



7

Gender and Sexuality

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of Chapter 7 is to provide you with anchors in sociological thinking and theory concerning gender and sexuality. As sociologists, we need to think about how gender and sexuality matter in everyday life and how they intersect with other dimensions of social structures including race/ethnicity, class, and age.

It is important to understand that gender and sexuality can be seen as critical vantage points to view the structure of society. This means that gender can be used to critique existing social structures, especially from the woman's point of view. Next, a key component of sociology is recognizing that gender and sexuality are social constructions. Gender is not biological—sex is. Therefore, gender traits such as what it means to be feminine or masculine are simply what society has come to expect of each gendered role. Subsequently, gender is also realized and structured into social roles and social institutions. This is shown where males and females are expected to conform to their gender roles in order to function within the society. Those who comply are rewarded, while those who go against the norm are punished. Lastly, gender and sexuality are relations of difference and inequality. This is very clearly based on what has been presented in much of society to date, with patriarchy being the dominant structure. The ideologies of presenting one gender as superior have structured society to give power and provisions to men.

The chapter then covers the gendered aspects of our lives in school, work, and our homes. Each section shows how gender relations have been changing in recent times, with schools being tailored to both male and females. In the area of the labour force, women have been able to more fully enter into the workforce due to their education. Finally, in the family, the work that has traditionally been

characterized as “women’s work” is now seeing a shift to where both parents are responsible for the housework and raising children. Of course, we are nowhere near equality in terms of gender. Schools still have disciplines that are male-dominated and there is still inequality in the workplace through harassment, pay equity, and gender-based biases.

KEY TERMS

Essence	Heterosexist	Sexism
Gender division of domestic labour	Homophobia	Sexuality
Gender hegemony	Homosexual	Trans
Governmentality	Interlocking/intersectional analysis	Transgressive sexualities
Hegemonic masculinity	Organizational sexuality	Transphobia
Heterocentric	Patriarchy	Undoing
Heteronormativity	Racialization	

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between sex and gender? (pp. 156–157)
2. How might a bar be a space of hypermasculinity and hyperfemininity? (p. 160)
3. What were the two serious consequences of sociology being a male-centred discipline? (p. 157)
4. What is a two-earner family? (p. 166)
5. What is the White Ribbon Campaign? (p. 169)
6. How do globalizing processes bring a double-sided dimension to gendered and sexual identities? (p. 167)
7. How do gendered divisions of labour present themselves in Canadian households? (p. 167)
8. What type of gender shift has occurred in schooling in Canada? (p. 163)
9. How is forcing women to wear “sexy outfits” as part of a work uniform discriminatory or a form of sexual harassment? (p. 166)
10. How can youth be a key source for change in Canada concerning equality within our society? (p. 169)

READINGS AND WEBSITES

Kimmel, Michael, Aronson, Amy, and Amy Kaler (eds). (2008). *The Gendered Society Reader*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

This reader is comprised of over 40 articles from various authors. The book is especially useful for those wanting to understand gender relations in a broad, yet specific, light. Major themes include biological arguments about gender, cultural constructions of gender, social constructions of gender, gender and the family, gender and the classroom, gender and the workplace, the gendered body, gendered intimacies, and the gender of violence.

Spencer, Dale. (2011). *Ultimate Fighting and Embodiment: Violence, Gender and Mixed Martial Arts*. New York and London: Routledge.

Spencer's book utilizes an ethnographic the sociology of sport and attempts to view mixed martial arts (MMA) through a sociological perspective with emphasis on the body, gender, and sexuality. In the first parts of his book, Spencer recounts his time training at an MMA training facility and his immersion into this culture. The topics he then includes are on pain and masculinity, since MMA is usually associated with violence and men. In addition, he examines how homosociality and homoeroticism are negotiated in this culture and the effects on the body and displays of emotions, which are how hyper-masculinity is presented.

We Are Equals. (March 7 2011). "Daniel Craig, 007 cross dresses to support equality." Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aC8Ls-5nRxM>

Actor Daniel Craig cross-dresses to raise awareness against violence toward women and in support of equality. The video made by We Are Equals to celebrate International Women's Day was originally aired in 2011.

The Passionate Eye: Growing Up Trans

<http://www.cbc.ca/passionateeye/m/episodes/growing-up-trans>

This CBC program examines the complicated and often controversial treatments now available to gender non-conforming and transgender children.

Egale Canada Human Rights Trust. (2015). *Egale Canada*. [Website]. Retrieved from <http://egale.ca/>

Egale Canada is an organization that advances equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified people and their families across Canada.