

The image shows a red Eames-style chair and a blue backpack on a sidewalk. The background is a teal-colored glass wall with a blurred reflection of a red and white striped object. The word "sociology" is written in white lowercase letters across the middle of the image.

sociology

JOHN J. MACIONIS

sociology

fourteenth edition

J O H N J . M A C I O N I S

KENYON COLLEGE

PEARSON

Boston Columbus Indianapolis New York San Francisco Upper Saddle River
Amsterdam Cape Town Dubai London Madrid Milan Munich Paris Montreal Toronto
Delhi Mexico City Sao Paulo Sydney Hong Kong Seoul Singapore Taipei Tokyo

13 Gender Stratification

Learning Objectives



Remember the definitions of the key terms highlighted in boldfaced type throughout this chapter.



Understand that gender is not a simple matter of biology but an idea created by society.



Apply different theoretical approaches to the concept of gender.



Analyze the ways in which gender is a dimension of social stratification.



Evaluate today's society using various feminist approaches.



Create a vision of a society in which women and men would have the same overall social standing.



CHAPTER OVERVIEW

We live in a world organized around not only differences of social class but also around the concepts of feminine and masculine, which sociologists call “gender.” This chapter examines gender, explores the meaning societies attach to being female or male, and explains how gender is an important dimension of social stratification. ■



At first we traveled quite alone . . . but before we had gone many miles, we came on other wagon-loads of women, bound in the same direction. As we reached different cross-roads, we saw wagons coming from every part of the country and, long before we reached Seneca Falls, we were a procession.

So wrote Charlotte Woodward in her journal as she made her way along the rutted dirt roads leading to Seneca Falls, a small town in upstate New York. The year was 1848, a time when slavery was legal in much of the United States and the social standing of all women, regardless of color, was far below that of men. Back

then, in much of the country, women could not own property, keep their wages if they were married, draft a will, file lawsuits in a court (including lawsuits seeking custody of their children), or attend college, and husbands were widely viewed as having unquestioned authority over their wives and children.

Some 300 women gathered at Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls to challenge this second-class citizenship. They listened as their leader, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, called for expanding women’s rights and opportunities, including the right to vote. At that time, most people considered such a proposal absurd and outrageous. Even many attending the conference were shocked by the idea: Stanton’s husband, Henry, rode out of town in protest (Gurnett, 1998).

Much has changed since the Seneca Falls convention, and many of Stanton’s proposals are now widely accepted as matters of basic fairness. But as this chapter explains, women and men still lead different lives in the United States and elsewhere in the world; in most respects, men are still in charge. This chapter explores the importance of gender and explains that gender, like class position, is a major dimension of social stratification.

Gender and Inequality

Remember

Chapter 8 (“Sexuality and Society”) explained that biological differences divide the human population into categories of female and male. **Gender** refers to *the personal traits and social positions that members of a society attach to being female or male*. Gender, then, is a dimension of social organization, shaping how we interact with others and how we think about ourselves. More important, gender also involves *hierarchy*, ranking men and women differently in terms of power, wealth, and other resources. This is why sociologists speak of **gender**

stratification, *the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and privilege between men and women*. In short, gender affects the opportunities and challenges we face throughout our lives.

Male-Female Differences

Many people think there is something “natural” about gender distinctions because biology does make one sex different from the other. But we must be careful not to think of social differences in biological terms. In 1848, for example, women were denied the vote because many people assumed that women did not have enough intelligence or interest in politics. Such attitudes had nothing to do with biology; they reflected the *cultural* patterns of that time and place.

Another example is athletic performance. In 1925, most people—women and men—believed that the best women runners could never compete with men in a marathon. Today, as Figure 13–1 shows, the gender gap has greatly narrowed, and the fastest women routinely post better times than the fastest men of decades past. Here, again, most of the differences between men and women turn out to be socially created.

There are some differences in physical ability between the sexes. On average, males are 10 percent taller, 20 percent heavier, and 30 percent stronger, especially in the upper body. On the other hand, women outperform men in the ultimate game of life itself: Life expectancy for men in the United States is 75.7 years, and women can expect to live 80.6 years (Ehrenreich, 1999; McDowell et al., 2008; Kochanek et al., 2011).

In adolescence, males do a bit better in the mathematics and reading parts of the SAT while females do better in writing, differences that reflect both biology and socialization. However, research does not point to any difference in overall intelligence between males and females (Lewin, 2008; College Board, 2010).

Biologically, then, men and women differ in limited ways; neither one is naturally superior. But culture can define the two sexes very differently, as the global study of gender described in the next section shows.

Gender in Global Perspective

The best way to see the cultural foundation of gender is by comparing one society to another. Three important studies highlight just how different “masculine” and “feminine” can be.

The Israeli Kibbutz

In Israel, collective settlements are called *kibbutzim*. The *kibbutz* (the singular form of the word) has been an important setting for research because gender equality is one of its stated goals; men and women share in both work and decision making.

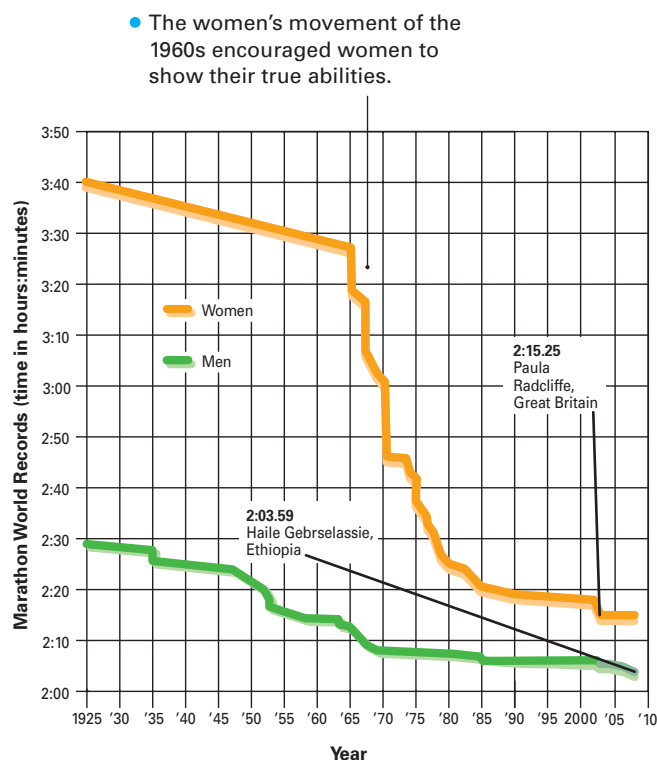
In recent decades, *kibbutzim* have become less collective and thus less distinctive organizations. But through much of their history, both sexes shared most everyday jobs. Many men joined women in taking care of children, and women joined men in repairing buildings and providing armed security. Both sexes made everyday decisions for the group. Girls and boys were raised in the same way; in many cases, young children were raised together in dormitories away from parents. Women and men in the *kibbutzim* have achieved remarkable (although not complete) social equality, evidence that cultures define what is feminine and what is masculine.

Margaret Mead’s Research

The anthropologist Margaret Mead carried out groundbreaking research on gender. If gender is based on the biological differences between men and women, she reasoned, people everywhere should define “feminine” and “masculine” in the same way; if gender is cultural, these concepts should vary.

Mead (1963, orig. 1935) studied three societies in New Guinea. In the mountainous home of the Arapesh, Mead observed men and women with remarkably similar attitudes and behavior. Both sexes, she reported, were cooperative and sensitive to others—in short, what our culture would label “feminine.”

Moving south, Mead then studied the Mundugumor, whose headhunting and cannibalism stood in striking contrast to the gen-



Diversity Snapshot

FIGURE 13–1 Men’s and Women’s Athletic Performance

Do men naturally outperform women in athletic competition? The answer is not obvious. Early in the twentieth century, men outpaced women by more than an hour in marathon races. But as opportunities for women in athletics have increased, women have been closing the performance gap. Only eleven minutes separate the current world marathon records for women (set in 2003) and for men (set in 2008).

Source: Marathonguide.com (2011).

tle ways of the Arapesh. In this culture, both sexes were typically self-ish and aggressive, traits we define as “masculine.”

Finally, traveling west to the Tchambuli, Mead discovered a culture that, like our own, defined females and males differently. But the Tchambuli *reversed* many of our notions of gender: Females were dominant and rational, and males were submissive, emotional, and nurturing toward children. Based on her observations, Mead concluded that culture is the key to gender differences, because what one society defines as masculine another may see as feminine.

Some critics view Mead’s findings as “too neat,” as if she saw in these three societies just the patterns she was looking for. Deborah Gewertz (1981) challenged what she called Mead’s “reversal hypothesis,” pointing out that Tchambuli males are really the more aggressive sex. Gewertz explains that Mead visited the Tchambuli (who themselves spell their name Chambri) during the 1930s, after they had lost much of their property in tribal wars, and observed men rebuilding their homes, a temporary role for Chambri men.

Watch the video “Similarities and Differences between Men and Women” on mysoclab.com

gender the personal traits and social positions that member of a society attach to being female or male

gender stratification the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and privilege between men and women

George Murdock's Research

In a broader review of research on more than 200 preindustrial societies, George Murdock (1937) found some global agreement about which tasks are feminine and which are masculine. Hunting and warfare, Murdock concluded, generally fall to men, and home-centered tasks such as cooking and child care tend to be women's work. With their simple technology, preindustrial societies apparently assign roles reflecting men's and women's physical characteristics. With their greater size and strength, men hunt game and protect the group; because women bear children, they do most of the work in the home.

But beyond this general pattern, Murdock found much variety. Consider agriculture: Women did the farming in about the same number of societies as men; in most, the two sexes shared this work. When it came to many other tasks, from building shelters to tattooing the body, Murdock found that societies of the world were as likely to turn to one sex as the other.

● **Evaluate** Global comparisons show that overall, societies do not consistently define tasks as either feminine or masculine. With industrialization, the importance of muscle power declines, further reducing gender differences (Nolan & Lenski, 2010). In sum, gender is too variable across cultures to be a simple expression of biology; what it means to be female and male is mostly a creation of society.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING By comparing many cultures, what do we learn about the origin of gender differences?

Patriarchy and Sexism

Conceptions of gender vary, and there is evidence of societies in which women have greater power than men. One example is the Musuo, a very small society in China's Yunnan province, in which women control most property, select their sexual partners, and make most decisions about everyday life. The Musuo appear to be a case of **matriarchy** ("rule of mothers"), a form of social organization in which females dominate males, which has only rarely been documented in human history.

The pattern found almost everywhere in the world is **patriarchy** ("rule of fathers"), a form of social organiza-



patriarchy a form of social organization in which males dominate females

matriarchy a form of social organization in which females dominate males

sexism the belief that one sex is innately superior to the other

tion in which males dominate females. Global Map 13–1 shows the great variation in the relative power and privilege of women that exists from country to country. According to the United Nations, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden give women the highest social standing; by contrast, women in the nations of Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Yemen have the lowest social standing in comparison to men. Of all the world's 195 nations, the United States ranks forty-fourth in terms of gender equality (United Nations Development Programme, 2010).

The justification for patriarchy is **sexism**, the belief that one sex is innately superior to the other. Sexism is not just a matter of individual attitudes; it is built into the institutions of society. *Institutional sexism* is found throughout the economy, with women concentrated in low-paying jobs. Similarly, the legal system has long excused violence against women, especially on the part of boyfriends, husbands, and fathers.

The Costs of Sexism

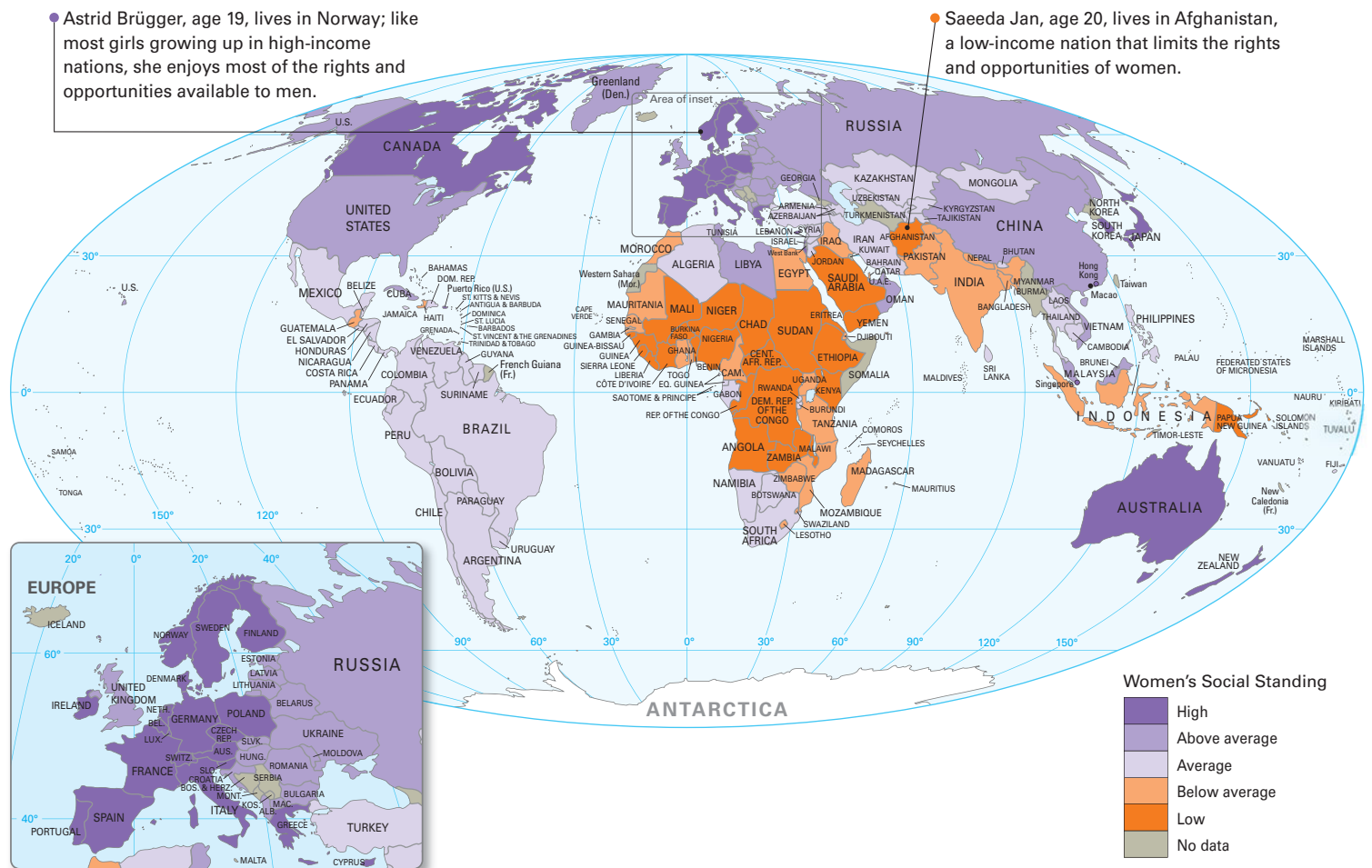
Sexism limits the talents and ambitions of the half of the human population who are women. Although men benefit in some respects from sexism, their privilege comes at a high price. Masculinity in our culture encourages men to engage in many high-risk behaviors: using tobacco and alcohol, playing dangerous sports, and even driving recklessly. As Marilyn French (1985) argues, patriarchy drives men to seek control, not only of women but also of themselves and their world. This is why masculinity is closely linked not only to accidents but also to violence, stress-related diseases, and suicide. The *Type A personality*—marked by chronic impatience, driving ambition, competitiveness, and free-floating hostility—is a recipe for heart disease and almost perfectly matches the behavior that our culture considers masculine (Ehrenreich, 1983).

Finally, as men seek control over others, they lose opportunities for intimacy and trust. As one analyst put it, competition is supposed to "separate the men from the boys." In practice, however, it separates men from men and everyone else (Raphael, 1988).

Must Patriarchy Go On?

In preindustrial societies, women have little control over pregnancy and childbirth, which limits the scope of their lives. In those same societies, men's greater size and physical strength are valued resources that give them power. But industrialization, including birth

In every society, people assume that certain jobs, patterns of behavior, and ways of dressing are "naturally" feminine while others are just as obviously masculine. But in global perspective, we see remarkable variety in such social definitions. These men, Wodaabe pastoral nomads who live in the African nation of Niger, are proud to engage in a display of beauty most people in our society would consider feminine.



• Astrid Brügger, age 19, lives in Norway; like most girls growing up in high-income nations, she enjoys most of the rights and opportunities available to men.

• Saeeda Jan, age 20, lives in Afghanistan, a low-income nation that limits the rights and opportunities of women.

Window on the World

GLOBAL MAP 13–1 Women's Power in Global Perspective

Women's social standing in relation to men's varies around the world. In general, women live better in rich countries than in poor countries. Even so, some nations stand out: In the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden, women come closest to social equality with men.

Source: Data from United Nations Development Programme (2010).

control technology, increases people's choices about how to live. In societies like our own, biological differences offer little justification for patriarchy.

But males are dominant in the United States and elsewhere. Does this mean that patriarchy is inevitable? Some researchers claim that biological factors such as differences in hormones and slight differences in brain structure “wire” the two sexes with different motivations and behaviors—especially aggressiveness in males—making patriarchy difficult or perhaps even impossible to change (S. Goldberg, 1974; Rossi, 1985; Popenoe, 1993b; Udry, 2000). However, most sociologists believe that gender is socially constructed and *can* be changed. Just because no society has yet eliminated patriarchy does not mean that we must remain prisoners of the past.

To understand why patriarchy continues today, we must examine how gender is rooted and reproduced in society, a process that begins in childhood and continues throughout our lives.

Gender and Socialization

Understand

From birth until death, gender shapes human feelings, thoughts, and actions. Children quickly learn that their society considers females and males different kinds of people; by about age three, they begin to think of themselves in these terms.

In the past, many people in the United States traditionally described women using terms such as “emotional,” “passive,” and “cooperative.” By contrast, men were described as “rational,” “active,” and “competitive.” It is curious that we were taught for so long to think of gender in terms of one sex being opposite to the other, especially because women and men have so much in common and also because research suggests that most young people develop personalities that are some mix of these feminine and masculine traits (Bem, 1993).

Just as gender affects how we think of ourselves, so it teaches us how to behave. **Gender roles** (an older term is **sex roles**) are *attitudes and activities that a society links to each sex*. A culture that defines males as ambitious and competitive encourages them to seek out positions of leadership and play team sports. To the extent that females are defined as deferential and emotional, they are expected to be supportive helpers and quick to show their feelings.

Gender and the Family

The first question people usually ask about a newborn—“Is it a boy or a girl?”—has great importance because the answer involves not just sex but also the direction the child’s life will likely take. In fact, gender is at work even before the birth of a child, especially in lower-income nations, because parents hope that their firstborn will be a boy rather than a girl.

Soon after birth, family members welcome infants into the “pink world” of girls or the “blue world” of boys (Bernard, 1981). Parents even send gender messages in the way they handle infants. One researcher at an English university presented an infant dressed as either a boy or a girl to a number of women; her subjects handled the “female” child tenderly, with frequent hugs and caresses, and treated the “male” child more roughly, often lifting him up high in the air or bouncing him on a knee (Bonner, 1984; Tavris & Wade, 2001). The lesson is clear: The female world revolves around cooperation and emotion, and the male world puts a premium on independence and action.

Gender and the Peer Group

About the time they enter school, children begin to move outside the family and make friends with others of the same age. Considerable research shows that young children tend to form single-sex play groups (Martin & Fabes, 2001).

Peer groups teach additional lessons about gender. After spending a year observing children at play, Janet Lever (1978) concluded that boys favor team sports that have complex rules and clear objectives such as scoring runs or making touchdowns. Such games nearly always have winners and losers, reinforcing masculine traits of aggression and control.

Girls, too, play team sports. But, Lever explains, girls also play hopscotch, jump rope, or simply talk, sing, or dance. These activities have few rules, and rarely is victory the ultimate goal. Instead of teaching girls to be competitive, Lever explains, female peer groups promote the

interpersonal skills of communication and cooperation, presumably the basis for girls’ future roles as wives and mothers.

The games we play offer important lessons for our later lives. Lever’s observations recall Carol Gilligan’s gender-based theory of moral reasoning, discussed in Chapter 5 (“Socialization”). Boys, Gilligan (1982) claims, reason according to abstract principles. For them, “rightness” amounts to “playing by the rules.” By contrast, girls consider morality a matter of responsibility to others.

Gender and Schooling

Gender shapes our interests and beliefs about our own abilities, guiding areas of study and, eventually, career choices (Correll, 2001). In high school, for instance, more girls than boys learn secretarial skills and take vocational classes such as cosmetology and food services. Classes in woodworking and auto mechanics attract mostly young men.

Women have now become a majority (57 percent) of the students on college campuses across the United States. As their numbers have increased, women have become well represented in many fields of study that once excluded them, including mathematics, chemistry, and biology. But men still predominate in many fields, including business, engineering, physics, and philosophy, and women cluster in the visual and performing arts (including music, dance, and drama), English, foreign languages, and the social sciences (including psychology, anthropology, and sociology). Newer areas of study are also gender-typed: More men than women take computer science, and courses in gender studies enroll mostly women (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Gender and the Mass Media

Since television first captured the public imagination in the 1950s, white males have held center stage; racial and ethnic minorities were all but absent from television until the early 1970s. Even when both sexes appeared on camera, men generally played the brilliant detectives, fearless explorers, and skilled surgeons. Women played the less capable characters, often unnecessary except for the sexual interest they added to the story. In recent years, male stars have earned more than their female counterparts. Before he left the show *Two and a Half Men*, for example, Charlie Sheen was the highest-paid male television actor, earning \$875,000 an episode. Mariska Hargitay has been the highest-paid female actor, earning \$400,000 an episode for *Law & Order: SVU*.

Historically, advertisements have shown women in the home, cheerfully using cleaning products, serving food, and modeling clothes. Men predominate in ads for cars, travel, banking services, and alcoholic beverages. The authoritative voiceover—the faceless voice that describes a product on television and radio—is almost always male (D. M. Davis, 1993; Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Messineo, 2008).

A careful study of gender in advertising reveals that men usually appear taller than

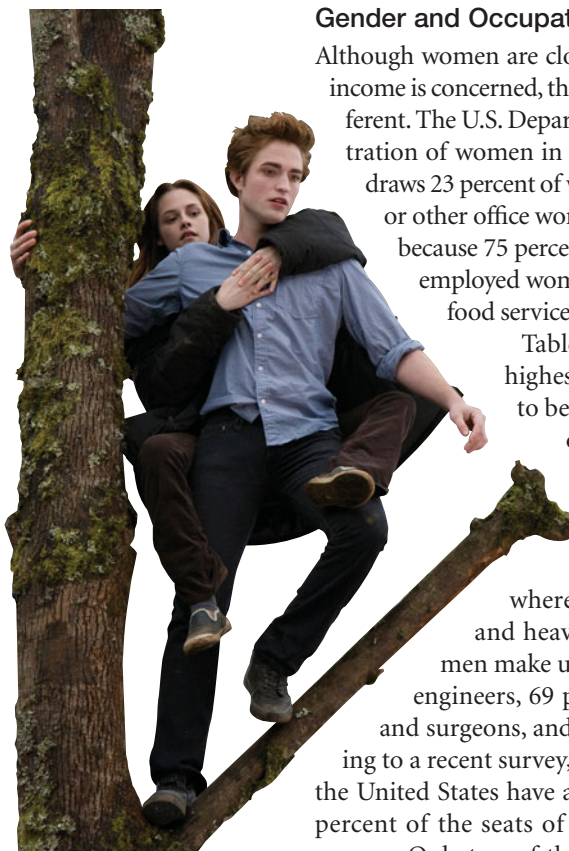
Sex is a biological distinction that develops prior to birth. Gender is the meaning that a society attaches to being female or male. Gender differences are a matter of power, because what is defined as masculine typically has more importance than what is defined as feminine. Infants begin to learn the importance of gender by the way parents treat them. Do you think this child is a girl or a boy? Why?



In our society, the mass media have enormous influence on our attitudes and behavior, and what we see shapes our views of gender. In the 2009 film *Twilight*, we see a strong, “take charge” male playing against a more passive female. Do you think the mass media create these gender patterns? Or it is more correct to say that they reproduce them? Is there another option?

women, implying male superiority. Women are more frequently presented lying down (on sofas and beds) or, like children, seated on the floor. Men’s facial expressions and behavior give off an air of competence and imply dominance; women often appear childlike, submissive, and sexual. Men focus on the products being advertised; women often focus on the men (Goffman, 1979; Cortese, 1999).

Advertising also actively perpetuates what Naomi Wolf calls the “beauty myth.” The Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life box on page 300 takes a closer look.



Gender and Social Stratification

Apply

Gender affects more than how people think and act. It is also about social hierarchy. The reality of gender stratification can be seen, first, in the world of working women and men.

Working Women and Men

Back in 1900, just 20 percent of U.S. women were in the labor force. Today, the figure has tripled to almost 60 percent, and 67 percent of these working women work full time (U.S. Department of Labor, 2011). The once common view that earning income is a man’s role no longer holds true.

Factors that have changed the U.S. labor force include the decline of farming, the growth of cities, shrinking family size, and a rising divorce rate. The United States, along with most other nations, considers women working for income the rule rather than the exception. Women make up almost half the U.S. paid labor force, and 54 percent of U.S. married couples depend on two incomes.

In the past, many women in the U.S. labor force were childless. But today, 59 percent of married women with children under age six are in the labor force, as are 72 percent of married women with children between six and seventeen years of age. For widowed, divorced, or separated women with children, the comparable figures are 61 percent of women with younger children and 73 percent of women with older children (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010).

Gender and Occupations

Although women are closing the gap with men as far as working for income is concerned, the work done by the two sexes remains very different. The U.S. Department of Labor (2010) reports a high concentration of women in two job types. Administrative support work draws 23 percent of working women, most of whom are secretaries or other office workers. These are often called “pink-collar jobs” because 75 percent are filled by women. Another 16 percent of employed women do service work. Most of these jobs are in food service industries, child care, and health care.

Table 13–1 shows the ten occupations with the highest concentrations of women. These jobs tend to be at the low end of the pay scale, with limited opportunities for advancement and with men as supervisors (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010).

Men dominate most other job categories, including the building trades, where 99 percent of brickmasons, stonemasons, and heavy equipment operators are men. Likewise, men make up 87 percent of police officers, 87 percent of engineers, 69 percent of lawyers, 68 percent of physicians and surgeons, and 57 percent of corporate managers. According to a recent survey, just twelve of the *Fortune* 500 companies in the United States have a woman chief executive officer, and just 16 percent of the seats of corporate boards of directors are held by women. Only two of the twenty-five highest-paid executives in the United States are women. Even so, increasing the leadership role of women in the business world is not just a matter of fairness; research into the earnings of this country’s 500 largest corporations showed that the companies with more women on the board are also the most profitable (Graybow, 2007; *Fortune*, 2010; Catalyst, 2011; U.S. Department of Labor, 2011).

Gender stratification in everyday life is easy to see: Female nurses assist male physicians, female secretaries serve male executives, and female flight attendants are under the command of male airplane

TABLE 13–1 Jobs with the Highest Concentrations of Women, 2010

| Occupation | Number of Women Employed | Percentage in Occupation Who Are Women |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Dental assistant | 289,000 | 97.5 |
| 2. Preschool or kindergarten teacher | 691,000 | 97.0 |
| 3. Speech-language pathologist | 127,000 | 96.3 |
| 4. Secretary or administrative assistant | 2,962,000 | 96.1 |
| 5. Dental hygienists | 134,000 | 95.1 |
| 6. Child care worker | 1,181,000 | 94.7 |
| 7. Receptionist or information clerk | 1,188,000 | 92.7 |
| 8. Word processors and typists | 133,000 | 92.5 |
| 9. Teacher assistants | 893,000 | 92.4 |
| 10. Dietitians and nutritionists | 97,000 | 92.3 |

Source: U.S. Department of Labor (2011).

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life



The Beauty Myth

Beth: "I can't eat lunch. I need to be sure I can get into that black dress for tonight."

Sarah: "Maybe eating is more important than looking thin for Tom."

Beth: "That's easy for you to say. You're a size 2 and Jake adores you!"

The Duchess of Windsor once remarked, "A woman cannot be too rich or too thin." The first half of her observation might apply to men as well, but certainly not the second. The answer lies in the fact that the vast majority of ads placed by the \$10-billion-a-year cosmetics industry and the \$35-billion diet industry target women.

According to Naomi Wolf (1990), certain cultural patterns create a "beauty myth" that is damaging to women. The beauty myth arises, first, because society teaches women to measure their worth in terms of physical appearance. Yet the standards of beauty embodied in the *Playboy* centerfold or the 100-pound New York fashion model are out of reach for most women.

The way society teaches women to prize relationships with men, whom they presumably attract with their beauty, also contributes to the beauty myth. Striving for beauty drives women to be extremely disciplined but also forces them to be highly attentive to and responsive to men. In short, beauty-minded women try to please men and avoid challenging male power.

Belief in the beauty myth is one reason that so many young women are focused on body image,



One way our culture supports the beauty myth is through beauty pageants for women; over the years, contestants have become thinner and thinner.

particularly being as thin as possible, often to the point of endangering their health. During the past several decades, the share of young women who develop an eating disorder such as anorexia nervosa (dieting to the point of starvation) or bulimia (binge eating followed by vomiting) has risen dramatically.

The beauty myth affects males as well: Men are told repeatedly that they should want to possess beautiful women. Such ideas about beauty reduce women to objects and motivate thinking about women as if they were dolls or pets rather than human beings.

There can be little doubt that the idea of beauty is important in everyday life. The question, according to Wolf, is whether beauty is about how we look or how we act.

What Do You Think?

1. Is there a "money myth" that states that people's income is a reflection of their talent? Does it apply more to one sex than to the other?
2. Can you see a connection between the beauty myth and the rise of eating disorders in young women in the United States? Explain the link.
3. Among people with physical disabilities, do you think that issues of "looking different" are more serious for women or for men? Why?

pilots. In any field, the greater the income and prestige associated with a job, the more likely it is to be held by a man. For example, women represent 97 percent of kindergarten teachers, 82 percent of elementary school teachers, 57 percent of secondary school educators, 46 percent of professors in colleges and universities, and 23 percent of college and university presidents (U.S. Department of Labor, 2011).

How are women excluded from certain jobs? By defining some kinds of work as "men's work," companies define women as less competent than men. In a study of coal mining in southern West Virginia, Suzanne Tallichet (2000) found that most men considered it "unnatural" for women to work in the mines. Women who did so were defined as deviant and were subject to labeling as "sexually loose" or as lesbians. Such labeling made these women outcasts, presented a

challenge to their holding the job, and made advancement all but impossible.

In the corporate world, too, the higher in the company we look, the fewer women we find. You hardly ever hear anyone say out loud that women don't belong at the top levels of a company. But many people seem to feel this way, and this pervasive feeling can prevent women from being promoted. Sociologists describe this barrier as a *glass ceiling* that is not easy to see but blocks women's careers all the same.

One challenge to male domination in the workplace comes from women who are entrepreneurs. In 2008, there were more than 10 million women-owned businesses in the United States, double the number of a decade ago; they employed more than 13 million people and generated \$2 trillion in sales. Through starting their own businesses, women have shown that they can make opportunities for themselves apart from large, male-dominated companies (Center for Women's Business Research, 2009).

 **Read** "Maid to Order: The Politics of Other Women's Work" by Barbara Ehrenreich on mysoclab.com

Gender, Income, and Wealth

In 2009, the median earnings of women working full time were \$36,278, and men working full time earned \$47,127. This means that for every dollar earned by men, women earned about 77 cents. This difference is greater among older workers because older working women typically have less education and seniority than older working men. Earning differences are smaller among younger workers because younger men and women tend to have similar schooling and work experience.

Among all full-time workers of all ages, 24 percent of women earned less than \$25,000 in 2009, compared with 15 percent of men. At the upper end of the income scale, men were more than twice as likely as women (23 percent versus 11 percent) to earn more than \$75,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

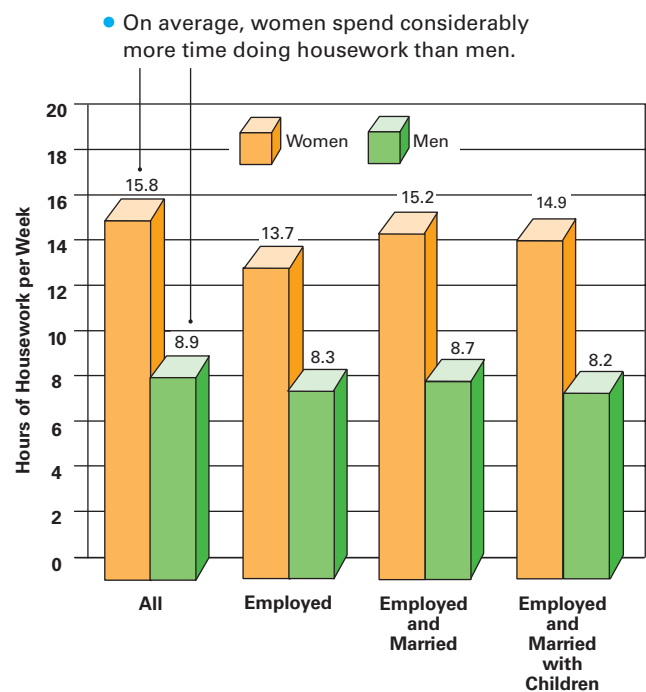
The main reason women earn less is the *type* of work they do, largely clerical and service jobs. In effect, jobs and gender interact. People still perceive jobs with less clout as “women’s work,” just as people devalue certain work simply because it is performed by women (England, Hermsen, & Cotter, 2000; Cohen & Huffman, 2003).

In recent decades, supporters of gender equality have proposed a policy of “comparable worth,” paying people not according to the historical double standard but according to the level of skill and responsibility involved in the work. Several nations, including Great Britain and Australia, have adopted comparable worth policies, but such policies have found limited acceptance in the United States. As a result, women in this country lose as much as \$1 billion in income annually.

A second cause of gender-based income disparity has to do with the family. Both men and women have children, of course, but our culture gives more responsibility for parenting to women. Pregnancy and raising small children keep many young women out of the labor force at a time when their male peers are making significant career advancements. When women workers return to the labor force, they have less job seniority than their male counterparts (Stier, 1996; Waldfogel, 1997).

In addition, women who choose to have children may be unable or unwilling to take on demanding jobs that tie up their evenings and weekends. To avoid role strain, they may take jobs that offer shorter commuting distances, more flexible hours, and employer-provided child care services. Women pursuing both a career and a family are often torn between their dual responsibilities in ways that men are not. One study found that almost half of women in competitive jobs took time off to have children, compared to about 12 percent of comparable men. Similarly, later in life, women are more likely than men to take time off from work to care for aging parents (Hewlett & Luce, 2005, 2009). Role conflict is also experienced by women on campus: Several studies confirm that young female professors with at least one child are less likely to have tenure than male professors in the same field (Shea, 2002; Ceci & Williams, 2011).

The two factors noted so far—type of work and family responsibilities—account for about two-thirds of the earnings difference between women and men. A third factor—discrimination against women—accounts for most of the remainder (Fuller & Schoenberger, 1991). Because overt discrimination is illegal, it is practiced in subtle ways. Women on their way up the corporate ladder often run into the



Diversity Snapshot

FIGURE 13–2 Housework: Who Does How Much?

Regardless of employment or family status, women do more housework than men. What effect do you think the added burden of housework has on women’s ability to advance in the workplace?

Source: Adapted from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011).

glass ceiling described earlier; company officials may deny its existence, but it effectively prevents many women from rising above middle management.

For all these reasons, women earn less than men in all major occupational categories. Even so, many people think that women own most of this country’s wealth, perhaps because women typically outlive men. Government statistics tell a different story: Fifty-seven percent of individuals with \$1.5 million or more in assets are men, although widows are highly represented in this elite club (Johnson & Raub, 2006; Internal Revenue Service, 2008). Just 11 percent of the individuals identified in 2010 by *Forbes* magazine as the 400 richest people in the United States were women (Goudreau, 2010).

Housework: Women’s “Second Shift”

In the United States, we have always been of two minds about housework: We say that it is important to family life, but people get little reward for doing it (Bernard, 1981). Here, as around the world, taking care of the home and children has always been considered “women’s work” (see Global Map 6–1 on page 130). As women have entered the labor force, the amount of housework women do has gone down, but the *share* done by women has stayed the same. Figure 13–2 shows that overall, women average 15.8 hours a week of housework, compared to 8.9 hours for men. As the figure shows, women in all



Looking around the college campus, it would be easy to think that gender stratification favors females. The latest data show that 59 percent of the associate and bachelor degrees are being earned by women. In addition, on most campuses, when it comes to academic awards, women are overly represented among the winners.

As many analysts see it, the pattern of women outperforming men is not limited to college. In the early grades, boys are twice as likely as girls to be diagnosed with a learning disability, receive prescribed medication, or be placed in a special education class. Most disciplinary problems in the school involve boys; just about all the school shootings and other acts of serious violence are carried out by boys. Boys earn grades that fall below those earned by girls. Later on, a smaller share of boys

will graduate from high school. Even the suicide rate for young men is almost five times higher than that for young women. Taken together, such data have led some people to charge that our society has launched a war on boys.

So what's happening to the men? One argument is that the rise of feminism has directed a great deal of support and attention to girls and women, ignoring the needs of males. Others claim that too many boys suffer from the absence of a father in their lives; girls can use their mothers as role models but what are fatherless boys to do? Still others suggest that our industrial way of life (which favored masculine strength and skills manipulating objects) has given way to an information-age culture that is far more verbal, favoring females.

Not everyone is convinced that boys and men are so bad off. It is true that most violent crime involves males, but for the last fifteen years crime rates have fallen. Girls may be outperforming boys in the classroom and on some standardized tests, but the scores boys earn have never been higher. And, when all is said and done, don't men still run the country? And the whole world?

Join the Blog!

Are males being left behind? What do *you* think? Go to MySocLab.com and join the Sociology in Focus blog to share your opinions and experiences and to see what others think.

Sources: Sommers (2000), von Drehle (2007), Lamm (2010), and Paton (2010).

categories do significantly more housework than men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011).

Men do support the idea of women entering the paid labor force, and most husbands count on the money their wives earn. But many men resist taking on a more equal share of household duties (Heath & Bourne, 1995; Harpster & Monk-Turner, 1998; Stratton, 2001).

Gender and Education

In the past, our society considered schooling more necessary for men, who worked outside the home, than for women, who worked in the home. But times have changed. By 1980, women earned a majority of all associate's and bachelor's degrees; in 2008, that share has risen to 59 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010).

In recent decades, college doors have opened wider to women, and the differences in men's and women's majors are becoming smaller. In 1970, for example, women earned just 17 percent of bachelor's degrees in the natural sciences, computer science, and engineering; by 2008, their proportion had doubled to 34 percent.

In 1992, for the first time, women earned a majority of postgraduate degrees, which often serve as a springboard to high-prestige jobs. In all areas of study in 2008, women earned 61 percent of master's degrees and 51 percent of doctorates (including 61 percent of all Ph.D. degrees in sociology). Women have also broken into many graduate fields that used to be almost all male. For example, in 1970, only a few hundred women earned a master's of business administration (M.B.A.) degree, compared to more than 69,000 in 2008 (45 percent of all such degrees) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010).

Despite these advances for women, men still predominate in some professional fields. In 2008, men received 51 percent of medical

(M.D.) degrees, 53 percent of law (LL.B. and J.D.) degrees, and 56 percent of dental (D.D.S. and D.M.D.) degrees (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Our society once defined high-paying professions (and the drive and competitiveness needed to succeed in them) as masculine. But the share of women in all these professions has risen and is now close to half. When will parity be reached? It may not be in the next few years. For example, the American Bar Association (2010) reports that men still account for 53 percent of law school students across the United States.

Based on the educational gains women have made, some analysts suggest that education is the one social institution where women rather than men predominate. More broadly, women's relative advantages in school performance have prompted a national debate about whether men are in danger of being left behind. The Sociology in Focus box takes a closer look.

Gender and Politics

A century ago, almost no women held elected office in the United States. In fact, women were legally barred from voting in national elections until the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1920. However, a few women were candidates for political office even before they could vote. The Equal Rights party supported Victoria Woodhull for the U.S. presidency in 1872; perhaps it was a sign of the times that she spent Election Day in a New York City jail. Table 13–2 identifies milestones in women's gradual movement into U.S. political life.

Today, thousands of women serve as mayors of cities and towns across the United States, and tens of thousands hold responsible administrative posts in the federal government. At the state level, 23 percent of state legislators in 2011 were women (although this

share fell by 1 percentage point in the 2010 elections, it is up from just 6 percent back in 1970). National Map 13–1 on page 304 shows where in the United States women have made the greatest political gains.

Change is coming more slowly at the highest levels of politics, although a majority of U.S. adults claim they would support a qualified woman for any office. In 2008, Hillary Clinton came close to gaining the presidential nomination of the Democratic party, losing out to Barack Obama, who became the nation’s first African American president. In 2011, six of fifty state governors were women (12 percent), and in Congress, women held 72 of 435 seats in the House of Representatives (16.6 percent) and 17 of 100 seats in the Senate (17 percent) (Center for American Women and Politics, 2011).

Women make up half the world’s population, but they hold just 19 percent of seats in the world’s 188 parliaments. Although this percentage represents a rise from 3 percent fifty years ago, in only sixteen countries, among them Sweden and Norway, do women represent more than one-third of the members of parliament (Paxton, Hughes, & Green, 2006; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2011).

Gender and the Military

Since colonial times, women have served in the U.S. armed forces. Yet in 1940, at the outset of World War II, just 2 percent of armed forces personnel were women. In the fall of 2010, women represented about 15 percent of all U.S. military personnel, including deployed troops.

Clearly, women make up a growing share of the U.S. military, and almost all military assignments are now open to both women and men. But law prevents women from engaging in offensive warfare. Even so, the line between troop support and outright combat is easily crossed, as the women serving in Iraq have learned. In fact, between March 2003 and March 2011, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan claimed the lives of 136 women soldiers.

The debate on women’s role in the military has been going on for centuries. Some people object to opening doors in this way, claiming that women lack the physical strength of men. Others reply that military women are better educated and score higher on intelligence tests than military men. But the heart of the issue is our society’s deeply held view of women as *nurturers*—people who give life and help others—which clashes with the image of women trained to kill.

Whatever our views of women and men, the reality is that military women are in harm’s way. In part, this fact reflects the strains experienced by a military short of personnel. In addition, the type of insurgency that surrounds our troops in Iraq can bring violent combat to any soldier at any time. Finally, our modern warfare technology blurs the distinction between combat and noncombat personnel. A combat pilot can fire missiles by radar at a target miles away; by contrast, noncombat medical evacuation teams routinely travel

¹Sociologists use the term “minority” instead of “minority group” because, as explained in Chapter 7 (“Groups and Organizations”), women make up a *category*, not a group. People in a category share a status or identity but generally do not know one another or interact.

TABLE 13–2 Significant “Firsts” for Women in U.S. Politics

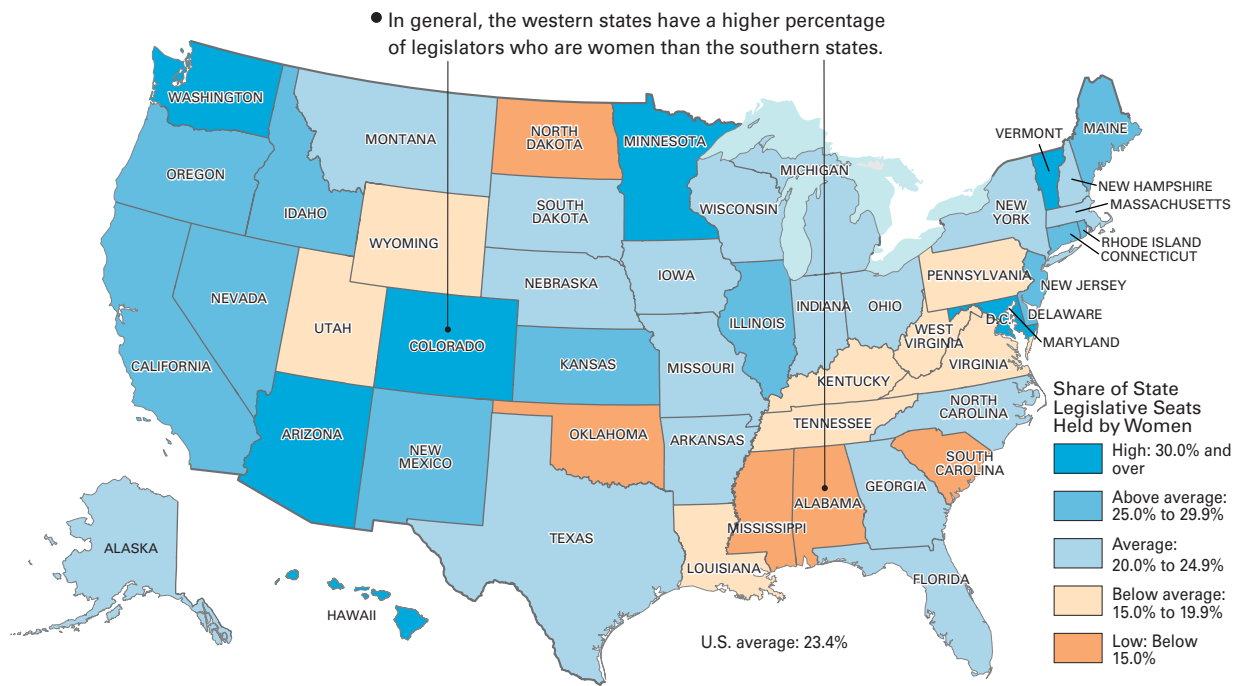
| | |
|------|--|
| 1869 | Law allows women to vote in Wyoming territory. |
| 1872 | First woman to run for the presidency (Victoria Woodhull) represents the Equal Rights party. |
| 1917 | First woman elected to the House of Representatives (Jeannette Rankin of Montana). |
| 1924 | First women elected state governors (Nellie Taylor Ross of Wyoming and Miriam “Ma” Ferguson of Texas); both followed their husbands into office. First woman to have her name placed in nomination for the vice-presidency at the convention of a major political party (Lena Jones Springs, a Democrat). |
| 1931 | First woman to serve in the Senate (Hattie Caraway of Arkansas); completed the term of her husband upon his death and won reelection in 1932. |
| 1932 | First woman appointed to the presidential cabinet (Frances Perkins, secretary of labor in the cabinet of President Franklin D. Roosevelt). |
| 1964 | First woman to have her name placed in nomination for the presidency at the convention of a major political party (Margaret Chase Smith, a Republican). |
| 1972 | First African American woman to have her name placed in nomination for the presidency at the convention of a major political party (Shirley Chisholm, a Democrat). |
| 1981 | First woman appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court (Sandra Day O’Connor). |
| 1984 | First woman to be successfully nominated for the vice-presidency (Geraldine Ferraro, a Democrat). |
| 1988 | First woman chief executive to be elected to a consecutive third term (Madeleine Kunin, governor of Vermont). |
| 1992 | Political “Year of the Woman” yields record number of women in the Senate (six) and the House (forty-eight), as well as (1) first African American woman to win election to the U.S. Senate (Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois), (2) first state (California) to be served by two women senators (Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein), and (3) first woman of Puerto Rican descent elected to the U.S. House of Representatives (Nydia Velazquez of New York). |
| 1996 | First woman appointed secretary of state (Madeleine Albright). |
| 2000 | First “First Lady” to win elected political office (Hillary Rodham Clinton, senator from New York). |
| 2001 | First woman to serve as national security adviser (Condoleezza Rice); first Asian American woman to serve in a presidential cabinet (Elaine Chao, secretary of labor). |
| 2005 | First African American woman appointed secretary of state (Condoleezza Rice). |
| 2007 | First woman elected as Speaker of the House (Nancy Pelosi). |
| 2008 | For the first time, women make up a majority of a state legislature (New Hampshire). |
| 2009 | Record number of women in the Senate (seventeen) and the House (seventy-three). |

directly into the line of fire (Segal & Hansen, 1992; Kaminer, 1997; McGirk, 2006).

Are Women a Minority?

A **minority** is any category of people distinguished by physical or cultural difference that a society sets apart and subordinates. Given the economic disadvantage of being a woman in our society, it seems reasonable to say that U.S. women are a minority even though they outnumber men.¹

Even so, most white women do not think of themselves in this way (Lengermann & Wallace, 1985). This is partly because, unlike racial minorities (including African Americans) and ethnic minori-



Seeing Ourselves

NATIONAL MAP 13–1 Women in State Government across the United States

Although women make up half of U.S. adults, just 23 percent of the seats in state legislatures are held by women. Look at the state-by-state variations in the map. In which regions of the country have women gained the greatest political power? What do you think accounts for this pattern?

 **Explore** the percentage of women in management, business, and finance in your local community and in counties across the United States on mysoclab.com

Source: Center for American Women and Politics (2011).

ties (say, Hispanics), white women are well represented at all levels of the class structure, including the very top.

Bear in mind, however, that at every class level, women typically have less income, wealth, education, and power than men. Patriarchy makes women dependent on men—first their fathers and later their husbands—for their social standing (Bernard, 1981).

Minority Women: Intersection Theory

If women are defined as a minority, what about minority women? Are they doubly disadvantaged? This question lies at the heart of **intersection theory**, *analysis of the interplay of race, class, and gender, often resulting in multiple dimensions of disadvantage*. Research shows that disadvantages linked to gender and race often combine to produce especially low social standing (Ovadia, 2001).

Income data illustrate the validity of this theory. Looking first at race and ethnicity, the median income in 2009 for African American women working full time was \$31,933, which is 82 percent as much as the \$39,010 earned by non-Hispanic white women working full time; Hispanic women earned \$27,268—just 70 percent as much as their white counterparts. Looking at gender, African American women earned only 85 percent as much as African American men, and Hispanic women earned only 86 percent as much as Hispanic men.

Combining these disadvantages, African American women earned 62 percent as much as non-Hispanic white men, and Hispanic women earned 53 percent as much (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). These differences reflect minority women’s lower positions in the occupational and educational hierarchies. These data confirm that although gender has a powerful effect on our lives, it does not operate alone. Class position, race and ethnicity, and gender form a multilayered system of disadvantage for some and privilege for others (Saint Jean & Feagin, 1998).

Violence against Women

In the nineteenth century, men claimed the right to rule their households, even to the point of using physical discipline against their wives, and a great deal of “manly” violence is still directed at women. A government report estimates that 294,000 aggravated assaults against women occur annually. To this number can be added 106,000 rapes or sexual assaults and perhaps 1.5 million simple assaults (U.S. Department of Justice, 2010).

Gender violence is also an issue on college and university campuses. According to research carried out by the U.S. Department of Justice, in a given academic year, about 3 percent of female college students become victims of rape (either attempted or completed).

In recent decades, our society has recognized sexual harassment as an important problem. At least officially, unwelcome sexual attention is no longer tolerated in the workplace. The television show *Mad Men*, which gives us a window back to the early 1960s, shows us our society before the more recent wave of feminism began.

Projecting these figures over a typical five-year college career, about 20 percent of college women experience rape. In 85 to 90 percent of all cases, the victim knew the offender, and most of the assaults took place in the man's or woman's living quarters while having a party or being on a date (National Institute of Justice, 2011).

Off campus as well, most gender-linked violence also occurs where most interaction between women and men takes place: in the home. Richard Gelles (cited in Roesch, 1984) argues that with the exception of the police and the military, the family is the most violent organization in the United States, and women suffer most of the injuries. The risk of violence is especially great for low-income women living in families that face a great deal of stress; low-income women also have fewer options to get out of a dangerous home (Smolowe, 1994; Frias & Angel, 2007).

Violence against women also occurs in casual relationships. As noted in Chapter 9 (“Deviance”), most rapes involve men known, and often trusted, by the victims. Dianne Herman (2001) claims that abuse of women is built into our way of life. All forms of violence against women—from the catcalls that intimidate women on city streets to a pinch in a crowded subway to physical assaults that occur at home—express what she calls a “rape culture” of men trying to dominate women. Sexual violence is fundamentally about *power*, not sex, and therefore should be understood as a dimension of gender stratification.

In global perspective, violence against women is built into different cultures in different ways. One case in point is the practice of female genital mutilation, a painful and often dangerous surgical procedure performed in more than forty countries and known to occur in the United States, as shown in Global Map 13–2 on page 306. The Thinking About Diversity box on page 307 highlights a case of genital

The basic insight of intersection theory is that various dimensions of social stratification—including race and gender—can add up to great disadvantages for some categories of people. Just as African Americans earn less than whites, women earn less than men. Thus African American women confront a “double disadvantage,” earning just 62 cents for every dollar earned by non-Hispanic white men. How would you explain the fact that some categories of people are much more likely to end up in low-paying jobs like this one?



mutilation that took place in California and asks whether this practice, which some people defend as promoting “morality,” amounts to a case of violence against women.

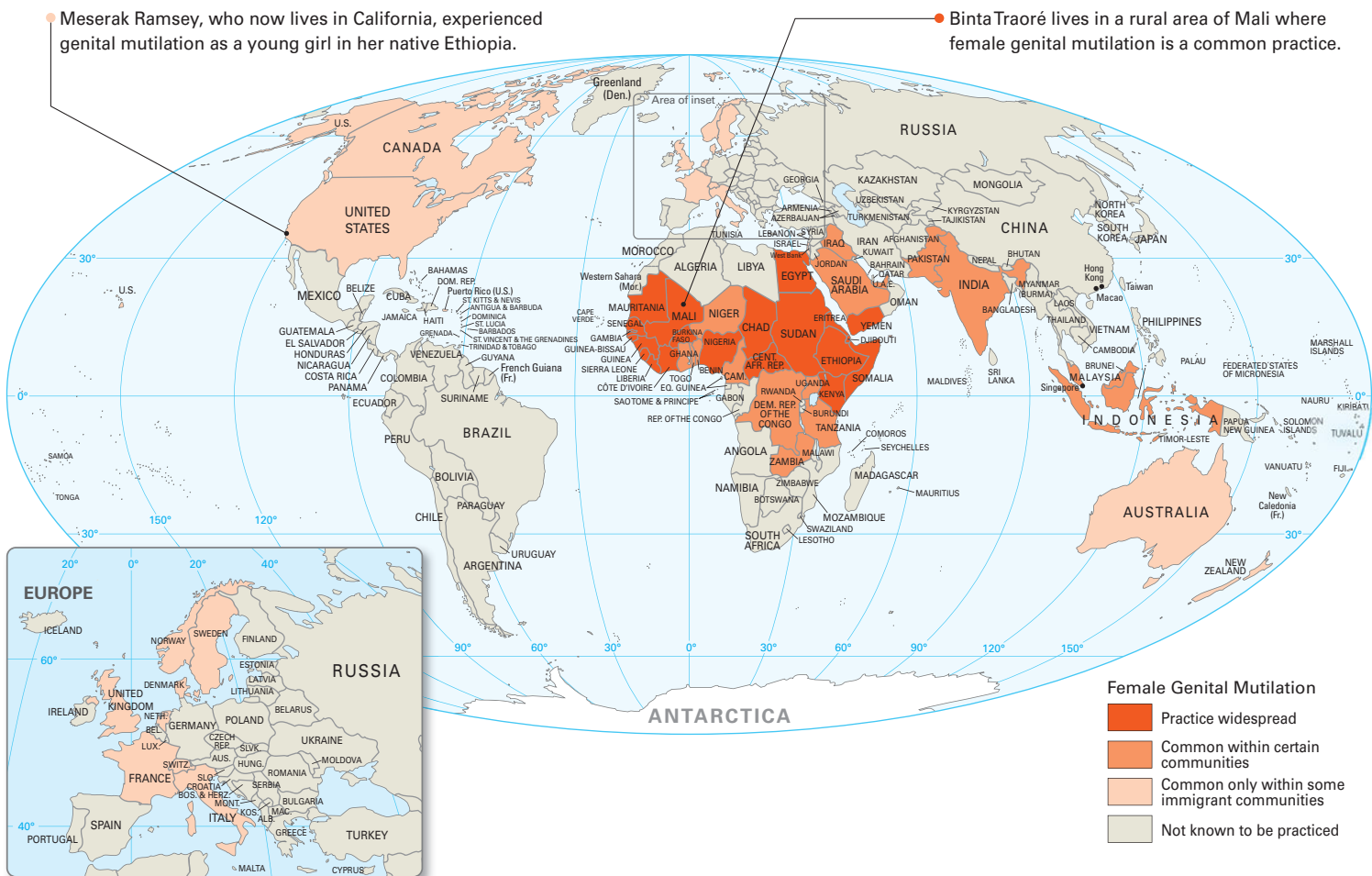
Violence against Men

If our way of life encourages violence against women, it may encourage even more violence against men. As noted earlier in Chapter 9 (“Deviance”), in more than 80 percent of cases in which police make an arrest for a violent crime, including murder, robbery, and physical assault, the person arrested is a male. In addition, 53 percent of all victims of violent crime are also men (U.S. Department of Justice, 2010).

Our culture tends to define masculinity in terms of aggression and violence. “Real men” work and play hard, speed on the highways, and let nothing stand in their way. A higher crime rate is one result. But even when no laws are broken, men's lives involve more stress and social isolation than women's lives, which is one reason that the suicide rate for men is four times higher than for women. In addition, as noted earlier, men live, on average, about five fewer years than women.

Violence is not simply a matter of choices made by individuals. It is built into our way of life, with resulting harm to both men and women. In short, the way any culture constructs gender plays an important part in how violent or peaceful a society will be.





Window on the World

GLOBAL MAP 13–2 Female Genital Mutilation in Global Perspective

Female genital mutilation is known to be performed in more than forty countries around the world. Across Africa, the practice is common and affects a majority of girls in the eastern African nations of Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia. In several Asian nations, including India, the practice is limited to a few ethnic minorities. In the United States, Canada, several European nations, and Australia, there are reports of the practice among some immigrants.

Sources: Data from Seager (2003), World Health Organization (2008), UNICEF (2009), and Population Reference Bureau (2010).

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to *comments, gestures, or physical contacts of a sexual nature that are deliberate, repeated, and unwelcome*. During the 1990s, sexual harassment became an issue of national importance that rewrote the rules for workplace interaction between women and men.

Most (but not all) victims of sexual harassment are women. The reason is that, first, our culture encourages men to be sexually assertive and to see women in sexual terms. As a result, social interaction in the workplace, on campus, and elsewhere can easily take on sexual overtones. Second, most people in positions of power—including business executives, doctors, bureau chiefs, assembly-line supervisors, professors, and military officers—are men who oversee the work of women. Surveys carried out in widely different work settings show

that 3 percent of women claim that they have been harassed on the job during the past year and about half of women say they receive unwanted sexual attention (NORC, 2011:1508).

Sexual harassment is sometimes obvious and direct: A supervisor may ask for sexual favors from an employee and make threats if the advances are refused. Courts have declared such *quid pro quo* sexual harassment (the Latin phrase means “one thing in return for another”) to be a violation of civil rights.

More often, however, sexual harassment is a matter of subtle behavior—suggestive teasing, off-color jokes, comments about someone’s looks—that may not even be intended to harass anyone. But based on the *effect* standard favored by many feminists, such actions add up to creating a *hostile environment*. Incidents of this kind are far more complex because they involve different percep-



Meserak Ramsey, a woman born in Ethiopia and now working as a nurse in California, paid a visit to an old friend's home. Soon after arriving, she noticed her friend's eighteen-month-old daughter huddled in the corner of a room in obvious distress. "What's wrong with her?" she asked.

Ramsey was shocked when the woman said her daughter had recently had a clitoridectomy, the surgical removal of the clitoris. This type of female genital mutilation—performed by a midwife, a tribal practitioner, or a doctor, and typically without anesthesia—is common in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Sudan, Egypt, and especially in Ethiopia and Somalia. The practice is known to exist in certain cultural groups in other nations around the world. It is illegal in the United States.

Among members of highly patriarchal societies, husbands demand that their wives be virgins at marriage and remain sexually faithful thereafter. The point of female genital mutilation is to eliminate sexual feeling, which, people assume, makes the girl less likely to violate sexual norms and thus be more desirable to men. In about one-fifth of all cases, an even more severe procedure, called infibulation, is performed, in which the entire external genital area is removed and the surfaces are stitched together, leaving only a small hole for urination and menstruation. Before marriage, a husband retains the right to open the wound and ensure himself of his bride's virginity.

How many women have undergone genital mutilation? Worldwide, estimates

place the number at more than 100 million (World Health Organization, 2010). In the United States, hundreds or even thousands of such procedures are performed every year. In most cases, immigrant mothers and grandmothers who have themselves been mutilated insist that young girls in their family follow their example. Indeed, many immigrant women demand the procedure *because* their daughters now live in the United States, where sexual mores are more lax. "I don't have to worry about her now," the girl's mother explained to Meserak Ramsey. "She'll be a good girl."

Medically, the consequences of genital mutilation include more than the loss of sexual pleasure. Pain is intense and can persist for years. There is also danger of infection, infertility, and even death. Ramsey knows this all too well: She herself underwent genital mutilation as a young girl. She is one

of the lucky ones who has had few medical problems since. But the extent of her suffering is suggested by this story: She invited a young U.S. couple to stay at her home. Late at night, she heard the woman cry out and burst into their room to investigate, only to learn that the couple was making love and the woman had just had an orgasm. "I didn't understand," Ramsey recalls. "I thought that there must be something wrong with American girls. But now I know that there is something wrong with me." Or with a system that inflicts such injury in the name of traditional morality.

What Do You Think?

1. Is female genital mutilation a medical procedure or a means of social control? Explain your answer.
2. What do you think should be done about female genital mutilation in places where it is widespread? Do you think respect for human rights should override respect for cultural differences in this case? Explain your answer.
3. The city of San Francisco proposed putting to voters a measure banning the infant circumcision of males, a practice that some critics call "male genital mutilation." Would you support a debate on this practice? Explain.



These young women have just undergone female genital mutilation. What do you think should be done about this practice?

Sources: Crossette (1995), Boyle, Songora, & Foss (2001), Population Reference Bureau (2010), and Sabatini (2011).

tions of the same behavior. For example, a man may think that repeatedly complimenting a co-worker on her appearance is simply being friendly. The co-worker may believe that the man is thinking of her in sexual terms and is not taking her work seriously, an attitude that could harm her job performance and prospects for advancement.

Pornography

Chapter 8 ("Sexuality and Society") defined *pornography* as sexually explicit material that causes sexual arousal. Keep in mind, however, that people take different views of what is and what is not pornographic. The law gives local communities the power to define what

sexually explicit materials violate "community standards of decency" and "lack any redeeming social value."

Traditionally, people have raised concerns about pornography as a *moral* issue. But pornography also plays a part in gender stratification. From this point of view, pornography is really a *power* issue because most pornography dehumanizes women, depicting them as the playthings of men.

In addition, there is widespread concern that pornography promotes violence against women by portraying them as weak and undeserving of respect. Men may show contempt for women defined this way by striking out against them. Surveys show that about half of U.S. adults think that pornography encourages men to commit rape (NORC, 2011:413).

APPLYING THEORY

Gender

| | Structural-Functional Approach | Symbolic-Interaction Approach | Social-Conflict Approach |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| What is the level of analysis? | Macro-level | Micro-level | Macro-level |
| What does gender mean? | Parsons described gender in terms of two complementary patterns of behavior: masculine and feminine. | Numerous sociologists have shown that gender is part of the reality that guides social interaction in everyday situations. | Engels described gender in terms of the power of one sex over the other. |
| Is gender helpful or harmful? | Helpful. Gender gives men and women distinctive roles and responsibilities that help society operate smoothly. Gender builds social unity as men and women come together to form families. | Hard to say; gender is both helpful and harmful. In everyday life, gender is one of the factors that help us relate to one another. At the same time, gender shapes human behavior, placing men in control of social situations. Men tend to initiate most interactions, while women typically act in a more deferential manner. | Harmful. Gender limits people's personal development. Gender divides society by giving power to men to control the lives of women. Capitalism makes patriarchy stronger. |

Like sexual harassment, pornography raises complex and conflicting issues. Despite the fact that some material may offend just about everybody, many people defend the rights of free speech and artistic expression. Pressure to restrict pornography has increased in recent decades, reflecting both the long-standing concern that pornography weakens morality and more recent concerns that it is demeaning and threatening to women.

Theories of Gender

Apply

Why does gender exist in the first place? Sociology's three main approaches offer insights about the importance of gender in social organization. The Applying Theory table summarizes the important insights offered by these approaches.

Structural-Functional Theory

The structural-functional approach views society as a complex system of many separate but integrated parts. From this point of view, gender serves as a means to organize social life.

As Chapter 4 ("Society") explained, members of hunting and gathering societies had little power over the forces of biology. Lacking effective birth control, women were frequently pregnant, and the responsibilities of child care kept them close to home. At the same time, men's greater strength made them more suited for warfare and hunting game. Over the centuries, this sexual division of labor became institutionalized and largely taken for granted (Lengermann & Wallace, 1985; Freedman, 2002).

Industrial technology opens up a much greater range of cultural possibilities. With human muscles no longer the main energy source, the physical strength of men becomes less important. In addition, the

ability to control reproduction gives women greater choices about how to live. Modern societies relax traditional gender roles as they become more meritocratic because such rigid roles waste an enormous amount of human talent. Yet change comes slowly because gender is deeply rooted in culture.

Gender and Social Integration

As Talcott Parsons (1942, 1951, 1954) observed, gender helps integrate society, at least in its traditional form. Gender establishes a *complementary* set of roles that links men and women into family units and gives each sex responsibility for carrying out important tasks. Women take the lead in managing the household and raising children. Men connect the family to the larger world as they participate in the labor force.

Thus gender plays an important part in socialization. Society teaches boys—presumably destined for the labor force—to be rational, self-assured, and competitive. Parsons called this complex of traits *instrumental* qualities. To prepare girls for child rearing, their socialization stresses *expressive* qualities, such as emotional responsiveness and sensitivity to others.

Society encourages gender conformity by instilling in men and women a fear that straying too far from accepted standards of masculinity or femininity will cause rejection by the other sex. In simple terms, women learn to reject nonmasculine men as sexually unattractive, and men learn to reject unfeminine women. In sum, gender integrates society both structurally (in terms of what we do) and morally (in terms of what we believe).

Evaluate Influential in the 1950s, this approach has lost much of its standing today. First, functionalism assumes a singular vision of society that is not shared by everyone. Historically, many women have worked outside the home because of economic need, a fact

not reflected in Parsons's conventional, middle-class view of family life. Second, Parsons's analysis ignores the personal strains and social costs of rigid, traditional gender roles. Third, in the eyes of those seeking sexual equality, Parsons's gender "complementarity" amounts to little more than women submitting to male domination.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING In Parsons's analysis, what functions does gender perform for society?

Symbolic-Interaction Theory

The symbolic-interaction approach takes a micro-level view of society, focusing on face-to-face interaction in everyday life. As suggested in Chapter 6 ("Social Interaction in Everyday Life"), gender affects everyday interaction in a number of ways.

Gender and Everyday Life

If you watch women and men interacting, you will probably notice that women typically engage in more eye contact than men do. Why? Holding eye contact is a way of encouraging the conversation to continue; in addition, looking directly at someone clearly shows the other person that you are paying attention.

This pattern is an example of sex roles, defined earlier as the way a society defines how women and men should think and behave. To understand such patterns, consider the fact that people with more power tend to take charge of social encounters. When men and women engage one another, as they do in families and in the workplace, it is men who typically initiate the interaction. That is, men speak first, set the topics of discussion, and control the outcomes. With less power, women are expected to be more *deferential*, meaning that they show respect for others of higher social position. In many cases, this means that women (just like children or others with less power) spend more time being silent and also encouraging men (or others with more power) not just with eye contact but also by smiling or nodding in agreement. As a technique to control a conversation, men often interrupt others, just as they typically feel less need to ask the opinions of other people, especially those with less power (Tannen, 1990, 1994; Henley, Hamilton, & Thorne, 1992; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999).

Evaluate The strength of the symbolic-interaction approach is helping us see how gender plays a part in shaping almost all our everyday experiences. Because our society defines men (and everything we consider to be masculine) as having more value than women (and what is viewed as feminine), just about every familiar social encounter is "gendered," so that men and women interact in distinctive and unequal ways.

The symbolic-interaction approach suggests that individuals socially construct the reality they experience as they interact, using gender as one element of their personal "performances." Gender can be a useful guide to how we behave. Yet gender, as a structural dimension of society, is beyond the immediate control of any of us as individuals and also gives some people power over others. There-



In the 1950s, Talcott Parsons proposed that sociologists interpret gender as a matter of *differences*. As he saw it, masculine men and feminine women formed strong families and made for an orderly society. In recent decades, however, social-conflict theory has reinterpreted gender as a matter of *inequality*. From this point of view, U.S. society places men in a position of dominance over women.

fore, patterns of everyday social interaction reflect our society's gender stratification. Everyday interaction also helps reinforce this inequality. For example, to the extent that fathers take the lead in family discussions, the entire family learns to expect men to "display leadership" and "show their wisdom."

A limitation of the symbolic-interaction approach is that by focusing on situational social experience, it says little about the broad patterns of inequality that set the rules for our everyday lives. To understand the roots of gender stratification, we have to "look up" to see more closely how society makes men and women unequal. We will do this using the social-conflict approach.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING Point to ways that gender shapes the everyday face-to-face interactions of individuals.

Social-Conflict Theory

From a social-conflict point of view, gender involves differences not just in behavior but in power as well. Consider the striking similarity between the way ideas about gender benefit men and the way oppression of racial and ethnic minorities benefits white people. Conventional ideas about gender do not make society operate smoothly; they create division and tension, with men seeking to protect their privileges as women challenge the status quo.

As earlier chapters noted, the social-conflict approach draws heavily on the ideas of Karl Marx. Yet as far as gender is concerned, Marx was a product of his time, and his writings focused almost

entirely on men. However, his friend and collaborator Friedrich Engels did develop a theory of gender stratification.

Gender and Class Inequality

Looking back through history, Engels saw that in hunting and gathering societies, the activities of women and men, although different, had equal importance. A successful hunt brought men great prestige, but the vegetation gathered by women provided most of a group's food supply. As technological advances led to a productive surplus, however, social equality and communal sharing gave way to private property and ultimately a class hierarchy, and men gained significant power over women. With surplus wealth to pass on to heirs, upper-class men needed to be sure their sons were their own, which led them to control the sexuality of women. The desire to control property brought about monogamous marriage and the family. Women were taught to remain virgins until marriage, to remain faithful to their husbands thereafter, and to build their lives around bearing and raising one man's children.

According to Engels (1902, orig. 1884), capitalism makes male domination even stronger. First, capitalism creates more wealth, which gives greater power to men as income earners and owners of property. Second, an expanding capitalist economy depends on turning people, especially women, into consumers who seek personal fulfillment through buying and using products. Third, society assigns women the task of maintaining the home to free men to work in factories. The double exploitation of capitalism, as Engels saw it, lies in paying men low wages for their labor and paying women no wages at all.

Evaluate Social-conflict analysis is critical of conventional ideas about gender, claiming that society would be better off if we minimized or even did away with this dimension of social structure. That is, this approach regards conventional families, which traditionalists consider personally and socially positive, as a social evil. A problem with social-conflict analysis, then, is that it minimizes the extent to which women and men live together cooperatively and often happily in families. A second problem lies in the assertion that capitalism is the basis of gender stratification. In fact, agrarian societies are typically more patriarchal than industrial-capitalist societies. Although socialist nations, including the People's Republic of China and the former Soviet Union, did move women into the work-

NASCAR racing has always been a masculine world. But Danica Patrick has made a name for herself as an outstanding driver. At the same time, she has made much of her income from trading on her good looks, including the 2009 *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit edition. Are men as likely to do the same? Why or why not?

force, by and large they provided women with very low pay in sex-segregated jobs (Rosendahl, 1997; Haney, 2002).

CHECK YOUR LEARNING According to Friedrich Engels, how does gender support social inequality in a capitalist class system?

Feminism

Evaluate

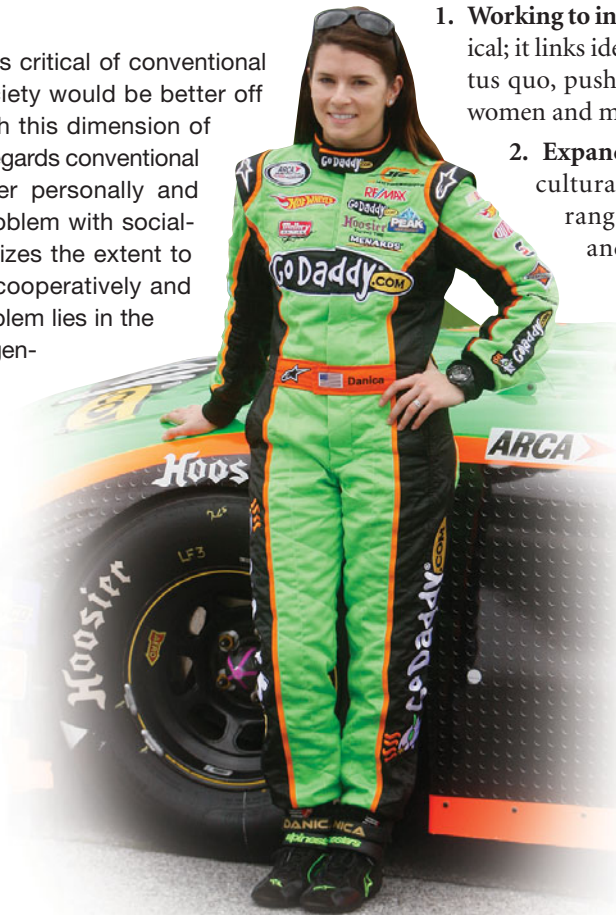
Feminism is support of social equality for women and men, in opposition to patriarchy and sexism. The first wave of feminism in the United States began in the 1840s as women who were opposed to slavery, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, drew parallels between the oppression of African Americans and the oppression of women. Their main objective was obtaining the right to vote, which was finally achieved in 1920. But other disadvantages persisted, causing a second wave of feminism to arise in the 1960s that continues today.

Basic Feminist Ideas

Feminism views the personal experiences of women and men through the lens of gender. How we think of ourselves (gender identity), how we act (gender roles), and our sex's social standing (gender stratification) are all rooted in the operation of society.

Although feminists disagree about many things, most support five general principles:

- 1. Working to increase equality.** Feminist thinking is political; it links ideas to action. Feminism is critical of the status quo, pushing for change toward social equality for women and men.
- 2. Expanding human choice.** Feminists argue that cultural conceptions of gender divide the full range of human qualities into two opposing and limiting spheres: the female world of emotions and cooperation and the male world of rationality and competition. As an alternative, feminists propose a "reintegration of humanity" by which all individuals can develop all human traits (M. French, 1985).
- 3. Eliminating gender stratification.** Feminism opposes laws and cultural norms that limit the education, income, and job opportunities of women. For this reason, feminists have long supported passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution, which states, in its entirety, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex." The



ERA was first proposed in Congress in 1923. Although it has widespread support, it has yet to become law.

4. **Ending sexual violence.** Today’s women’s movement seeks to eliminate sexual violence. Feminists argue that patriarchy distorts the relationships between women and men, encouraging violence against women in the form of rape, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and pornography (A. Dworkin, 1987; Freedman, 2002).
5. **Promoting sexual freedom.** Finally, feminism supports women’s control over their sexuality and reproduction. Feminists support the free availability of birth control information. As Figure 13–3 shows, 73 percent of married women of childbearing age in the United States use contraception; the use of contraceptives is far less common in many lower-income nations. Most feminists also support a woman’s right to choose whether to bear children or end a pregnancy, rather than allowing men—husbands, physicians, and legislators—to control their reproduction. Many feminists also support gay people’s efforts to end prejudice and discrimination in a largely heterosexual culture (Ferree & Hess, 1995; Armstrong, 2002).

Types of Feminism

Although feminists agree on the importance of gender equality, they disagree on how to achieve it: through liberal feminism, socialist feminism, or radical feminism (Stacey, 1983; L. Vogel, 1983; Ferree & Hess, 1995; Armstrong, 2002; Freedman, 2002). The Applying Theory table on page 312 highlights the key arguments made by each type of feminist thinking.

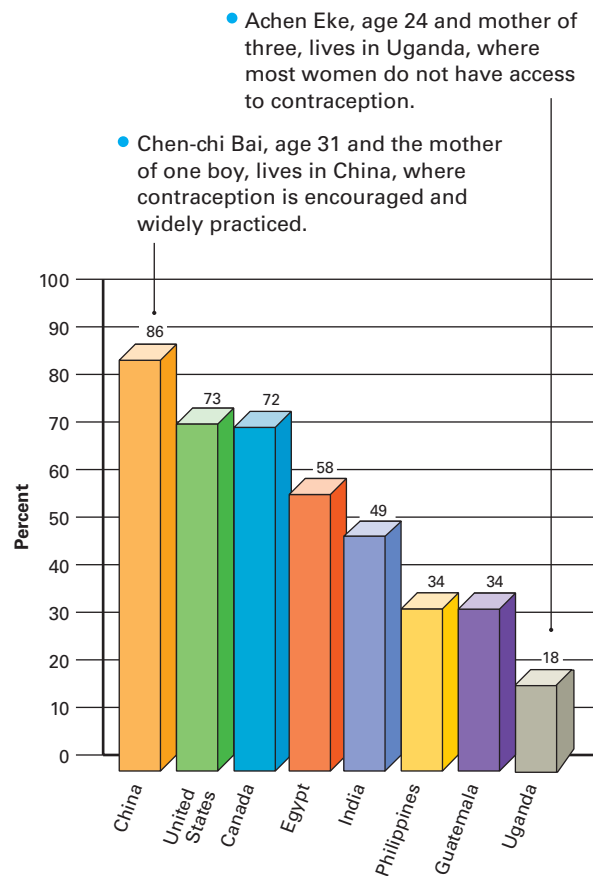
Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism is rooted in the classic liberal thinking that individuals should be free to develop their own talents and pursue their own interests. Liberal feminism accepts the basic organization of our society but seeks to expand the rights and opportunities of women, in part through passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Liberal feminists also support reproductive freedom for all women. They respect the family as a social institution but seek changes, including more widely available maternity and paternity leave and child care for parents who work.

Given their belief in the rights of individuals, liberal feminists think that women should advance according to their own efforts, rather than by working collectively for change. They believe that both women and men, through their individual achievement, are capable of improving their lives, as long as society removes legal and cultural barriers.

Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism evolved from the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. From this point of view, capitalism strengthens patriarchy by concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a small number of men. Socialist feminists do not think the reforms supported by liberal feminism go far enough. The family form created by capitalism must change if we are to replace “domestic slavery” with some collective means of carrying out housework and child care. Replac-



Global Snapshot

FIGURE 13–3 Use of Contraception by Married Women of Childbearing Age

In the United States, most married women of childbearing age use contraception. In many lower-income countries, however, most women do not have the opportunity to make this choice.

Source: Population Reference Bureau (2010).

ing the traditional family can come about only through a socialist revolution that creates a state-centered economy to meet the needs of all.

Radical Feminism

Like socialist feminism, *radical feminism* finds liberal feminism inadequate. Radical feminists believe that patriarchy is so deeply rooted in society that even a socialist revolution would not end it. Instead, reaching the goal of gender equality means that society must eliminate gender itself.

One possible way to achieve this goal is to use new reproductive technology (see Chapter 18, “Families”) to separate women’s bodies from the process of childbearing. With an end to motherhood, radical feminists reason, society could leave behind the entire family system, liberating women, men, and children from the oppression of family, gender, and sex itself (A. Dworkin, 1987). Radical feminism

APPLYING THEORY

Feminism

| | Liberal Feminism | Socialist Feminism | Radical Feminism |
|--|--|--|--|
| Does it accept the basic order of society? | Yes. Liberal feminism seeks change only to ensure equality of opportunity. | No. Socialist feminism supports an end to social classes and to family gender roles that encourage “domestic slavery.” | No. Radical feminism supports an end to the family system. |
| How do women improve their social standing? | Individually, according to personal ability and effort. | Collectively, through socialist revolution. | Collectively, by working to eliminate gender itself. |

seeks an egalitarian and gender-free society, a revolution more sweeping than that sought by Marx.

Opposition to Feminism

Because feminism calls for significant change, it has always been controversial. But today, just 20 percent of U.S. adults say they oppose

feminism, a share that has declined over time (NORC, 2009). Figure 13–4 shows a similar downward trend in opposition to feminism among college students after 1970. Note, however, that there has been little change in attitudes in recent years and that more men than women express antifeminist attitudes. In addition, surveys show that only 20 percent of women say they are willing to call themselves “feminist” (“The Barrier that Didn’t Fall,” 2008).

Feminism provokes criticism and resistance from both men and women who hold conventional ideas about gender. Some men oppose sexual equality for the same reason that many white people have historically opposed social equality for people of color: They do not want to give up their privileges. Other men and women, including those who are neither rich nor powerful, distrust a social movement (especially its radical expressions) that attacks the traditional family and rejects patterns that have guided male-female relations for centuries.

Men who have been socialized to value strength and dominance may feel uneasy about the feminist ideal of men as gentle and warm (Doyle, 1983). Similarly, some women whose lives center on their husbands and children may think that feminism does not value the social roles that give meaning to their lives. In general, resistance to feminism is strongest among women who have the least education and those who do not work outside the home (Marshall, 1985; Ferree & Hess, 1995; CBS News, 2005).



How much do you think conceptions of gender will change over your lifetime? Will there be more change in the lives of women or men? Why?

Race and ethnicity play some part in shaping people's attitudes toward feminism. In general, African Americans (especially African American women) express the greatest support of feminist goals, followed by whites, with Hispanic Americans holding somewhat more traditional attitudes when it comes to gender (Kane, 2000).

Criticism of feminism is also found in academic circles. Some sociologists charge that feminism ignores a growing body of evidence that men and women do think and act in somewhat different ways, which may make complete gender equality impossible. Furthermore, say critics, with its drive to increase women's presence in the workplace, feminism undervalues the crucial and unique contribution women make to the development of children, especially in the first years of life (Baydar & Brooks-Gunn, 1991; Popenoe, 1993b; Gibbs, 2001).

Finally, there is the question of *how* women should go about improving their social standing. A large majority of U.S. adults believe that women should have equal rights, but 70 percent also say that women should advance individually, according to their abilities; only 10 percent favor women's rights groups or collective action (NORC, 2007: 430).

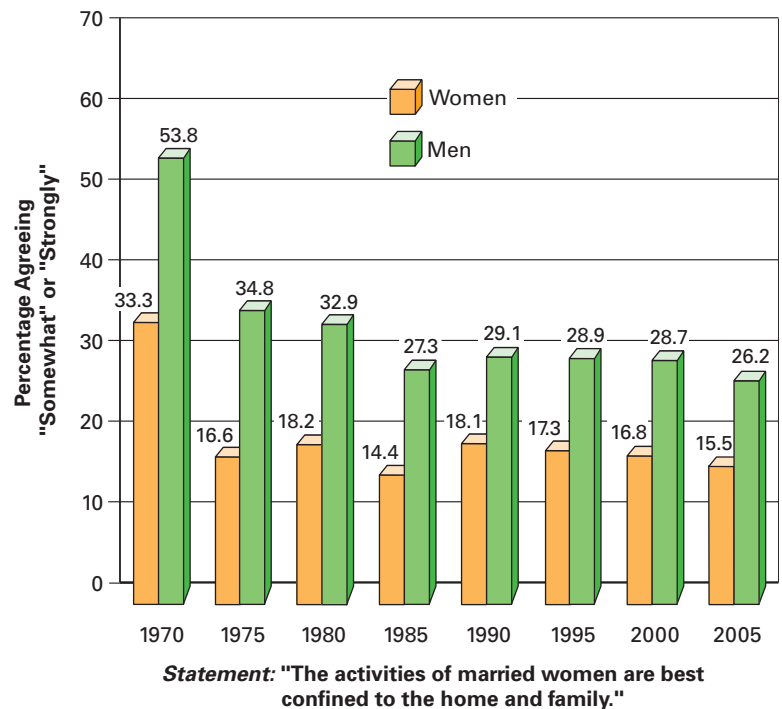
For these reasons, most opposition to feminism is directed toward its socialist and radical forms, while support for liberal feminism is widespread. In addition, there is an unmistakable trend toward greater gender equality. In 1977, some 65 percent of all adults endorsed the statement "It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family." By 2010, the share supporting this statement had dropped sharply, to 36 percent (NORC, 2011:438).

Gender: Looking Ahead

Evaluate

Predictions about the future are no more than educated guesses. Just as economists disagree about what the employment rate will be a year from now, sociologists can offer only general observations about the likely future of gender and society.

Change so far has been remarkable. A century ago, women were second-class citizens, without access to many jobs, barred from political office, and with no right to vote. Although women remain socially disadvantaged, the movement toward equality has surged ahead. Two-thirds of people entering the workforce during the 1990s were women, and in 2000, for the first time, a majority of U.S. families had both husband and wife in the paid labor force. Today's economy depends a great deal on the earnings of women. In addition, more than one in five married men have wives who earn more than they do (Fry & Cohn, 2010).



Student Snapshot

FIGURE 13-4 Opposition to Feminism among First-Year College Students, 1970–2005

The share of college students expressing antifeminist views declined after 1970. Men are still more likely than women to hold such attitudes.

Sources: Astin et al. (2002) and Pryor et al. (2006).

Many factors have contributed to this transformation. Perhaps most important, industrialization and recent advances in computer technology have shifted the nature of work from physically demanding tasks that favor male strength to jobs that require thought and imagination. This change puts women and men on an even footing. Also, because birth control technology has given us greater control over reproduction, women's lives are less constrained by unwanted pregnancies.

Many women and men have also deliberately pursued social equality. For example, complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace are now taken much more seriously than they were a generation ago. As more women assume positions of power in the corporate and political worlds, social changes in the twenty-first century may be as great as those that have already taken place.

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

CHAPTER 13 Gender Stratification

Can you spot “gender messages” in the world around you?

As this chapter makes clear, gender is one of the basic organizing principles of everyday life. Most of the places we go and most of the activities we engage in as part of our daily routines are “gendered,” meaning that they are defined as either more masculine or more feminine. Understanding this fact, corporations keep gender in mind when they market products to the public. Take a look at the ads below. In each case, can you explain how gender is at work in selling these products?

Hint Looking for “gender messages” in ads is a process that involves several levels of analysis. Start on the surface by noting everything obvious in the ad, including the setting, the background, and especially the people. Then notice how the people are shown—what they are doing, how they are situated, their facial expressions, how they are dressed, and how they appear to relate to each other. Finally, state what you think is the message of the ad, based on both the ad itself and also what you know about the surrounding society.

There are a lot of gender dynamics going on in this ad. What do you see?





Generally, our society defines cosmetics as feminine because most cosmetics are marketed toward women. How and why is this ad different?

What gender messages do you see in this ad?



Seeing Sociology in *Your* Everyday Life

1. Look through some recent magazines and select three advertisements that involve gender. In each case, provide analysis of how gender is used in the ad.
2. Watch several hours of children's television programming on a Saturday morning. Notice the advertising, which mostly sells toys and breakfast cereal. Keep track of what share of toys are "gendered," that is, aimed at one sex or the other. What traits do you associate with toys intended for boys and those intended for girls?
3. Do some research on the history of women's issues in your state. When was the first woman sent to Congress? What laws once existed that restricted the work women could do? Do any such laws exist today? Go to the "Seeing Sociology in *Your* Everyday Life" feature on mysoclab.com to read more about how gender can be changed and learn some of the personal benefits that come from recognizing this fact.

Gender and Inequality

Gender refers to the meaning a culture attaches to being female or male.

- Evidence that gender is rooted in culture includes global comparisons by Margaret Mead and others showing how societies define what is feminine and masculine in various ways.

 **Read the Document** on [mysoclab.com](#)

- Gender is not only about difference: Because societies give more power and other resources to men than to women, gender is an important dimension of social stratification. **Sexism** is built into the operation of social institutions.
- Although some degree of **patriarchy** is found almost everywhere, it varies throughout history and from society to society. **pp. 294–97**

 **Watch the Video** on [mysoclab.com](#)

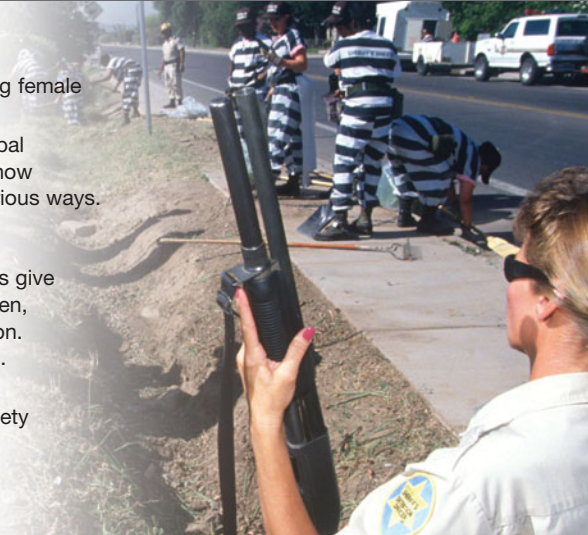
gender (p. 294) the personal traits and social positions that members of a society attach to being female or male

gender stratification (p. 294) the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and privilege between men and women

matriarchy (p. 296) a form of social organization in which females dominate males

patriarchy (p. 296) a form of social organization in which males dominate females

sexism (p. 298) the belief that one sex is innately superior to the other



Gender and Socialization

Through the socialization process, gender becomes part of our personalities (**gender identity**) and our actions (**gender roles**). All the major agents of socialization—family, peer groups, schools, and the mass media—reinforce cultural definitions of what is feminine and masculine

pp. 297–99

gender roles (sex roles) (p. 298) attitudes and activities that a society links to each sex



Gender and Social Stratification

Gender stratification shapes **the workplace**:

- A majority of women are now in the paid labor force, but 39% hold clerical or service jobs.
- Comparing full-time U.S. workers, women earn 77% as much as men.
- This gender difference in earnings results from differences in jobs, differences in family responsibilities, and discrimination. **pp. 299–301**

Gender stratification shapes **family life**:

- Most unpaid housework is performed by women, whether or not they hold jobs outside the home.
- Pregnancy and raising small children keep many women out of the labor force at a time when their male peers are making important career gains. **pp. 301–2**

Gender stratification shapes **education**:

- Women now earn 59% of all associate's and bachelor's degrees.
- Women make up 47% of law school students and are an increasing share of graduates in professions traditionally dominated by men, including medicine and business administration. **p. 302**

Gender stratification shapes **politics**:

- Until a century ago, almost no women held any elected office in the United States.
- In recent decades, the number of women in politics has increased significantly.
- Even so, the vast majority of elected officials, especially at the national level, are men.
- Women make up only about 15% of U.S. military personnel. **pp. 302–3**

 **Explore the Map** on [mysoclab.com](#)

Intersection theory investigates the factors of race, class, and gender, which combine to cause special disadvantages for some categories of people.

- Women of color encounter greater social disadvantages than white women and earn much less than white men.
- Because all women have a distinctive social identity and are disadvantaged, they are a minority, although most white women do not think of themselves this way. **p. 304**



minority (p. 303) any category of people distinguished by physical or cultural difference that a society sets apart and subordinates

intersection theory (p. 304) analysis of the interplay of race, class, and gender, often resulting in multiple dimensions of disadvantage

Violence against women and men is a widespread problem that is linked to how a society defines gender. Related issues include

- **sexual harassment**, which mostly victimizes women because our culture encourages men to be assertive and to see women in sexual terms.
- **pornography**, which portrays women as sexual objects. Many see pornography as a moral issue; because pornography dehumanizes women, it is also a power issue. **pp. 304–8**

sexual harassment (p. 306) comments, gestures, or physical contacts of a sexual nature that are deliberate, repeated, and unwelcome

Theories of Gender

The **structural-functional approach** suggests that

- in preindustrial societies, distinctive roles for males and females reflect biological differences between the sexes.
- in industrial societies, marked gender inequality becomes dysfunctional and gradually decreases.

Talcott Parsons described gender differences in terms of complementary roles that promote the social integration of families and society as a whole. **pp. 308–9**

The **symbolic-interaction approach** suggests that

- individuals use gender as one element of their personal performances as they socially construct reality through everyday interactions.
- gender plays a part in shaping almost all our everyday experiences.

Because our society defines men as having more value than women, the sex roles that define how women and men should behave place men in control of social situations; women play a more deferential role. **p. 309**

The **social-conflict approach** suggests that

- gender is an important dimension of social inequality and social conflict.
- gender inequality benefits men and disadvantages women.

Friedrich Engels tied gender stratification to the rise of private property and a class hierarchy. Marriage and the family are strategies by which men control their property through control of the sexuality of women. Capitalism exploits everyone by paying men low wages and assigning women the task of maintaining the home. **pp. 309–10**



Feminism

Feminism

- endorses the social equality of women and men and opposes patriarchy and sexism.
- seeks to eliminate violence against women.
- advocates giving women control over their reproduction. **pp. 310–11**

There are three types of feminism:

- Liberal feminism seeks equal opportunity for both sexes within the existing society.
- Socialist feminism claims that gender equality will come about by replacing capitalism with socialism.
- Radical feminism seeks to eliminate the concept of gender itself and to create an egalitarian and gender-free society.

Today, although only about 20% of U.S. adults say they oppose feminism, only 20% of U.S. women say they call themselves “feminist.” Most opposition to feminism is directed toward socialist and radical feminism. Support for liberal feminism is widespread. **pp. 311–13**



feminism (p. 310) support of social equality for women and men, in opposition to patriarchy and sexism