

Women: The Oppressed Majority

Hey People:
You must also carefully study all the graphics in this document (cartoons, pictures, tables, and so on). The fact that I have to tell you this is not a good sign. If you wish to succeed in this class then you will have to change your approach.

SUBORDINATE STATUS MEANS CONFINEMENT TO SUBORDINATE roles not justified by a person's abilities. Society is increasingly aware that women are a subordinate group. There are biological differences between males and females; however, one must separate differences of gender from those produced by sexism, distinctions that result from socialization. The feminist movement did not begin with the women's movement of the 1960s but has a long history and, like protest efforts by other subordinate groups, has not been warmly received by society. A comparison of the socioeconomic position of men and women leaves little doubt that they have unequal opportunities in employment and political power. Although men are taking on greater responsibilities with child care and housework, these are still disproportionately the responsibilities of women. Minority women occupy an especially difficult position in that they experience subordinate status by virtue of their race or ethnicity as well as their gender. Minority women are also more likely to be poor, which creates what sociologists have termed the *matrix of domination*.

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Women are an oppressed group even though they form the numerical majority. They are a social minority in the United States and throughout Western society. Men dominate in influence, prestige, and wealth. Women do occupy positions of power, but those who do are the exceptions, as evidenced by newspaper accounts that declare “She is the first woman” or “the only woman” to be in a particular position.

Many people, men and women, find it difficult to conceptualize women as a subordinate group. After all, not all women live in ghettos. They no longer have to attend inferior schools. They freely interact and live with their alleged oppressors, men. How, then, are they a subordinate group? Let us reexamine the five properties of a subordinate or minority group introduced in Chapter 1:

1. Women do experience unequal treatment. Although they are not segregated by residence, they are victims of prejudice and discrimination.
2. Women have physical and cultural characteristics that distinguish them from the dominant group (men).
3. Membership in the subordinate group is involuntary.
4. Through the rise of contemporary feminism, women have become increasingly aware of their subordinate status and have developed a greater sense of group solidarity.
5. Women are not forced to marry, yet many women feel that their subordinate status is most irrevocably defined within marriage.

In this chapter, the similarities between women and racial and ethnic groups will become apparent.

The most common analogy about minorities used in the social sciences is the similarity between the status of African Americans and that of women. Blacks are considered a minority group, but, one asks, how can women of all groups be so similar in condition? We recognize some similarities in recent history; for example, an entire generation has observed and participated in both the civil rights movement and the women’s movement. A background of suffrage campaigns, demonstrations, sit-ins, lengthy court battles, and self-help groups is common to the movements for equal rights for both women and African Americans. But similarities were recognized long before the recent protests against inequality. In *An American Dilemma* (1944), the famous study of race described in Chapter 1, Gunnar Myrdal observed that a parallel to the Blacks’ role in society was found among women. Other observers, such as Helen Mayer Hacker (1951, 1974), later elaborated on the similarities.

What do these groups have in common besides recent protest movements? The negative stereotypes directed at the two groups are quite similar: both groups have been considered emotional, irresponsible, weak, or inferior. Both are thought to fight subtly against the system: women allegedly try to outwit men by feminine wiles, as historically Blacks allegedly outwitted Whites by pretending to be deferential or respectful. To these stereotypes must be added another similarity: neither women nor African Americans are accepting a subordinate role in society any longer.

Nearly all Whites give lip service, even if they do not wholeheartedly believe it, to the contention that African Americans are innately equal to Whites. They are inherently the same. But men and women are not the same, and they vary most dramatically in their roles in reproduction. Biological differences have contributed to sexism. **Sexism** is the ideology that one sex is superior to the other. Quite different is the view that

sexism
The ideology that one sex is superior to the other.

there are few differences between the sexes. Such an idea is expressed in the concept of **androgyny**. An androgynous model of behavior permits people to see that humans can be both aggressive and expressive, depending on the requirements of the situation. People do not have to be locked into the behavior that accompanies the labels *masculine* and *feminine*. In the United States, people disagree widely as to what implications, if any, the biological differences between the sexes have for social roles. We will begin our discussion of women as a subordinate group with this topic.

Gender Roles

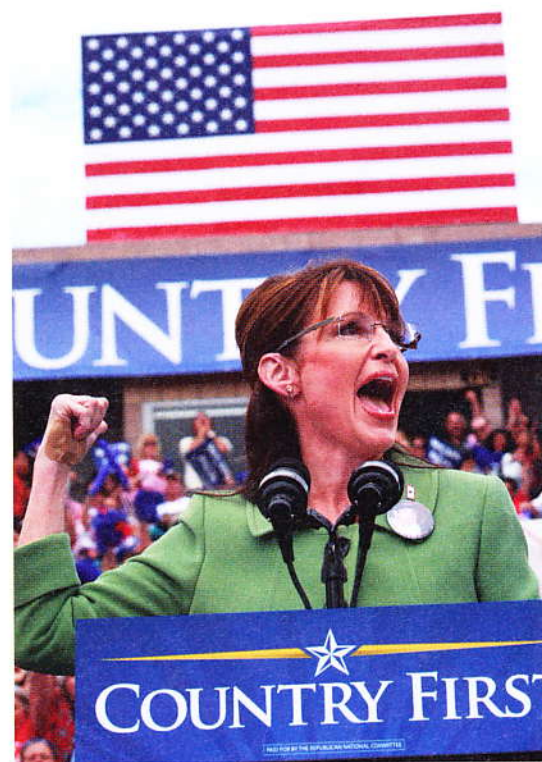
A college man, done with afternoon classes, heads off to get a pedicure and, while the nail polish is drying, sits on a nearby park bench finishing some needlepoint he started. Meanwhile, a college woman walks through the park chewing tobacco and spitting along the path. What is wrong with this picture? We are witnessing the open violation of how men and women are expected to act. So unlikely are these episodes that I have taken them from sociology teachers who specifically ask their students to go out, violate gender expectations, and record how they feel and how people react to their behavior (Nielsen et al. 2000, 287).

Gender roles are society's expectations of the proper behavior, attitudes, and activities of males and females. Toughness has traditionally been seen in the United States as masculine, desirable only in men, whereas tenderness has been viewed as feminine. A society may require that one sex or the other take the primary responsibility for the socialization of the children, economic support of the family, or religious leadership.

Without question, socialization has a powerful impact on the development of females and males in the United States. Indeed, the gender roles first encountered in early childhood often are a factor in defining a child's popularity. Sociologists Patricia Adler and her colleagues (1992, 1998) observed elementary school children and found that boys typically achieved high status on the basis of their athletic ability, coolness, toughness, social skills, and success in relationships with girls. By contrast, girls gained popularity based on their parents' economic background and their own physical appearance, social skills, and academic success.

It may be obvious that males and females are conditioned to assume certain roles, but the origin of gender roles as we know them is less clear. Many studies have been done on laboratory animals, such as injecting monkeys and rats with male and female hormones. Primates in their natural surroundings have been closely observed for the presence and nature of gender roles. Animal studies do not point to instinctual gender differences similar to what humans are familiar with as masculinity and femininity. Historically, women's work came to be defined as a consequence of the birth process. Men, free of child care responsibilities, generally became the hunters and foragers for food. Even though women must bear children, men could have cared for the young. Exactly why women were assigned that role in societies is not known.

Women's role varies across different cultures. Furthermore, we know that acceptable behavior for men and women changes over time in a society. For example, the men in the royal courts of Europe in the late 1700s fulfilled present-day stereotypes of feminine



The very visible success of women such as Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, who was nominated in 2008 to be vice president of the United States, may lead some people to conclude that gender equality has been accomplished. Yet as even cursory analysis shows in politics and business, women remain underrepresented.

androgyny

The state of being both masculine and feminine, aggressive and passive.

gender roles

Expectations regarding the proper behavior, attitudes, and activities of males and females.

appearance in their display of ornamental dress and personal vanity rather than resembling the men of a century later, although they still engaged in duels and other forms of aggression. The social roles of the sexes have no constants in time or space (Lorber 2005; Taylor et al. 2007).

Sociological Perspectives

Gender differences are maintained in our culture through the systematic socialization of babies and infants, children, adolescents, and adults. Even though different subcultures and even different families vary in child rearing, we teach our children to be boys and girls, even though men and women are more alike than they are different.

We are bombarded with expectations for behavior as men and women from many sources simultaneously. Many individual women hold positions involving high levels of responsibility and competence but may not be accorded the same respect as men. Similarly, individual men find the time to get involved with their children's lives only to meet with disbelief and occasional surprise from health care and educational systems accustomed to dealing only with mothers. Even when individuals are motivated to stretch the social boundaries of gender, social structure and institutions often impede them. Gender differentiation in our culture is embedded in social institutions: the family, of course, but also education, religion, politics, the economy, medicine, and the mass media.

Functionalists maintain that sex differentiation has contributed to overall social stability. Sociologists Talcott Parsons and Robert Bales (1955) argued that to function most efficiently, the family needs adults who will specialize in particular roles. They believed that the arrangement of gender roles with which they were familiar had arisen because marital partners needed a division of labor.

The functionalist view is initially persuasive in explaining the way in which women and men are typically brought up in U.S. society. However, it would lead us to expect even girls and women with no interest in children to still become babysitters and mothers. Similarly, males with a caring feeling for children may be "programmed" into careers in the business world. Clearly, such a differentiation between the sexes can have harmful consequences for the person who does not fit into specific roles, while depriving society of the optimal use of many talented people who are confined by sexual labeling. Consequently, the conflict perspective is increasingly convincing in its analysis of the development of gender roles (Taylor et al. 2007, 38–39).

Conflict theorists do not deny the presence of a differentiation by sex. In fact, they contend that the relationship between females and males has been one of unequal power, with men being dominant over women. Men may have become powerful in preindustrial times because their size, physical strength, and freedom from childbearing duties allowed them to dominate women physically. In contemporary societies, such considerations are not as important, yet cultural beliefs about the sexes are now long established.

Both functionalists and conflict theorists acknowledge that it is not possible to change gender roles drastically without dramatic revisions in a culture's social structure. Functionalists see potential social disorder, or at least unknown social consequences, if all aspects of traditional sex differentiation are disturbed. Yet for conflict theorists, no social structure is ultimately desirable if it has to be maintained through the oppression of its citizens.



Suffragists struggled for many years to convince Congress and the states to pass the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which they finally did, extending to women the right to vote beginning in 1920.

The Feminist Movement

Women's struggle for equality, like the struggles of other subordinate groups, has been long and multifaceted. From the very beginning, women activists and sympathetic men who spoke of equal rights were ridiculed and scorned.

In a formal sense, the American feminist movement was born in upstate New York in a town called Seneca Falls in the summer of 1848. On July 19, the first women's rights convention began, attended by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and other pioneers in the struggle for women's rights. This first wave of feminists, as they are currently known, battled ridicule and scorn as they fought for legal and political equality for women, but they were not afraid to risk controversy on behalf of their cause. In 1872, for example, Susan B. Anthony was arrested for attempting to vote in that year's presidential election.

The Suffrage Movement

The **suffragists** worked for years to get women the right to vote. From the beginning, this reform was judged to be crucial. If women voted, it was felt, other reforms would quickly follow. The struggle took so long that many of the initial advocates of women's suffrage died before victory was reached. In 1879, an amendment to the Constitution was introduced that would have given women the right to vote. Not until 1919 was it finally passed, and not until the next year was it ratified as the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

The opposition to giving women the vote came from all directions. Liquor interests and brewers correctly feared that women would assist in passing laws restricting or prohibiting the sale of their products. The South feared the influence that more Black voters (i.e., Black women) might have. Southerners had also not forgotten the pivotal role women had played in the abolitionist movement. Despite the opposition, the suffrage movement succeeded in gaining women the right to vote, a truly remarkable achievement because it had to rely on male legislators to do so.

The Nineteenth Amendment did not automatically lead to other feminist reforms. Women did not vote as a bloc and have not been elected to office in proportion to their numbers. The feminist movement as an organized effort that gained national attention faded, regaining prominence only in the 1960s. Nevertheless, the women's movement did not die out completely in the first half of the century. Many women carried on the struggle in new areas, such as the effort to lift restrictions on birth control devices (Freeman 1975; O'Neill 1969; Rossi 1964).

The Women's Liberation Movement

Ideologically, the women's movement of the 1960s had its roots in the continuing informal feminist movement that began with the first subordination of women in Western society. Psychologically, it grew in America's kitchens, as women felt unfulfilled and did not know why, and in the labor force, as women were made to feel guilty because they were not at home with families. Demographically, by the 1960s, women had attained greater control about when and whether to become pregnant if they used contraception and, hence, had greater control over the size of the population (Heer and Grossbard-Shectman 1981).

Sociologically, several events delayed progress in the mid-1960s. The civil rights movement and the antiwar movement were slow to embrace women's rights. The New Left seemed as sexist as the rest of society in practice, despite its talk of equality. Groups protesting the draft and demonstrating on college campuses generally rejected women as leaders and assigned them traditional duties such as preparing refreshments and publishing organization newsletters. The core of early feminists often knew each other from participating in other protest or reform groups that had initially been unwilling to accept women's rights as a legitimate goal. Beginning in about 1967, as Chapter 7 showed, the movement for Black equality was no longer as willing to accept help from sympathetic Whites. White men moved on to protest the draft, a cause not as crucial to women's lives. Although somewhat involved in the antiwar movement, many White women began to

suffragists

Women and men who worked successfully to gain women the right to vote.

feminine mystique
Society's view of a woman as only her children's mother and her husband's wife.

struggle for their own rights, although at first they had to fight alone. Eventually, civil rights groups, the New Left, and most established women's groups endorsed the feminist movement with the zeal of new converts, but initially they resisted the concerns of feminists (Freeman 1973, 1983).

The movement has also brought about a reexamination of men's roles. Supporters of "male liberation" wanted to free men from the constraints of the masculine value system. The masculine mystique is as real as the feminine one. Boys are socialized to think that they should be invulnerable, fearless, decisive, and even emotionless in some situations. Men are expected to achieve physically and occupationally at some risk to their own values, not to mention those of others. Failure to take up these roles and attitudes can mean that a man will be considered less than a man. Male liberation is the logical counterpart of female liberation. If women are to redefine their gender role successfully, men must redefine theirs as workers, husbands, and fathers (Messner 1997; National Organization for Men Against Sexism 2008).

Amid the many changing concerns since the mid-1960s, the feminist movement too has undergone significant change. Betty Friedan, a founder of the National Organization for Women (NOW), argued in the early 1960s that women had to understand the **feminine mystique**, recognizing that society saw them only as their children's mother and their husband's wife. Later, in the 1980s, though not denying that women deserved to have the same options in life as men, she called for restructuring the "institution of home and wife." Friedan and others now recognize that many young women are frustrated when time does not permit them to do it all: career, marriage, and motherhood. Difficult issues remain, and feminists continue to discuss and debate concerns such as the limits businesses put on careers of women with children, domestic violence, and male bias in medical research (Friedan 1963, 1981, 1991).

The Economic Picture

He works. She works. They are both physicians—a high-status occupation with financial rewards. He makes \$140,000. She makes \$88,000. Those are the results of a detailed study of occupations by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 2004. It looked at the earnings of 821

TABLE 15.1			
Women as a Percentage of All Workers in Selected Occupations, 1950, 1980, and 2006			
Occupation	1950	1980	2006
PROFESSIONAL WORKERS (%)			
Accountants	14.9	36.2	60.2
Engineers	1.2	4.0	14.5
Lawyers and judges	4.1	12.8	32.6
Physicians	6.5	12.9	32.2
Registered nurses	97.8	96.5	91.3
College professors	22.8	33.9	46.3
OTHER OCCUPATIONS (%)			
Carpenters	0.4	1.5	2.4
Protective services (firefighters, police officers, guards)	2.0	9.5	22.3
Sales clerks, retail	48.9	71.1	49.1
Cashiers	81.7	86.6	74.8
Bookkeepers	77.7	90.5	90.3
Food preparation workers	61.6	66.9	56.6
Private household workers	94.9	97.5	90.3

Sources: Bureau of the Census 1981, 2007a, 388–391.

occupations ranging from chief executives to dishwashers, considering individuals' age, education, and work experience. The unmistakable conclusion was there is a substantial gap in median earnings between full-time male and female workers in the same occupation. He's an air traffic controller and makes \$67,000. She earns \$56,000. He's a housekeeper and makes \$19,000. She earns \$15,000. He's a teacher's assistant and makes \$20,000. She earns \$15,000.

Men do not always earn more. The census bureau found two occupations out of 821 in which women typically earn about 1 percent more: hazardous materials recovery workers and telecommunications line installers (Weinberg 2004).

Another aspect of women's subordinate status is that more than any other group, they are confined to certain occupations. **Occupational segregation by gender** is the tendency for men and women to be employed in different occupations from each other. Some sex-typed jobs for women pay well above the minimum wage and carry moderate prestige, such as nursing and teaching. Nevertheless, they are far lower in pay and prestige than such stereotyped male positions as physician, college president, and university professor. When they do enter nontraditional positions, as we have seen, women as a group receive lower wages or salary.

The data in Table 15.1 present an overall view of the male dominance of high-paying occupations. Among the representative occupations chosen, men unquestionably dominate in those that pay well. Women dominate as receptionists, seamstresses, health care workers, and domestic workers. Trends show the proportions of women increasing slightly in the professions, indicating that some women have advanced into better-paying positions, but these gains have not significantly changed the overall picture.

How pervasive is segregation by gender in the workforce? To what degree are women and men concentrated in different occupations? Bureau of Labor Statistics researchers have compiled a segregation index to estimate the percentage of women who would have to change their jobs to make the distribution of men and women in each occupation mirror the relative percentage of each sex in the adult working population. This study showed that 54 percent of women and men workers would need to switch jobs to create a labor force without sex segregation. There has been a steady decline in such segregation, but the decrease was not as great in the 1990s as in earlier decades (Wooton 1997).

Women's earnings have increased significantly over the last quarter century. However, so have the earnings of men. As shown in Figure 15.1, the female-male wage gap has narrowed from women's weekly earnings being just over 62 cents on the dollar earned by men as a group to about 81 cents in 2006. One cannot assume that the trend will continue at the same rate, because much of the narrowing of the gap actually has to do with men's wages leveling off so that women's very modest increases have come closer to matching their male counterparts, while still remaining 20 percent behind (Leicht 2008).

Sources of Discrimination

If we return to the definition of discrimination cited earlier, are not men better able to perform some tasks than women, and vice versa? If ability means performance, there certainly are differences. The typical woman can sew better than the typical man, but the latter can toss a ball farther than the former. These are group differences. Certainly, many women out throw many men, and many men out sew many women, but society expects women to excel at sewing and men to excel at throwing. The differences in those abilities result from cultural conditioning. Women usually

occupational segregation by gender

The tendency for men and women to be employed in different occupations from each other.

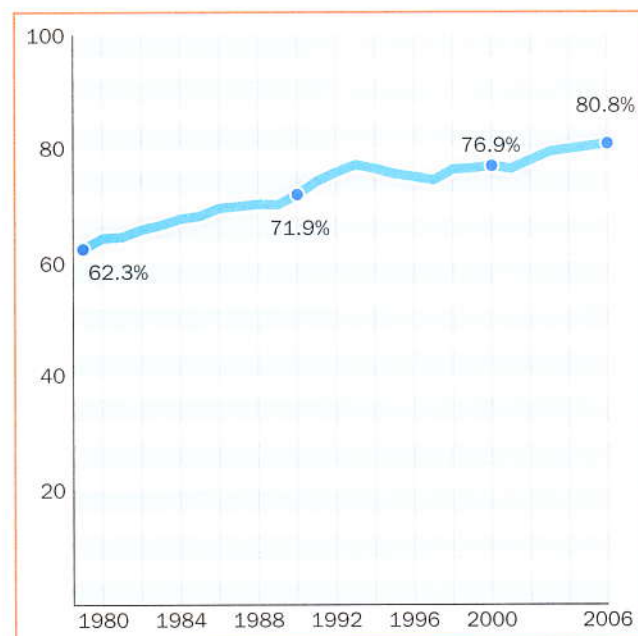
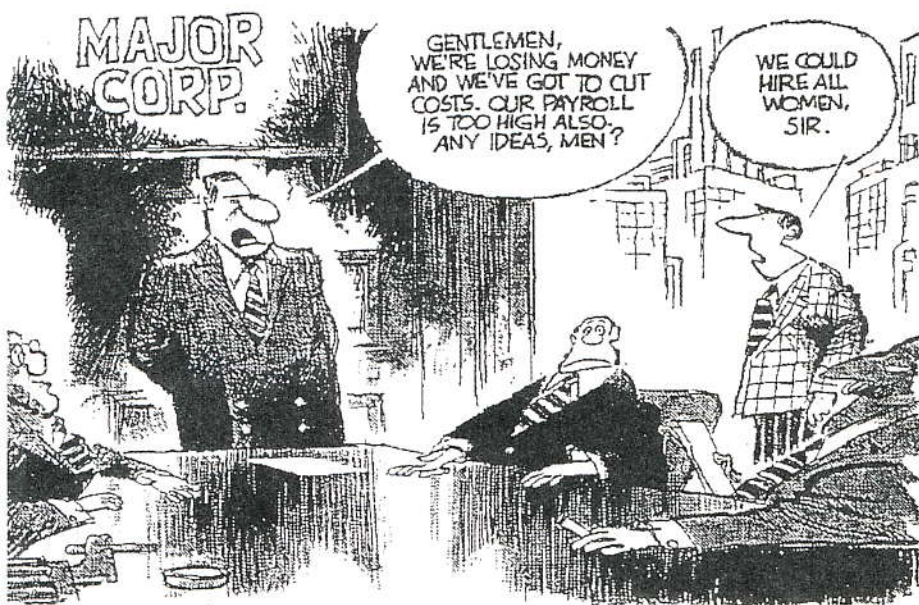


FIGURE 15.1
The Female-Male Earnings Gap: Closing but Still Massive

The gap has narrowed to women earning 80 cents on the men's dollar. However, this gap amounts to trillions of dollars a year because that means millions of working women every year typically receive 80 cents rather than a full dollar.

Source: Department of Labor 2007, 46.



are taught to sew, and men are less likely to learn such a skill. Men are encouraged to participate in sports that require the ability to throw a ball much more than are women. True, as a group, males have greater potential for the muscular development needed to throw a ball, but U.S. society encourages men to realize their potential in this area more than it encourages women to pursue athletic skills.

Today's labor market involves much more than throwing a ball and using a needle and thread, but the analogy to these two skills is repeated time and again. Such examples are used to support sexist practices in all aspects of the

workplace. Just as African Americans can suffer from both individual acts of racism and institutional discrimination, women are vulnerable to both sexism and institutional discrimination. Women are subject to direct sexism, such as sexist remarks, and also to differential treatment because of institutional policies.

Removing barriers to equal opportunity would eventually eliminate institutional discrimination. Theoretically, men and women would sew and throw a ball equally well. We say "theoretically" because cultural conditioning would take generations to change. In some formerly male jobs, such as gas station clerk and attendant, society seems quite willing to accept women. In other occupations, such as president, it will take longer; many years may pass before full acceptance can be expected in other fields such as professional contact sports.

Many efforts have been made to eliminate institutional discrimination as it applies to women. The 1964 Civil Rights Act and its enforcement arm, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, address cases of sex discrimination. As we saw in Chapter 3, the inclusion of sex bias along with prejudice based on race, color, creed, and national origin was an unexpected last-minute change in the provisions of the landmark 1964 act. Federal legislation has not removed all discrimination against women in employment. The same explanations presented in Chapter 3 for the lag between the laws and reality in race discrimination apply to sex discrimination: lack of money, weak enforcement powers, occasionally weak commitment to using the laws available, and, most important, institutional and structural forces that perpetuate inequality.

What should be done to close the gap between the earnings of women and men? As shown in Figure 15.2, women earn more annually with more formal schooling, just like their male counterparts. However, as women continue their education, the wage gap does not narrow and even shows signs of growing.

In the 1980s, **pay equity**, or comparable worth, was a controversial solution presented to alleviate the second-class status of working women. It directly attempted to secure equal pay when occupational segregation by gender was particularly pervasive. Pay equity calls for equal pay for different types of work that are judged to be comparable by measuring such factors as employee knowledge, skills, effort, responsibility, and working conditions (American Association of University Women 2007; Dey and Hill 2007).

A primary goal of many feminists is to eliminate sex discrimination in the labor force and to equalize job opportunities for women. Without question, women earn less than men. As we noted earlier in both Table 3.1 and Figure 3.3, women earn less than men even when race and education are held constant; that is, college-educated women working

pay equity

The same wages for different types of work that are judged to be comparable by such measures as employee knowledge, skills, effort, responsibility, and working conditions; also called *comparable worth*.

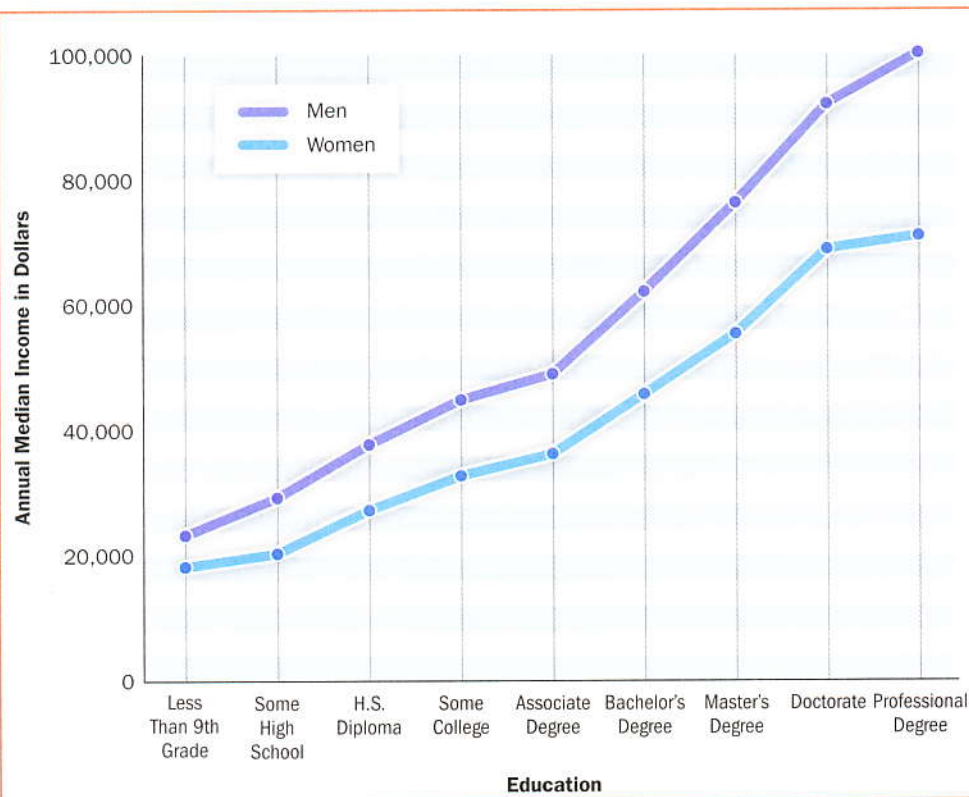


FIGURE 15.2
Financial Return on Education for Women and Men, 2007

Note: See Table 3.1.

Source: DeNavas-Walt et al. 2008, PINC-03.

full-time make less than comparably educated men. Even when additional controls are introduced, such as previous work experience, a substantial earnings gap remains. A detailed analysis of the wage gap that considered schooling, employment history, time with the current employer, and medical leaves of absence found that all these factors can explain less than 42 percent of the wage differences between men and women (Wellington 1994).

This doctrine sounds straightforward, but it is not so simple to put into operation. How exactly does one determine the comparability of jobs to identify comparable worth? Should a zookeeper be paid more than a child care worker? Does our society pay zookeepers more because we value care giving for children less than for animals? Or do zookeepers earn more than child care workers because the former tend to be male and the latter are generally female?

Despite some local initiatives, pay equity has not received much support in the United States except from the feminist movement. From a policy perspective, pay equity would have to broaden the 30-year-old Equal Pay Act and be initiated at the federal level. Proposed legislation such as the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Fair Pay Act has failed to mobilize much support. With the government backing away from affirmative action, it is unlikely to launch an initiative on pay equity (Business and Professional Women 2002; Sorensen 1994).

What about women aspiring to crack the glass ceiling? The phrase **glass ceiling**, as noted in Chapter 3 and illustrated in Figure 3.3, refers to the invisible barrier blocking the promotion of a qualified worker because of gender or minority membership. Despite continuing debate over affirmative action, the consensus is that there is little room at the top for women and minorities. The glass ceiling operates so that all applicants may be welcomed by a firm, but when it comes to the powerful or more visible positions, there

glass ceiling

The barrier that blocks the promotion of a qualified worker because of gender or minority membership.

TABLE 15.2**Major Barriers to Women's Executive Advancement**

- Initial placement and clustering in dead-end staff jobs or highly technical professional jobs
- Lack of mentoring
- Lack of management training
- Lack of opportunities for career development
- Lack of opportunities for training tailored to the individual
- Lack of rotation to line positions or job assignments that produce revenue
- Little or no access to critical developmental assignments, including service on highly visible task forces and committees
- Different standards for performance evaluation
- Biased rating and testing systems
- Little or no access to informal communication networks
- Counterproductive behavior and harassment by colleagues

Source: Glass Ceiling Commission, cited in Department of Labor 1995, 7–8.

are limits—generally unstated—on the number of women and non-Whites welcomed or even tolerated (Table 15.2).

Women are doing better in top-management positions than minorities, but they still lag well behind men, according to a study that showed that only 15 percent of the director seats of *Fortune* 500's largest corporations were held by women. As for CEOs of the *Fortune* 500, there are so few—12 as of 2008—that the corporations can be named: Archer Daniels Midland, Avon, Kraft Foods, PepsiCo, Reynolds American, Rite Aid, Safeco, Sara Lee, TJX, WellPoint, Western Union, and Xerox. The other 488 corporations are led by men (Catalyst 2008; CNN Money 2008).

Women are still viewed differently in the world of management. Although studies of top male executives show some improvement over their attitudes about executive women in the last 40 years, stereotypes still abound that block women's ascent up the corporate ladder. In making hiring decisions, executives may assume that women are not serious about their commitment to the job and will be “distracted” by family and home. They assume that women are on a **mommy track**, an unofficial career track that firms use for women who want to divide their attention between work and family. This assumption would be false if applied to all women. It also implies that corporate men are not interested in maintaining a balance between work and family. Even competitive, upwardly mobile women are not always taken seriously in the workplace (Carlson et al. 2006; Heilman 2001; F. Schwartz and Zimmerman 1992).

Family and work continue to present challenges to women and men in the twenty-first century. Sociologist Kathleen Gerson contends in *Listen to Our Voices* that the workplace is still not adequately meeting the needs of parents.

mommy track

An unofficial corporate career track for women who want to divide their attention between work and family.

sexual harassment

Any unwanted and unwelcome sexual advances that interfere with a person's ability to perform a job and enjoy the benefits of a job.

Sexual Harassment

Under evolving legal standards, **sexual harassment** is recognized as any unwanted and unwelcome sexual advances that interfere with a person's ability to perform a job and enjoy the benefits of a job. Increased national attention was given to harassment in the 1990s and into the present through allegations made against elected officials and high-ranking military officers.

The most obvious example of sexual harassment is the boss who tells an employee, “Put out or get out!” However, the unwelcome advances that constitute sexual harassment may take the form of subtle pressures regarding sexual activity, inappropriate touching, attempted kissing, or sexual assault. Indeed, in the computer age, there is growing



Listen to Our Voices

WHAT DO WOMEN AND MEN WANT?

Young workers today grew up in rapidly changing times: They watched women march into the workplace and adults develop a wide range of alternatives to traditional marriage. Now making their own passage to adulthood, these “children of the gender revolution” have inherited a far different world from that of their parents or grandparents. They may enjoy an expanded set of options, but they also face rising uncertainty about whether and how to craft a marriage, rear children, and build a career. . . .

If the realities of time-demanding workplaces and missing supports for caregiving make it difficult for young adults to achieve the sharing, flexible, and more egalitarian relationships most want, then how can we get past this impasse? Clearly, most young women are not likely to answer this question by returning to patterns that fail to speak to either their highest ideals or their greatest fears. To the contrary, they are forming fallback strategies that stress personal autonomy, including the possibility of single parenthood. Men’s most common responses to economic pressures and time-demanding jobs stress a different strategy—one that allows for two incomes but preserves men’s claim on the most rewarding careers. Women and men are leaning in different directions, and their conflicting responses are fueling a new gender divide. But this schism stems from the intensification of long-simmering work/family dilemmas, not from a decline of laudable values.



Kathleen Gerson

We need to worry less about the family values of a new generation and more about the institutional barriers that make them so difficult to achieve. Most young adults do not wish to turn back the clock, but they do hope to combine the more traditional value of making a lifelong commitment with the more modern value of having a flexible, egalitarian relationship.

Rather than trying to change individual values, we need to provide the social supports that will allow young people to overcome work/family conflicts and realize their most cherished aspirations.

Since a mother’s earnings and a father’s involvement are both integral to the economic and emotional welfare of children (and also desired by most women and men), we can achieve the best family values only by creating flexible workplaces, ensuring equal economic opportunity for women, outlawing discrimination against all parents, and building child-friendly communities with plentiful, affordable, and high-quality child care. These long-overdue policies will help new generations create the more egalitarian partnerships they desire. Failure to build institutional supports for new social realities will not produce a return to traditional marriage. Instead, following the law of unintended consequences, it will undermine marriage itself.

Source: Gerson 2007, A8, A11.

concern that sexually harassing messages are being sent anonymously over computer networks through e-mail and picture phones.

In 1986, in a unanimous decision (*Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*), the Supreme Court declared that sexual harassment by a supervisor violates the federal law against sex discrimination in the workplace as outlined in the 1964 Civil Rights Act. If sufficiently severe, harassment is a violation even if the unwelcome sexual demands are not linked to concrete employment benefits such as a raise or promotion. Women’s groups hailed the

feminization of poverty

The trend since 1970 in which women account for a growing proportion of those who live below the poverty line.

displaced homemakers

Women whose primary occupation had been homemaking but who did not find full-time employment after being divorced, separated, or widowed.

court's decisiveness in identifying harassment as a form of discrimination. A federal judge subsequently ruled that the public display of photographs of nude and partly nude women at a workplace constitutes sexual harassment. Despite these rulings, it is very difficult legally and emotionally for a person to bring forward a case of sexual harassment (Domino 1995; Roscigno and Schmidt 2007).

Feminization of Poverty

Since World War II, an increasing proportion of the poor in the United States has been female; many of these poor Americans are divorced or never-married mothers. This alarming trend has come to be known as the **feminization of poverty**. In 2007, 12.5 percent of all families in the United States lived in poverty, but 28.3 percent of families headed by single mothers did so. Not only are female-headed families much more likely to be poor but also their income deficit relative to being nonpoor is much greater than other types of poor families (DeNavas-Walt et al. 2008, 13).

Poor women share many social characteristics with poor men: low educational attainment, lack of market-relevant job skills, and residence in economically deteriorating areas. However, conflict theorists believe that the higher rates of poverty among women can be traced to two distinct causes: sex discrimination and sexual harassment on the job place women at a clear disadvantage when seeking vertical social mobility.

The burden of supporting a family is especially difficult for single mothers, not only because of low salaries but also because of inadequate child support. The average child-support payment reported in 2008 (for money collected in 2003) for the 45 percent who received the *full* award was a mere \$120 per week. This level of support is clearly insufficient for rearing a child in the early twenty-first century. In light of these data, federal and state officials have intensified efforts to track down delinquent spouses and ensure the payment of child support: nearly 16 million cases were under investigation in 2006 (Bureau of the Census 2007a, 360).

According to a study based on census data by the advocacy group Women Work, families headed by single mothers and displaced homemakers are four times as likely to live in poverty as other households in the United States. **Displaced homemakers** are defined as women whose primary occupation had been homemaking but who did not find full-time employment after being divorced, separated, or widowed. Single mothers and displaced homemakers tend to work in service jobs, which offer low wages, few benefits, part-time work, and little job security. Moreover, single mothers and displaced homemakers are also more likely to have an unstable housing situation, including frequent changes of residence (Women Work 2007).

Many feminists feel that the continuing dominance of the political system by men contributes to government indifference to the problem of poor women. As more and more women fall below the official poverty line, policy makers will face growing pressure to combat the feminization of poverty.

Education

The experience of women in education has been similar to their experience in the labor force: a long history of contribution but in traditionally defined terms. In 1833, Oberlin College became the first institution of higher learning to admit women, two centuries after the first men's college began in this country. In 1837, Wellesley became the first women's college. But it would be a mistake to believe that these early experiments brought about equality for women in education: at Oberlin, the women were forbidden to speak in public. Furthermore,

Washing the men's clothes, caring for their rooms, serving them at table, listening to their orations, but themselves remaining respectfully silent in public assemblages, the Oberlin "coeds" were being prepared for intelligent motherhood and a properly subservient wifehood. (Flexner 1959, 30)

The early graduates of these schools, despite the emphasis in the curriculum on traditional roles, became the founders of the feminist movement.

Today, research confirms that boys and girls are treated differently in school: teachers give boys more attention. In teaching students the values and customs of the larger society, schools in the United States have treated children as if men's education were more important than that of women. Professors of education Myra and David Sadker (2003) documented this persistence of classroom sexism: the researchers noted that boys receive more teacher attention than girls, mainly because they call out in class eight times more often. Teachers praise boys more than girls and offer boys more academic assistance. Interestingly, they found that this differential treatment was present with both male and female teachers.

Despite these challenges, in many communities across the nation, girls seem to outdo boys in high school, grabbing a disproportionate share of the leadership positions, from valedictorian to class president to yearbook editor—everything, in short, except captain of the boys' athletic teams. Their advantage numerically seems to be continuing after high school. In the 1980s, girls in the United States became more likely than boys to go to college. By 2005, women accounted for more than 57 percent of college students nationwide. And in 2002, for the first time, more women than men in the United States earned doctoral degrees (Bureau of the Census 2007a, 143).

At all levels of schooling, significant changes also occurred with congressional amendments to the Education Act of 1972 and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare guidelines developed in 1974 and 1975. Collectively called Title IX provisions, the regulations are designed to eliminate sexist practices from almost all school systems. Schools must make these changes or risk the loss of all federal assistance:

1. Schools must eliminate all sex-segregated classes and extracurricular activities. This means an end to all-girl home economics and all-boy shop classes, although single-sex hygiene and physical education classes are permitted.
2. Schools cannot discriminate by sex in admissions or financial aid and cannot inquire into whether an applicant is married, pregnant, or a parent. Single-sex schools are exempted.
3. Schools must end sexist hiring and promotion practices among faculty members.
4. Although women do not have to be permitted to play on all-men's athletic teams, schools must provide more opportunities for women's sports, intramural and extramural (*Federal Register*, June 4, 1975).

Title IX became one of the more controversial steps ever taken by the federal government to promote and ensure equality.

Efforts to bring gender equity to sports have been attacked as excessive. The consequences have not fully been intended: for example, colleges have often cut men's sports rather than build up women's sports. Also, most of the sports with generous college scholarships added for women over the last 30 years are in athletic fields that have not been traditionally attractive to minority women (Suggs 2002).



The impact of Title IX over the last 30 years has been particularly apparent as more opportunities have emerged for women to participate in sports in both high school and college.



Research Focus

CHILD CARE AND THE GENDER DIVIDE

It is a commonly held notion that in dual-income households men and women equally share the housework, but this is not supported by the research. Study after study leads to the same conclusion: men are gradually doing more housework, but women do far more even when they work full time.

The latest study, released in 2008 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, drew on 70,000 interviews conducted from 2003 to 2006 about couples' activities during a typical 24-hour period (Figure 15.3) the age group of 25–54 is used because it generally includes people who have completed going to school full time but excludes retired people.

We have seen that almost as many women as men hold jobs. Yet the time-use study showed that every hour of the day, the working woman is more likely to be engaged

in child care than her husband. This gap is greatest during the early morning hours and the evening period. On the positive note, fathers are indeed engaged in caring for children, but it is still more likely to be cared out by mothers.

The same data shows that as the number of children increases, the mother's time spent on child care on a daily basis increases on the average while for fathers it remains unchanged. Interestingly, college-educated mothers and fathers spend more time engaged in child care than less-educated parents, but the amount of time increases more for the college-educated mothers than the college-educated fathers.

Source: Allard and Janes 2008; Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008.

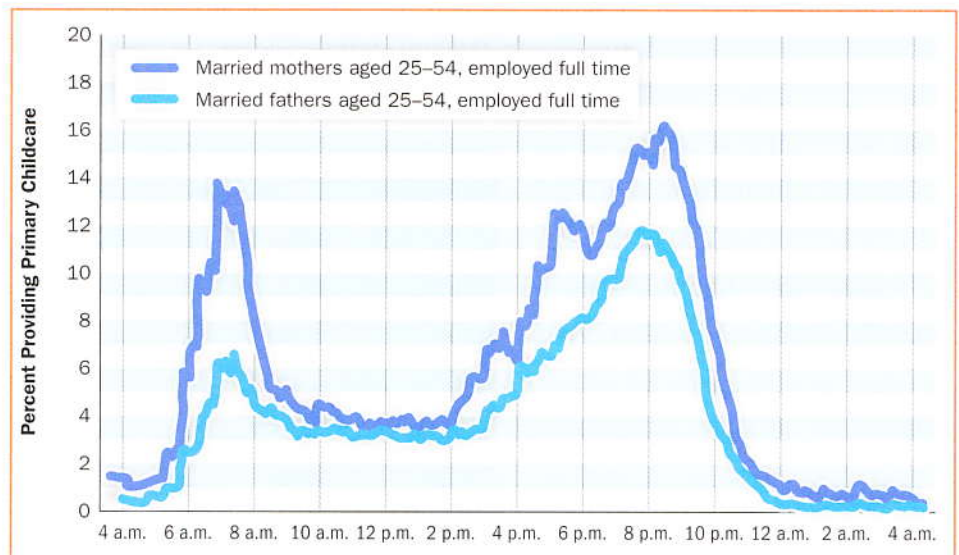


FIGURE 15.3
Hours Spent Providing Child Care

Family Life

Our society generally equates work with wages and holds unpaid work in low esteem. Women who do household chores and volunteer work are given little status in our society. Typically, this unrecognized labor is done on top of wage labor in the formal economy. These demands traditionally placed on a mother and homemaker are so extensive that simultaneously pursuing a career is extremely difficult. For women, the family is, according to sociologists Lewis Coser and Rose Laub Coser (1974) a “greedy institution.” More recently, other social scientists have also observed the overwhelming burden of the multiple social roles associated with being a mother and working outside the home.

Child Care and Housework

A man can act as a homemaker and caregiver for children, but in the United States, women customarily perform these roles. Studies indicate that men do not even think about their children as much as women do. Sociologist Susan Walzer (1996) was interested in whether there are gender differences in the amount of time that parents spend thinking about the care of their children. Drawing on interviews, Walzer found that mothers are much more involved than fathers in the invisible mental labor associated with taking care of a baby. For example, while involved in work outside the home, mothers are more likely to think about their babies and to feel guilty later if they become so consumed with the demands of their jobs that they fail to think about their babies.

Is the gender gap closing in child care? In Research Focus, we consider the latest scientific evidence in answer to this question.

Sociologist Arlie Hochschild has used the term **second shift** to describe the double burden—work outside the home followed by child care and housework—that many women face and that few men share equitably. As shown in Figure 15.4, this issue has become increasingly important as greater proportions of mothers work outside the home. On the basis of interviews with and observations of 52 couples over an eight-year period, Hochschild reports that the wives (and not their husbands) planned domestic schedules and play dates for children while driving home from the office and then began their second shift (Hochschild 1990; Hochschild and Machung 1989).

Hochschild found that the married couples she studied were fraying at the edges psychologically and so were their careers and their marriages. The women she spoke with hardly resembled the beautiful young businesswomen pictured in magazine advertisements, dressed in power suits but with frilled blouses, holding briefcases in one hand and happy young children in the other. Instead, many of Hochschild’s female subjects talked about being overtired and emotionally drained by the demands of their multiple roles. They were much more intensely torn by the conflicting demands of work outside the home and family life than were their husbands. Hochschild (1990, 73) concludes that “if we as a culture come to see the urgent need of meeting the new problems posed by the second shift, and if society and government begin to shape new policies that allow working parents more flexibility, then we will be making some progress toward happier times at home and at work.” Many feminists share this view.

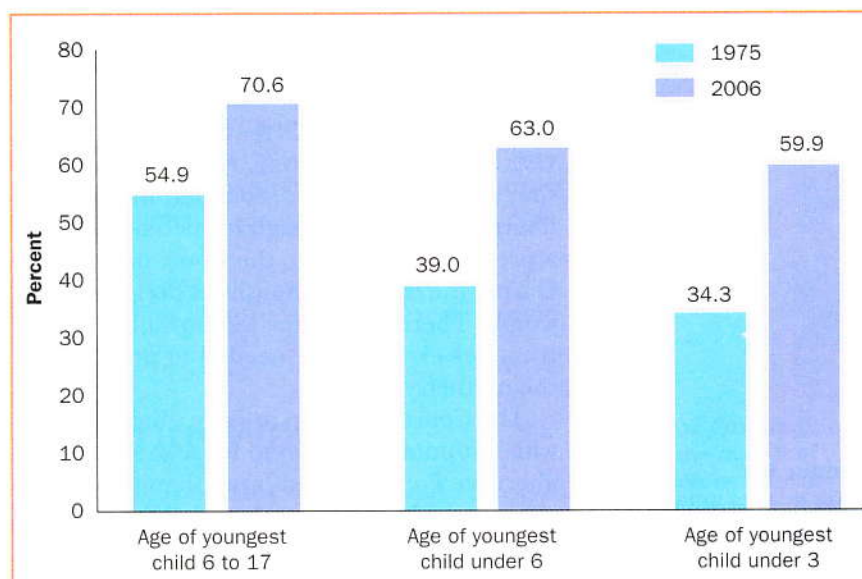
There is an economic cost to this second shift. Households do benefit from the free labor of women, but

second shift

The double burden—work outside the home followed by child care and housework—that is faced by many women and that few men share equitably.

FIGURE 15.4
Labor Force Participation Rates among Mothers

Sources: Department of Labor 2001, 2007, 15.





Source: Kirk Anderson, www.kirktoons.com.

women pay what has been called the **mommy tax**: the lower salaries women receive over their lifetime because they have children. Mothers earn less than men and other women over their lifetime because having children causes them to lose job experience, trade higher wages for following the mommy track, and be discriminated against by employers. How high is this mommy tax? Estimates range from 5 percent to 13 percent of lifetime wages for the first child alone. Having two children lowers earnings 10 percent to 19 percent. There is no denying that motherhood and the labor market are intertwined (Budig and England 2001; Szegedy-Maszak 2001).

Abortion

A particularly controversial subject affecting family life in the United States has been the call for women to have greater control over their bodies, especially their reproductive lives, through contraceptive devices and the increased availability of abortions. Abortion law reform was one of the demands NOW made in 1967, and the controversy continues despite many court rulings and the passage of laws at every level of government.

On January 22, 1973, the feminist movement received unexpected assistance from the U.S. Supreme Court in its *Roe v. Wade* decision. By a 7–2 margin, the justices held that the “right to privacy . . . founded in the Fourteenth Amendment’s concept of personal liberty . . . is broad enough to encompass a woman’s decision whether or not to terminate a pregnancy.” However, the Court did set certain limits on a woman’s right to abortion. During the last three months of pregnancy, the fetus was ruled capable of life outside the womb. Therefore, states were granted the right to prohibit all abortions in the third trimester except those needed to preserve the life, physical health, or mental health of the mother.

The Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade*, though generally applauded by pro-choice groups, which support the right to legal abortions, was bitterly condemned by those opposed to abortion. For people who call themselves “pro-life,” abortion is a moral and often a religious issue. In their view, human life actually begins at the moment of conception rather than when the fetus could stay alive outside the womb. On the basis of this belief, the fetus is a human, not merely a potential life. Termination of this human’s life, even

mommy tax

Lower salaries women receive over their lifetime because they have children.

before it has left the womb, is viewed as an act of murder. Consequently, antiabortion activists are alarmed by the more than 1 million legal abortions carried out each year in the United States (Luker 1984).

The early 1990s brought an escalation of violent antiabortion protests. Finally, a 1994 federal law made it a crime to use force or threats or to obstruct, injure, or interfere with anyone providing or receiving abortions and other reproductive health services. In a 6–3 decision, the Supreme Court’s majority upheld the constitutionality of a 36-foot buffer zone that keeps antiabortion protesters away from a clinic’s entrance and parking lot. Abortion remains a disputed issue both in society and in the courts. The law has apparently had some impact, but acts of violence, including deaths of clinic workers and physicians, continue.

In terms of social class, the first major restriction on the legal right to terminate a pregnancy affected poor people. In 1976, Congress passed the Hyde Amendment, which banned the use of Medicaid and other federal funds for abortions. The Supreme Court upheld this legislation in 1980. State laws also restrict the use of public funds for abortions. Another obstacle facing the poor is access to abortion providers: in the face of vocal prolife public sentiment, fewer and fewer hospitals throughout the world are allowing their physicians to perform abortions, except in extreme cases. Only about 13 percent of counties in the United States have even one provider who is able and willing to perform abortions (R. Jones et al. 2008).

Political Activity

Women in the United States constitute 53 percent of the voting population and 49 percent of the labor force but only 8 percent of those who hold high government positions. As of the beginning of 2009, Congress included only 74 women (out of 435 members) in the House of Representatives and only 17 women (out of 100 members) in the Senate. The number of women serving in Congress has steadily increased. Only nine states—Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawai’i, Kansas, Michigan, North Carolina, and Washington—had a woman governor at the beginning of 2009. In national elections women tend to vote less Republican than men. In 2008, 56 percent of women backed Barack Obama, the largest swing toward the Democrat presidential nominee during the last 10 elections (Connelly 2008).

The low number of women officeholders until recently has not resulted from women’s inactivity in politics. About the same proportion of eligible women and men vote in presidential elections. The League of Women Voters, founded in 1920, performs a valuable function in educating the electorate of both sexes, publishing newsletters describing candidates’ positions, and holding debates among candidates. Perhaps women’s most visible role in politics until recently has been as unpaid campaign workers for male candidates: doorbell ringers, telephone callers, newsletter printers, and petition carriers.

Runs for elective office in the 1990s showed women overcoming one of their last barriers to electoral office: attracting campaign funds. Running for office is very expensive, and women candidates have begun to convince backers to invest in their political future. Their success as fund-raisers will also contribute to women’s acceptance as serious candidates in the future.

Women’s political representation is not an issue in just the United States. In A Global View, we look at the different levels of success women have received who seek elected office and some efforts to increase that representation.

Matrix of Domination: Minority Women

Many women experience differential treatment not only because of their gender but also because of race and ethnicity. These citizens face a subordinate status twice defined. A disproportionate share of this low-status group also is poor. The African American feminist Patricia Hill Collins (2000) has termed this the **matrix of domination** (Figure 15.5).

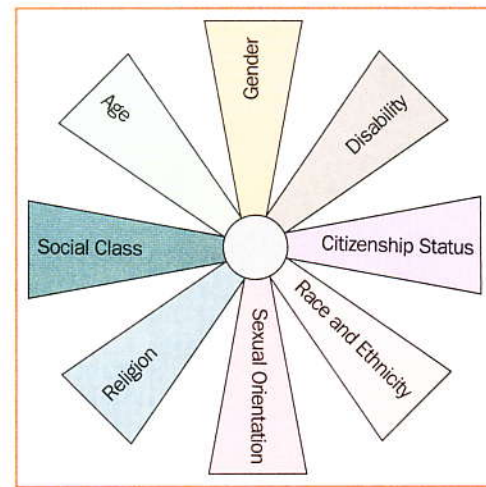


FIGURE 15.5

Matrix of Domination

The matrix of domination illustrates how several social factors—including gender, social class, and race and ethnicity—can converge to create a cumulative impact on a person’s social standing.

matrix of domination

Cumulative impact of oppression because of race, gender, and class as well as sexual orientation, religion, disability status, and age.



WOMEN ELECTED OFFICIALS: RWANDA AND BEYOND

Chile in 2006 became yet another country to accomplish what the United States has not come close to doing—electing Michelle Bachelet, a woman to head the country. While Hillary Clinton came close to capturing her party's nomination and Sarah Palin became the vice presidential candidate for the Republicans, no woman has been nominated by a major political party in the United States. By contrast, women led 12 countries in 2008 (Argentina, Germany, Ireland, Finland,

Chile, New Zealand, Philippines, Liberia, Mozambique, India, Ukraine, and Moldova). A total of 45 countries have had women to serve as prime minister, president, or chancellor.

Although these women rose to power through social circumstances unique to each election and country, their success demonstrates the willingness of many nations to look to women to represent their nation.

As shown in the accompanying table, there is a range of success of women being

Women in National Legislatures (Selected Countries)

More than 25%		10–25%		Less than 10%	
Rwanda	48.8	Singapore	24.5	Japan	9.4
Sweden	47.0	Mexico	23.2	India	9.1
Cuba	43.2	Canada	21.3	Brazil	9.0
Finland	41.5	China	21.3	Kenya	8.9
Argentina	40.0	Poland	20.2	Ukraine	8.2
Netherlands	39.3	Great Britain	19.5	Jordan	6.4
Spain	36.3	France	18.2	Haiti	4.1
South Africa	33.0	United States	16.8	Kuwait	3.8
Afghanistan	27.7	Greece	14.7	Iran	2.8
Australia	26.7	Israel	14.2	Yemen	0.3
Vietnam	25.8	Russia	14.0	Saudi Arabia	0.0
Iraq	25.5	Syria	12.4	Cambodia	0.0

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union 2008.

Whites dominate non-Whites, men dominate women, and the affluent dominate the poor.

Gender, race, and social class are not the only systems of oppression, but they do profoundly affect women and people of color in the United States. Other forms of categorization and stigmatization can also be included in this matrix, such as sexual orientation, religion, disability status, and age. If we turn to a global stage, we can add citizenship status and being perceived as a “colonial subject” even after colonialism has ended (Winant 2006).

A Global View

elected to national legislatures and parliaments. Worldwide, women represent 18.2 percent of those in national legislatures, with the United States ranking in the middle among 188 countries, with slightly less than 17 percent.

Although only Saudi Arabia allows men but bars women from voting, many countries have taken the step to establish quotas for the purpose of increasing women's representation. In about 40 countries, the government sets aside a certain percentage of seats for women, usually 10 to 30 percent. In about 50 nations, political parties have decided that 20 percent to 40 percent of their candidates should be women. That places a minimum proportion of seats in national legislatures that must be held by women. Canada has the political party quota, Mexico has both types, and the United States has never seriously considered either.

Consider the case of the central African country of Rwanda, where nearly half of the legislators are women and where a woman recently served as prime minister. The genocide in Rwanda was a driving force in women wanting to ensure they would be more involved politically as the country recovered. Since 2003, its constitution mandates that at least 30 percent of seats in the congress (called the Chamber of Deputies) must be female. This also applies to all elected councils throughout

the country. These minimum gender quotas are achieved through elections in which only women can stand for election and only women can vote.

Obviously this is a form of affirmative action—a type of policy that has been very controversial in the United States.

What has been the initial impact in the large increase in women in policy-making positions? Rwanda is a very troubled country still recovering from the civil war and genocide of the early 1990s. In response, women created a cross-party alliance called Forum of Women Parliamentarians, focused on advocating on behalf of Rwandan women. Issues on their agenda include recognizing children legally born of unwed mothers, preventing hospitals from holding new mothers and their babies if they are unable to pay for treatment, and cracking down on gender-based violence.

Yet the impact is also limited. Even where the proportion of women elected to office increases, the proportion of top-appointed positions and party leadership roles remain firmly in the hands of men worldwide.

Source: Equal Representation in Government and Democracy 2008; Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2008; Paxton et al. 2007; Powley 2006; Tripp and Kang 2008; UNIFEM 2008.

Feminists have addressed themselves to the needs of minority women, but the oppression of these women because of their sex is overshadowed by the subordinate status that both White men and White women impose on them because of their race or ethnicity. The question for the Latina (Hispanic woman), African American woman, Asian American woman, Native American woman, and so on appears to be whether she should unify with her brothers against racism or challenge them for their sexism. The answer is that society cannot afford to let up on the effort to eradicate sexism and racism as well as other forces that stigmatize and oppress (Beisel and Kay 2004; Epstein 1999; MacLean and Williams 2008).

The discussion of gender roles among African Americans has always provoked controversy. Advocates of Black nationalism contend that feminism only distracts women from full participation in the African American struggle. The existence of feminist groups among Blacks, in their view, simply divides the Black community and thereby serves the dominant White society. By contrast, Black feminists such as bell hooks (2000) argue that little is to be gained by accepting the gender-role divisions of the dominant society that place women in a separate, subservient position. African American journalist Patricia Raybon (1989) has noted that the media commonly portray Black women in a negative light: as illiterates, as welfare mothers, as prostitutes, and so forth. Black feminists emphasize that it is not solely Whites and White-dominated media that focus on these negative images; Black men (most recently, Black male rap artists) have also been criticized for the way they portray African American women (Threadcraft 2008).

Native Americans stand out as a historical exception to the North American patriarchal tradition. At the time of the arrival of the European settlers, gender roles varied greatly from tribe to tribe. Southern tribes, for reasons unclear to today's scholars, usually were matriarchal and traced descent through the mother. European missionaries sought to make the native peoples more like the Europeans, and this aim included transforming women's role. Some Native American women, like members of other groups, have resisted gender stereotypes (Marubbio 2006).

The plight of Latinas usually is considered part of either the Hispanic or feminist movements, and the distinctive experience of Latinas is ignored. In the past, they have been excluded from decision making in the two social institutions that most affect their daily lives: the family and the Church. The Hispanic family, especially in the lower class, feels the pervasive tradition of male domination. The Catholic Church relegates women to supportive roles while reserving for men the leadership positions (Browne 2001; De Anda 2004).

By considering the matrix of domination, we recognize how much of our discussion has focused on race and ethnicity coupled with data on poverty, low incomes, and meager wealth. Now we recognize that issues of gender domination must be included to fully understand what women of color experience.

Conclusion

Women and men are expected to perform, or at least to prefer to perform, specific tasks in society. The appropriateness to one gender of all but a very few of these tasks cannot be justified by the biological differences between females and males any more than differential treatment based on race can be justified. Psychologists Sandra Bem and Daryl Bem (1970, 99) made the following analogy a generation ago that still may have applicability today.

Suppose that a White male college student decided to room with a Black male friend. The typical White student would not blithely assume that his roommate was better suited to handle all domestic chores. Nor should his conscience allow him to do so even in the unlikely event that his roommate said, "No, that's okay. I like doing housework. I'd be happy to do it." We would suspect that the White student would still feel uncomfortable about taking advantage of the fact that his roommate has simply been socialized to be "happy with

such an arrangement." But change this hypothetical Black roommate to a female marriage partner, and the student's conscience goes to sleep.

The feminist movement has awakened women and men to assumptions based on sex and gender. New opportunities for the sexes require the same commitment from individuals and the government as those made to achieve equality between racial and ethnic groups.

Women are systematically disadvantaged in both employment and the family. Gender inequality is a serious problem, just as racial inequality continues to be a significant social challenge. Separate, socially defined roles for men and women are not limited to the United States. Chapter 16 concentrates on the inequality of racial and ethnic groups in societies other than the United States. Just as sexism is not unique to this nation, neither is racism nor religious intolerance.

Summary

1. Sociologists consider gender roles to be the expectations of behavior. Functionalists see role differences as contributing to carrying out family roles whereas conflict theorists argue they contribute to inequality between men and women.
2. The feminist movement has deep roots in the nineteenth century, and although many younger people today may avoid the label of feminist, the movement continues to work for parity between men and women.
3. The labor force is characterized by occupation segregation by gender and significant differential in earnings for men and women working in the same occupations.
4. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 has played a significant role in reducing sex discrimination, but further measures to achieve pay equity have not been enacted.
5. A pattern of increasing poverty among single women has led to the feminization of poverty.
6. Women have encountered great success in formal schooling. Title IX is helping to eliminate inequities, especially in school athletic programs.
7. Men have increasingly accepted responsibilities for housework and child care, but women continue to assume more responsibility, leading to a phenomenon referred to as a *second shift*.
8. Despite highly public women politicians, the vast majority of elected officials in the United States, especially at the national level, are women. Gender is only one basis for the unequal treatment that women experience; this leads to a formulation called the *matrix of domination* that considers a variety of social dimensions.

Key Terms

androgyny 357	matrix of domination 371	second shift 369
displaced homemakers 366	mommy tax 370	sexism 356
feminine mystique 360	mommy track 364	sexual harassment 364
feminization of poverty 366	occupational segregation	suffragists 359
gender roles 357	by gender 361	
glass ceiling 363	pay equity 362	

Review Questions

1. How is women's subordinate position different from that of oppressed racial and ethnic groups? How is it similar?
2. How has the focus of the feminist movement changed from the suffragist movement to the present?
3. How do the patterns of women in the workplace differ from those of men?
4. How has the changing role of women in the United States affected the family?
5. What are the special challenges facing women of subordinate racial and ethnic groups?

Critical Thinking

1. Women have many characteristics similar to those of minority groups, but what are some differences? For example, they are not segregated from men residentially.
2. Earlier in the 1990s, the phrase *angry white men* was used by some men who viewed themselves as victims. In what respect may men see themselves as victims of reverse discrimination? Do you think these views are justified?
3. How are men's and women's roles defined differently when it comes to such concepts as the mommy track, the second shift, and the displaced homemaker?