

LECTURE NOTES: GENDER AND THE FAMILY IN A CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT

Lecture Notes on Family Construction

- 1) Public/private dichotomy
 - “Working mans home is his castle”
 - Led to policy of non-interference with private matters
- 2) Feminists argue that the family is political for 4 reasons
 - Power is an element in family relations
 - External rules and laws govern the domestic sphere
 - Family is where early socialization occurs
 - Division of Labor in families results in practical and psych barrier for women elsewhere
- 3) How is motherhood constructed in our society?
 - Motherhood as honorable abstractly rather than in material terms
 - The Myth of Supermom
 - Double Shift
- 4) How do feminists say this needs to be dealt with?
 - Shared parenting to make cultural changes
 - Women’s unpaid domestic labor cannot be taken for granted
 - Lack of family policy in the US.
 - Maternity leave
 - Economic supports
 - Social supports i.e. daycare ect.

Course readings:

- **María Hinojosa** reflects on her experiences of raising her son in the United States and compares this with her mother’s experience of raising children in Mexico and the U.S.
- **Rachel Aber Schlesinger** recounts her family story, starting with her grandmother. She reflects on her own experience of being a grandmother, and presents material from interviews with other Jewish grandmothers who seek to transmit their values to their grandchildren.

Discussion Questions:

1. Should men be more involved in parenting? Why? Why not? If so, what changes are necessary to make this a reality? Look at the micro-, meso-, macro and global levels of analysis, and intersectionality of race, class, sexuality, and gender. What might be the outcomes of this change?
2. How does family culture change with immigration? What roles can grandparents play in the lives of their grandchildren, according to Rachel Aber Schlesinger and María Hinojosa?