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Title and subtitle
Beyond Silence. Middle-Aged Women in the 1970's

Abstract
Through a feminist critique of the theories, methods and epistemologies of the social sciences, this book makes visible some of its "silences". Through discussions of and reflections on research processes the book contributes to the development of a self-reflexive social science.
On a more concrete level, it attempts to give voice to some of those who have been silenced in the traditional social sciences: middle-aged women. The women who form the basis of the research study presented here grew up in America in the Depression years, married after the Second World War and, in the 1970's, faced the end of their active mothering role. Processes of continuity and change in these women's lives are discussed. The women are presented at mid-life as "housewives" and "women-in-transition" and their reflections as well as actions are placed in the context of their daily lives, as structured by gendered social relations. These reflections and actions are shown to change over time, revealing how and in what ways the women are themselves active agents in the processes of change and social reproduction. While the middle years are emphasized, early adulthood is discussed as well.
The research study on which the presentation of these middle-aged women is based was longitudinal in nature. Different qualitative research methods were used but central emphasis was given to thematically structured in-depth interviews.

Key words feminist research, social science theory, epistemology, research process, middle-age, continuity, change, socialization, identity, generation, housewife, mothering, marriage, friendship.

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