

**Sex:** refers to biological differences; chromosomes, hormonal profiles, internal and external sex organs.

**Gender:** describes the characteristics that a society or culture delineates as masculine or feminine.

### **Social Constructionism**

Sex and gender are created through social interaction, learning, internalization of norms and cultural narratives

Social entities acquire meanings through culturally negotiated knowledge: a “**mechanism** for training people to participate in social systems” (Johnson 73)

### **Gender Socialization**

The process by which we learn what attitudes, behaviors, and appearances are appropriate for a person of our gender.

Gender Socialization amplifies the differences and reduces the similarities between men/women or boys/girls; it does not allow for genders that do not fit within this either/or binary.

### **Micro–Level Forces**

Gender Socialization

- Parents treat boys & girls differently from early age
- Gender stereotypes in school & textbooks
- Ongoing influence of peers & media

–learn prescribed behaviors; internalize gender stereotypes; adjust expectations & desires.

### **Macro–Level Forces** (big org’s & society as whole)

Gendered Division of Labor = assignment of different tasks to women & men.

– Historically, the greater the GDOL in a society, the greater gender inequality -- Separate work tends not to be equally rewarded.

### **What is FEMINISM?**

- Concerns the liberation of women and girls from discrimination based on gender.
- gender subordination is linked to discrimination based on other systems of power and inequality.
- race, class, sexuality, age, ability, national origin.

## **What about men's relation to feminism?**

Feminism can also liberate men from limitations imposed by gender hierarchy and inequality

Sociologist Michael Kimmel says, "We must be [cheerleaders, allies and foot soldiers] in front of other men, risking our own fears of rejection, our own membership in the club of masculinity, confronting our own fears of other men."

Women cannot achieve the changes we will discuss in this class without men as allies.

**Patriarchy** is the social system organized around gender difference and stratification that values men, masculinity, and maleness. - Allan G. Johnson

## **First Wave Feminism**

A period of feminist activism during the nineteenth and twentieth century that predominantly sprung in the countries like United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. The predominant agenda of this movement was the liberation of women.

But how?

The First Wave Feminist movement tried to bring women into the mainstream of society by voicing for equality in the domain of civil, legislative rights and giving women the right to franchise (cast vote).

### **An important name during the period of first wave feminism:**

Mary Wollstonecraft who wrote *The Vindication of the Rights of Women*. In this work of hers she tried to advocate the social and moral equality of the sexes.

- *Vindication of the Rights of Women* is one of the most prominent and oldest books on Feminism (written in the backdrop of the French Revolution) that was a response to the political and educational theorists who did not proclaim education for women.
- Wollstonecraft argued that access to education was one of the primary rights that women should be receiving.
- Instead of viewing women as ornaments to society or property to be traded in marriage, Wollstonecraft maintains that they are human beings deserving of the same fundamental rights as men.

**Second Wave Feminism:** The second wave of feminism came as a response to the experiences of women after World War II. The late 1940s post-war boom, an era characterized by an unprecedented economic growth, a baby boom, suburban expansion, and the triumph of capitalism, encouraged a patriarchal family life.

- - *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir examined as early as 1949 the notion of women being perceived as "other" in the patriarchal society. She went on to conclude that male-centered ideology was being accepted as a norm and enforced by the ongoing development of myths.

### **A quick look as to what Third Wave Feminism had to say:**

Third Wave Feminism essentially emerged during the time to reorganize the failures of the Second Wave Feminism. It wanted to approach the conceptualization of feminism by opposing the dominant gender binaries in society. They wanted to encompass the various social structures that encompass gender, like ethnicity, nationality, religion, environment (ecology) and so on. Emphasizing discursive power and the ambiguity of gender, third-wave theory usually incorporates elements of queer theory; anti-racism and women-of-color consciousness; post-colonial theory; critical theory; postmodernism; transnationalism; eco-feminism; new feminist theory, transgender politics and a rejection of the gender binary.

### **Standpoint**

**Standpoint:** The position from which one experiences, interprets, and understands the world.

Based on your self-identification as well as how society categorizes you.

### **Epistemology**

#### **Definition?**

The Study of *how* we know what we know (The theory of knowledge, esp. with regard to its methods and validity, as well as what counts as “real” knowledge.)

Standpoint Epistemology: Recognizes that we can produce valuable knowledge from the particular standpoint from which we sit. We are all experts of our own identity.

### **Standpoint Feminism**

Standpoint feminism is a theory that feminist social science should be practiced from the standpoint of women or particular groups of women, as some scholars (e.g. Patricia Hill Collins and Dorothy Smith) say that they are better equipped to understand some aspects of the world. A feminist or women's standpoint epistemology proposes to make women's experiences the point of departure, in addition to, and sometimes instead of men's.

#### **Dominant Ideology:**

The ideas that represent the foundational values of a particular society—often appearing neutral, whereas alternative ideologies are seen as radical, regardless of their content.

#### **Hegemony:**

A dominant organizing principle or the permeation throughout society of the ruling elite's values, attitudes, beliefs and morality.

Dominant ideologies promote hegemony

People internalize this prevailing consciousness to the point that it appears natural.