

## Chapter 8. FEMINIST FAMILY THEORY

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### CHAPTER OUTLINE: KEY TERMS, PEOPLE, PLACES, CONCEPTS

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## CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS: KEY TERMS, PEOPLE, PLACES, CONCEPTS

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### Convention:

A convention is a set of agreed, stipulated or generally accepted standards, norms, social norms or criteria, often taking the form of a custom.

Certain types of rules or customs may become law and regulatory legislation may be introduced to formalize or enforce the convention (for example, laws that define on which side of the road vehicles must be driven). In a social context, a convention may retain the character of an 'unwritten' law of custom (for example, the manner in which people greet each other, such as by shaking each other's hands).

### Seneca Falls Convention:

The Seneca Falls Convention was an early and influential women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls, New York, July 19-20, 1848. It was organized by local New York women upon the occasion of a visit by Boston-based Lucretia Mott, a Quaker famous for her speaking ability, a skill rarely cultivated by American women at the time. The local women, primarily members of a radical Quaker group, organized the meeting along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a skeptical non-Quaker who followed logic more than religion.

The meeting spanned two days and six sessions, and included a lecture on law, a humorous presentation, and multiple discussions about the role of women in society.

### CLAS:

CLAS was a standards-based assessment based on Outcomes Based Education principles given in California in the early 1990s. It was based heavily on concepts of new standards such as whole language and reform mathematics. Instead of multiple choice tests with one correct

answer, it used open written responses that were graded according to rubrics.

**Patriarchy:**

Patriarchy is a social system in which the role of the male as the primary authority figure is central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women, children, and property. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege, and is dependent on female subordination.

Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, and economic organization of a range of different cultures, and also influences modern civilization.

**Structural functionalism:**

Structural functionalism, is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole. This approach looks at both social structure and social functions.

**Feminism:**

Feminism is a collection of movements aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights for women. In addition, feminism seeks to establish equal opportunities for women in education and employment. A feminist is a 'person whose beliefs and behavior are based on feminism.'

Feminist theory, which emerged from these feminist movements, aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and lived experience; it has developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues such as the social construction of sex and gender.

**Theory:**

The English word theory was derived from a technical term in philosophy in Ancient Greek. The word *theoria*, θεωρημα, meant 'a looking at, viewing, beholding', and referring to contemplation or speculation, as opposed to action. Theory is especially often contrasted to 'practice' a Greek term for 'doing', which is opposed to theory because theory involved no doing apart from itself.

**Multiracial:**

The terms multiracial and mixed-race describe people whose ancestries come from multiple races. Unlike the term biracial, which often is only used to refer to having parents or grandparents of two different races, the term multiracial may encompass biracial people but can also include people with more than two races in their heritage, or also may refer to the origin of more generationally distant genetic admixtures of more than one race in a person's DNA.

The actual incidence of multiracial admixture and heritage is believed to be far higher than is commonly reported, although there is evidence that this is changing as people are becoming more comfortable with revealing personal multiracial heritage. Census records and other studies also show the real number of multiracial individuals to be increasing in the United States along with an increase in marriages across race lines.

**Categorization:**

Categorization is the process in which ideas and objects are recognized, differentiated and understood. Categorization implies that objects are grouped into categories, usually for some specific purpose. Ideally, a category illuminates a relationship between the subjects and objects of knowledge.

**Language:**

Language may refer either to the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication, or to a specific instance of such a system of complex communication. The scientific study of language in any of its senses is called linguistics.

The approximately 3000-6000 languages that are spoken by humans today are the most salient examples, but natural languages can also be based on visual rather than auditive stimuli, for example in sign languages and written language.

**Gender role:**

Gender roles refers to the set of social and behavioral norms that are considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex in the context of a specific culture, which differ widely between cultures and over time. There are differences of opinion as to whether observed gender differences in behavior and personality characteristics are, at least in part, due to cultural or social factors, and therefore, the product of socialization experiences, or to what extent gender differences are due to biological and physiological differences.

Views on gender-based differentiation in the workplace and in interpersonal relationships have often undergone profound changes as a result of feminist and/or economic influences, but there are still considerable differences in gender roles in almost all societies.

**Privilege:**

Privilege is a way of framing issues surrounding social inequality, focusing as much on the advantages that one group accrues from society as on the disadvantages that another group experiences.

**Group role**

Privilege differs from conditions of overt prejudice, in which a dominant group actively seeks to oppress or suppress another group for its own advantage. Instead, theories of privilege suggest that the privileged group views its social, cultural, and economic experiences as a norm that everyone should experience, rather than as an advantaged position that must be maintained at the expense of others.

**Reinforcement:**

Reinforcement is a term in operant conditioning and behavior analysis for the process of

increasing the rate or probability of a behavior (e.g. pulling a lever more frequently) by the delivery or emergence of a stimulus (e.g. a candy) immediately or shortly after the behavior, called a 'response,' is performed.

The response strength is assessed by measuring frequency, duration, latency, accuracy, and/or persistence of the response after reinforcement stops. Experimental behavior analysts measured the rate of responses as a primary demonstration of learning and performance in non-humans (e.g. the number of times a pigeon pecks a key in a 10-minute session).

**Social:**

The term social refers to a characteristic of living organisms as applied to populations humans and other animals. It always refers to the interaction of organisms with other organisms and to their collective co-existence, irrespective of whether they are aware of it or not, and irrespective of whether the interaction is voluntary or involuntary.

**Etymology**

The word 'Social' derives from the Latin word socii ('allies'), it is particularly derived from the Italian Socii states that historically allied with the Roman Republic, though they famously rebelled against Rome in the Social War of 91-88 BC. Definition

In the absence of agreement about its meaning, the term 'social' is used in many different senses and regarded as a fuzzy concept, referring among other things to:

Attitudes, orientations, or behaviors which take the interests, intentions, or needs of other people into account (in contrast to anti-social behaviour) has played some role in defining the idea or the principle.

**Social change:**

Social change refers to an alteration in the social order of a society. It may refer to the notion of social progress or sociocultural evolution, the philosophical idea that society moves forward by dialectical or evolutionary means. It may refer to a paradigmatic change in the socio-economic

structure, for instance a shift away from feudalism and towards capitalism.

### **Discrimination:**

Discrimination is the cognitive and sensory capacity or ability to see fine distinctions and perceive differences between objects, subjects, concepts and patterns, or possess exceptional development of the senses. Used in this way to identify exceptional discernment since the 17th century, the term began to be used as an expression of derogatory racial prejudice in the 1830s from Thomas D. Rice's performances as 'Jim Crow'.

Since the American Civil War the term 'discrimination' generally evolved in American English usage as an understanding of prejudicial treatment of an individual based solely on their race, later generalized as membership in a certain socially undesirable group or social category.

### **Pregnancy discrimination:**

Pregnancy discrimination occurs when expectant women are fired, not hired, or otherwise discriminated against due to their pregnancy or intention to become pregnant. Common forms of pregnancy discrimination include not being hired due to visible pregnancy or likelihood of becoming pregnant, being fired after informing an employer of one's pregnancy, being fired after maternity leave, and receiving a pay dock due to pregnancy.

### **Motives**

Employers discriminate on the grounds of pregnancy for a number of reasons: prejudices against working women and mothers-fear of loss of productivity due to the absence of an employee-insufficient resources to support temporary employees or provide overtime pay for other employees to fulfill the duties during leave-belief that the employee will require too many accommodations even after her return.

### **United States**

In the United States, since 1978, employers are legally bound to provide the same insurance, leave pay, and additional support that would be bestowed upon any employee with medical leave or disability.

### **Family violence:**

Family violence can be broadly defined as a pattern of abusive behaviors by one or both partners in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family, friends or cohabitation. Domestic violence has many forms including physical aggression (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), or threats thereof; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or domineering; intimidation; stalking; passive/covert abuse (e.g., neglect); and economic deprivation. Alcohol consumption and mental illness can be co-morbid with abuse, and present additional challenges when present alongside patterns of abuse.

### **Social interaction:**

In sociology, social interaction is a dynamic, changing sequence of social actions between individuals (or groups) who modify their actions and reactions due to the actions by their interaction partner(s). Social interactions can be differentiated into accidental, repeated, regular, and regulated. Social interactions form the basis for social relations.

### **Symbolic interactionism:**

Symbolic Interaction, or the ongoing use of language and gestures in anticipation of how the other will react; a conversation. Symbolic interactionism isn't just talk. Both the verbal and nonverbal responses that a listener then delivers are similarly constructed in expectation of how the original speaker will react. The ongoing process is like the game of charades; only it's a full-fledged conversation.

### **Deconstruction:**

Deconstructionism is a philosophical theory of literary and other artistic criticism. It has been described as 'a tendency to subvert or pull apart and examine existing conventions having to do with meaning and individualism.' Owing to the highly subjective nature of deconstruction different authors and artists have had different interpretations of the theory, and thus applications of the theory in criticism and art vary greatly.

The term deconstruction was coined by French philosopher Jacques Derrida in his 1967 book *Of Grammatology*, and deconstruction itself grew out of the semiotics theory of linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure, who explored the way systems of meaning work in language.

### **Interactionism:**

In sociology, interactionism is a theoretical perspective that derives social processes (such as conflict, cooperation, identity formation) from human interaction. It is the study of how individuals act within society. Interactionist theory has grown in the latter half of the twentieth century and has become one of the dominant sociological perspectives in the world today.

### **Norm:**

Social norms are the behaviors and cues within a society or group. This sociological term has been defined as 'the rules that a group uses for appropriate and inappropriate values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. These rules may be explicit or implicit.

### **Domestic violence:**

Domestic violence, spousal abuse, family violence and intimate partner violence (IPV), can be broadly defined as a pattern of abusive behaviors by one or both partners in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family, friends or cohabitation. Domestic violence has many forms including physical aggression (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), or threats thereof; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or domineering; intimidation; stalking; passive/covert abuse (e.g., neglect); and economic deprivation. Alcohol consumption and mental illness can be co-morbid with abuse, and present additional challenges when present alongside patterns of abuse.

### **Violence:**

Violence is the expression of physical force against one or more people, compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt. Worldwide, violence is used as a tool of manipulation and also is an area of concern for law and culture which take attempts to suppress and stop it. The word violence covers a broad spectrum.

### **Coercion:**

Coercion is the practice of forcing another party to behave in an involuntary manner (whether through action or inaction) by use of threats or intimidation or some other form of pressure or force. In law, coercion is codified as the duress crime. Such actions are used as leverage, to force the victim to act in the desired way.

### **Superwoman:**

In sociology the term superwoman has been used to describe a Western woman who works hard to manage multiple roles of a worker, a homemaker, a volunteer, a student etc. It was first used by Marjorie Hansen Shaevitz, in her book *The superwoman syndrome*.

The term derived a number of expressions, such as superwoman syndrome, superwoman squeeze (a pressure on a superwoman to perform well in her multiple roles), and superwoman complex (an expectation of a superwoman that she can and should do everything).

### **Black feminism:**

Black Feminism argues that sexism, class oppression, and racism are inextricably bound together. Forms of feminism that strive to overcome sexism and class oppression. The Combahee River Collective argued in 1974 that the liberation of black women entails freedom for all people, since it would require the end of racism, sexism, and class oppression.

### **Liberation:**

Liberation is a bronze Holocaust memorial created by the sculptor Nathan Rapoport, located in New Jersey's Liberty State Park. Officially dedicated on May 30, 1985, the monument portrays an American soldier, carrying the body of a Holocaust survivor out of a Nazi concentration camp.

This memorial sculpture was commissioned by the State of New Jersey and sponsored by a coalition of veterans organizations.

**Liberation movement:**

A liberation movement is an organization leading a rebellion against a colonial power or national government, often seeking independence based on a nationalist identity and an anti-imperialist outlook.

**Rights:**

Rights are legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement; that is, rights are the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people, according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory. Rights are of essential importance in such disciplines as law and ethics, especially theories of justice and deontology.

Rights are often considered fundamental to civilization, being regarded as established pillars of society and culture, and the history of social conflicts can be found in the history of each right and its development.

**Lesbian:**

Lesbian is a term most widely used in the English language to describe sexual and romantic desire between females. The word may be used as a noun, to refer to women who identify themselves or who are characterized by others as having the primary attribute of female homosexuality, or as an adjective, to describe characteristics of an object or activity related to female same-sex desire.

Lesbian as a concept, used to differentiate women with a shared sexual orientation, is a 20th-century construct.

**Lesbian feminism:**

Lesbian feminism is a cultural movement and critical perspective, most influential in the 1970s and early 1980s (primarily in North America and Western Europe), that questions the position

of lesbians and women in society. It particularly refutes heteronormativity, the assumption that everyone is 'straight' and society should be structured to serve heterosexual needs. Some key thinkers and activists are Charlotte Bunch, Rita Mae Brown, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Marilyn Frye, Mary Daly, Sheila Jeffreys and Monique Wittig (although the latter is more commonly associated with the emergence of queer theory).

**Postmodernism:**

Postmodernism is a range of conceptual frameworks and ideologies that are defined in opposition to those commonly associated with ideologies of modernity and modernist notions of knowledge and science, such as formalism, materialism, metaphysics, positivism, realism, reductionism, and structuralism. Postmodernism is not a philosophical movement, but rather a number of philosophical and critical methods. In other words, postmodernism is not a method of doing philosophy, but rather a way of approaching traditional ideas and practices in non-traditional ways that deviate from pre-established superstructural modes.

**Separatism:**

Separatism is the advocacy of a state of cultural, ethnic, tribal, religious, racial, governmental or gender separation from the larger group. While it often refers to full political secession, separatist groups may seek nothing more than greater autonomy. Some groups refer to their organizing as independence, self-determination, partition or decolonization movements instead of, or in addition to, autonomist, separatist or secession movements.

**Social support:**

Social support is the physical and emotional comfort given to us by our family, friends, co-workers and others. It is knowing that we are part of a community of people who love and care for us, and value and think well of us. Social support is a way of categorizing the rewards of communication in a particular circumstance.