

Doing gender

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



" Doing Gender" At dinner: I was out at dinner one night and I took sometime to start observing the different ways men and women " do gender". As men and women came into the restaurant I began to notice how different we walk, the women seem to walk with their legs much closer together with a dainty tippy-toe gait the men however walk with the legs further apart and much more of a slow dragging stroll. Watching the different groups of both sexes eating there were many similarities, the women have a better posture sitting up straight with legs crossed or legs closed together with knees touching. The men sit as if their shoulders are heavy with much of a slouch, feet apart and elbows on both sides of the table. As food was being served, I was trying to recognize what different things were being ordered. All the women surprisingly ordered the almost the same things water with a straw to drink, taking a drink very lightly holding the glass with just the thumb and two of the other fingers, a chicken salad and or regular green salad. I overheard one of the women ask for ' light ranch' dressing instead of the regular ' house ranch'. With the women more concerned about the weight factor of what's being eaten. The Men were being served more of a full course meal including meat and two sides items drinking either soda or some short or a beer. When they started eating the women took fewer bites but chewing it completely and carrying on more of the conversation being discussed at the table in a low alto voice. The men consuming more portions of food at a time and responding to the women with a very quick " yes" or " uh huh". Just about all the women who I was watching got up several minutes after they were done eating and mirrored off to the restroom as the men stayed to take care of the bill. So as I was finishing my own dinner I

started reflecting everything I just noticed I thought about the three different groups I observed and how closely all their behavior was almost identical. It was like watching the same people but at different tables. A century ago people thought that most human behavior was guided by the biological instinct, today we recognize that behavior results mostly from nurture rather than nature (Macionis, Ch. 3, p. 64). After conducting this research I then realized that different cultures, races, and communities "do gender" in different ways. I starting to wonder if people ever think about the way they "do gender" if they thought about it would they change it depending how other people perceive them. Can a woman be too feminine? And can a man be too masculine? What we think of ourselves, then, depends on how we think others view us (Macionis, Ch. 3, p. 69). I thought then it would be interesting to find out how gays and lesbians "do gender" being that in this community there is many labels and roles identifying gays and lesbians. I decided to go out to a club/bar to observe this where the social attributes are more intense. At the Club: It was Friday night about 10: 30pm and the ratio of men to women was almost the same though men were the dominant gender. I watch the dance floor full up pretty fast with men between the ages of 21-28, dancing close to one another and very sensual. No women were dancing but socializing with other girls near the pool tables drinking beer. There were two types of women it seemed ones wearing tight jeans, fitted t-shirt, tennis shoes or boots, and short hair. The second types of women were wearing short skirts, heels, long hair and lots of make-up. Looking at some of these women was hard to identify as what we would in general call a woman. Watching the men at the bar ordering drinks was very

different then watching the women, the men order mixed drinks and while waiting to be noticed by the bartender many of them were caressing each other. As the night progressed the number of men increased more intoxicated then earlier, the men appeared to be more flirtatious with each other kissing and holding one another more freely then the women. A good half of the guys walked around with their shirts off many of them very muscular as if they live at the gym. When talking about sexuality and gender here I noticed that there were guys who portray a much more masculine man and some more feminine then most. Same with the women very few of them seemed what we would call feminine women yet more masculine then " normal". So it seems to me that " doing gender" here plays both sides and roles. In contrast to this experience, going to a non-gay club/bar the men didn't showcase their bodies yet it was the women exposing more of themselves plus there was way more women then men. But in both situations men seem to be the dominant gender as in taking the initiative to peruse the other person in something social and sexual. As we present ourselves in everyday situations, we reveal information consciously and unconsciously to others that include the way we dress, objects we carry, and our tone of voice plus gestures and mannerisms. Although social power affects performance, which is one of the reasons that men's behavior typically differs from women's (Macdonis, Ch. 4, p. 95). It's funny how society can mold what is considered the " right gender" for one another, a woman who may seem more masculine then usual or a little less " girly" may be treated different or classified as a lesbian although I feel that women can get away with it on a more accepting level. Men have much more of a role to

adhere to, the slight decline in the masculinity of a man might cause rejection and then "he" would be classified as gay or not man enough. Not to mention it's said that women are the sensitive ones and men don't cry nor show emotion. Do we really have the wrong or even bad perception of gender and the role it plays? After realizing this I thought of myself and how I do gender, and like it was said it's without knowing I think it the back of our minds we do what we think we're supposed to do, what we think is safe, speaking in a deeper voice because I a man, playing sports because that's what men do, getting married having kids and taking care of the family because that's what the men are supposed to do, but according to who...? Society. I think in some sense we're all pre-programmed in doing gender according to our sex, many of us may even hold back on doing things that might be more comfortable because our gender doesn't allow or accept it. I'm not much of a sports player, and that activity is mainly associated with being male so when put into the category of not being man enough it puts a doubt and imperfection in my back of my mind on who I am and they way people view me. Disposition along with demeanor plays such a big role in social acceptance that if I don't "do gender" accordingly that I'll never be accepted by everyone.