

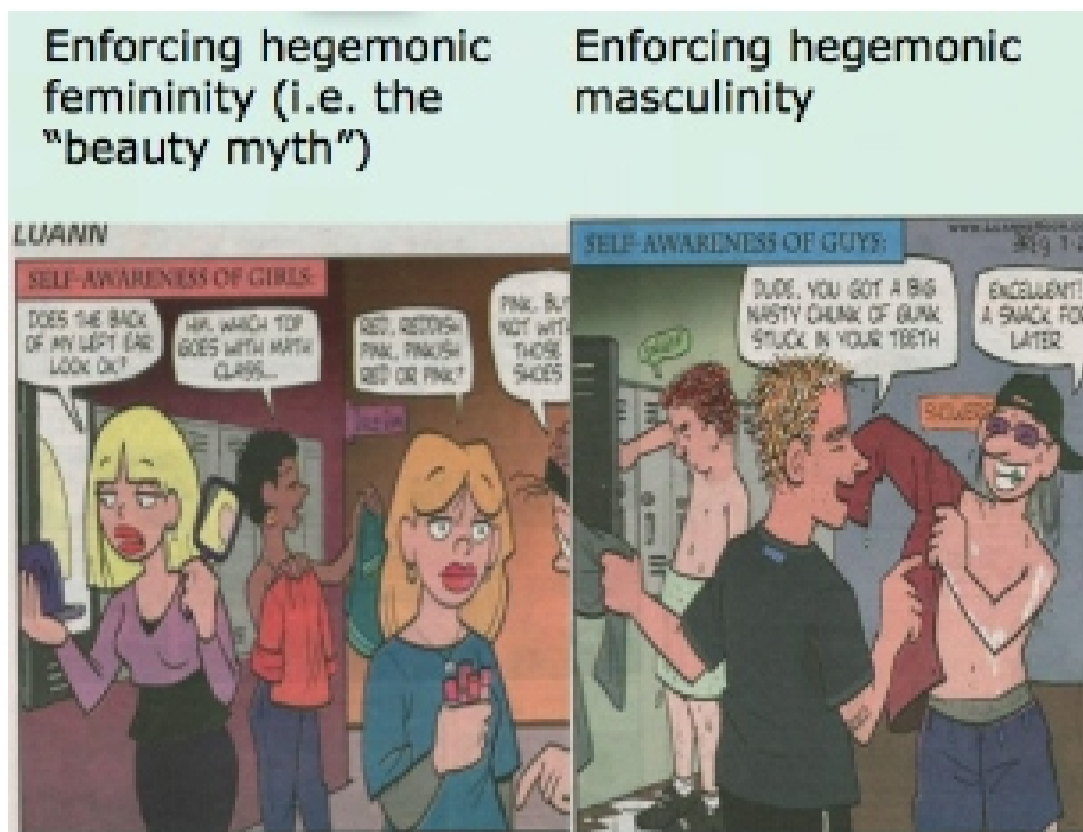
## Lecture Notes

2-24-14

- Sociological Perspective on Gender
- Some vocabulary: sex, gender, and sexuality
- The Constructionist Perspective
- Constructionism vs. Essentialism
- Elements of Gender Constructs
- Gender – Cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity
- Sex – Presumed\* biological distinctions between men and women
  - \* Intersexed individuals and individuals who identify as transgender complicated the idea that “sex” solely refers to “men” and “women.”
- A lot of people use the term “gender” when they really mean “sex.”
  - “Gender” ≠ “Sex”
- We’re not born with “gender.”
- Gender is a construct.
  - Masculinity and femininity are social agreements, not ontological facts.
- What does it mean to be “constructed?” What does it mean to be a “construct?”
  - Pants are a social construct. People come to an agreement about what are and are not “pants.”
  - Thinness as a feminine ideal is a social construct. People come to an agreement about ideal body types. This changes over time.
  - The color pink as inherently feminine is a social construct. People come to an agreement about markers of femininity.
- Gender Essentialism - The belief in hard-wired, essential differences between men and women that stem from in-born, biological, and evolutionary distinctions.
- There’s nothing in *inherently* masculine or manly about gambling. As women attain economic and social parity with men, we will see a rise in female gamblers.
- Sociologists tend to reject gender essentialism because it is ahistorical. Essentialist arguments fail to account for historical change.
- Sociologists tend to reject gender essentialism because it downplays cultural factors.
- Gender Constructionism
- Elements of Society that Construct Gender: History & biology, social structure, socialization, culture
- History & Biology – sets limits and possibilities
- Social Structure – work, economy, law, politics
- Socialization – learning gender from parents and other “agents of socialization”; helps establish self-fulfilling prophecies and gender ideologies
- Culture – messaging and images; establishes hegemonic standards for men and women

2-26-14

- **Hegemony** – Implies dominance of one group over another. The reason we don’t simply say “dominance” is because hegemony describes a condition where the subordinate group is dependent upon the powerful group, and in some way buys into the criteria of judgment or the culture set forth by the majority group.



- **Resocialization** - Preexisting roles, identities, and norms are changed in a new environment
- **Agents of Socialization** - Individuals, groups, and other elements of the environment that impart values, norms, and ideology to individuals (e.g. parents, educators, peers, and mass media).
- What Does Gender Socialization Do?
  - self-fulfilling prophecies
  - institutional discrimination
  - glass ceilings
- **Self-fulfilling prophecy** - A prediction that causes itself to be true.
  - Ex: Girls are bad at math => Don't study => Bad math scores
- **Institutional Discrimination** - discrimination that has been a part of the structures, processes and procedures of organizations.
- **Glass Ceiling** - Invisible and unbreakable barriers to economic advancement face by otherwise qualified women and racial and ethnic minorities.

3-3-14

- The term “socialization” describes the process of social learning. Humans learn how to behave and act through socialization. Socialization occurs throughout the course of a human’s life, but early infancy is a critical period of socialization. All humans (except for so-called “feral children”) experience socialization.
- Gender socialization, learning to fulfill the cultural expectations of manhood and womanhood, typically starts immediately after birth. Sociologists show how gender socialization contributes to sex inequality (inequality between men and women) through the creation of self-fulfilling prophecies for so-called “men’s work” and “women’s work.”
- There are multiple approaches to study gender, sex, and sexuality. Sociologists often focus on inequality and power differences between men and women. Sociologists often study these inequalities with a social constructionist framework.
- The social constructionist framework does not see gender as the simple or inevitable fulfillment of biological, genetic, or evolutionary drives. Instead, different components of our society produce and come to an agreement about what it means to act and live as a real man or a real woman.

- Different components of our society “construct” gender. **Socialization constructs gender.**
  - (e.g. a newborn girl is put in a pink blanket; a son is encouraged to study dinosaurs and daughter is encouraged to play house).
- **Culture constructs gender.**
  - Watching movies and wanting to be as thin as Kristen Stewart or as muscular as Taylor Lautner; advertising that associates femininity with thinness).
- **Social structure constructs gender.**
  - The ratio of men to women in Congress; the wage gap; feminization of poverty)
- **Women at a Higher Risk of Falling Below the Poverty Line Compared to Men**
  - 2011: Women 34 percent more likely to be poor than men
  - 2010: Women 29 percent more likely to be poor than men
- Hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity refer to the dominant or prevailing definitions of manhood and womanhood. Hegemonic masculinity and femininity are social constructs. They change over time and vary cross-culturally.
- Sociologists and social critics show how hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity produce harmful outcomes.
  - The beauty standards embodied in hegemonic femininity help explain high rates of eating disorders among women. The aggressiveness inherent in hegemonic masculinity helps explain high rates of violent crime among men.)
- The sociological approach to understanding gender and sex differences differs from the gender essentialism. Gender essentialism (often expressed in sociobiology, evolutionary psychology, and/or mass media) explains sex & gender as a product of evolutionary drives, genetics, and brain chemistry.
- A Gender Ideology: “femininity = domesticity”
- A Gender Ideology: “Women are naturally domestic”

<b>The Holts</b>	
<b>Social Structure</b>	<b>Gender Strategies</b>
middle-class	upstairs/downstairs myth
employment opportunities for Nancy	passive resistance dog care
<b>Gender Ideologies</b>	withholding sex
Mrs. Egalitarian	
Mr. Transitional	

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