

Week 10

**Society as Patriarchy:
Gender, Sexuality and Social
Control**

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A man's world?

Mapping out the development of sociology

	Society as...	Sociologists...
C19th	... progress	Comte, Spencer
	... mode of production	Marx
	... rationality	Weber
	... integration	Durkheim
C20th	... city	Cooley, Mead, Park, Burgess
	... humanistic interaction	Simmel, Blumer, Becker, Garfinkel, Goffman
	... functional	Parsons, Merton
	... cultural reproduction	Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Althusser, Gramsci, Habermas
Society as male?	...Sociologists are men?

A man's world?

The history of mainstream ('malestream') sociology

Is sociology by men, about men and for men?

'Male orientation may so colour the organisation of sociology as a discipline that the invisibility of women is a structured male view, rather than a superficial flaw. The male focus, incorporated into the definitions of the subject areas, reduces women to a side issue from the start'
(Ann Oakley 1974)

i.e. 'male focus' of the sociological discipline impacts on....

- *Who is doing sociology*
whose ideas are seen as important in the history of sociology
- *How sociology is done*
the type of knowledge (epistemologies)
the way this knowledge is produced (methodologies)
- *What sociology is about*
women's experiences of the social world are invisible...

Sociology a 'Male Science' of a 'Male Society'

The 'Founding Fathers'

- Durkheim
- Weber
- Marx

Development of sociology shaped by the founding ideas of the
'Dead White Men'

What about 'founding mothers'? Hidden history of female sociologists
e.g.

Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) – the first female sociologist

Marianne Weber (1870-1954) – a woman-centred sociology

Marx

**Man's world
of production**

**Economic processes
Production of goods
Owners – Labourers
Class conflicts**

Woman's world of
reproduction

Natural function
Procreation, childcare
Domestic labour hidden



Sexual division of labour: based on natural inequalities that both maintain the capitalist system and lead to female exploitation & conflict between the sexes

Weber

Man's world
of rationality and power

How men dominate men

Woman's world of
irrationality/emotion and
weakness

*"The woman is dependent
because of the normal
superiority of the physical and
intellectual energies of the
male"*



**Sexual division of labour: based on traditional authority of
male head of household that arises from the natural
superiority of men**

Durkheim

**Man's world
of integration**

**Moral bonds through
role specialisation**

- Intellectual
- Instrumental

**Woman's world of
domesticity**

- Affective
- Emotional

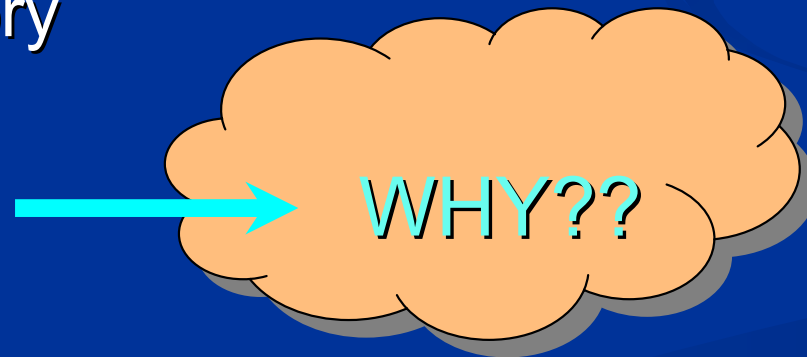


**Sexual division of labour: based on natural
“complementary differences” that are functional for
maintaining the moral equilibrium of society as a whole**

A man's world that would be nothing without a woman or a girl....

All of the founding fathers

- rely on essentialist assumptions about the sexual division of labour that underpin their vision of society
- based on 'natural' differences between the sexes grounded in women's reproductive role
- women are therefore 'necessary' to the existence of the social world – but 'inferior' and ultimately 'invisible' in social theory



See Sydnie (1987)
Natural Women, Cultured Men

Conditions of classical social theory: C19th ideology of 'separate spheres'

- MALE
- Public sphere
- Production
- Workplace/economic
- Culture
- Instrumental
- Mind
- Rational
- Strength
- Intellect
- FEMALE
- Private sphere
- Reproduction
- Home/domestic
- Nature
- Affective (emotional)
- Body
- Irrational
- Weakness
- Intuition

C19th Ideology of 'separate spheres'

Economic conditions

Industrialisation and separation of work from home

Ideological justification

Existence of biological differences between the sexes and innate superiority of males

Political implications

Female exclusion from participation in public sphere

Development of feminist movement: 'First Wave' Feminism (1840-1920)

Suffragette Movement:

- Demand for liberal principle of 'equality' - the banner of modernity and progress - to be extended to all
- Emancipation of women through recognition of equal political and civil rights

Aim to make women 'visible' and 'equal' in public life

Classic texts of liberal feminism:

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the rights of women* (1792)

John Stuart Mill, *The Subjugation of women* (1869)

Modern social theory

Parsons

- Functionalist model of family based on male breadwinner (instrumental role) & female home-maker (expressive role)
- Assumption of sex-based division of labour remains unquestioned

The functional family?



How to be a good wife in the 1950s:
'the goal is to try to make your home a place of peace and order where your husband can relax in body and spirits'

'The problem with no name'

'The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning... Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night – she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question – “Is this all”?’

Betty Friedan (1963) *The Feminist Mystique*

US Activist, founder/president of *National Organization for Women*

Naming 'the problem': Second Wave Feminism (from 1960s..)

Political movement: Women's Liberation

Demands for equal rights of women based on:
equal pay, equal education and opportunities, access to free
childcare, maternity leave, control over own reproductive lives
(access to contraception, abortion)

Theoretical movement:

Critique of 'malestream' sociology and development of feminist
theories and 'woman-centred' approaches

For feminists, the theoretical is political!

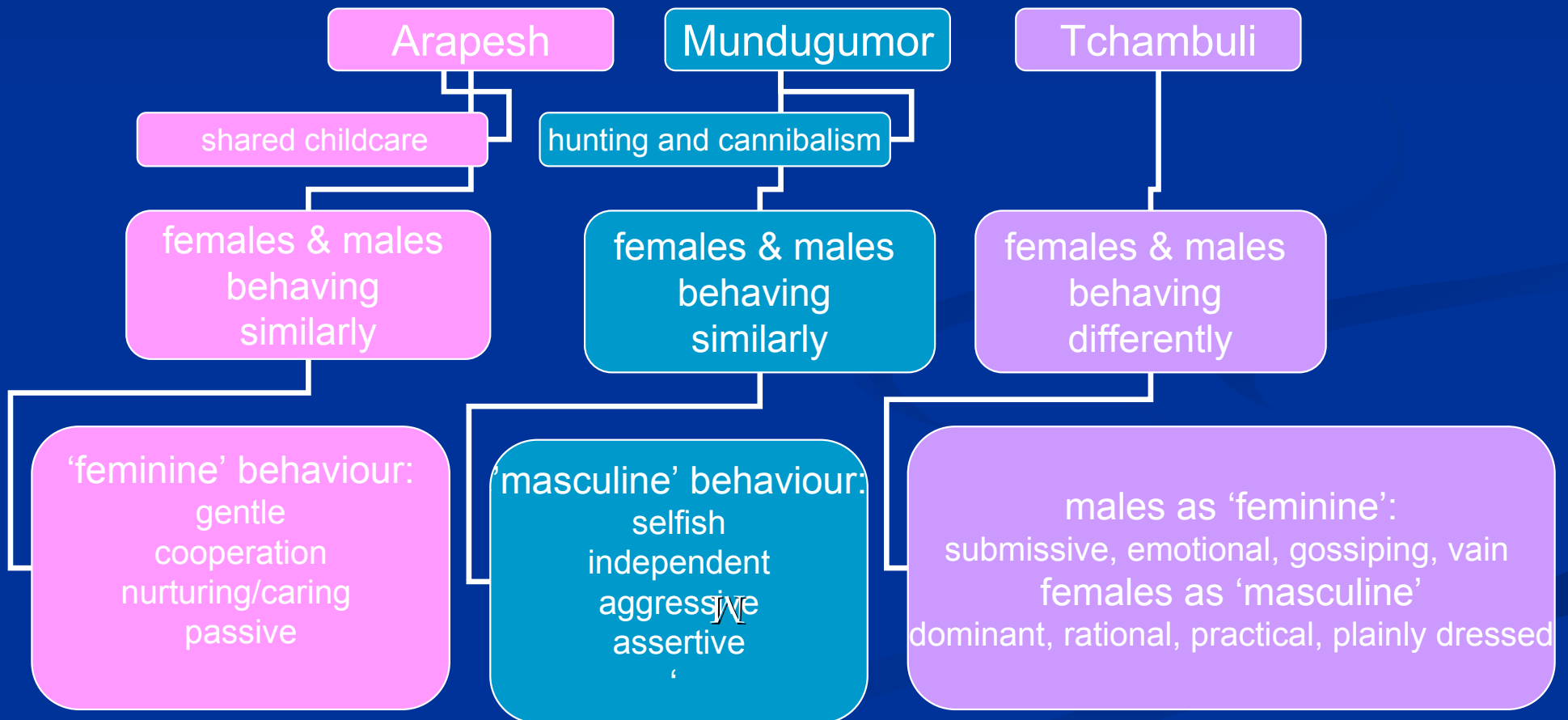
Development of Feminist Theory

Key Concepts

1. Sex-Gender Distinction

Margaret Mead *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*
(1935)

3 tribes in New Guinea



Development of Feminist Theory

Key Concepts

1. Sex-Gender Distinction

Mead's observations led her to conclude that there is no fixed link between biological sex and social role.....

Development of Feminist Theory: Key Concepts

1. Sex-Gender Distinction



Sex = 'natural'

biological differences between the sexes as 'male' or 'female'

Gender = 'cultural'

social classification as 'masculine' or 'feminine'
..... identities, behaviours, roles, position within society.....

'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman'

Simone de Beauvoir (1949) *The Second Sex*

Development of Feminist Theory

Key Concepts

2. Patriarchy

Patriarchy: a system of social structures and practices by which men dominate, oppress and exploit women

Can be endemic at all levels of society:
institutionalisation of male power
socialisation into this system

Sylvia Walby *Theorising Patriarchy* (1990)

Employment

Household

Culture

Sexuality

Violence

State

2nd Wave Feminism:

Three central positions

	LIBERAL	RADICAL / CULTURAL	MARXIST/ SOCIALIST
Female oppression	Discrimination	Domination	Exploitation
Problem is...	RIGHTS	PATRIARCHY / MEN	CAPITALISM
Located in..	Public/political sphere	'Personal' life	Economic & ideological (links between public and private sphere)
Focus on...	Equal rights & opportunities	Sexuality, motherhood, reproduction, violence	Class & gender, domestic labour
Female liberation...	Inclusion in public sphere	Redefining, reclaiming, celebrating femininity	Socialism
Politics	'Revisionist'	'Reversal'	'Revolution'
Theorists	e.g. Betty Friedan	e.g. Kate Millett	e.g. Juliet Mitchell

Key point!

- There is not just one unitary 'feminist' position or 'feminist theory'

e.g. see also psychoanalytic feminism, existentialist feminism, postmodern feminism, ecofeminism, multicultural feminism....and more

- Nor is there is one unitary concept of 'woman'
- e.g. radical lesbian separatists, black feminist theory

see Tong 1988 *Feminist Thought*

Feminist perspectives on motherhood

How would you describe motherhood?

- Ann Oakley – an oppressive myth that should be challenged through shared parenting?
- Shulamith Firestone – an unpleasant natural burden that women should be liberated from by technological means?
- Andrienne Rich – a pleasurable female experience that women should embrace and discover for themselves, free from patriarchal control?
- Nancy Chodorow – the basis of female gender identity resulting from socialisation (as only women mother, only girls grow up wanting to care for children)?
- Marxist feminists – an unpaid form of work that should be made into a collective responsibility or salaried?

Bringing women into sociology

How does this impact on:

➤ *How sociology is done?*

the type of knowledge (epistemologies)

the way this knowledge is produced
(methodologies)

Feminist epistemologies

- Positivism (feminist empiricism): correct 'male bias' by including women in studies
- Realism: uncovering structures/processes of patriarchy and gender relations
- Interpretivism: critique of objectivity as a masculine mode of thinking, leading to the development of alternative feminist approaches

Feminist methodologies

More women should study the world in the same way as men

Women should develop alternative feminist perspectives/approaches:

'feminist standpoint': women's oppressed position gives them a special critical viewpoint for interpreting the world

qualitative research: "experience and feeling must be at the heart of feminist research" (Stanley and Wise)

See Sandra Harding (1986)
The Science Question in Feminism

Bringing women into sociology

How does this impact on:

➤ *What sociology is about?*

- Expanding and reshaping existing areas of study...
crime, class, education, work, religion...
reshaping *what* is studied by including studies of girls/women in existing fields of research, and *how* it is studied by using concept of gender in the analysis
- Development of new areas of study...
domestic labour, reproduction, motherhood, childcare, family, sexualities, pornography, violence...

Contemporary developments: From women's studies to gender studies

Shift away from focus on 'woman' to focus on
'women'....

- 'Third wave' of feminist theory: plurality and difference, diversity, deconstruction (e.g. Butler, Irigaray)

.... to focus on 'gender' as an organisational
feature of social life

- Relational concepts of masculinity and femininity
- Growth of masculinities studies (e.g. Connell)
- Gender is now central to sociology (i.e. has been 'mainstreamed' as part of the discipline)

Gender and the modern world

- What impact has feminism had on the social world?
- Have the goals of second wave feminism been achieved?
- Does feminism still have any relevance in contemporary societies?
- Do we live in a post-feminist world?
- Does studying gender provide a useful way of looking at social problems and understanding the social world?

Gender today: UK in the 2000s

- Gender and work – a world of female inclusion in the workplace?

46% of labour market are women

Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay act came into force 30 years ago

YET

average hourly earnings for women working full-time are 18% lower than for men, and 40% lower for women working part-time

Gender pay gap due to gender segregation (vertical and horizontal) in workplace

(Equal Opportunities Commission 2005)

Gender today: UK in the 2000s

- Gender and education – a world of equal opportunities?

54% of undergraduates are female

YET

only 18% of MPs, 12% of university vice chancellors, 7% of the senior judiciary, 7% of top business leaders, 9% of national newspaper editor are women

(Equal Opportunities Commission 2005)

Gender today: UK in the 2000s

- Gender and sexuality – a world of reproductive rights and sexual freedoms?

Access to contraception and abortion

YET

1 in 4 women experience an act of domestic violence at some point in their lifetime and approx. 80,000 suffer rape or attempted rape

(British Crime Survey 2005)

Gender today: another week of gender politics

- Civil partnership act
- Dame Butler-Sloss warns that government policies are undermining the institution of marriage
- David Cameron to address the 'scandalous under representation' of female MPs

Gender is everywhere, woven into the fabric of our everyday lives.....

A final thought

Would a 'genderless' society be possible - or even desirable?