CHAPTER 14 Inequalities of Gender

Lecture Outline

I. Gender and Inequality
   A. Throughout the world women are confronting the cultural norms that keep them in subservient positions and prevent them from asserting their own choices about their futures.

II. Sex versus Gender
   A. Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females, including the primary sex characteristics that are present at birth and the secondary sex characteristics that develop later.
   B. Some people are born as hermaphrodites; their primary sexual organs have features of both male and female organs, making it difficult to categorize the person as male or female.
   C. Another ambiguous sexual category consists of transsexuals, who feel very strongly that the sexual organs they were born with do not conform to their deep-seated sense of what their sex should be.
   D. Gender refers to the culturally defined ways of acting as a male or a female that become part of an individual's personal sense of self.
      1. Gender socialization in the family and in schools tends to separate males and females into different social worlds with their own forms of activity and language.
      2. Boys and girls are increasingly participating in the same types of activities in their schools and communities, and many teachers, parents, and administrators seek to avoid the worst effects of gender separation.
   E. Sexuality refers to the manner in which a person engages in the intimate behaviors connected with genital stimulation, orgasm, and procreation.
      1. Sexuality is profoundly influenced by cultural norms and social institutions such as the family and the school, as well as by social structures such as the class system of a society.
      2. Universal cultural norms exerting social control over sexuality include the incest taboo, marriage, and heterosexuality, but even these norms include variations and differing degrees of sanction.
3. *Heterosexuality* refers to sexual orientation toward the opposite sex, in contrast to *homosexuality*, or sexual orientation toward the same sex, and *bisexuality*, or sexual orientation toward either sex.

4. Norms of heterosexuality function to ensure that there is genital sexual intercourse between men and women in the interest of population replacement and growth.

5. Fear of homosexuals and same-sex attraction is known as homophobia.

III. Gender Stratification

A. All human societies are stratified by gender, meaning that males and females are channeled into specific statuses and roles. *Gender roles* are the sets of behaviors considered appropriate for individuals of a particular gender.

B. Until quite recently it was assumed that there were two separate spheres of life for men and women.

1. Out of this gender-based division of labor grew the notion of differences in men’s and women’s abilities and personalities, which were thought to be based on biological and psychological differences between males and females.

2. In the twentieth century, evidence from the social sciences established that gender roles are not innate but are strongly influenced by culture.

C. Preindustrial societies are usually rigidly sex-segregated. As societies increase in size and complexity, women usually become subordinated to men.

D. The origins of gender inequality in most modern societies can be traced to their feudal periods.

IV. Gender Inequality in Industrial Societies

A. In modern industrial societies boys and girls are socialized into “masculine” and “feminine” roles.

B. International comparisons show that in many nations, including the United States, women are more likely to be poor than men.

C. Gender stratification in modern societies is reflected in *sexism*, an ideology that justifies prejudice or discrimination based on sex.

D. Sexism is also expressed in violence and harassment of women, often intended to “keep women in their place” and maintain male power.
V. The Women’s Movement
   A. The modern women’s movement arose in the mid-1960s out of an already existing network of women’s organizations, together with a less formal network of women in consciousness-raising groups.
   B. The movement won significant victories during the 1960s and 1970s and began to change the way men and women think about gender roles.
   C. Women who work outside the home are also expected to perform the bulk of domestic and child care work.
      1. This “second shift” is an example of the persistence of *patriarchy*, the dominance of men over women.

VI. Women at Work
   A. The most frequently cited problems of women in the workplace are low wages, differentials in fringe benefits, “dead end” jobs, sexual harassment, lack of child care, stress over multiple roles, and lack of leisure time.
   B. Another problem is the segregation of women into the “pink-collar ghettos” of secretarial and clerical work.