Men's Violence Against Women: An Overview

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Men's violence against women is a widespread problem across cultures, socioeconomic groups, and religions (Watts and Zimmerman 2002), resulting in more damage and death than several major diseases (including all cancers) and accidents combined (Kristof 2013). And, of course, killing and maiming are only the "tip of the iceberg," as men's violence victimizes women in a wide variety of other ways, including intimate partner violence with less serious injuries, rape and other sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, public harassment, human trafficking, forced labor, and female infanticide. In many cases, this violence has a distinctly gendered component. In other words, the offender attacks the victim in part because she is a woman or girl.

The pervasiveness of this phenomenon is due, in large part, to the indisputable fact that women-as-a-group are strongly disadvantaged compared with men-as-a-group. (Note the use of hyphens to emphasize that there are wide variations within men and within women. Many men are relatively disadvantaged and many women are relatively privileged, but in the aggregate, the gap in social and economic power between the sexes is enormous.) For the purposes of this chapter, I am defining violence as a violation of human rights through intentional physical and/or psychological harm.

Whenever I write or talk about gender-based violence as a systemic issue, defensive reactions ensue. Some men, and a few women, react by saying things like: (1) "You're male bashing," (2) "I'm a man, and I'm not violent," and (3) "Women are violent too." These reactions are understandable and two of them contain indisputable truths: the vast majority of men are not violent, and there are also women who are violent. The first statement, however, is not. I think of "male bashing" as an unfair attack on men based on unjustified sweeping generalizations implying that all men are alike (which we are not; there is great diversity among men). It seems difficult for some people to hold two ideas simultaneously—that most males are not violent, and that most violent people are males, but again both of these statements are well supported by empirical data. Therefore, the fact that men-as-a-group are more violent than women-as-a-group does not imply simplistic "woman = good; man = bad" communication. It is simply stating that violence is partly embedded in the social meanings of what it means to be a man and in the social-structural conditions that create power imbalances between the sexes. In the quest to reduce men's violence, one of the greatest and perhaps most underutilized forces is the amplification of the voices and efforts of the vast majority of normal and healthy men to use their influence positively.

The factor that ties all of these different forms of violence together is the abuse of men's power through a variety of interconnected mechanisms such as sexism, entitlement, privilege, and a

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toxic form of masculinity. *Patriarchy*, the societal system that confers greater levels of power and influence on males, is the overarching factor that ties all of these mechanisms together. Patriarchy has existed throughout the world for about 5000 years (Lerner 1986). It is expressed in the dominant conscious and unconscious values and beliefs assigned to men and women, social customs, economic arrangements (Kilmartin 2010b), and in what historian Gerda Lerner (1986) terms the "leading metaphors" of cultural systems. For the purposes of this volume, the most important of these metaphors are theologies constructed around male gods and religious authority, which place women into positions of subservience. Lerner asserts that goddesses were the norm before the advent of patriarchy but that over time they were transformed into gods as men came to power, based on the "counterfactual metaphor of male procreativity" (p. 220).

Because the sexes are so interdependent, the control of women by men is often accomplished through indirect means (Rudman and Glick 2008) such as indoctrinating women into subservient roles, depriving them of educational or occupational opportunities, limiting their access to economic and/or political resources, and rewarding women who cooperate with men's dominance. Women who do not cooperate are under threat of punishment, such as being considered socially unrespectable and reducing their access to resources. In a cross-cultural study involving 19 nations, Peter Glick and Susan Fiske (2001) note that benevolent sexism—the "women are wonderful" effect, which is roughly synonymous with chivalry—communicates that women are praiseworthy but ultimately incompetent and is used to secure women's cooperation with men's dominance. Hostile sexism, the outright antipathy toward women, is reserved for women who challenge men's dominance. In laboratory studies, men reported that they liked the women they interacted with more than they liked the men, but they nevertheless assigned women leadership roles and other resources less frequently than they did for men (Glick and Fiske 2001).

Violence is the extreme of hostile sexism. When men in the aggregate are threatened by women's assertions of power, they sometimes react with coercive measures. Although most men do not commit violence directly against women, many participate in systems that have the effect of condoning or even facilitating gender-based intentional harm. I do not intend to convey that the attitudes, behaviors, and social conventions in which men (and women) participate that result in violence are always intentional or even conscious, or that patriarchy is a conspiracy in which men gather and scheme about the best ways to oppress women. Rather, the social forces that impel the power imbalance have created and maintain gender-based violence as a toxic byproduct of the oppression of women. Below, I present two models: one focused on the individual causes of gender-based violence, and the other focused on larger social forces, the cultural-systemic model.

The Individual Model

As I have discussed previously (Kilmartin 2014; Kilmartin and Allison 2007), four conditions must be present for an individual to commit a violent act. I have since added a fifth condition, self-justification. Since this volume is about men's violence against women, I will use the generic masculine in describing these conditions even though violence is not limited to male actors. The first condition is pathology on the part of the offender. By "pathology," I am not referring to specific mental illnesses which could be diagnosed in the attacker (although some may be mentally ill), but rather characteristics that differentiate him from normal and healthy men who are nonviolent. For example, sexual assault perpetrators, in contrast to nonoffenders, show much higher levels across a constellation of characteristics such as hypermasculinity, misogyny, childhood maltreatment experiences, rape myth acceptance, and adversarial sexual beliefs (Lisak and Roth 1988).

The second condition is the decision to act violently. Many offenders have suffered from abuse and neglect, especially as children, and they deserve our empathy and attention in healing from their psychic wounds. However, there is

no contradiction between having compassion for someone's pain on the one hand, and holding him accountable for his behavior on the other. Even though his harmful actions are in part a product of his own maltreatment, he is nevertheless responsible for his actions except in the rare cases where he is so severely mentally ill that he cannot distinguish right from wrong and/or control his impulses. These are remarkably rare cases, and in the legal system, the bases for insanity pleas or decisions that a defendant is unfit for trial. Even in these rare cases when an offender is judged not to be legally accountable for his actions, he must be confined in a locked ward of a mental hospital to protect other potential victims.

Self-justification, the third condition, is part of the decision to act violently. Few people wake up in the morning and say to themselves, "I'm going out to commit an egregiously immoral act." They believe that their actions, however much social disapproval accompanies them, are nevertheless justified. As author Jim Butcher (2009) stated, "No one is an unjust villain in his own mind…. We're all the hero of our own story" (pp. 205–206). The self-narrative that an offender constructs may be affected by media portrayals of "good guys" doing violence against "bad guys," as when a police officer kills a criminal to protect other potential victims and/or to bring some measure of vengeance and justice. In television portrayals, about 40 % of violent acts are of this variety (Murray 1988), and the experience of retribution may activate the pleasure centers of the brain (Worthington 2010). In a longitudinal study of male children and adolescents who reported identifying with television aggressors, nearly twice as many reported that, as adults, they had pushed, shoved, or grabbed their domestic partners within the past year compared with those who did not identify with the aggressors (Huesmann and Taylor 2006).

Self-justification involves a complicated set of influences (Tavris and Aronson 2007). For example, a man who has hit his spouse might use minimization ("I only did it once."), victim blaming ("She drove me to it. She doesn't know how to listen."), selective memory ("She always pushes me; she never loved me."), vengeance ("She

cheated on me; I was teaching her a lesson."), or attempts to provide premature closure to the event ("Look, I *said* I was sorry. Let's move on."). One offender stated in a batterer education group, "I was trying to push her onto the bed, but she hit the floor instead and cut her head on the night stand. If she had hit the bed like she was supposed to, I wouldn't be here" (Franklin 2003).

Religious justifications may play a role in gender-based violence. In some religions, it is believed that a man will treat a woman well if she behaves in ways that are considered appropriately deferent, caring, and forgiving. Therefore, if men abuse her, she is considered to have misbehaved and therefore deserving of maltreatment—a classic victim-blaming strategy. In both the religious and secular worlds, one often encounters this same phenomenon for judging the responsibility for rape. Some men and women will attribute a sexual assault to the victim's intoxication, flirtation, poor judgment, or manner of dress. Such an attribution includes the unexamined assumptions that men's sexuality is out of control and therefore it is women's responsibility to contain it, and that a sexual assault is sexual in nature, when in reality it is an act of violence for which sexuality is the mode of harm. Rape is no more about sex than hitting someone with a frying pan is about cooking.

In the marital situation, if the man believes that he is the rightful head of the family and that his wife should be subservient, he might be prone to violence when he perceives that he has lost a measure of masculine control when his wife disagrees with him or refuses to conform her behavior to his dictates. Some religious traditions justify rape and even murder as appropriate punishments for various perceived transgressions by women.

The fourth condition for violence to occur is the means to do harm. Obviously, the availability of weapons fulfills this condition, but in many cases, men's greater upper body strength and/or ability to intimidate based on size is sufficient to effect their violence. For instance, most acquaintance rapists use only the amount of force necessary to accomplish their objectives and rarely employ weapons. Often the victim is impaired

with alcohol and/or other drugs, making the assault easier to accomplish. The use of a weapon and the presence of physical injuries increase the likelihood of criminal charges; however, these circumstances are found only in a small minority of cases (Kilmartin and Allison 2007).

Finally, gender-based violence is unlikely to occur without social support. Many violent men associate with like-minded men who denigrate, disrespect, and dehumanize women. Men in these groups who disagree with those who display these attitudes often remain silent, believing that they are alone in their opinions (Kilmartin et al. 2008). At the macrosocial level, cultural attitudes about women and victimization also provide social support for individuals' violence, even as legal systems attempt to contain it. This factor leads us into a model that goes beyond the individual in an attempt to understand the "big picture" of this pervasive problem.

The Cultural-Systemic Model

As I have noted elsewhere (Kilmartin 2014), a comprehensive understanding of sexual assault must include a discussion of the important social contexts in which violence occurs. These contexts affect all forms of gender-based violence. The epidemiology of the problem varies among cultures, indicating that cultural beliefs and social-structural conditions affect violence against women. I have situated this model in a pyramid shape because greater numbers of people are involved as one moves from the tip to the base, and also because the forces toward the bottom of the pyramid serve to support those at the top. We will not end the scourge of gender-based violence until we erode its foundation (Fig. 2.1).

At the top of the pyramid are perpetrators, the small minority of men who are violent toward women. Although violence is a low-frequency behavior, it obviously has powerful quality-of-life implications, and small differences add up within large populations to create a serious public health problem. In fact, husbands, boyfriends, ex-husbands, and ex-boyfriends murder three women per day in the USA. To place this violence into context, the 2001 World Trade Center bombings killed 2973 people and the Virginia Tech massacre in 2007 killed 33. Therefore, male partners' and ex-partners' murders equate to a new Virginia Tech massacre every 11 days and a new 9/11 disaster about every 1000 days (Kilmartin 2010a). And yet little attention is paid to interpersonal violence by news media, a fact I will take up in the discussion of the foundational elements in the pyramid model.

If one adds psychological violence to the mix, the group of men at the top of the pyramid becomes much larger. In a meta-analysis (a statistical technique combining results from several studies) of 55 studies that included an aggregate of about 86,000 participants, Ilies et al. (2003) found that about 24 % of women had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. This should not be construed as meaning that 24 % of men harass women; as with sexual assault, it is a small group of men who are serial offenders. The vast majority of the harassers of women are men (Pina et al. 2009). Many women report death and rape threats after posting feminist articles online

Fig. 2.1 The Cultural-Systemic Model of Men's Violence Against Women. (Originally from Kilmartin 2014. Used with permission)

Perpetrators

Direct Facilitators

Cultural Standard Bearers

Prejudice and Dehumanization

Inequality, Disadvantage, and Power Differences

(Atherton-Zeman 2013), an illustration of how hostile sexism is directed toward women who challenge men's power (Glick and Fiske 2001).

The next level of the pyramid is a group of (mostly) men who are the direct facilitators of the violence. Offenders often associate with like-minded men who may offer support for the offender's violence, either directly or by refusing to intervene in dangerous situations. For example, Boswell and Spade (1996) noted that rape-prone fraternities are characterized by jokes that degrade women and parties with heavier drinking, bathrooms for women that were filthy, sometimes to the point of being unusable, and music so loud that conversations are impossible. In contrast to fraternities which were safer places for women, the rape-prone fraternities exhibited a pervasive attitude that women are only for sex, as evidenced by members' loss of social status within the fraternity when they develop longer-term relationships with women. An undetected rapist ("Frank") within a fraternity explains to an interviewer how the fraternity facilitated his violence in a DVD available from legalmomentum. org (National Judicial Education Program 2005):

Frank: We had parties almost every weekend. My fraternity was known for that. We would invite a bunch of girls and lay out the kegs or whatever we were drinking that night and everyone would get plastered. We would invite girls, all of us in the fraternity. We'd be on the lookout for good looking girls, especially freshmen, the real young ones. They were the easiest, it's like we knew they wouldn't know the ropes kind of, it's like they were easy prey. They wouldn't know anything about drinking, about how much alcohol they could manage, and they wouldn't know anything about our techniques."

Interviewer: What were those techniques?

Frank: We'd invite them to the party and we'd make it seem like it was a real honor, like we didn't just invite any girl, which I guess is true [laughs]. And we'd get them drinking right away. We'd have a bunch of kegs but we almost always had some kind of punch also, it was almost like our own home brew. We'd make it real sweet, you know, we'd use some

kind of sweet juice and then we'd just throw in all kinds of alcohol. It was powerful stuff. And these girls wouldn't know what hit them. They'd all be just guzzling the stuff because it was just juice, right, and they were so nervous being there because they were just freshmen anyway.

Frank goes on to describe how he raped a young woman (he did not use the term rape and seemed unaware that he was describing a felony to the interviewer) whom he had groomed during the week by feigning romantic interest in her and invited to a party, where she quickly became intoxicated on punch made with sweet juice to mask its alcohol content. The fraternity brothers designated certain rooms in the house for those who wanted to be alone with a woman, and none of them intervened when he saw one of his brothers taking an obviously intoxicated woman to his room. "Frank" had separated her from the party by suggesting that she come upstairs to get away from the noise. Because she had been interested in him romantically, because he appeared to be interested in her, and because he had appeared to be respectful to her during the week, she accompanied him and he raped her.

His fraternity brothers facilitated the rape in several ways. First, they supported a social atmosphere in which women were routinely disrespected. Second, they normalized the belief that it was acceptable to get women intoxicated to facilitate sexual access. Third, they conspired to do so at the parties by concocting the sweet punch. Fourth, they turned up the music so loud that any woman who wanted to have a conversation with a man would have to go to an isolated place. Unlike a stranger rapist, the acquaintance rapist must find some way to separate the victim from social situations, and the loud music facilitated this process. Fifth, they failed to intervene when he was taking her upstairs, despite her being clearly intoxicated. And finally, many times fraternity members engage in a conspiracy of silence in the aftermath of an assault when law enforcement or campus judicial systems investigate (Seccuro 2011).

Facilitation can take the form of passivity, as when bystanders fail to intervene in potentially

dangerous situations. In a survey conducted by the Virginia Health Department, The American Institute for Research (2003) found that 69 % of men aged 18–34 reported that they knew at least one adult man who was or had been sexually involved with an underage girl, and 51 % reported knowing five or more. They nearly always expressed disapproval, and not surprisingly, the level of their disapproval rose as the difference between the ages of the man and the girl grew larger. But their stated willingness to intervene did not increase even as their levels of disapproval did.

In an egregious example, cult leader Warren Jeffs used his power to help men in his group obtain sexual access to underage girls, and other members of his cult refused to cooperate with investigating authorities. There were arrest warrants on Jeffs in 2005 but he evaded authorities for some time by hiding with members of his church. The victimization of these girls was so extensive that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) placed Jeffs on its Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list, finally arresting him in 2006 (FBI 2010). He is now serving a life sentence but continues to control his followers from prison (ABC News 2012). Church leaders facilitated Jeffs' crimes through money laundering and obstructing investigations by law enforcement. Jeffs used his religious authority to justify his crimes and intimidate church members (Brower and Krakauer 2011).

The next level of the cultural-systemic model involves cultural standard-bearers, who are people with wide influence and access to large audiences and who use this platform to promote gender-based violence. Warren Jeffs has a great deal of influence, but it is limited to a relatively small group of people who share his religious ideologies. In mainstream cultures, there are standard-bearers whose names are recognized within most households, and who have large numbers of followers.

Standard-bearers in mainstream US culture include political pundits, comedians, and other performers who routinely display disrespectful attitudes toward women and thereby influence their followers to do the same. For example,

when law student Sandra Fluke testified before Congress about the need for health insurers to provide contraception, radio performer Rush Limbaugh called her a "slut" and a "prostitute" and suggested that she ought to post sex videos online (Elverton-Dixon 2012). Limbaugh is particularly known for derogatory comments toward any woman who advances egalitarian ideals, once saying that feminism was invented so that "ugly broads" and "fat cows" could have access to the mainstream. Radio/television personality Howard Stern routinely brings women on to his show, has them remove their clothes, and makes comments on the acceptability of their bodies. Like several comedians, he also has been known to joke about rape (Jhally and Katz 2000).

Most of the cultural standard-bearers for violence against women are men, but not all. In 2009, when film director Roman Polanski was arrested many years after fleeing a sexual assault conviction involving subduing a 13-year old girl with alcohol and sedatives and then penetrating her anally while she was unconscious (Polanski pled guilty to a lesser charge and then fled to France to avoid incarceration), comedian Whoopi Goldberg stated on the popular daytime television show *The View* that Polanski should not be held accountable for his actions because he is a great artist and that his crime wasn't "rape-rape," implying that Polanski's violence was not serious enough that he should be held legally accountable (Allen 2009). Other cultural standard-bearers also expressed support for Polanski, including Woody Allen, Martin Scorsese, and Harvey Weinstein (Che 2012). *Tonight Show* host Jay Leno told 737 jokes about the 1994 alleged O. J. Simpson murders of his former wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman, over 200 more than on any other subject (Rice 2009). Simpson was acquitted in criminal court but found liable for the deaths in civil court (ABC News 1996).

Some politicians with extreme religious beliefs become cultural standard-bearers for violence with their misogynist rhetoric. To cite one example: in 2012, US vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan stated that a rapist who impregnates a victim should have the right to prevent her from

aborting the fetus (E. G. Ryan 2012) and stated that rapists should also be able to obtain custody of the child or have visitation rights as noncustodial parents. In fact, only 19 of the 50 states have laws explicitly preventing rapists from having these rights (Zuckerman 2012). Although there is no evidence that Ryan has ever been directly violent toward a woman, and in fact he may consciously believe that he likes women (he is married to one), his political stance not only downplays the horror of rape but also advocates toward possible retraumatization of rape survivors by the very men who attacked them. In this way, he is a polite supporter of egregious violence. Many people who voted for him did so on the basis of conservative and sexist religious beliefs, which have been adopted as the linchpin of his political party for several decades.

Whether they are overtly hostile toward women or merely insensitive, cultural standard-bearers would not be able to have such wide influence if their audiences found their communications objectionable. Standard-bearers are clearly tapping into broadly held cultural attitudes toward women. The next level of the cultural-systemic pyramid is prejudice and dehumanization, which provides a foundation for cultural standard-bearers, direct facilitators, and ultimately, offenders. Sexist, disrespectful, and dehumanizing attitudes toward women are held in wide segments of the population. Women who challenge the status quo of male dominance are often subject to negative consequences in the workplace (Stockdale and Bhattacharya 2009).

Even the benevolent sexist ("women are wonderful") attitude, held by many women and men alike, has an undercurrent of the belief that women are incompetent. One way in which women deal with male dominance is to seek the protection of powerful men. Psychologically, this strategy requires the adoption of the benevolent sexist attitude that women are special but less powerful and that if they behave with deference, men's power will be used to their advantage (such as with economic resources) rather than to hurt them. In the process, they denigrate other women who challenge men's power. In fact, women are much more likely to adopt benevolent sexist at-titudes in cultures where men hold strong hostile sexist attitudes. Men can adopt their protectionism as a gallant duty and thereby downplay the unfairness of their dominance (Glick and Fiske 2001). College women who engage in "Prince Charming" fantasies of powerful men rescuing, providing for, and romancing them with chivalry show a strong tendency to have less ambitious career goals than other women, implicitly adopting beliefs in their incompetence, powerlessness, and in the process, adopting beliefs that normalize men's greater competence, social status, and power (Rudman and Heppen 2003).

Assigning full or partial responsibility for an instance of gender-based violence to the victim is another strategy that men use to protect themselves from the awareness that they hold unearned privilege and that they should play a role in ending men's violence against women that goes beyond merely refraining from the behavior. Victim blaming is a widespread phenomenon that takes extreme forms in men such as the belief in two-thirds of Indian judges that women who dress provocatively invite rape. Not surprisingly, of 635 rape cases in the Indian city of Delhi in the first 11 months of 2012, only one ended in conviction (Kristof 2013).

Victim blaming is not limited to men. Women use it to protect themselves psychologically from awareness of their own vulnerability. If a woman attributes a victim's assault to her manner of dress, flirtation, challenge to her partner's dominance, alcohol and other drug use, stupidity, and/or poor judgment, she can assure herself that she is safe if she does not hold the same characteristics and/or does not engage in the same behaviors. Survivors of gender-based violence will even engage in blaming themselves because they feel safer if they assure themselves that they learned from their mistakes and will not engage in risk behaviors again. As I often tell audiences, do not expend energy in blaming victims; they are experts at it and do not need your help with it.

Victim blaming can also be seen in the implicit calculus of empathy for victims of violence. Those who have been injured or murdered through random violence nearly always receive large amounts of compassion from the general

public. For example, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre, and the 2013 Newtown, CT mass murder of schoolchildren appropriately resulted in large outpourings of sympathy. The former two tragedies resulted in the building of memorials to mark the tragedy and make the public statement that the victim's lives mattered. It is likely that there will also be one built to mark the Newtown tragedy. In contrast, victims of interpersonal violence merit only a footnote in the news unless something is unusual (such as when the victim or assailant is a celebrity), and there is no physical memorial to these victims despite the fact that their numbers far outweigh those of random violence. As Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (2009) put it, "we journalists tend to be good at covering events that happen on a particular day, but we slip at covering events that happen every day—such as the quotidian cruelties inflicted on women and girls" (p. xiv).

Why is there so much more compassion for victims of random violence than for those of interpersonal violence? Because it is nearly impossible to avoid identifying with random violence victims. People feel vulnerable because they are aware that they could have been one of these victims, could have been an employee at the World Trade Center or the Pentagon, a student at Virginia Tech, or the parent of one of the Newtown children. But implicit victim blaming allows people to distance themselves from those who have suffered or died as a result of interpersonal violence, by believing that they would not have had the poor judgment to be married to or otherwise associate with a violent man. It is interesting to note that the US government has spent more than a trillion dollars to combat terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks but only US $ 3 million to combat gun violence (Diaz 2013) and only US $ 1.6 billion to reduce violence against women ("House passes violence against women reauthorization" 2013), which resulted in the killing of three times as many women in the 10 years that followed. In response to international terrorism, the government narrowed the individual liberties of its citizens in an attempt to provide greater safety; in response to the scourge of gun violence in the USA, the government passed laws to give its citizens greater access to firearms.

The base of the pyramid is inequality, disadvantage, and power differences. Women-as-a-group continue to hold less economic power than men-as-a-group throughout the world. Although they have made gains in the political arena, women still lack proportional representation in government in most places around the world. Voters (both men and women) are often reluctant to vote for female candidates for national office, as evidenced by the large sex imbalance in the US Congress and the absence of any major-party nomination of a female candidate for the presidency. Filmmaker Michael Moore (2001) noted that women were not even allowed to vote in US elections until 1920, but when the rights of women to vote were recognized, they still voted for male political candidates even though women held the statistical majority. No other oppressed group in history has ever voted in overwhelming numbers to keep their oppressors in power, according to Moore (2001).

Moore's description tells us that sexism operates rather differently from racism, religious discrimination, and other forms of oppression. Because men and women are so interdependent, sexist men must find a way to love women and denigrate them at the same time (Rudman and Glick 2008). This task is accomplished by separating the women who are believed to deserve men's admiration from the ones who are believed to deserve their antipathy (Glick and Fiske 2001). As Peter Glick (2005) remarked, "If you hate black people, you don't tend to hang out with them on the weekends." Therefore, benevolent and hostile sexism serve to provide an uneasy resolution to men's ambivalence about women, and some women participate in their own subordination as a strategy for surviving in a male-dominated society. Moreover, sexism is often reproduced in family structures and interactions, as older family members pressure younger ones to adopt antiquated gender behaviors which they also model.

As a result, sexism continues to be an accepted social activity in a way that other forms

of oppression are not. For example, it is quite routine for girls and boys to wear different color robes in high school graduation ceremonies, a practice that would be viewed as unacceptable to distinguish racial, religious, or socioeconomic groups. There is a board game called "Battle of the Sexes," but it is doubtful that a "Battle of the Races" or "Jews vs. Christians" board game would be acceptable. One intermediate goal to ending sexism and inequality is for people to disapprove of sexism as a social activity in the same way that they disapprove of overt racism or religious intolerance.

I will end on an optimistic note. The base of the pyramid is slowly crumbling as the gendered division of labor erodes. Gender is becoming less and less of an organizing principle in modern society for several reasons. First, most heterosexual couples need two incomes to prosper and therefore increasingly find they have to share both domestic work and paid work force labor. Second, children are not the economic asset they were in agriculturally dominated societies, and therefore most women will not spend their young adult years giving birth to large numbers of children and thus they have more access to paid labor. Third, reproductive technologies are available that will limit the size of families in this overpopulated world, again giving women more options for directly remunerated work. Fourth, because of the advent of laborsaving devices, male upperbody strength is no longer much of an economic asset; there is little work men can do that women cannot, and therefore heterosexual couples have more options than ever in how they will negotiate paid and domestic work. This flexibility can be seen in the increased numbers of women in the military and men as full-time homemakers (Kilmartin 2010b).

Sexism will not survive in a society where gender becomes less of an organizing principle for the worlds of work and family. I do not believe that sexism will end in our lifetimes, but there are signs that it is improving. In 2013, women made up 18 % of representatives and 20 % of senators in the US Congress. Although still far short of equal representation, these numbers indicate progress. Women are now the majority of the paid labor force even though their aggregate incomes still fall far short of that of men. And women's votes in the 2012 US presidential election were instrumental; the election would have gone to the losing candidate had only men voted (Ms. Magazine 2013).

Men's roles are also expanding. As the sole breadwinner pressure eases through the sharing of it in egalitarian couples, men find themselves taking on increased domestic labor, an important development, as there is a negative correlation across cultures between men's participation in childrearing and the epidemiology of gender-based violence within the culture (Coltrane 1995). As the social, economic, and physical separation of the sexes diminishes, so will its most toxic by-product, men's violence against women. Education, activism, legislation, and law enforcement can and are helping to accelerate this process.

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