

# Chapter 10

A solid red horizontal bar spans the width of the slide, positioned below the chapter title and above the main topic.

Gender

# Chapter Outline

- Sex and Gender
- Cultural Variation in Sexual Behavior
- Coming of Age in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Male and Female Rites of Passage
- Gender Roles, Power, and Prestige: The Status of Women
- Gender Relations: Complex and Variable

# Sex and Gender

- **Sex**  
The biological differences between male and female.
- **Gender**  
The social classification of masculine and feminine.

# Margaret Mead

- Masculine and feminine traits are patterned by culture.
- Key findings in new guinea:
  - Arapesh: both sexes are expected to act in ways Americans consider “feminine”.
  - Mundugamor: both sexes were what American culture would call “masculine”.

# Cultural Construction of Gender

- The idea that gender characteristics are not inborn but rather constructed within each culture.
- All cultures recognize:
  - Two sexes: male and female.
  - Two genders: masculine and feminine.

# Alternative Gender Roles

- Genders that are neither man nor woman have been described for many societies:
  - Two-spirit—a man living as a woman and considered to have supernatural powers in native American society.
  - Hijra—an alternative gender role in India conceptualized as neither man nor woman.

# Question

- To say that gender is "constructed" is to say that
  - a) most cultures have few expectations about behavior as it relates to gender.
  - b) masculine and feminine have different meanings (and associated behaviors) in different cultures.
  - c) gender differences are actually superficial, given other concerns of people's lifeways.
  - d) in American society, people are free to decide on assuming any gender characteristics they wish.
  - e) societies have consciously developed ideas of two or more genders in planning their way of life.

# Answer: b

- To say that gender is "constructed" is to say that **masculine and feminine have different meanings (and associated behaviors) in different cultures.**

# Cultural Sexual Behaviors

Cultures vary in what is erotic:

- Before the Tahitians learned to kiss from the Europeans, they began sexual intimacy by sniffing.
- The Trobriand islanders inspected each other for lice if they felt fond of each other.

# Homosexuality and Culture

- Adolescent boys in Sambia have homosexual relations as part of initiation but enter heterosexual marriages as adults.
- In the United States, consistent heterosexuality is considered essential to masculine identity.

# Sexuality and Culture

- Sexual norms affect sexual behavior.
- Cultures differ in:
  - Age that sexuality begins and ends.
  - Ways people make themselves attractive.
  - Importance of sexual activity.

# Inis Beag Society: Ireland

- Described as “one of the most sexually naïve of the world’s societies”.
- Women are expected to endure sex.
- Refusing intercourse is a mortal sin.

# Inis Beag Society

Culturally patterned sexual repression:

- Absence of sexual foreplay.
- Belief that sexual activity weakens men.
- Absence of premarital sex.
- High percentage of celibate males.
- Extraordinarily late age of marriage.

# Mangaia of Polynesia

- Adolescent boys are given sexual instruction and an experience with a woman in the village.
- Practically every girl and boy has had intercourse before marriage.
- Female frigidity, male celibacy, and homosexuality are practically unknown.

# Question

- Anthropological studies of sexual behavior in Mangaia, Polynesia and Inis Beag, Ireland, supports which of the following statements?
  - a) Sexual behaviors are similar across cultures, as shown in the two ethnographic cases.
  - b) Elders in Inis Beag are much more prone to explain about sex than in Mangaia.
  - c) Both societies try to prevent young people from having sexual intercourse until they are married.
  - d) Sexual activity and sexual responsiveness are culturally-patterned.
  - e) Sexual jokes were more pronounced in Inis Beag than Mangaia.

# Answer: d

- Anthropological studies of sexual behavior in Mangaia, Polynesia and Inis Beag, Ireland, supports the following statement:
  - **Sexual activity and sexual responsiveness are culturally-patterned.**

# Male Initiation Rites: Purpose

- Culturally validate male dominance.
- Legitimate a change of status from child to adult.
- Involve an extended period of separation, during which the initiates learn the beliefs, skills, and knowledge necessary to participate as a functioning adult in society.

# Female Initiation Rites

- Generally performed at menarche (first menstruation).
- Occur in more societies than male initiation rites.
- Research indicates much cross-cultural variability.
  - Sometimes the initiate is isolated from society; sometimes she is the center of attention.
  - Some rituals are elaborate and take years to perform; others are performed with little ceremony.

# Andalusia and Sexual Control of Women

- Women are seen as the devil.
- Women have lustful appetites and lead men into temptation.
- Women possess goodness only as mothers.
- Husbands fear that women drive them to early death by demands for sex.

# Manhood Puzzle

- The question of why in almost all cultures masculinity is viewed not as a natural state but as a problematic status to be won through overcoming obstacles.
- Machismo
  - A cultural construction of hypermasculinity as essential to the male gender role.

# Gender Roles

- Cultural expectations of men and women in a particular society, including the division of labor.
- Gender hierarchy
  - The ways gendered activities and attributes are related to the distribution of resources, prestige, and power in a society.

# Private/public Dichotomy

- Gender system in which women's status is lowered by their cultural identification with the home and children,
- Men are identified with public, prestigious economic and political roles.

# Tlingit of the Northwest Coast

- Gender relations are egalitarian.
- Women and men could achieve prestige through their own efforts.
- Sexual division of labor was not rigid.
- Women often acted as negotiators and handled the money for long-distance trade.

# Tlingit of the Northwest Coast

- Some women were heads of clans or tribes.
- Ideal marriage was between a man and woman of equal rank.
- Roles were structured based on ability, training, and personality rather than gender.

# Gender Relations in Horticultural Societies

- High degree of segregation between the sexes.
- Myths “explain” why women are socially inferior to men and why men and women have different roles.

# Quick Quiz



1. Which one of the following does **not** describe anthropologists' involvement in studies of gender?
  - a) documenting variation in how particular cultures think about and symbolize gender
  - b) examination of evolutionary and historical changes in gender relations
  - c) an interest in the effects of European expansion on gender relationships in non-western societies
  - d) an almost exclusive focus on women, children, and issues specific to women's lives
  - e) examination of how gender relations interrelate with other aspects of a society and culture

# Answer : d

- The the following does not describe anthropologists' involvement in studies of gender:
  - **an almost exclusive focus on women, children, and issues specific to women's lives**

2. Anthropologists refer to the observation that in nearly all world cultures men test and prove their manhood as

- a) the androgyny perplex.
- b) the "manhood puzzle."
- c) androcentrism.
- d) initiation.
- e) the public/private dichotomy.

# Answer : b

- Anthropologists refer to the observation that in nearly all world cultures men test and prove their manhood as **the "manhood puzzle."**

3. Women's role in the economy of a society
  - a) may be improved by the introduction of new technology.
  - b) often changes, so that they have more leisure time to spend with their children.
  - c) is often underestimated, so that their status declines if machine technology is added.
  - d) improves with technology and with being paid in cash for their hard work.
  - e) may diminish as men take wage-labor jobs.

# Answer : c

- **Women's role in the economy of a society is often underestimated, so that their status declines if machine technology is added.**