

Social Construction of Gender – SOC-C-13

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Questions to reflect upon

- What is the difference between a female and woman?
- How is gender a variable?
- Is a woman the greatest enemy of another woman?
- Why do we blame men if mother in law is more torturous than father in law?
- Why most of the jokes circulated are on women and not on men?

Sex Versus Gender

- Sex is defined as the anatomical and physiological characteristics that signify the biological maleness and femaleness of an individual.
- Gender emphasises the social construction of masculinity and femininity, products of social cultural and psychological factors which are acquired by an individual in the process of becoming man or a woman.
- Sex is natural while gender is socio-cultural and is man-made.
- Sex is biological. It refers to the physical differences in the anatomy of a male and the female body. Gender refers to the masculine and feminine qualities, behaviour and roles.
- Sex is constant while gender is variable.

Gender Division of Labour

- Production: Refers to the activity which produces goods and services for consumption.
- Reproduction: are of two kinds, biological and social.
- Community: refers to all activities needed to run community life.

Patriarchy

- Patriarchy means the rule by the male head of social units like family or tribe.
- Walby defines Patriarchy as a system of social structure and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.
- Patriarchy is both a structure and an ideology.
- She has identified 6 structures of Patriarchy
 - i. Production Relations in household
 - ii. Paid Work
 - iii. Patriarchal State
 - iv. Male violence
 - v. Patriarchal Relations in Sexuality
 - vi. Patriarchal Cultural Institutions

Forms of Patriarchy

Forms of Patriarchy

Private Patriarchy

Public Patriarchy

- Identify some forms of private and public patriarchy that you see around you.

Patriarchy as a cultural form

- Identify some practices and cultural forms, which are patriarchal in practice.
- Costume
- Curriculum
- Profession
- Media
- Workplace
- Household
- Religion
- Space
- Language

Patriarchy Controls

- Production
- Reproduction
- Sexuality
- Mobility
- Economic resources
- Cultural Institutions
- Political Institutions

Gender Identity

- Identity in a group is defined as certain common traits found among the group members.
- Identity depends on how society turns male and female into masculine and feminine beings.
- Socialization in formation of gender identity takes four processes:
 - Manipulation
 - Canalisation
 - Verbal appellation
 - Activity Exposure

Masculinity Vs Femininity

- For understanding gender, we need to look into the characteristics of man and maleness, women and femaleness.
- Gender Socialization
- Male- Masculine- Man
- Female- Feminine- Woman

Body versus Mind

Nature versus Culture

Emotion versus Reason

Private versus Public

What is your
idea of a
complete
Man?
Is gender a
central
concern for
man?

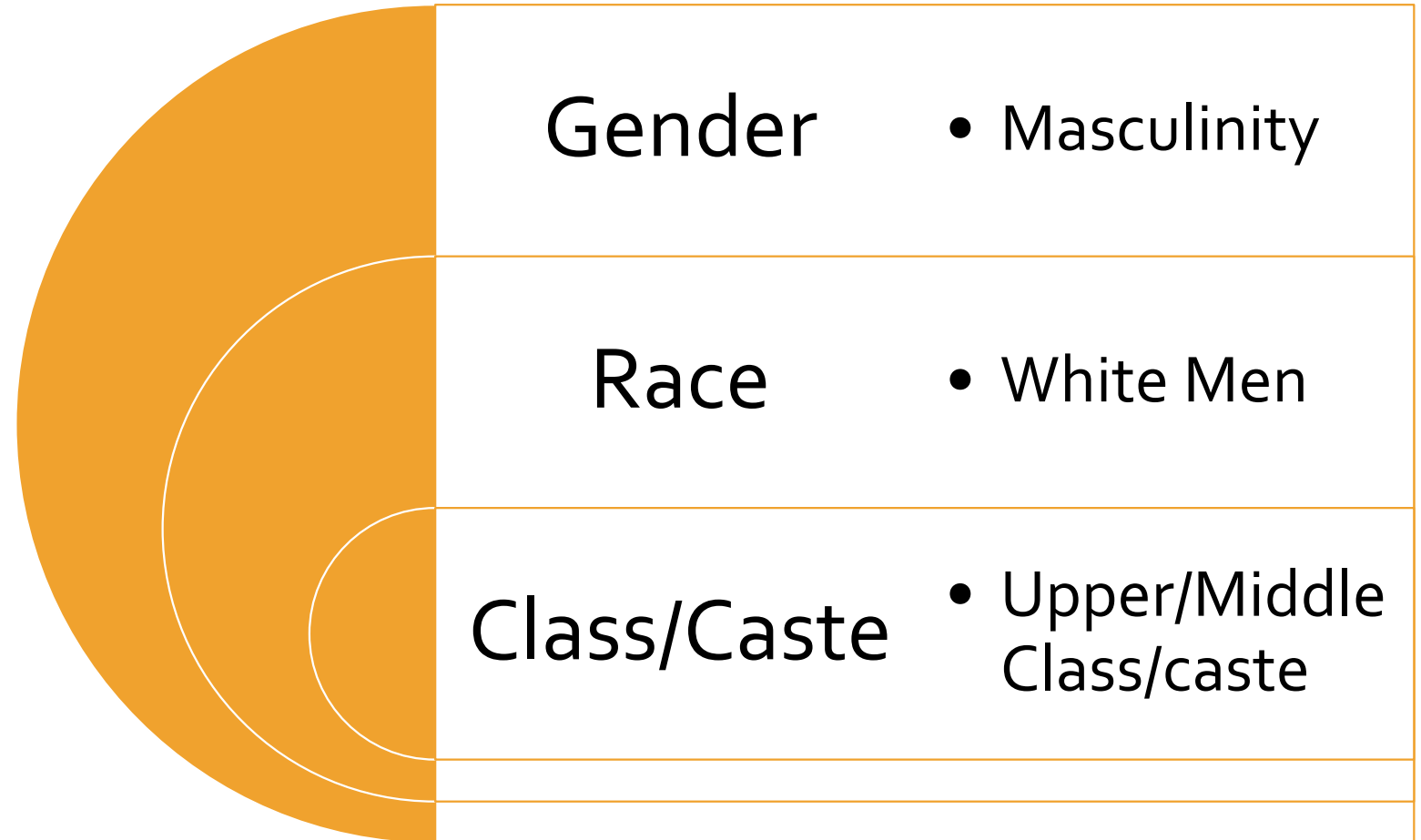
The Complete Man



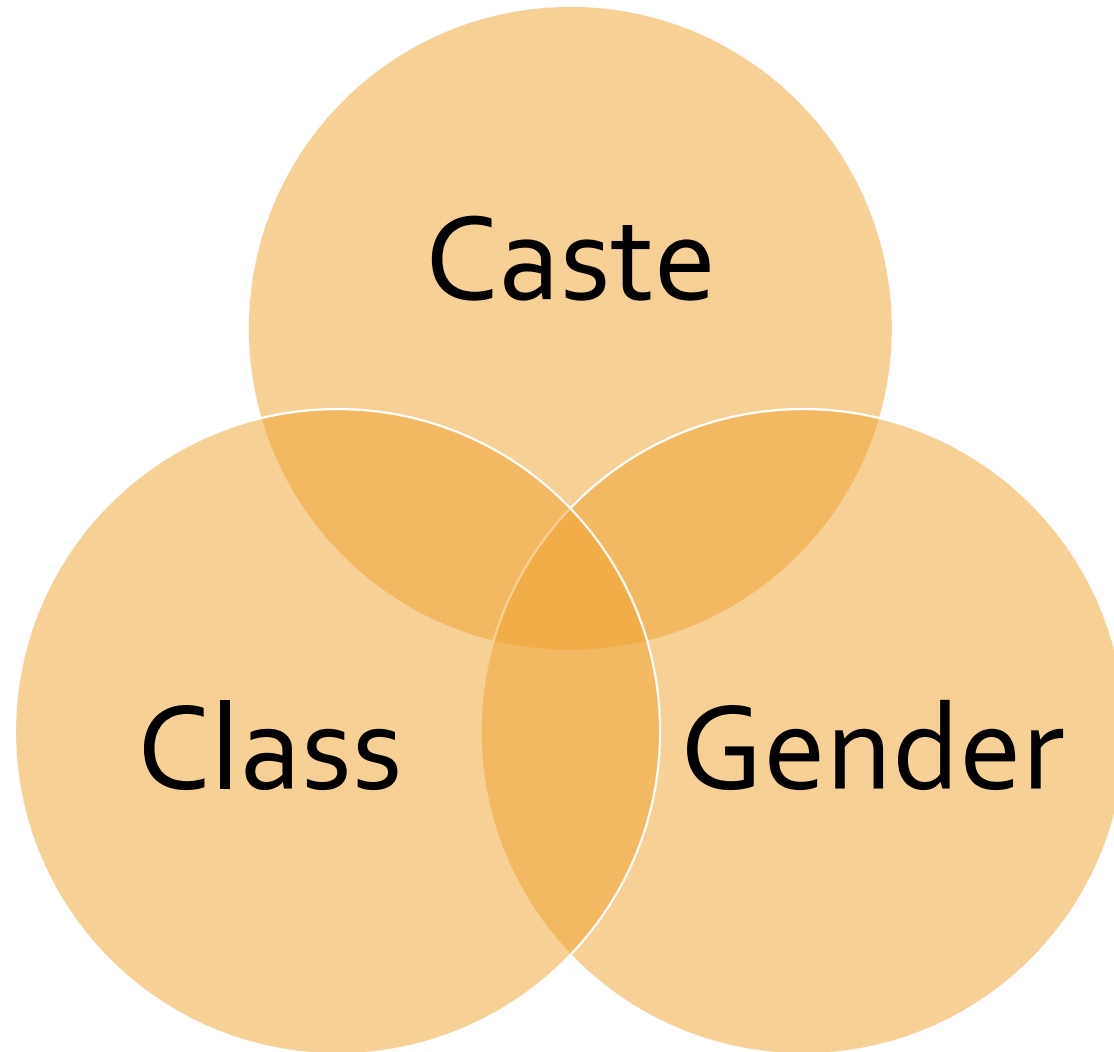
Masculinity Vs Femininity

- Associated with power, violence, assertiveness
- Dressing up is seen as the feminine trait off late popular media is flaunting images of men being open about their looks.
- Concerns over masculinity grew in 1960 and 1970s.
- Patriarchy also has its pressures on men as it has on women.
- Men's group also aligned with women's against patriarchy.
- Recognizing the fact that men were at advantage because of patriarchy, they said:
 - i. We need a more democratic organization of gender asking for mutual respect
 - ii. The ideal notions for masculinity are indeed harmful for men.
- These pro-feminist organizations also pointed out about the hierarchy between men.

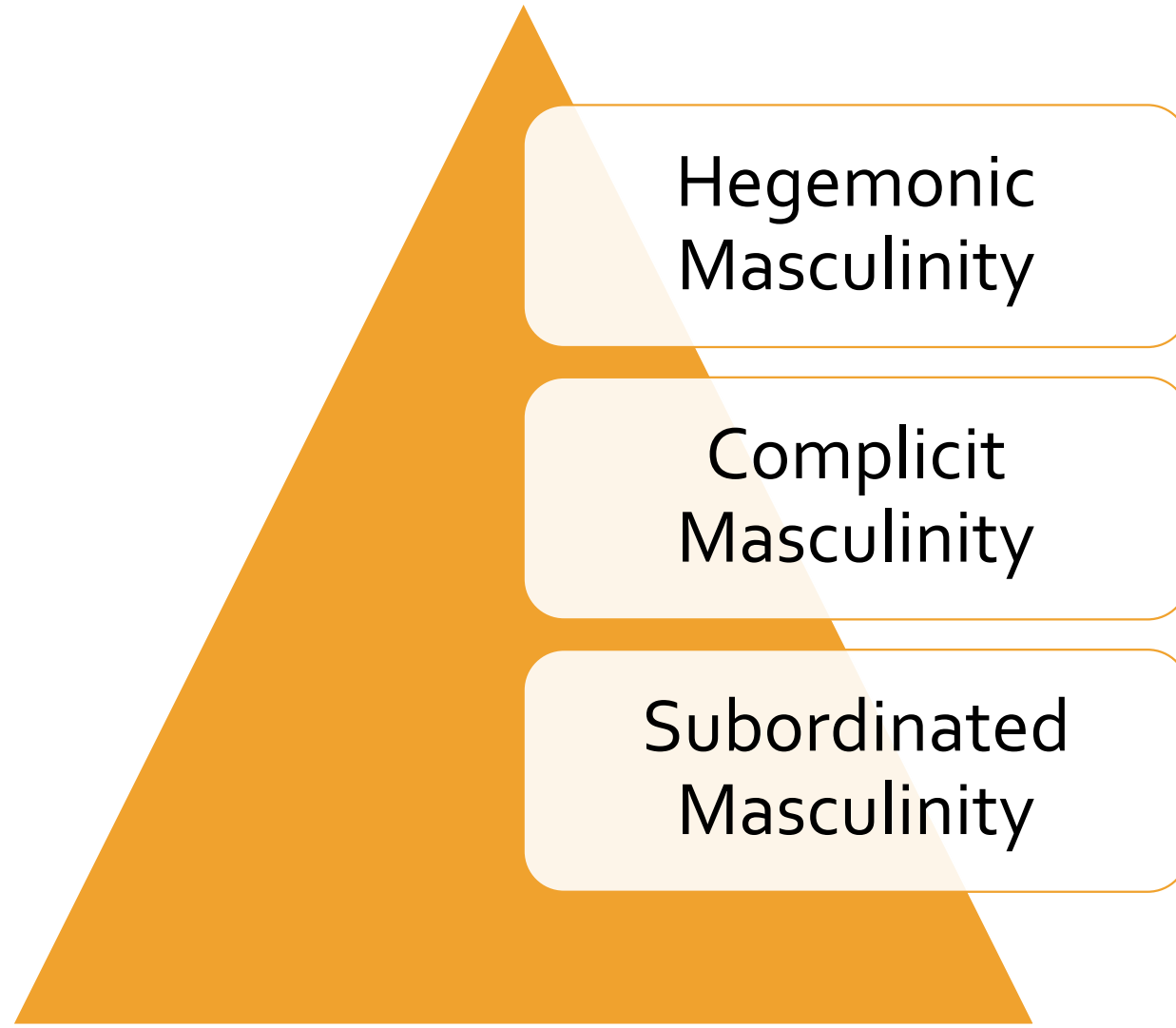
Intersectionality within gender



Inter-
sectionality



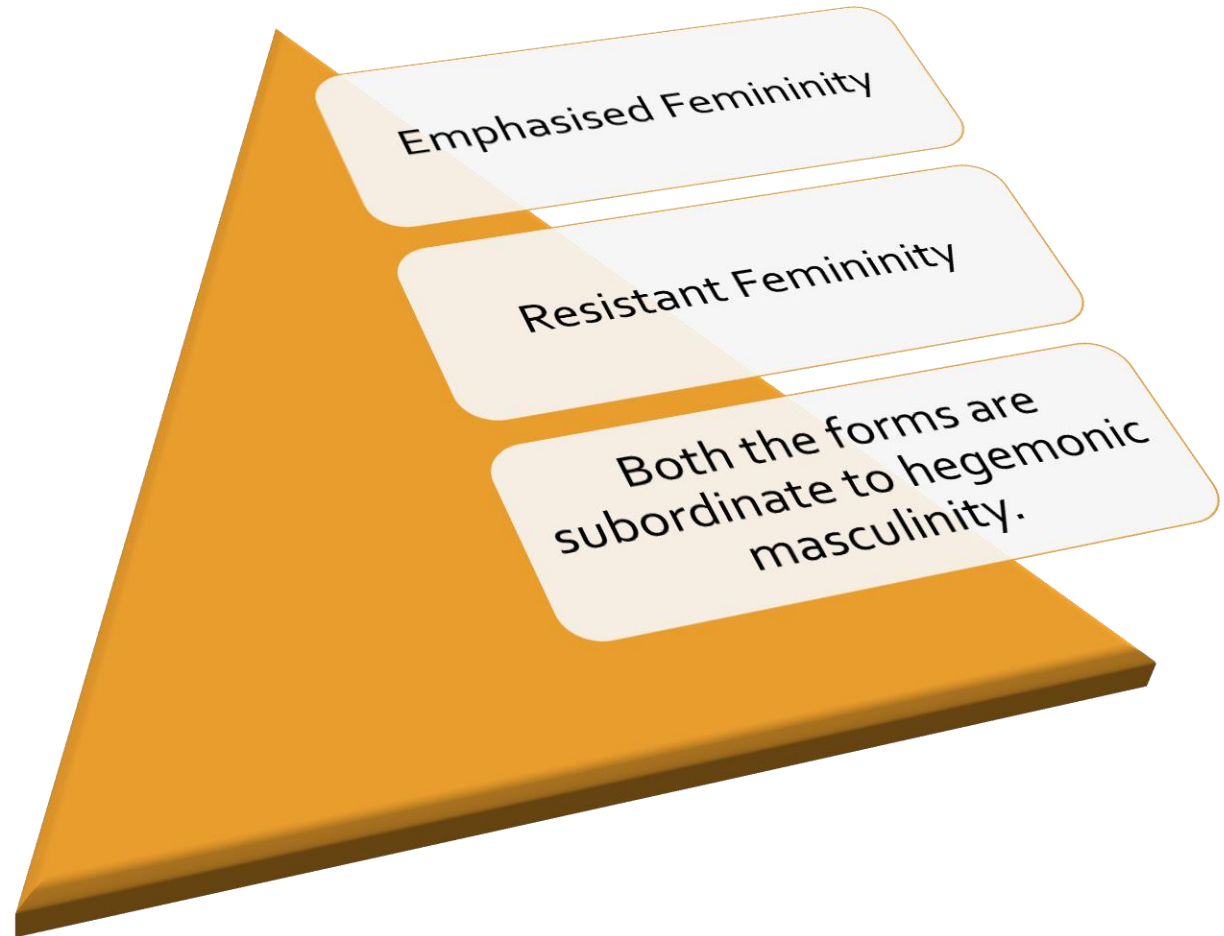
R.W. Connell's
hierarchy of
Masculinity



Hegemonic Masculinity

- According Connell, hegemonic masculinity is associated first and foremost with heterosexuality and marriage, authority, paid work, strength, physical toughness.
- Eg-Superman, Amitabh Bachhan, Businessman like Mukesh Ambani.
- Compliticit Masculinity: Works on the dividend of patriarchy
- Subordinated Masculinity: Does not follow the norms of masculinity.

Hierarchy of Femininity



Gender Crisis

- Crisis of institutionalization
- Crisis of Sexuality
- Crisis of Interest Formation

Colonial Construction of Masculinity Vs Femininity

- According to Ashis Nandy, British colonialism took masculine power to be superior to feminine, which was still superior to Klibatva (effeminate).
- As far as the discourse of nationalism was concerned, he distinguishes between the older generation of Tilak to Gandhi, with the former flaunting masculinity and the later femininity.
- Mrinalini Sinha's work on the Masculine British men and effeminate desi babus.
- Demonstration of "Mother India" with femininity.
- Partha Chatterjee's work on binary of public/private and Outer world / Inner worlds.

Sexual division of labour

- Sexual division of labour refers to the allocation of different roles, responsibilities and tasks to women and men based on societal ideas of what men and women should do or are capable of doing.
- All work and activity can be divided into productive, reproductive and community activities.

family

- Exploration of political economy of household (intrahousehold distribution of resources)
- Relation of contradiction and collusion between state, community and household.
- Not looking at family from an ideological standpoint, and trying to understand marginalized aspects of family.
- Studies in the South Asian context, was largely based on patrilineal and patriarchal descent, which rationalizes differential access of men and women to material and symbolic resources.
- Influential work has been Leela Dube's work 'Seed and Earth', where she talks about theory of rationalization of a system where the woman is alienated from productive resources, has no control over her labour power and is denied rights over her offspring.

Social 'Functions' of Family: A Critique

- Biological Reproduction
- Sexuality
- Socialization
- Welfare
- Production, distribution and Consumption
- Family Roles and Relationships.

Work

- Work is defined as task whether paid or unpaid, an expenditure of mental and physical effort which can produce goods and services for human needs.
- Before the 1970s, sociological studies focused on paid work only. It was challenged with the second wave of feminism.
- Ann Oakley's *The Sociology of House work and Housewife* argued that housework came into existence with the separation of home from workplace.
- With industrialization, was taken up away from home. Domestic work became invisible.

Gender Inequality at workplace

- Occupational Segregation
 - Vertical Segregation
 - Horizontal Segregation
- Part time tasks
- Wage-Gap
- Mother Gap and Female Forfeit
- Dual Responsibility
- Sexual Division of Labour and Re-negotiation of domestic task between men and women.

Contd...

- In popular literature, family and marriage is looked at from a functionalist perspective.
- It's a hub of exploitation and inequality, from a feminist perspective.
- 'Captive Wife' – housewives who felt relegated to an endless cycle of childcare and housework.
- Most feminists have questioned family as a co-operative unit based on common interest and mutual support.

Suggested Readings

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- Wharton, A. S. 2005. Sociology of Gender, Blackwell



Thank You