Gender

Introduction to Sociology

Sex

- Sex refers to the biological characteristics.
  - Primary sex characteristics.
    - Organs related to reproduction: vagina or penis (those parts of our anatomy are covered-up).
  - Secondary sex characteristics.
    - Physical distinctions
      - Males: Larger muscles, lower voices, more body hair, taller, etc.
      - Females: Breasts, more fatty tissue, broader hips.

Gender

- Behaviors and attitudes a group considers appropriate for males and females.
- Social characteristics
  - Females: Cooperative, caring, nurturing... what else?
  - Males: Competitive, driven, less emotional... what else?
- Globally, gender is a device by which society controls its members.

Our Biology

- There are biological imperatives that influence the differences in gender.
  - Brenda to David.
  - Testosterone levels in aggressive males.
- Biological women can, with the assistance of biological men, give birth to new humans.
- Biological women who have just given birth can breast feed their new human.
- Gender is not simply a matter of procreation however.
New Humans (AKA Babies)

- Born a particular biological sex results in immediate gender designations.
  - Naming, clothing, colors.

- Children begin receiving gender information upon their birth.

- By the time they reach the age of 2 to 3-years-old they already have a fairly firm understanding of the dominate gender ideology.
  - The process of gendering is legitimated by religion, law, science, and society's associated values.

Gender: Social Construct

- Third (or Fourth) Sex
  - Berdaches or Two-Spirit
  - Manly-hearted woman

- Cross-cultural gender expectations.
  - Margaret Mead
    - Arapesh - both sexes would be described as feminine.
    - Mundugumor - both sexes would be described as masculine.
    - Tchambuli - gender roles are reversed.
  - George Murdock
    - Surveyed over 200 societies and found wide-spread agreement concerning which tasks are feminine or masculine.
Gender Bending

- Bending gender rules and/or passing between genders does not erode, but maintains dominant gender ideology.

- Clothing, while covering up the biological parts that differentiate the sexes, serves to display our gender.

- Men’s styles vs. Women’s styles.
  - Hair, make-up, color of clothes, shoes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hair</th>
<th>Makeup</th>
<th>Shoes</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Woman 1</td>
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<td>Men</td>
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Marked

- Feminine Performances
  - “Marked” from linguistics.
    - To “mark” a word is to attach meaning beyond / in addition to words known meaning (i.e. visit, visited or “s” to indicate plural).
    - To be “unmarked” is to have meaning that goes without saying.
      - It is what it is.
  - Men can choose to be “unmarked”
  - There are no “unmarked” women.
    - Coherent styles
    - Miss, Mrs., or Ms.
    - Women’s sports.
Doing Gender

- **Masculine performances**
  - Masking vulnerability.
  - Ritual (getting ready and going out).
  - “Girl-watching”
    - Normalized as “play”
      - Not just normative, but required.
    - “Boys will be boys”
    - Shared masculine identities.
  - Power
    - Homo-social (male-gendered) and heterosexual power.
    - Balancing interested and too interested.
    - Benevolent sexism
    - Hostile sexism

**Gender Inequality**

- Around the world and in the United States non-males are persistently the recipients of discrimination and abuse/violence.
- Patriarchal History
  - Centered on human reproduction.
  - Early society’s survival was dependent on birthing a lot of children.
  - This restricted female productivity and participation in society.
  - Males were able to garner power and prestige from their exploits.
  - Female activities were necessary for survival, but routine, dull, and taken-for-granted.
Gender Inequality

- Health Care
  - Women’s chest pain not taken as seriously.
  - Hysterectomies

- Education
  - Men earn 95 percent of the associate degrees in the “masculine” fields.
  - Women more likely to go into the “family and consumer sciences”.
  - Women outnumber men in college (undergraduate programs).

- Workplace
  - Women made up 20% of the labor force in 1890.
  - Women now represent 47% of the labor force.
  - Women make, on average, 72% of what men are paid.

Feminism

- Sociological Feminism
  - The view that culture determines gender.
  - Gender-based inequality exists.
    - It harms both men and women (though, in most measurable ways, women more).

- Political Feminism
  - Liberal Feminism - Individuals are free to develop their own talents and interests.
  - Socialist Feminism - Capitalism concentrates power in the hands of a small number of men.
  - Radical Feminism - Equality will be achieved only through the elimination of gender itself.
Violence

- Sexual Harassment
  - unwelcome sexual attention at work or at school, which may affect work performance, or create a hostile work environment.

- Forcible Rape
  - U.S. rate is .52-1 per 1,000 females.
  - Most victims know their attackers.

- Date (acquaintance) Rape
  - Studies indicate 1.7 percent of college students have been raped.
  - 1.1 percent have been the victim of attempted rape.

- Murder
  - Men are more likely to be murders.

Gender Roles

- Where do we learn this stuff?
  - Family
  - Peers
  - School
  - Media (Which is just reflecting our values).