

Gender, Status & Power

Chapter 2

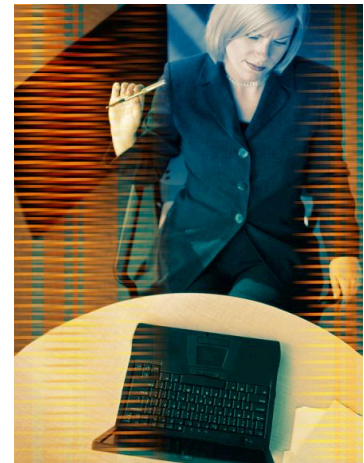


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WHAT IS GENDER?

- Early conceptions:
 - *Sex*—biological differences in genetic composition and reproductive anatomy and function (Unger, 1979b)
 - *Gender*—characteristics and traits considered socio-culturally appropriate for males and females; traits that make up masculinity and femininity (Unger, 1979b)



WHAT IS GENDER?

- Current conception:
 - *Gender*—Classification system that influences access to power and resources and shapes the relations among women and men

GENDER SHAPES SOCIETIES and CULTURES



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- Most societies are *hierarchical*—they have one or more dominant groups and other subordinate groups
- *Power*—the ability to control the outcomes of others by withholding or providing resources

GENDER SHAPES SOCIETIES & CULTURES

- *Status*—social standing that elicits respect
- Most societies are *patriarchal*—a social system in which more power and higher status are allocated to men



Who Has The Power?

- Men make the laws
 - 2002 United Nations
 - Women consist of only 14% of members of national parliaments and congresses worldwide.
 - Jewish, Islamic and Christian traditions
 - View deity as masculine
 - Women as subservient
 - Limit women's participation



Who Has The Power?

- Men dominate the Media

- Men have more wealth and leisure time
 - Earn less than men
 - Much of the work is unpaid (childcare, farming)



Who Has The Power?

- Worldwide women have less access to education
 - Worldwide literacy rates are lower for women
 - Men have more political and military power in most societies.
 - In U.S. 84% of police officers and 86% of the military are men



Justifying Gender Inequality

- Dominate groups use a variety of tactics to keep power & control.
- *Legitimizing myths*—attitudes, values, and beliefs that serve to justify hierarchical social practices



Justifying Gender Inequality Stereotypes

- ❑ Different from men
- ❑ Evil and treacherous
- ❑ Controlling
- ❑ Incompetent
- ❑ Helpless
- ❑ Overemotional
- ❑ Fragile
- ❑ Pure
- ❑ Self-sacrificing



JUSTIFYING GENDER INEQUALITY

- *Prejudice*—negative attitude or feeling toward a person because of her/his membership in a particular group
 - *Sexism*—prejudice on the basis of sex or gender
 - *Heterosexism*—negative attitudes or beliefs about gay, lesbian, or bisexual people



JUSTIFYING GENDER INEQUALITY

- *Oppression*—widespread and systematic pattern of prejudice and discrimination

JUSTIFYING GENDER INEQUALITY

- *Discrimination*—
treating others unfairly
because of their
membership in a
particular group
 - *Sex discrimination*
—unfair treatment
because of sex or
gender



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Gender Shapes Social Interactions

Cognitive Impact of Gender

- First characteristic people notice about an individual is their gender.
 - This leads people to treat others as members of a group rather than as individuals.
 - When gender cue are ambiguous people resort to puzzle solving to figure out the correct gender.

GENDER SHAPES SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

- *Intergroup bias effect*—tendency to perceive one's own social group more positively than other groups
- *Outgroup homogeneity effect*—tendency to characterize members of other groups as all being alike and having similar qualities

GENDER SHAPES SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

- Low-status outgroups may be treated with *paternalistic prejudice*—they are seen as needing guidance or to be taken care of by the dominant group
- High-status outgroups may be treated with *envious prejudice*—grudging acknowledgement of their competence along with dislike

GENDER AS A PRESENTATION OF SELF



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- Self-presentation—*
acting in a way that others expect you to act.
- Both men and women present themselves according to the audience.
 - Self-presentation is a strategic choice.

GENDER AS A PRESENTATION OF SELF

- Gender can become a *self-fulfilling prophecy* —expectations can make the expected events come true with powerful and long-lasting effects



“Doing Gender”

- Gender is a social performance, it is something people do.
- Often occurs without conscious thought or reflection.
- Doing gender is also doing status.
- Women are doing subordination.



“Doing Gender”

- In conversation subordinate groups may be treated disrespectfully.
- Research shows that men use different conversational tactics with men and women.



“Doing Gender”

- *Talking down, ordering, silencing*—men use these tactics more often when talking with women than with men and more than women do with each other
 - *Intrusive interruptions*—active attempts to end the other speaker’s turn and take over the conversation

Talking Down, Ordering Around, and Silencing

- Women who interrupt risk social disapproval, especially when they interrupt a man.
- Interrupting a man is violating a social order which gives men more status.

Talking Down, Ordering Around, and Silencing

- James & Drakich 1993 reviewed 63 studies over 40 years and found:
- Overall men talked more than women.
- Men tend to talk more in meetings, classrooms and problem-solving groups, although they do so in normal conversation as well.



Nonverbal Messages

- *Nonverbal messages*—high status people tend to have more nonverbal privileges and fewer nonverbal obligations; they take up more space, invade the space of others and touch them and their possessions



Nonverbal Messages

- Nancy Henley 1973, 1977 theorized that when men and women interact, men's nonverbal behavior is of high-status, dominate individuals while women's nonverbal behavior is like that of lower-status, submissive individuals.



Nonverbal Messages

- Women tend to smile more even though the smile does not reflect their feelings.
- When high status people smile it is because they are feeling good.
- Low status people may smile in order to please the person they are interacting with.



Nonverbal Messages

- *Visual dominance*—tendency for high-status people to look at subordinates while speaking to them but look away when it is the subordinate's turn to talk



Nonverbal Messages

Visual dominance

- Looking at conversational partner when speaking conveys respect and interest.
- The more status a person has the less they need to look at the other person.
- High-status people look at their subordinate while speaking to them but tend to look away when the subordinate speaks.



Impact of Sexism

□ *Hassles and stressors*

- Gender-role stereotyping
- Demeaning remarks
- Sexual objectification

Hassles & Stressors

Impact of Sexism

- Both men and women experience sexist remarks.
- For women the remarks are more personal.
- For men the remarks are more general, for men as groups.

Hassles & Stressors

Impact of Sexism

Sexism impacts an individual's well-being.

- Higher anger
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Lower self-esteem
- Decrease comfort in social situations



Hassles & Stressors

Impact of Sexism

- Sexist incidents have a greater negative impact than do other life events on women's psychological and physical health.

Hassles & Stressors

Impact of Sexism

Klonoff & Landrine 1995 Survey found:

99% of women had experienced sexist events in their lifetime.

97% had experienced it within the past year.

Most common:

- sexist jokes, 94%
- lack of respect 83%
- Called sexist names 82%



Double Binds

- Subordinate status creates double binds.
- Double binds create no win situations.
- Women often face double bind situations, because of their subordinate status.
- If you act like dominate group you are criticized for acting outside of your group.



Double Binds

- Gender is an asset for men because masculinity is linked with perceptions of dominance, competence and normative behavior.
- Gender is a liability for women because dominate, masterful behavior is not valued in women.



Double Binds

Example: Assertiveness

1. Assertiveness is associated with male behavior.
2. Women who behave assertively are criticized.
3. Double bind to stand up for yourself or to be disliked or viewed as pushy.



Double Binds

Gender Management Strategies

Behavior women adopt to soften their impact so that they don't appear to threatening.



Double Binds

Jean Baker Miller 1986

- Examined the relationship between power and feminine personality.
 - Theorizes that women develop certain personality characteristics that are in keeping with subordinate status.
 - Women develop characteristic that are useful and pleasing to dominate group.
 - Women learn to accept their inequality.

GENDER SHAPES INDIVIDUALS

- *Gender-typed*— ascribing to one's self the traits, behaviors, and roles normative for people of one's sex in the culture



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Denial of personal discrimination

- —people are very likely to acknowledge that discrimination happens (on the basis of sex, race, sexuality, etc.), but are less likely to acknowledge that it has happened to them

□ Why??



SEXIST ATTITUDES

- *Ambivalent sexism*—feelings of both hostility and benevolence toward women
 - *Hostile sexism*—belief that women are inferior and are threatening to take over man’s rightful (dominant) place
 - *Benevolent sexism*—belief that women are special beings to be protected and cherished
- *Social dominance orientation (SDO)*—how much an individual supports the domination of “superior” groups over “inferior” groups



SEXIST ATTITUDES

- *Neosexism*—a version of contemporary sexism that reflects the conflict between egalitarian values and residual negative feelings and beliefs about women
- *Modern sexism*—beliefs that equality has more or less been achieved, and that whatever inequalities may remain are not due to discrimination



THE GENDER SYSTEM & VIOLENCE

- One third of women around the world have been physically assaulted, coerced into sexual activity, and subjected to severe emotional abuse (Heise, Ellsberg & Gottemmoeller, 1999).
- One third of all U.S. women report having been physically harmed by acquaintances or partners (Gazmarian et al., 2000).
- One in every six (15%) U.S. women have been raped (Gazmarian et al., 2000).

THE GENDER SYSTEM & VIOLENCE

- One quarter of U.S. women have experienced childhood sexual abuse (Gazmarian et al., 2000).
- Rape and other violent acts against women are widespread in war zones and refugee camps (Mollica et al., 1993).
- About 9% of cultures have practiced sex-biased infanticide (Hrdy, 1988).

THE GENDER SYSTEM & VIOLENCE

- Female genital mutilation is practiced in at least 28 African countries and parts of Asia (Abusharaf, 1998).
- In many countries, over half of female murder victims are killed by a current or former partner. In the U.S., this accounts for 42% (Neft & Levine, 1997).