

ANTH 230: Gender Across Cultures

Lecturer: Prof. Elizabeth Wirtz
Transcribed by Josh Park

Spring 2025

Contents

2 Introduction

2.1 The Four Fields of Anthropology

- Cultural Anthropology
 - Study of contemporary humans/human societies
- Linguistic Anthropology
 - Study of language and communication
- Archaeology
 - Study of past human societies; deep time
- Physical/Biological Anthropology
 - Study of human biology and evolution

2.2 Holistic Approach to Humanity

- Pre/Historical
- Biological
- Social
- Language

2.3 When did Anthropology Begin?

- Formalized in 1800s
- Distinct from sociology
 - Who did it study?
 - * Sociologists studied 'Western complex societies'
 - * Anthropologists studied 'the exotic other'
 - How was it studied?
 - * Sociologists tended to use quantitative data
 - * Anthropologists used qualitative data

2.4 Handmaiden to Colonialism

- Anthropologists originally employed to make colonialism easier
- Realized quickly how much colonialism was destroying cultures
- Became advocates for the people they studied

3 .

4 .

5 Biological Sex

5.1 The 5 Markers of Biological Sex

Typically 5 markers used to determine sex

- Chromosomes
- Hormones
- Inner genitalia
- Outer genitalia
- Secondary sexual characteristics

5.2 Sex Development

5.2.1 Chromosomes

- XY (typically male)
- XX (typically female)
- All embryos begin with indistinguishable sex and have potential to become a variety of sexes
- Fetus starts to form sexual characteristics around age 5-7 weeks

5.3 Chromosomal Variance

- Not all chromosomal compositions are XX or XY
- Over 70 chromosomal combinations documented
- Roughly 1 in every 426 humans have a chromosomal makeup that does not conform to XX/XY binary
 - Statistically ~125 students at Purdue
 - Likely higher than 1/426 odds; not many people get their chromosomes tested
- Examples:
 - XXY or XXXY (Klinefelter's Syndrome)
 - XO (Turner's Syndrome)

5.4 Hormones

- Glands secrete combination of the hormones testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone
- 2 essential washing of hormones - in utero and at puberty
- Different combinations = different effects on the body
- Interaction between chromosomes and hormones determined development of physical body
- Variety of physically diverse bodies

5.5 Hormones and the Life Course

- Hormone production varies over the life course
- Endocrine system influences body and brain functioning
- Influenced by external factors
 - Environment
 - Diet
 - Social roles

5.6 Chromosomes + Hormones

Chromosomes and hormones encourage the development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics

- Primary (M): testes, penis, scrotum, prostate,
- Primary (F): ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, vagina
- Secondary (F): breast development, wider hips, higher body fat (esp. in hips, thighs, butt)
- Secondary (M): deepening of voice, broader shoulders, increased muscle mass, growth of body hair

5.7 Transgressive Bodies

- Roughly 2% of the population is non-binary
- Medicalization of the body leads normative assumptions about the body and categorizes some as 'normal' and others as 'abnormal'
- Frequently we 'correct' bodies that do not fit the binary
 - Infanticide
 - Murder
 - Sexual assignment surgery
 - Hormone Therapy
 - * Over assignment to female
 - * "Easier to dig a hole than to build a hole"

6 Biological Sex 2

6.1 Mental Maps of Reality

- How we categorize the world around us
- How we assign value to different categories

6.2 Categories and Dualisms

- In order to understand and make sense of the world, we create categories
- By definition these are exclusionary and reductive, and thus rarely represent 'reality'
- Categories often come in binaries and set in opposition to one another (dualisms)
 - Nature/Culture
 - Sex/Gender

- Homo/Hetero
- Mind/Body

6.3 Cultural Narratives of the Body

- Our cultural beliefs about similarities/differences influence how we see the body and understand sex

6.4 Sexing the Body

- Gender ideology - set of cultural ideas about the essential character of different genders
 - Sex and gender as binary
 - Sex and gender as synonymous
- Gender ideology shapes concepts of biological sex and how the body works
- Popular and medical notions of biological sex often reflect our cultural beliefs rather than reality
- Scientific terminology and medicalization change the way we culturally understand the body

6.5 The Egg and the Sperm

- Traditional notion of conception is based on stereotypical male-female gender roles

6.6 Biopower

- The processes by which regimes of authority produce knowledge on human life and the power these systems of knowledge have on social institutions and individual lives

7 Biological Sex 3

7.1 Gendered Physiological Discrimination

- Ewa Klobukowska
 - Polish sprinter; set multiple world records in the 1960s
 - "Failed a gender test" and was banned/stripped of all records
 - Gave birth to a son a year later
- Ordering and disciplining of bodies on hormones, chromosomes and other biological processes
- Explores this concept through 'Sex Verification Testing' in elite sports
- Example of Biopower

7.2 Sex, Gender, Race, and Imperialism

- Current International Olympic Committee rules:
 - 'Suspicion-Based Testing' vs 'Universal Testing'
 - DNA Chromosome Tests
 - Hormone Level Tests
- Types of people considered 'suspicious' are not treated equally
 - People identifying as women of color targeted almost exclusively

- Bodies targeted for sex suspicion and testing tend to come from marginalized or ‘othered’ populations

7.3 Intersectionality

- We are all a combination of various social identities and positions
 - Sexual orientation (Straight vs. LGBTQ+)
 - Culture (Western vs. non-Western)
 - Education (post-secondary vs. no formal education)
- These positionalities intersect to create unique social groups and experiences, including privileges/oppressions
- Ex: Gender (sexism) + race (racism) = “misogynoir”
 - Unique form of oppression experienced by female POCs

8 Participation activity

No new material; participation activity

9 Gender 101

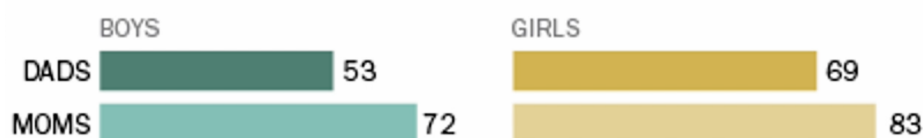
9.1 What is Gender?

- Gender is culturally constructed and historically informed
- Gender is learned - culturally transmitted
- Concepts of gender differ cross-culturally
- Concepts of gender are contested within/across cultures
- Gender roles are socialized from an early age

9.2 Babies and Gender

- Gender stereotyping begins as early as 3 months old
- Parents may respond to crying children differently depending on assumed (from external genitalia) gender
- These discrepancies can have a profound impact on neurological development and can leave traces on genes
- Fathers found to see less value in letting children participate in activities typically associated with the ‘other’ gender
 - Indicates boys are taught to be more restrictive in the toys they play with and the activities they partake in than girls are

% of dads/moms saying it is a very/somewhat good thing for parents to encourage young boys /girls to play with toys or participate in activities typically associated with the opposite gender



9.3 Gendered Clothing

- Skirts vs. Pants
 - Differs across cultures
 - Differs within a single culture across time
- The great switch of 1920's
 - Gendered clothing was invented by marketers/manufacturers in the 1920's to make people want to buy more clothes for different gendered children

9.4 Gendered Speech

- Study on communication within a business meeting
 - Women speaking 50% of the time: *BOTH* men and women perceived women to dominate the conversation
 - Women speaking 30% of the time: *BOTH* men and women perceived women to be equally participating

9.5 Gender and Power

- *Patriarchy* - a system of societal and institutional organization that privileges men and masculinity
- *Sexism* - prejudice and/or discrimination against someone on the basis of gender
 - Reverse sexism does *not* exist (in the United States)
 - Patriarchy is inherently a system of power
 - Women and femininity is devalued
 - Thus, sexism can only occur to the devalued group

9.6 Gender Identity

- How we feel and see ourselves and how we want others to see us
- Difficult to develop gender identity that exists outside of the confines of the ideologies and terminologies of the society you exist in

9.7 Gender Performance

- How we express or 'do' gender
- Performance \neq fake
- Performance refers to individual outward expression

9.8 Gender Embodiment

- Routine repetitious actions become embedded within us
- Becomes 'naturalized' or performed unconsciously

9.9 Gender Ideals/Stereotypes

- Concepts of gender most often represent cultural ideals rather than reality or how people actually behave
- Gender is constantly (re)produced and contested

9.10 Intersectionality

- Interlocking systems of power that account for the multiple social positions we occupy
- *Cannot* discuss gender without talking about other oppressive categories such as
 - Nationality
 - Race
 - Ability
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Class
- Ex: “Second Wave Feminist Movement”
 - Called a feminist movement but was strictly for upper class straight white women with U.S. citizenship
 - The subset of women above wanted to abolish the idea that working outside of the home was strictly for men
 - Lower class/immigrant women had already been working outside of their homes in order to make enough money for their household, taking jobs in other peoples homes or in factories

9.11 Third Genders

- Native American – Two Spirit
- Samoan – Fa’afafine
- South Asian – Hijra

10 Gender 101 2

10.1 Gender is...

- A system of categories and associations
 - Mental Maps of Reality
- Subject Positions we create, occupy, and contest
 - Like ‘hijra’, ‘woman’, or ‘man’
 - Intersects with other subject positions like age, race, religion, etc.
- Identities we craft dialectically with Subject Positions
 - Is complex and can change over time
 - Performed
 - Embodied
 - * “Manspreading” is a learned posture for men rather than one facilitated by actual physiological differences

- * Women expected to maintain ‘feminine’ posture depending on race, class, etc.
- i.e. Infants treated differently by parents based on perceived gender
 - * Time to respond to babies cries differ; longer for boys than girls
 - * Due to perceived sense of men being supposed to manage emotions on their own
 - * Not intentional from parents
- A System of Power
 - Patriarchy
 - * “Masculinity” treated as ideal
 - * Women, minorities disproportionately affected by standards/expectations
 - * Boys subject to “psychological violence” to condition them towards certain idealized standards of masculinity
 - Posited that this psychological violence is a prerequisite to widespread sexual/physical violence towards women

10.2 Gender and Hegemony

- *Hegemony* - Cultural and ideological influence over a population exerted by dominant and powerful groups within and across societies
 - Ex: Common perception that patriarchy stems from a power dynamic influenced by physical strength, yet the majority of modern power dynamics have nothing to do with physical strength

11 Gender 101 3

11.1 Gender and Hegemony

- Gendered Subject Personalities - Subject positions often offer multiple ‘ways of being’ within each category
 - Ex: masculinities
- Each subject positionality will be ranked (and valued) based on its adherence to the hegemonic (dominant/privileged) notion of that gender (Hegemonic Gender)
- Subject positionalities are typically ideals rather than representative of concrete real world dynamics
 - Often shape our mental maps of reality, whence shaping legal and otherwise concrete societal frameworks
- Individuals may occupy one subject position while exhibiting characteristics of another
 - Ex: ‘tomboy’, ‘dyke’, ‘queer’
- Hegemonic Gender intersect with Hegemonic Positionalities/Categories

11.2 Gender and Social Stratification

- Mental Maps of Reality overlap and create associations
- Sherry Ortner - “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?”
 - Females reproduce offspring and therefore produce ‘naturally’
 - Males must produce ‘artificially’ (culturally)
 - Culture dominates Nature \implies Males (men) dominate Females (women)

- Critiques
 - Overlooks cultures with more than gender binaries
 - Utilizes a Western lens to assess 'power and agency'
 - Ignores the massive impact that European colonization had on restructuring cultural gender categories and ideologies

11.3 Gender and Kinship

- Kinship - A cultural system of defining who is related to whom and what obligations members of a kin network have to each other
- Kin groups/family - The most basic political, organizational, and economic (resource management) unit in society
- Patterns of Kinship influence social interactions, access to resources, and larger social organization and patterns

11.4 Descent and Lineage

- Systems of determining who is related to whom
- Unilineal
 - Matrilineal
 - Patrilineal
- Bilateral

12 lecture video

catch up when posted