

Sociology 265H1F

Gender and Society

Bonnie Fox

My Office Hour: Tuesday, 3:00-4:00

725 Spadina, Room 382

Spencer's Office Hour: Tues. 11:00-12:00

ESSAY: Due next week!

Week 4: The Social Construction of Gender II: "Doing Gender"

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I. The Importance of Socialization: Learning Gender Competence

II. Problems with Socialization Arguments

A. On Gendered Individuals (the products of socialization)

(1) Girls and boys: not always treated differently

Barrie Thorne, *Gender Play*: (a) critique of the assumption of "pink & blue cultures" or different treatment all the time. Context matters.

(b) gender is an idea, sometimes salient, sometimes not.

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- (2) Children aren't passive in the learning process
- (3) There are multiple masculinities & femininities

R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* – including “hegemonic masculinity” (associated with powerful men) & “complicit masculinity” (exhibiting a range of characteristics) & “subordinated masculinity” & “marginalized masculinity” and multiple femininities. And ‘gender benders’

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- (4) The assumption of stable personality characteristics ignores how behaviour changes with changed social contexts, and that we think about our identity (especially as we grow up)
- (5) The evidence: there are few sizeable (large) gender differences (Janet Hyde)

B. The Need to Understand Social Organization, and Social Institutions, to Understand Gender Inequality (which is not just a matter of individuals' behaviour, characteristics, or choices). Socialization: only about the individual.

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III. An Alternative Argument/Suggestion

- A. The importance of gender; our identities as women/men.

Arlie Hochschild (*The Second Shift*) on what shapes our gender identities & ideologies – cultural ideals of gender, our personal histories, and an assessment we make of our abilities.

We make decisions and ‘choices’ that shape our lives, and in line with our sense of self as gendered persons (e.g., choice of major)

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IV. An Influential Alternative Approach: Doing Gender (C. West & D. Zimmerman)

- A. Sex, Sex Category, and Gender**
- B. The argument: Gender: “managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one’s sex category” (West & Zimmerman, 2015 [1987], p. 35)**
- C. We are always accountable for acting as a woman or a man – normatively or not (in which case we’re “at the risk of gender assessment”) Doing it is “unavoidable” (W & Z, 2015, p. 39)**

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D. An issue: the relationship between society (and social institutions) and a person doing gender

(1) W & Z: Doing gender in conformity supports the status quo.

E. C.J. Pascoe's "Dude, You're A Fag"

An argument similar to 'doing gender': Boys accomplishing a masculine identity, while also disciplining other boys for insufficiently masculine behaviour

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F. An issue with the 'doing gender' approach: Why would a person not do gender in a conforming way?

Problematic in West and Zimmerman: they give no explanation of how the type of behaviour is related to a person's immediate social context or situation.

G. Another Study: M. Cooper's "The Go-To-Guy"

Doing gender, doing masculinity in a new way, which makes sense as a product of the workplace environment in Silicon Valley.

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