from asking how technology impacts on women, or whether technology means oppression or liberation. Rather, it emphasizes the intertwining effects between gender and class. We also emphasize that to study women workers in Taiwan's labor-intensive industries; we need to open the black box of their skills to challenge the assumption of their low-skill. (2) Feminist literature has criticized the traditional definition of technology for its association with masculinity, thus opening up such new research fields as domestic technology. By examining the experience of technology among housewives, nurses, secretaries and operators, we analyze whether the introduction of new technology brings more work to women, or offers opportunities to recognize their contribution. (3) To criticize the innovation-centered research agenda, the feminist study of technology has shifted the focus from the female elites to women users. (4) The latest feminist literature emphasizes "the co-production of gender and technology" as its theoretical foundation. We use two useful concepts – "interpretative flexibility" and "masculinity and gender identity" to illuminate this theoretical foundation. (5) Finally, we stress the importance of examining Taiwan's technological development from the postcolonial feminist perspective. We examine whether the technology from the center ignores the local bodies, whether the local agents of modern technology selectively represent the meaning of technology, and whether the gender bias of Euro-American societies travels through technology and integrates with local gender politics. We believe that the perspectives of feminist technology studies can give us a fuller understanding of a technoscientific society and lead to better technology policies.