

## Chapter 10 – Sex and Gender

Courtesy of Stacy Schlepp

### Sex: The Biological Dimension

- **Sex** refers to the biological and anatomical differences between females and males.
  - At the core of these differences is the chromosomal information transmitted at the moment a child is conceived.
    - Mothers contributes an X chromosome and the father either an X (which produces a female embryo) or a y **Primary** chromosome (which produces a Male embryo)
- **Sex Characteristics** is the genitalia used in reproductive process.
- **Secondary Sex Characteristics** are the physical traits (other than reproductive organs) that identify an individual's sex. Usually develop during puberty.

### Hermaphrodites / Transsexuals

- **Hermaphrodite** is a person in whom sexual differentiation is ambiguous or incomplete.
  - They have a combination of male and female genitalia.
- **Transsexual** is a person in whom the sex-related structures of the brain that define gender identity are opposite from the physical sex organs of the person's body.
  - They often feel that they are the opposite sex from that of their sex organs.
- **Transvestite** is a male who lives as a woman or a female who lives as a man but does not alter the genitalia.
  - Tran sexuality may occur in conjunction with homosexuality, but this is frequently not the case.

### Sexual Orientation

- **Sexual Orientation** refers to an individual's preference for emotional-sexual relationships with members of the opposite sex (heterosexuality), the same sex (homosexuality), or both (bisexuality)
- Researchers at the University of Chicago established three criteria for identifying people as homosexual or bisexual.
  - Sexual attraction to persons of one's own gender
  - Sexual involvement with one or more persons of one's own gender
  - Self identification as gay, lesbian or bisexual.
- Transgender describes individuals whose appearance, behavior, or self-identification does not conform to common social rules of gender expression. (i.e. those who cross dress)
- **Homophobia** - extreme prejudice directed at gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and others who are perceived as not being heterosexual.

- **Gender** refers to the culturally and socially constructed differences between females and males found in the meanings, beliefs, and practices associated with "femininity" and "Masculinity."
  - Although biological differences are important, in reality most differences are socially constructed.

### *Microlevel analysis of gender*

- **Gender Role** refers to the attitudes, behavior, and activities that are socially defined as appropriate for each sex and are learned through the socialization process.
- **Gender Identity** is a person's perception of the self as female or male.
  - This is a socialized identity
- **Body Consciousness** is how a person perceives and feels about his or her body.
  - Includes an awareness of social conditions in society that contribute to this self knowledge.

### *Macrolevel analysis of Gender*

- **Gender Institutions** means that gender is one of the major ways by which social life is organized in all sectors of society.
  - Gender is embedded in the images, ideas, and language of a society and is used as a means to divide up work, allocate, resources, and distribute power.
- **Gender Belief System** includes all the ideas regarding masculine and feminine attributes that are held to be valid in a society.
  - Legitimized by religion, science, law and other societal values.

### *The Social Significance of Gender*

- Stereotypes define men as strong, rational, dominant, independent, and less concerned with their appearance. Women are stereotyped as weak, emotional, nurturing, dependent, and anxious about their appearance.
  - The Social significance of gender stereotypes is illustrated by eating problems (anorexia, bulimia, and obesity).
  - Bodybuilding is another gendered experience.
    - The perfect body is objectified in both compulsive dieting and bodybuilding.

### *Sexism*

- **Sexism** is the subordination of one sex, usually female, based on the assumed superiority of the other sex.
- Directed at women it has three components
  - Negative attitudes toward women
  - Stereotypical beliefs that reinforce, complement, or justify the prejudice
  - Discrimination – acts that exclude, distance, or keep women separate.
- Sexism cuts both ways
- **Patriarchy** is a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political, and economic structures are controlled by men.
- **Matriarchy** is a hierarchical system of social organization in which cultural, political, and economic structures are controlled by women.

- Under patriarchy, men are seen as natural heads of households, Presidential candidates, corporate executives, college presidents, etc. Women are seen as subordinates.

### (291 – 295) Gender Stratification in Historical and Contemporary Perspective

- Three factors are important in determining the gendered division of labor in a society:
  - The type of subsistence base
  - The supply of and demand of labor
  - The extent to which women's child-rearing activities are compatible with certain types of work.
- Subsistence refers to the means by which a society gains the basic necessities of life, including food, shelter, and clothing.
- Techno economic base is the level of technology and the organization of the economy in a give society.

#### Hunting and Gathering Societies

- While men hunted for wild game, women gather roots and berries.
  - There is relative equality between men and women.
    - Population size is between 25-30
    - Egalitarian (family)
    - No Surplus
    - Nomadic settlement pattern

#### Horticultural and Pastoral Societies

- Change is caused by the development of hand tools
- Population size is several hundred.
- Family begins socialization
- Pastoralism is the domestication of large animals to provide food. Done by men.
  - Polygyny –is the marriage of one man to multiple wives – contributes to power differences between women and men.
    - Menstrual Taboos – women are separated into different huts based on the duration of their monthly flows.
    - Bridewealth turns women into property as they can be bought and sold.

#### Agrarian Societies

- Change is caused by the use of animal-drawn plows and equipment
  - Women are excluded form theses tasks because they are viewed as too weak for the work and because child-care responsibilities are considered incompatible with the full-time labor.
- Population size is several thousand
- Cities develop
- Family begins to lose significance
- Men who own land or herds is the control of surplus
- Purdah found primarily among Hindus and Muslims, requires the seclusion of women, extreme modesty in apparel, and visible subordination of women to men.

- Genital Mutilation is a surgical procedure performed on young girls as a method of sexual control. Involves either the sewing closed of the vagina until marriage or the cutting of the clitoris and labia.
  - Still practiced in more the twenty-five countries.

#### Industrial Societies

- Change due to the invention of the steam engine
  - Factory or mechanized production has replaced agriculture as the major form of economic activity.
- Population in the millions
- Cities / urbanization
- Men who own means of production is the control of surplus

#### Postindustrial Society

- Invention of computer and development of “high-tech” society
- Corporate shareholders and high-tech entrepreneurs control the surplus
- Billions of people
- Most people live in or around cities
- Division of Labor
- Households are headed by women with no male

### (295 – 302) Gender and Socialization

- Many parents prefer boys to girls because of stereotyped ideas about the relative importance of males and females to the future of the family and society

#### Gender Socialization by Parents

- From birth, parents act toward children on the basis of the child's sex.
- Children's toys reflect their parents' gender expectations.
  - Gender-appropriate toys for boys include computer games, trucks and other vehicles, sports equipment, and war toys such as guns and soldiers.
- Even chores are based on gender, when children are old enough to do such maintenance tasks.
  - Children from middle or upper-income families are less likely to be assigned gender-linked chores than children from lower-income backgrounds.
- African American mothers are less likely to socialize their daughters into roles as subordinates; instead, they are likely to teach them a critical posture that allows them to cope with contradictions.

#### Peers and Gender Socialization

- Peers help children learn prevailing gender-role stereotypes, as well as gender-appropriate and gender-inappropriate behavior.
- Children are more socially acceptable to their peers when they conform to implicit societal norms governing the “appropriate” ways that girls and boys should act I social situations and what prohibitions exist in such cases.

- Male bonding that occurs during adolescence is believed to reinforce masculine identity and to encourage gender stereotypical attitudes and behavior.

#### Teachers, Schools, and Gender Socialization

- Teachers provide important messages about gender through both the formal content of classroom assignments and informal interactions with students.
- One of the messages that teachers may communicate to students is that boys are more important than girls.
- **Gender bias** consists of showing favoritism toward one gender over the other.
  - Researchers find that teachers devote more time, effort, and attention to boys than to girls.
- Teacher-student interactions influence not only students learning but also their self-esteem
  - Girls self esteem is undermined by:
    - A relative lack of attention from teachers
    - Sexual harassment by male peers
    - The stereotyping and invisibility of females in textbooks, especially in science and math texts
    - Test bias based on assumptions about the relative importance of quantitative and visual-spatial ability, as compared with verbal ability, that restricts some girl's chances of being admitted to the most prestigious colleges and being awarded scholarships.
- Many teachers use gender as a way of organizing students, resulting in unnecessary competition between females and males.
- College instructors often pay more attention to men than women.
  - Women college professors encourage a more participatory classroom environment and do a better job of including both women and men in their interactions.

#### Sports and Gender Socialization

- Studies indicate that boys are socialized to participate in highly competitive, rule oriented games with a larger number of participants than games played by girls.
- Girls are socialized to play exclusively with others of their own age, in groups of two or three.

#### Mass Media and Gender Socialization

- Critics argue that the media simply reflect existing gender roles in society, but others point out that the media have a uniquely persuasive ability to shape ideas.
- Males are more aggressive, constructive, and direct, and are rewarded for their actions
- Females are depicted as acting deferential toward other people or as manipulating them through helplessness or seductiveness to get their way.
- In advertising, if people embrace traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, their personal and social success is assured; if they purchase the right products and services, they can enhance their appearance and gain power over other people.

- Men are more likely to be shown away from home or outside.
- Women are more likely to be located, and doing domestic tasks.

#### Adult Gender Socialization

- Double standard of aging affects more women than men.

#### (302 – 306) Contemporary Gender Inequality

- Women experience gender inequality as a result of economic, political, and educational discrimination.

#### Gendered Division of Paid Work

- Gender segregated work refers to the concentration of women and men in different occupations, jobs, and places of work.
  - Has declined in the 1970's
  - Affects both men and women
- Labor Market Segmentation is the division of jobs into categories with distinct working conditions. This results in women having separate and unequal jobs.
- Most women work in lower paying, less prestigious jobs, with little opportunity for advancement.
- Job segregation is structural; it does not occur simply because individual workers have different abilities, motivations, and material needs.

#### Pay Equity (Comparable Worth)

- **Pay Gap** is the disparity between women's and men's earnings
  - Calculated by dividing women's earnings by men's to yield a percentage, also known as the earnings ratio.
    - The pay gap is even greater for women of color.
- **Comparable Worth** (pay equity) is the belief that wages ought to reflect the worth of a job, not the gender or race of the worker.
- Men suffer a loss of wages in female-dominated jobs such as nurse, secretary, and elementary schoolteacher.

#### Paid Work and Family Work

- Before the industrial revolution domesticity kept many middle and upper class women out of the work force. Only working-class and poor women had to deal with the work/family conflict.
- Now the typical married woman combines paid work in the labor force and family work as a homemaker, yet the sexual division of labor in the family remains essentially unchanged.
- The Sandwich generation – those women caught between the needs of their young children and of their elderly relatives who they also care for.

### Perspectives on Gender Stratification

#### Functionalist and Neoclassical Economic Perspectives

- Functionalist theory views men and women as having distinct roles that are important for the survival of the family and society.

#### The Importance of Traditional Gender Roles

- Husband performs instrumental tasks, while the wife assumes the expressive tasks.

### Human Capital Model

- Individuals vary widely in the amount of human capital they bring to the labor market.
  - Human capital is acquired by education and job training; it is the source of a person's productivity and can be measured in terms of the return on the investment and the cost.
    - From this perspective what individuals earn is the result of their own choices.

### Evaluation of Functionalist and Neoclassical Economic Perspectives

- Parson's analysis suggests that it is natural and perhaps inevitable to have a gendered division of labor.
  - Yet the current economic structure is forcing these roles to combine, as the male is not the single bread winner any more.
  - Functionalist perspective also does not look at the structure of society that makes educational and occupational opportunities more available to some than to others.
  - Finally, it does not consider the fact that tasks assigned to women and to men are unequally valued by society.

### Conflict Perspectives

- Holds that gendered division of labor within families and in the workplace results from male control of and dominance over women and resources.
- The person who has the most power controls the situation, however, in most cases it is still the male.

Men who control the means of production, not only gain control over property and the distribution of goods but also gain power over women.

### Feminist Perspectives

- **Feminism** is the belief that women and men are equal and should be valued equally and have equal rights.
- Both men and women can both be feminists, as they have much in common as they seek to gain a better understanding of the causes and consequences of gender inequality.

### Liberal Feminism

- Gender inequality is equated with equality of opportunity.
- This approach notes the importance of gender-role socialization and suggests that changes need to be made in what children learn from their families, teachers, and the media about appropriate masculine and feminine attitudes and behaviors.

### Radical Feminism

- Male domination causes all forms of human oppression, including racism and classism.
- Trace the roots of patriarchy to women's childbearing and child-rearing responsibilities, which make them dependent on men.
- From women's condition to improve patriarchy must be abolished.

### Socialist Feminism

- Women's oppression results from their dual roles as paid and unpaid workers in a capitalist economy.

- The only way to eliminate capitalism is to develop a socialist economy that would bring equal pay and rights to women.

### Multicultural Feminism

- Race, class, and gender are forces that simultaneously oppress African American women.
- Aida Hurtado
  - Distinct differences exist between the world views of white women who participate in the women's movement and many Chicanos, who have a strong sense of identity with their own communities.
  - Politics of inclusion – create social structures that lead to positive behavior and bring more people into a dialogue about how to improve social life and reduce inequalities.

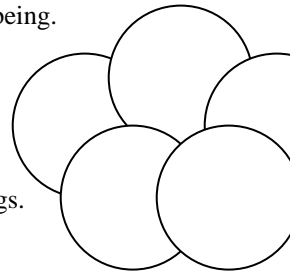
### Evaluation of Conflict and Feminist Perspectives

- Feminist and Conflict theorists have been criticized for their emphasis on male dominance without a corresponding analysis of the ways in which some men may also be oppressed by patriarchy and capitalism.

**Intersectionality** refers to the different social constructed categories that intersect and affect a human being.

- Race – Ethnicity
- Sex – Gender
- Social class
- Age
- Citizenship

The body gets overlaid with cultural meanings.



**Rule of Hypodecent** – people will assume the social position with the least power. Also known as the one-drop rule.

### Matrix of Dominaton

### Racial formation

Identity Politics – People who attempt to make and unconscious identity conscious and increase public awareness.