Gender Stratification: Crash Course Sociology #32

Crash Course: Sociology
https://youtube.com/watch?v=Yb1_4FPtzrI
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Why do some people think that drinking black coffee is manly, while ordering a pumpkin spice latte is girly? Don't let them fool you! Pumpkin spice has no gender. Pumpkin spice is for everyone.

The gendering of inanimate objects is a super common practice. And it's a good example of how societies create markers of gender that have nothing to do with anything biological.

Gender, as you'll recall, refers to the personal and social characteristics. But not the biological traits that we associate with different sexes. That's why sociologists say that gender is a social construct, something that we, as a society, create and enforce.

Now, those social constructs may be totally made up, but their effects on how we interact with each other are very real. Indeed, gender influences how we organize all of society and how we distribute power.

Trust me, the identity politics of your morning coffee are only the beginning.

===== Intro (0:49) =====

When I say that gender affects the organization of society of society and the distribution of power, what I mean is that our society is largely stratified by gender.

Gender stratification refers to the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and privilege across genders. Take, for example, the right to vote. Denying women the vote has been one way that many societies have kept political power in teh hands of men.

It was less than a century ago, in 1920, that women in the United States gained the right to vote. Saudi Arabia didn't allow women to vote until the 2015 election. This kind of disenfranchisement is an example of patriarchy at work.

Patriarchy is a form of social organization in which men have more power and dominate other gender. Matriarchal, or female-dominated societies, do this too, but most societies throughout human history have been patriarchies.

And patriarchal societies are maintained through a careful cultivation of the attitudes, behaviors, and system that favor men and encourage society to believe that one gender is innately better than others. Also known as sexism.

For example, little girls may sometimes be encouraged to be tomboys, but young boys are often shamed for liking toys that are considering stereotypically feminine. Or even, say, the color pink.

Societies often define and celebrate certain sets of characteristics as being masculine. Sociologist Raewyn Connell described this process as hegemonic masculinity. Think of the type of guy who's the lead in every action movie: tall, braod-shouldered, strong, able-bodied, heterosexual, usually wealthy, probably named Chris... That's hegemonic masculinity.

But it goes beyond mere appearance. Hedgemonic masculinities are linked to power within society too. Fitting into the archetype of masculinity pays off in the form of societal approval.

But, ultimately, in a patriarchal society, all men share in patriarchal dividends. This is a fancy way of saying that there are benefits that accrue to men simply because they are men. But before we get too deep into what those benefits are, let's take a step back and look at how different gender expectations are taught in our society.

As you might remember from our episode on socialization, the first people who teach us about gender are our parents. If daughters are given dolls to play with and sons are given toy hammers, kids learn that caring behaviors are feminine and building things is masculine.

This type of anticipatory socialization is reinforced by the societal assumption that men are the breadwinners in families and women will take care of the home and children. Even as more women have become equal earners outside the home, they still tend to do more work in the household as well.

Sociologist Arlie Hochschild called this phenomenon the Second Shift, in which women come home from work to more work - cooking, laundry, childcare - whereas men are more likely to spend their time in leisure after work.

According to a survey on time use from the Beureau of Labor Statistics in 2015, full-time working moms spend about 9 more hours per week on household chores and caring for family members than full-time working dads.

These gender dynamics are helped along by corporate and governmental policies that set aside parental leave only for women. And by less formal influences too, like commercials or TV shows that depict fathers who can't do the laundry or take care of their own kids for the weekend.

The media play a big part in teaching kids about gender ideals. Unfortunately, their depictions of what the typical woman or man looks like tend to be a bit skewed. Women, in particular, are exposed to messages that encourage them to value youth, beauty, and thinness.

These media messages, which encourage women to be desirable to men, contribute to what Raewyn Connell has referred to as 'emphasized femeninities'.

This is the flip-side of hegemonic masculinities. Emphasized femininities are forms of femininity that conform to what the ideal female is in men's eyes. The social reality is that femininities come in many different forms and may or may not be constructed in ways that emphasize stereotypical notions of gender.

But media or only one source of gender socialization. The gender constructions that kids see outside of the home also tend to reinforce the dynamic of women in caring roles and men in leadership roles. Take school, for example, while 3/4 of K-12 teachers are women, about 1/2 of school principles, and only 14% of school superintendents are women.

Female principles are more likely to work in elementary schools, which is less likely to lead to promotions to higher positions in the district. And who you see at the front of the classroom isn't the only way that schools influence gender socialization.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble to talk about how sports ended up as part of the landmark United States law about gender discrimination in schools: Title IX.

===== Thought Bubble (5:05) =====

Passed in 1972, Title IX is a law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in public schools. It was originally developed in response to discrimination in higher education, such as enrollment quotas, or refusing to hire female academics with children. But th law became most well known for its effects on sports.

Prior to 1970, most schools only had official teams for boys. And if a girl wanted to join the team, she could be turned away without question. As a result, only about 4% of girls played sports.

By tying schools' funding to equal opportunities for boys and girls, Title IX required that schools offered girls just as many opportunities to play sports as boys. This increased the num ber of high school girls playing sports from 295,000 in 1970 to over 3,000,000 nowadays.

But, more importantly, it also forced colleges to increase their funding for female sports scholarships, which was one of the factors in the increase in the increase in women pursuing high education.

One person for whom it made a difference: Sally Ride. Thanks to Title IX, she was able to get a tennis scholarship to college, which led to her studying physics and eventually becoming America's first female astronaut.

Thanks Thought Bubble!

===== Main Episode (6:05) =====

Since the 1970s, the number of women pursuing higher education has sky-rocketed, with women now making up the majority of all college graduates. But different majors attract different genders, with men being heavily represented in fields like computer science, economics, and engineering while women are more likely to cluster in biology, psychology, or sociology.

Moving past education, the jobs that women work tend to be in service or care positions such as food service, education, health care, and administrative roles. Sometimes known as pink collar jobs, these jobs with the highest concentrations of women tend to come with both lower prestige and lower pay.

You've probably also heard of the glass ceiling, a term used by sociologists to describe the invisible barrier that stops women's advancement to the top levels of an organization.

Women are particularly underrepresented in leadership positions across all major institutions. Of the Fortune 500 companies, only 32 CEO's are women. In politics, only 19% of the US House of Representatives and 21% of the US Senate are female. The US has never had a female president or a vice president and did not have its first female Supreme Court justice until 1981.

Why does the glass ceiling persist? While the US and many other countries have laws in place to prevent explicit discrimination the basis of sex and gender, women are often held back through less explicit kinds of sexism.

For example, men who are assertive in salary negotiations are more successful in getting a higher salary. But women who do the same tend to be seen negatively. Which is a catch-22 for women. Do you negotiate and be labeled as too aggressive or do you settle for lower pay?

One of the results of gender stratification is gender wage gap. According to a survey done in 2016 by the Pew Research Center, white women earn about 80 cents for every dollar that white men make.

This gap is wider for non-white women, with black women earning 65 cents and Hispanic women earning 58 cents for every dollar that white men make.

Now, there's a lot to unpack from the gender pay gap. That 20 cent gap isn't all due to gender discrimination. Much of it can be explained by differences in education, choices of careers, differences in the hours worked, and differences in experience. But those last two factors, hours worked and career experience, are often related to the decision to leave the workforce to care for children, which is way more normative for women than for men.

So, some people argue that, if we can explain the gender gap by looking at people's choices, then it must be the people alone who are responsible for the gap being there. But the fact is, society has a tremendous influence on what choices people make. As well as what type of person is considered the right "fit" for a given job.

Yes, the gender gap is smaller if you compare female CEO's with 30 years of work experience to male CEO's with 30 years of work experience. But there are fewer women who are offered those positions.

Gender socialization is also part of why women might choose to opt out of the workforce to care for children. And society also informs the educational choices that women and men make that contribute to the gap.

For example, until the 1980s, the number of women who majored in computer science was increasing at a pace similar to other fields, like medicine. But around 1985, that rate began to drop. Roughly around the time that personal computers and video games came on the market and were marketed as gadgets for boys and men. Gendered marketing strikes again!

And patriarchal norms about masculinities can affect men as well as women. For example, men have higher rates of suicide than women. Studies of suicide among men have found that it's often linked to financial troubles or divorce, two crises of masculinity that may be related to men's identity as a breadwinner.

Men are also more likely to be incarcerated. They are more likely to behave in criminal behavior, yes, but holding all else equal, men are more likely to be tried for a crime and more likely to be found guilty.

This stems from the stereotype that women are more moral and innocent, an example of benevolent sexism that makes women less likely to be seen as criminal types.

But, benevolent or not, sexism and the patriarchy have a real impact that make it harder for all genders to be on even footing in our society.

Today we learned about some of those impacts, starting with discussing patriarchy and sexism and Raewyn Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinities and emphasized femininities. Then we discussed gender socialization in the home, media, and schools. Finally we talked about how gender stratification results in different outcomes by gender in education, occupations, earnings, and criminal activities.

===== Outro (10:07) =====

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Our animation team is Thought Cafe and Crash Course is made with Adobe Creative Cloud.

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