The Politics of Gender and Sexuality

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The Politics of Gender and Sexuality (Question Two)

Introduction

It is worth noting that the engagement of psychology with an intersectional perspective when it comes to social identities continues to grow. It is a special issue and significant one based on the fact that it focuses on illustrating how intersectional positions within the range of sexual minority identities articulate with various other dimensions of identity, for instance, gender, racial ethnicity, age, sexuality, power, as well as socioeconomic status. It is proper to realize that different authors portray intersectionality as either mainly concerned with a couple of marginalized identities or even as what is recognized as a more generalized theory of identity. This paper is an analytical approach describing the intersection of race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality as well as power and how these identities relate to one another.

The intersection of race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and power

In their work, ‘Race and Sexuality,’ Vidal-Ortiz, Robinson and Khan (2018) strive to show the connection between race and sexuality. It is worth realizing that even though race and sexuality are often not linked together in productive, analytical ways, they are inseparable elements as far as our identities, as well as social lives, are concerned. How we perceive people, events and also life experiences highly depend on how we view the exposure as well as the processes that link race and sexuality[[1]](#footnote-1). Now and then we come across numerous messages that either show a link or in other words a connection between race and sexuality or that attempt to disentangle their inherent relationship altogether.

How most individuals in the United States of America think about identity and especially when it comes to gender, race, as well as sexuality, has got a long history that goes back to the encounters among European Christian, people linked with African descent and also Native Americans. There were a couple of assumptions that were brought by the European Christians based on the connection between civilization as well as Christian ideas of sexuality and gender[[2]](#footnote-2). This is to say that Christianization focused not only on religious matters but also on sexual and cultural conversion. Currently, the language of religion, sexuality, race, and gender continue to be considered as they define the boundaries of normative ‘modernity’ and this consist of the function of religion in showing the relationship between secular versus religious arguments that revolve around gender, sexuality, and race.

When it comes to the contemporary United States, terms of sexuality, race, religion, and gender have emerged as of great significance to the ways that individuals understand themselves. Even looking at how modern surveys, census questionnaires and also other types of applications ask questions, they all focus on one’s sexual orientation, gender, race, and other factors. It is essential for people today to understand their identity as this plays a tremendous role when it comes to engaging in political and public discourse. It is worth realizing that racial and gender identities in the United States have shifted throughout its history. For instance, the establishment of what is highly recognized as the black power movement ensured that racial identity is placed at the center of national (as well as international) political movements. This also encouraged the emergence of what came to be known as Red Power among the Native Americans and also movements focused on gender and sexuality[[3]](#footnote-3). Racial identity being emphasized has over time triggered the white Americans to review their own ethnic pasts. It is apparent that gender and sexual identities have gone through tremendous changes over time. Currently, for example, it is common to come across an individual that identify as gay or straight.

It is firmly believed that gender identity indexes how people across the world understand their gender, and this does not in any way necessarily correspond to the gender assigned to a person at birth. It is worth realizing that gender, sex as well as sexuality are intrinsically connected and they to a great extent organize the set of values that revolve around being sexed, gendered and also an individual’s sexuality. The meaning of sexuality is also linked to gender in the sense that many societies perceive gender as a binary of man and woman. Sexual and gender desires of someone, play a significant role when it comes to sexual identity.

In his work, ‘Masculinity as Homophobia,’ Michael Kimmel argues that homophobia is a primary principle when it comes to our cultural definition of manhood. Homophobia is highly recognized as that fear that men have based on the idea that other men will unmask them and show them to the world as not real men. The fear of being perceived as a sissy by those around to a great extent dominates the cultural definitions of manhood[[4]](#footnote-4). For instance, a boy comes out openly to accuse another boy of being a sissy, to which the other boy will disagree and respond that he is not in any way a sissy but the accuser is indeed a sissy. This may result in the two boys fighting out as the means to figure out who among them is telling the truth. One boy may in the process have to take the stand even to face a group of boys to prove to them that he is not a sissy and this takes a while before this boy regains any sense of self-respect.

It is proper to remember that as adolescents, men realize that their age group is a type of gender police, primarily because people here are always in the process of trying to portray them as feminine or sissies. Young men are always riding gender boundaries and keeping an eye on any feminine thing that may present itself. Men tend to work on ensuring that they maintain a strong front cover and this pertains to everything that they do. It is worth noting that every movement or dressing revolves around a coded gender language. This is the reason why when people want to know someone who is termed as homosexual, they consider on giving descriptions such as; he walks in a specific manner, he happens to be very emotional, or even on the claim that he shows his feelings. Some women tend to believe that men who show no interest in women to be gays. As far as all of these claims are concerned, the big question is, how is one supposed to behave, so others do not have a wrong idea about them? Homophobia has been known to exaggerate all the traditional rules of masculinity, and it is to a great extent linked to sexism.

For a long time, manhood has and continues to be equated with power. In every corner as well as in organizations, such power is expressed. Women have come to understand this, and as a result, others have come openly to challenge this. Feminism is highly recognized as a set of theories that revolve around explaining the fear of women for men as well as empowering these women to confront this fear both privately and publicly. Feminists have that belief that women are that group in our societies that does not have power. It is also essential to remember that feminism observes men as a group in the society that has got power implying that individually, men ought to feel powerful. However, most men do not feel or believe that they got all powers as seen by the feminists[[5]](#footnote-5). Men continue to use exclusion as well as an escape as the dominant techniques to ensure that they keep their fears of humiliation at bay. Masculinity has emerged as a relentless test by which most men prove to other men, women as well as to themselves that they have mastered the part successfully and that they are not sissies. It is necessary for every individual to remember that relief from gender struggle we currently face will emerge from standing up for equality and justice, and also from a politics of inclusion.

Men, as well as boys, get involved in what is recognized as gender issues. This challenge arises as a result of pragmatic reasons. For instance, the gender inequalities we do face today trigger a lot of problems, especially from the women. The men are known to have predominant control of economic assets, cultural authority, and political power among many other areas makes the women concerned and leaves many seeking for justice and equality. However, it is proper to know that moving towards a gender-equal community has been perceived as a complex undertaking that would require changes from the small details of everyday living. It is challenging to generate gender systems focused on equality if we fail to embrace broad social consensus in favor of promoting gender equality. It has been established that patterns of gender inequality are to a great extent interwoven with social definitions of masculinity and also based on gender inequalities of men. Change directed towards gender equality is likely to be supported if it occurs that men and boys are in the position to see clearly the positive benefits they will acquire for themselves as well as for the individuals in their lives.

Understanding gendered power on a world scale is something worth considering. It is proper to remember that we usually address gender based on the small scale by focusing on personal identities, mother and their daughters, husbands, and wives, and also on intimate relationships. However, it is essential to understand gender on a larger scale. As environmental feminism continues to make its move, it is necessary to think on a world scale when it comes to issues based on gender. Gender, class, sexuality, race, and nationality among other areas are the separate ways of categorizing individuals, and this is known to have no logical interconnection. Considering how gender is global and how it is linked with race and class is an excellent approach. It is apparent how global media spread quickly what is perceived as stereotypes and sexist images and this issue has less discussion. As far as this is concerned, it is of great significance to note that globalization is a gendered process.

The whole idea is traceable in olden days where gender-divided colonies were established, and missionary patriarchies were spreading. Reflecting upon how things are being done today, it is easy to see the massive concentration of men at the topmost levels of organizations, state power as well as in the military force. One may be caught by the thought of why the huge private fortunes are sometimes inherited in the United States but never in any way assembled by the female population. Gender inequality in the world of globalization is also connected to other elements such as race and sexuality. Masculinities are to a great extent known to be embedded in neoliberal globalization. According to Raewyn Connell, gender relations as far as the world scale is concerned, are affected by the movement of metropolitan power into offshore spaces, new forms of resistance, social turbulence that emerge from triumphant neoliberalism, as well as the conflict among globally powerful patriarchies[[6]](#footnote-6). It is essential to understand that one of the basic challenges when it comes to comprehending gender and power on a world scale revolves around the idea that gender theory primarily emerges from one world region and this is especially the most powerful.

Rakan,

Your paper weaves these texts together nicely, and you are clearly comfortable with these ideas and their implications in a way that I find very impressive. I would have liked to see you pull race/empire/colonial relations in more clearly, since you did such a masterful job with describing gender, sex, and sexuality. I would note that you referred to psychology in both the intro and (tragically short) conclusion. But I never really saw you develop that idea. How do all of these intersections and insights from these readings come together to understand psychology, or how social identity impacts psychology?

There are obviously other issues too, like cultural and ethnic norms, colonialism and imperialism which challenge those norms, and intersect with gendered and sexualized logics. As we move into the semester, I will be excited to see how you think through those added layers.

Also, please do use in-text citations per my guidelines.

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Conclusion

It is therefore apparent that the engagement of psychology with an intersectional perspective when it comes to social identities continues to grow. It is a special issue and significant one based on the fact that it focuses on illustrating how intersectional positions within the range of sexual minority identities articulate with various other dimensions of identity, for instance, gender, racial ethnicity, age, sexuality, power, as well as socioeconomic status. As seen through this paper, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality as well as power are connected in one way or another even though they are understood differently by different people. MORE PLEASE!!!!

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4. Kimmel, Michael S. "Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity." *Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integrated study* 81 (2004): 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Connell, Raewyn. *Making gendered people: Bodies, identities, sexualities*. 1999. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Connell, Raewyn. "100 million Kalashnikovs: Gendered power on a world scale." *Debate Feminista* 51 (2016): 3-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)