In this chapter, we examine **gender stratification**—males' and females' unequal access to power, prestige, and property. Gender is especially significant because it is a *master status;* that is, it cuts across *all* aspects of social life. No matter what we attain in life, we carry the label *male* or *female*. These labels carry images and expectations about how we should act. They not only guide our behavior, but they also serve as a basis of power and privilege.

In this chapter's fascinating journey, we shall look at inequality between the sexes around the world and in the United States. We shall explore whether it is biology or culture that makes us the way we are, and review sexual harassment, unequal pay, and violence against women. This excursion will provide a good context for understanding the power differences between men and women that lead to situations such as the one just described in our opening vignette. It should also give you insight into your own experiences with gender.

Issues of Sex and Gender

When we consider how females and males differ, the first thing that usually comes to mind is **sex,** the *biological characteristics* that distinguish males and females. *Primary sex characteristics* consist of a vagina or a penis and other organs related to reproduction. *Secondary sex characteristics* are the physical distinctions between males and females that are not directly connected with reproduction. Secondary sex characteristics become clearly evident at puberty when males develop more muscles and a lower voice, and gain more body hair and height, while females form more fatty tissue and broader hips, and develop breasts.

Gender, in contrast, is a *social,* not a biological characteristic. **Gender** consists of whatever behaviors and attitudes a group considers proper for its males and females. Consequently, gender varies from one society to another. Whereas *sex* refers to male or female, *gender* refers to masculinity or femininity. In short, you inherit your sex, but you learn your gender as you are socialized into the behaviors and attitudes your culture asserts are appropriate for your sex.

The expectations associated with gender vary around the world, as illustrated in the photo montage on the next page. They vary so greatly that some sociologists suggest we replace the terms *masculinity* and *femininity* with *masculinities* and *femininities* (Beynon 2002).

The sociological significance of gender is that it is a device by which society controls its members. Gender sorts us, on the basis of sex, into different life experiences. It opens and closes doors to power, property, and even prestige. Like social class, gender is a structural feature of society.

Before examining inequalities of gender, let's consider why the behaviors of men and women differ.

gender stratification males' and females' unequal access to power, prestige, and property on the basis of their sex

sex biological characteristics that distinguish females and males, consisting of primary and secondary sex characteristics

gender the behaviors and attitudes that a society considers proper for its males and females; masculinity or femininity

Gender Differences in Behavior: Biology or Culture?

Why are most males more aggressive than most females? Why do women enter "nurturing" occupations such as nursing in far greater numbers than men? To answer such questions, many people respond with some variation of "They're just born that way."

Is this the correct answer? Certainly biology plays a significant role in our lives. Each of us begins as a fertilized egg. The egg, or ovum, is contributed by our mother, the sperm that fertilizes the egg by our father. At the very moment the egg is fertilized, our sex is determined. Each of us receives twenty-three pairs of chromosomes from the ovum and twenty-three pairs from the sperm. The egg has an X chromosome. If the sperm that fertilizes the egg also has an X chromosome, we become a girl (XX). If the sperm has a Y chromosome, we become a boy (XY).

That's the biology. Now, the sociological question is: Does this biological difference control our behavior? Does it, for example, make females more nurturing and submissive and males more aggressive and domineering? Let's consider the positions that sociologists take.

India

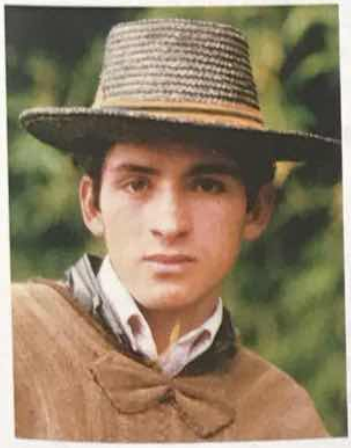
Brazil

To express their gender, people follow the guidelines of their culture. As you can see from these photos, the guidelines for demonstrating femininity and masculinity vary widely from one culture to another.

Republic of Georgia

Mexico

Kenya



Chile

Ivory coast

Tibet

The Dominant Position in Sociology

The dominant sociological position is that social factors, not biology, are the reasons we behave the way we do. Our visible differences of sex do not come with meanings built into them. Rather, each human group makes its own interpretation of these physical differences and on this basis assigns males and females to separate groups. There, people learn what is expected of them and are given different access to their society's privileges.

Most sociologists find compelling the argument that if biology were the principal factor in human behavior, all around the world we would find women to be one sort of person and men another. In fact, however, ideas of gender vary greatly from one culture to another—and, as a result, so do male–female behaviors. This dominant position, that of culture, is presented in the Thinking Critically section.

Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, whose position in the ongoing "nature versus nurture" debate is summarized here.

THINKING Critically

Biology Versus Culture—Culture Is the Answer

For sociologist Cynthia Fuchs Epstein (1986, 1988, 1989), differences between the behavior of males and females are solely the result of social factors—specifically, socialization and social control. Her argument is as follows:

1. The anthropological record shows greater equality between the sexes in the past than we had thought. In earlier societies, women, as well as men, hunted small game, made tools, and gathered food. In hunting and gathering societies, the roles of both women and men are less rigid than those created by stereotypes. For example, the Agta and Mbuti are egalitarian. This proves that hunting and gathering societies exist in which women are not subordinate to men. Anthropologists claim that in these societies there is a separate but equal status of women at this level of development.
2. The types of work that men and women do in each society are determined not by biology but by social arrangements. Few people can escape these arrangements, and almost everyone works within his or her allotted narrow range. This gender division of work serves the interests of men, and both informal customs and formal laws enforce it. When these socially constructed barriers are removed, women's work habits are similar to those of men.
3. Biology "causes" some human behaviors, but these are limited to those involving reproduction or differences in body structure. These differences are relevant for only a few activities, such as playing basketball or "crawling through a small space."
4. Female crime rates are rising in many parts of the world. This indicates that aggression, which is often considered a biologically dictated male behavior, is related instead to social factors. When social conditions permit, such as when women become lawyers, they, too, become "adversarial, assertive, and dominant." Not incidentally, another form of this "dominant behavior" is the challenge women have made in scholarly journals to the biased views about human nature proposed by men.

In short, rather than "women's incompetence or inability to read a legal brief, perform brain surgery, [or] to predict a bull market," social factors—socialization, gender discrimination, and other forms of social control—create gender differences in behavior. Arguments that assign "an evolutionary and genetic basis" to explain differences in the behaviors of women and men are simplistic. They "rest on a dubious structure of inappropriate, highly selective, and poor data, oversimplification in logic and in inappropriate inferences by use of analogy."

Opening the Door to Biology

The matter of "nature" versus "nurture" is not so easily settled, however, and a number of sociologists acknowledge that biological factors are involved in some human behavior other than reproduction and childbearing (Udry 2000). The Thinking Critcally section on the next page presents this position. Alice Rossi, a feminist sociologist and former president of the American Sociological Association, has suggested that women are better prepared biologically for "mothering" than are men. She (1977, 1984) says that women are more sensitive to the infant's soft skin and to their nonverbal communications. Rossi stresses that the issue is not either biology or society. Instead, nature provides biological predispositions, which are then overlaid with culture.

To see why the door to biology is opening, just slightly, in sociology, let's consider a medical accident and a study of Vietnam veterans.

A Medical Accident The drama began in 1963, when 7-month-old male identical twins were taken to a doctor to be circumcised (Money and Ehrhardt 1972). The inept physician, who was using a heated needle, turned the electric current too high and accidentally burned off the penis of one of the boys. You can imagine the parents' disbelief—and then their horror—as the truth sank in.

What can be done in a situation like this? The damage was irreversible. The parents were told that their boy could never have sexual relations. After months of soul-searching

THINKING Critically

Biology Versus Culture—Biology Is the Answer

Sociologist Steven Goldberg (1974, 1986, 1993) finds it astonishing that anyone should doubt "the presence of core-deep differences in males and females, differences of temperament and emotion we call masculinity and femininity." Goldberg's argument—that it is not environment but inborn differences that "give masculine and feminine direction to the emotions and behaviors of men and women"—is as follows:

1. The anthropological record shows that all societies for which evidence exists are (or were) **patriarchies** (societies in which men dominate women). Stories about long-lost **matriarchies** (societies in which women dominate men) are myths.
2. In all societies, past and present, the highest statuses are associated with men. In every society, politics is ruled by "hierarchies overwhelmingly dominated by men."
3. Men dominate societies because they "have a lower threshold for the elicitation of dominance behavior . . . a greater tendency to exhibit whatever behavior is necessary in any environment to attain dominance in hierarchies and male-female encounters and relationships." Men are more willing "to sacrifice the rewards of other motivations—the desire for affection, health, family life, safety, relaxation, vacation and the like—in order to attain dominance and status."
4. Just as a 6-foot woman does not prove the social basis of height, so exceptional individuals, such as highly achieving and dominant women, do not refute "the physiological roots of behavior."

In short, there is only one valid interpretation of why every society from that of the Pygmy to that of the Swede associates dominance and attainment with men. Male dominance of society is "an inevitable resolution of the psychophysiological reality." Socialization and social institutions merely *reflect*—and sometimes exaggerate—inborn tendencies. Any interpretation other than inborn differences is "wrongheaded, ignorant, tendentious, internally illogical, discordant with the evidence, and implausible in the extreme." The argument that males are more aggressive because they have been socialized that way is equivalent to the claim that men can grow moustaches because boys have been socialized that way.

To acknowledge this reality is *not* to defend discrimination against women. Approval or disapproval of what societies have done with these basic biological differences is not the issue. The point is that biology leads males and females to different behaviors and attitudes—regardless of how we feel about this or whether we wish it were different.

Steven Goldberg, whose position in the ongoing "nature versus nurture" debate is summarized here.

and tearful consultations with experts, the parents decided that their son should have a sex change operation. When he was 22 months old, surgeons castrated the boy, using the skin to construct a vagina. They then gave the child a new name, Brenda, dressed him in frilly clothing, let his hair grow long, and began to treat him as a girl. Later, physicians gave Brenda female steroids to promote female pubertal growth (Colapinto 2001).

At first, the results were promising. When the twins were 4 years old, the mother said (remember that the children are biologically identical):

> One thing that really amazes me is that she is so feminine. I've never seen a little girl so neat and tidy. . . . She likes for me to wipe her face. She doesn't like to be dirty, and yet my son is quite different. I can't wash his face for anything. . . . She is very proud of herself, when she puts on a new dress, or I set her hair. . . . She seems to be daintier. (Money and Ehrhardt 1972)

About a year later, the mother described how their daughter imitated her while their son copied his father:

> I found that my son, he chose very masculine things like a fireman or a policeman. . . . He wanted to do what daddy does, work where daddy does, and carry a lunch kit. . . . [My daughter] didn't want any of those things. She wants to be a doctor or a teacher. . . . But none of the things that she ever wanted to be were like a policeman or a fireman, and that sort of thing never appealed to her. (Money and Ehrhardt 1972)

patriarchy a society or group in which men dominate women; authority is vested in males

matriarchy a society in which women as a group dominate men as a group

If the matter were this clear-cut, we could use this case to conclude that gender is entirely up to nurture. Seldom are things in life so simple, however, and a twist occurs in this story. Despite this promising start and her parents' coaching, Brenda did not adapt well to femininity. She preferred to mimic her father shaving, rather than her mother putting on makeup. She rejected dolls, favoring guns and her brother's toys. She liked rough and tumble games and insisted on urinating standing up. Classmates teased her and called her a "cavewoman" because she walked like a boy. At age 14, she was expelled from school for beating up a girl who teased her. Despite estrogen treatment, she was not attracted to boys, and at age 14, in despair over her inner turmoil, she was thinking of suicide. In a tearful confrontation, her father told her about the accident and her sex change.

"All of a sudden everything clicked. For the first time, things made sense, and I understood who and what I was," the twin says of this revelation. David (his new name) then had testosterone shots and, later, surgery to partially reconstruct a penis. At age 25, he married a woman and adopted her children (Diamond and Sigmundson 1997; Colapinto 2001.

The Vietnam Veterans Study Time after time, researchers have found that boys and men who have higher levels of testosterone tend to be more aggressive. In one study, researchers compared the testosterone levels of college men in a "rowdy" fraternity with those of men in a fraternity that had a reputation for academic success and social responsibility. Men in the "rowdy" fraternity had higher levels of testosterone (Dabbs et al. 1996). In another study, researchers found that prisoners who had committed sex crimes and acts of violence against people had higher levels of testosterone than those who had committed property crimes (Dabbs et al. 1995). The samples researchers used were small, however, leaving the nagging uncertainty that the findings of a particular study might be due to chance.

Then in 1985, the U.S. government began a health study of Vietnam veterans. To be certain the study was representative, the researchers chose a random sample of 4,462 men. Among the data they collected was a measurement of testosterone. Now, unexpectedly, sociologists had a large random sample available, and it is providing surprising clues about human behavior.

This sample supports earlier studies showing that men who have higher levels of testosterone tend to be more aggressive and to have more problems as a consequence. When the veterans with higher testosterone were boys, they were more likely to get in trouble with parents and teachers and to become delinquents. As adults, they are more likely to use hard drugs, to get into fights, to end up in lower-status jobs, and to have more sexual partners. Knowing this, you probably won't be surprised to learn that they also are less likely to marry—certainly their low-paying jobs and trouble with the police make them less appealing candidates for marriage. Those who do marry are more likely to have affairs, to hit their wives, and, it follows, to get divorced (Dabbs and Morris 1990; Booth and Dabbs 1993).

Sociologists stress the social factors that underlie human behavior, the experiences that mold us, funneling us into different directions in life. The study of Vietnam veterans discussed in the text is one indication of how the sociological door is slowly opening to also consider biological factors in human behavior. Shown here are men of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in a "search and destroy" patrol in Tuy Province, Vietnam, in June 1966.

Fortunately for us sociologists, the Vietnam veterans study does not leave us with biology as the sole basis for behavior. Not all men with high testosterone get in trouble with the law, do poorly in school, or mistreat their wives. A chief difference, in fact, is social class. High-testosterone men from higher social classes are less likely to be involved in antisocial behaviors than are high-testosterone men from lower social classes (Dabbs and Morris 1990). *Social* factors (socialization, life goals, self-definitions), then, also play a part. In addition, conflict increases testosterone, so we can't be certain that high levels of testosterone are the cause or the consequence of conflict (Mazur and Michalek 1998). Uncovering the social factors and discovering how they work in combination with testosterone will be of great interest to sociologists.

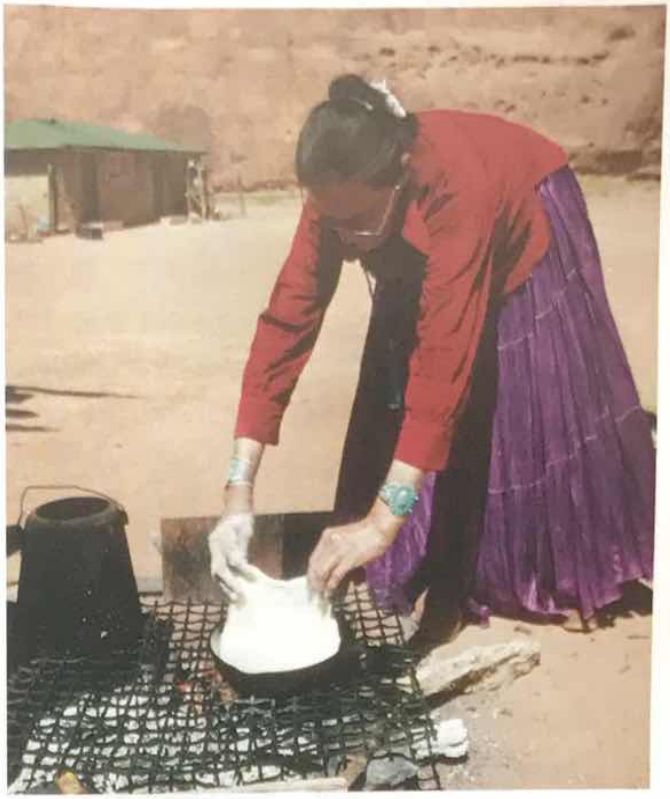
IN SUM

We shall have to await further studies, but the initial findings are intriguing. They indicate that some behavior that we sociologists usually assume to be due entirely to socialization is also influenced by biology. The findings are preliminary, but significant and provocative. In the years to come, this should prove to be an exciting—and controversial—area of sociological research. One level of research will be to determine if any behaviors are due only to biology. The second level will be to discover how social factors modify biology. The third level will be, in sociologist Janet Chafetz's (1990:30) phrase, to determine how "different" becomes translated into "unequal."

Gender Inequality in Global Perspective

Some analysts speculate that in hunting and gathering societies women and men were social equals (Leacock 1981; Hendrix 1994). Apparently horticultural societies also had less gender discrimination than does our contemporary world (Collins et al. 1993). In these societies, women may have contributed about 60 percent of the group's total food. Yet, after reviewing the historical record, historian and feminist Gerda Lerner (1986) concluded that "there is not a single society known where women-as-a-group have decision-making power over men (as a group)."

Let's take a brief overview of some of this global inequality.



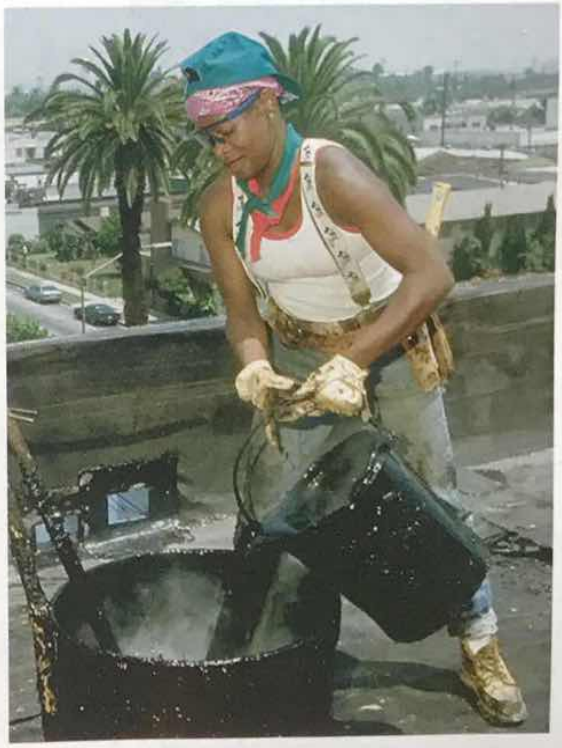
Anthropologist George Murdock surveyed 324 traditional societies worldwide. In all of them, some work was considered "men's work," while other tasks were considered "women's work." He found that almost universally cooking is considered women's work. This Navaho woman is making fry bread over an open fire in Monument Valley, Arizona.

Sex Typing of Work

Anthropologist George Murdock (1937) surveyed 324 societies around the world. He found that in all of them activities are sex typed. In other words, every society associates activities with one sex or the other. He also found that activities that are considered "female" in one society may be considered "male" in another. In some groups, for example, taking care of cattle is women's work, while other groups assign this task to men.

Metalworking was the exception; it was considered men's work in all the societies Murdock examined. Three other pursuits—making weapons, pursuing sea mammals, and hunting—were almost universally the domain of men. In a few societies, however, women participated in these activities. Although Murdock found no specific work that was universally assigned to women only, he did find that making clothing, cooking, carrying water, and grinding grain were almost always female tasks. In a few societies, however, such activities were regarded as men's work.

From Murdock's cross-cultural survey, we can conclude that nothing about biology requires men and women to be assigned different work. Anatomy does not have to equal destiny when it comes to occupations, for as we have seen, pursuits that are considered feminine in one society may be deemed masculine in another, and vice versa. The photo essay on women at work in India underscores this point.



Throughout history, women have been denied the right to pursue various occupations on the basis of presumed biological characteristics. As society— and sex roles— have changed, women have increasingly entered occupations traditionally reserved for men.

Prestige of Work

You might ask whether this division of labor really illustrates social inequality. Does it perhaps simply represent arbitrary forms of dividing up labor, not gender discrimination?

That could be the case, except for this finding: *Universally, greater prestige is given to male activities—regardless of what those activities are* (Linton 1936; Rosaldo 1974). If taking care of goats is men's work, then the care of goats is considered important and carries high prestige, but if it is women's work, it is considered less important and given less prestige. Or, to take an example closer to home, when delivering babies was "women's work" and was done by midwives, it was given low prestige. But when men took over this task, its prestige increased (Ehrenreich and English 1973). In short, it is not the work that provides the prestige, but the sex with which the work is associated.

Other Areas of Global Discrimination

Let's briefly consider four additional aspects of global gender discrimination. Later, when we focus on the United States, we shall examine these topics in greater detail.

Education Almost 1 billion adults around the world cannot read; two-thirds are women ("State of . . . " 2001). Table 11.1, which lists all the world's countries where less than half the women can read and write, illustrates this point further. In every one of these countries, a higher percentage of men are literate. This table also shows how illiteracy is clustered, for 22 of these 32 countries are in Africa.

Politics Around the world, women lack equal access to national decision making: No national legislature of any country has as many women as men. Women come closest to having equal representation in Sweden, where 43 percent of the legislators are women, but in some countries, such as Japan and Iran, the total is only 1 percent ("Women of . . . " 2002). In Kuwait and United Arab Emirates, women can't even vote (Crossette 1995a, b). In most nations, women hold only about 11 percent of the seats in parliaments and congress.

The Pay Gap In every nation, women average less pay than men. In the United States, full-time working women average only 65 percent of what men make (see Figure

Table 11.1 The Percentage of Women and Men Who Cannot Read and Write

Country	Women	Men	Country	Women	Men
Niger	92%	76%	Bhutan	66%	39%
Burkina Faso	86%	66%	Libya	64%	38%
Guinea-Bissau	81%	40%	Morocco	64%	38%
Pakistan	79%	40%	Liberia	62%	30%
Afghanistan	78%	48%	Cote d'Ivoire	61%	45%
Sierra Leone	77%	49%	Burundi	59%	43%
Nepal	76%	41%	Togo	59%	25%
Benin	75%	43%	Egypt	56%	33%
Yemen	75%	32%	Central African Republic	55%	40%
Senegal	72%	53%	Eritrea	55%	33%
Mozambique	71%	40%	India	55%	32%
Bangladesh	70%	48%	Iraq	54%	34%
Mauritania	68%	47%	Sudan	54%	30%
Ethiopia	67%	56%	Malawi	53%	25%
Laos	67%	36%	Haiti	52%	48%
Mali	66%	51%			
Chad	66%	48%			

Countries where less than half of the women are literate.
Source: "Women of Our World," 2002.

11.8 on page 312), while in South Korea women make half of what men earn (Monk-Turner and Turner 2000).

Violence Against Women A global human rights issue is violence against women. Historical examples are foot binding in China, witch burning in Europe, and *suttee* (burning the living widow with her dead husband's body) in India. Today we have rape, wife beating, female infanticide, and forced prostitution, which was probably the case in our opening vignette. One of today's most notorious examples is female circumcision, the topic of the Cultural Diversity box on the next page.

"Honor killings" are another form of violence against women. In some societies, such as Pakistan, Jordan, and Kurdistan, a woman who is thought to have brought disgrace on her family is killed by a male relative—usually a brother or husband, but often her father or uncles. What threat to the family's honor can be so severe that the daughter or the wife is killed? The usual reason is sex outside of marriage. In Iraq, even a woman who has been raped is in danger of becoming the victim of an honor killing (Banerjee 2003). Killing the girl or woman removes the "stain" she has brought to the family, restoring the family's honor in the community. The police generally ignore honor killings, viewing them as family matters.

Foot binding, a form of violence against women, was practiced in China. This photo of a woman in Canton, China, is from the early 1900s. The woman's tiny feet, which made it difficult for her to walk, were a status symbol, indicating that her husband was wealthy and did not need her labor. It also made her dependent on him.

How Females Became a Minority Group

Around the world, gender is *the* primary division between people. Every society sets up barriers to provide unequal access to power, property, and prestige on the basis of sex. Consequently, sociologists classify females as a *minority group*. In most countries females outnumber males, so you may find this strange. This term applies, however, because it refers to people who are discriminated against on the basis of physical or cultural characteristics, regardless of their numbers (Hacker 1951). For an overview of gender discrimination in a changing society, see the Cultural Diversity box on page 301.

Have females always been a minority group? As we just saw, some analysts speculate that in horticultural and hunting and gathering societies, women and men may have been social equals—or that at least there was much less gender discrimination than we have today. How did it happen, then, that around the world women came to be systematically discriminated against? Let's consider the primary theory that has been proposed.

The Origins of Patriarchy

The major theory of the origin of patriarchy—men dominating society—points to social consequences of human reproduction (Lerner 1986; Friedl 1990). In early human history, life was short, and in order to reproduce the human group, many children had to be born. Because only females get pregnant, carry a child for nine months, give birth, and nurse, women were limited in their activities for a considerable part of their lives. To survive, an infant needed a nursing mother. With a child at her breast or in her uterus, or one carried on her hip or on her back, women were physically encumbered. Consequently, around the world women assumed tasks that were associated with the home and child care, while men took over the hunting of large animals and other tasks that required greater speed and absence from the base camp for longer periods of time (Huber 1990).

As a consequence, men became dominant. It was they who left camp to hunt animals, who made contact with other tribes, who traded with these other groups, and who quarreled and waged war with them. It was also the men who made and controlled the instruments of death, the weapons used for hunting and warfare. It was they who

Female Circumcision

"Lie down there," the excisor suddenly said to me [when she was 12], pointing to a mat on the ground. No sooner had I laid down than I felt my frail, thin legs grasped by heavy hands and pulled wide apart.... Two women on each side of me pinned me to the ground ... I underwent the ablation of the labia minor and then of the clitoris. The operation seemed to go on forever. I was in the throes of agony, torn apart both physically and psychologically. It was the rule that girls of my age did not weep in this situation. I broke the rule. I cried and screamed with pain ...!

Afterwards they forced me, not only to walk back to join the other girls who had already been excised, but to dance with them. I was doing my best, but then I fainted.... It was a month before I was completely healed. When I was better, everyone mocked me, as I hadn't been brave, they said. (Walker and Parmar 1993:107–108)

Female circumcision is common in parts of Muslim Africa and in some parts of Malaysia and Indonesia. Often called female genital cutting by Westerners, this practice is also known as clitoral excision, clitoridectomy, infibulation, and labiadectomy, depending on how much of the tissue is removed. Worldwide, between 100 million and 200 million females have been circumcised. In Egypt, 97 percent of the women have been circumcised (Boyle et al. 2001).

In some cultures, only the girl's clitoris is cut off; in others, more is removed. In Sudan, the Nubia cut away most of the girl's genitalia, then sew together the remaining outer edges. They bind the girl's legs from ankles to waist for several weeks while scar tissue closes up the vagina. They leave a small opening the size of a pencil for the passage of urine and menstrual fluids.

Among most groups, the surgery takes place between the ages of 4 and 8. In some cultures, it occurs seven to ten days after birth. In others, it is not performed until girls reach adolescence. Because the surgery is usually done without anesthesia, the pain is so excruciating that adults must hold the girl down. In urban areas, physicians sometimes perform the operation; in rural areas, a neighborhood woman usually does it.

Shock, bleeding, infection, infertility, and death are among the risks. Common side-effects are vaginal spasms, painful intercourse, and lack of orgasms. Urinary tract infections also occur as urine and menstrual flow build up behind the tiny opening.

When a woman marries, the opening is cut wider to permit sexual intercourse. In some groups, this is the husband's responsibility. Before a woman gives birth, the opening is enlarged further. After birth, the vagina is again sutured shut, a cycle of surgically closing and opening that begins anew with each birth.

What are the reasons for this custom? Some groups believe that it reduces female sexual desire, making it more likely that a woman will be a virgin at marriage, and, afterward, remain faithful to her husband. Others think that it enhances fertility and vaginal cleanliness.

Feminists call female circumcision a form of ritual torture to control female sexuality. They point out that men dominate the societies that practice it. Mothers cooperate with the surgery because in these societies an uncircumcised woman is considered impure and is not allowed to marry. Grandmothers insist that the custom continue out of concern that their granddaughters marry well.

Change is coming. The first ladies of four countries—Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Nigeria—have condemned the practice (Lacey 2003). In Kenya, two girls obtained a court order stopping their father from having them circumcised. Their community was shocked, but an attorney reminded the court that Kenya had signed human rights agreements.

For Your CONSIDERATION

Do you think that the United States should try to make other nations stop this custom? Or would this be ethnocentric, the imposition of Western values on other cultures? As one Somali woman said, "The Somali woman doesn't need an alien woman telling her how to treat her private parts." What legitimate basis do you think there is for members of one culture to interfere with another?

Sources: Based on Mahran 1978, 1981; Ebomoyi 1987; Lightfoot-Klein 1989; Merwine 1993; Walker and Parmar 1993; Chalkley 1997; Collymore 2000; "Kenya ..." 2001.

accumulated possessions in trade, and gained prestige by triumphantly returning with prisoners of war or with large animals to feed the tribe. In contrast, little prestige was given to the ordinary, routine, taken-for-granted activities of women—who were not seen as risking their lives for the group. Eventually, men took over society. Their weapons, items of trade, and knowledge gained from contact with other groups became sources of power. Women became second-class citizens, subject to men's decisions.

"Pssst. You Wanna Buy a Bride?" China in Transition

Nguyen Thi Hoan, age 22, thanked her lucky stars. A Vietnamese country girl, she had just arrived in Hanoi to look for work, and while she was still at the bus station a woman offered her a job in a candy factory.

It was a trap. After Nguyen had loaded a few sacks of sugar, the woman took her into the country to "get supplies." There some men took her to China, which was only 100 miles away. Nguyen was put up for auction, along with a 16-year-old Vietnamese girl. Each brought $350. Nguyen was traded from one bride dealer to another until she was taken to a Chinese village. There she was introduced to her new husband, who had paid $700 for her (Marshall 1999).

Why are tens of thousands of women kidnapped and sold as brides in China each year (Rosenthal 2001b)? First, parts of China have a centuries-long tradition of bride selling. Second, China has a shortage of women. The government enforces a "one couple-one child" policy. Since sons are preferred, female infanticide has become common. One result is a shortage of women of marriageable age. In some provinces, for every 100 women there are over 120 men. Yet all the men are expected to marry and produce heirs (Rosenthal 2001b).

Actually, Nguyen was lucky. Some kidnapped women are sold as prostitutes.

Bride selling and forced prostitution are millennia old practices. But China is also entering a new era, which is bringing with it new pressures for Chinese women. Ideas of beauty are changing, and blonde, blue-eyed women are becoming a fetish. As a consequence, Chinese women feel a pressure to "Westernize" their bodies. Surgeons promise to give them bigger breasts and Western-looking eyes. A Western style of advertising is gaining ground, too: Ads now show scantily clad women perched on top of sports cars (Chen 1995; Johansson 1999; Yat-ming Sin and Hon-ming Yau 2001).

China in transition . . . It is bringing back the old, bride selling, while moving toward the new, Western ideas of beauty and advertising. In both the old and new, women are commodities for the consumption of men.

Is this theory correct? Remember that the answer lies buried in human history, and there is no way of testing it. Male dominance may be due to some entirely different cause. For example, anthropologist Marvin Harris (1977) proposed that because most men are stronger than most women and hand-to-hand combat was necessary in tribal groups, men became the warriors and women the reward to entice them to do battle. Frederick Engels proposed that patriarchy developed with the origin of private property (Lerner 1986; Mezentseva 2001). He could not explain why private property should have produced male dominance, however. Gerda Lerner (1986) suggests that patriarchy may even have had different origins in different places.

Whatever its origins, a circular system of thought evolved. Men came to think of themselves as inherently superior—based on the evidence that they dominated society. They surrounded many of their activities with secrecy, and constructed elaborate rules and rituals to avoid "contamination" by females, whom they openly deemed inferior by that time.

A theory of how patriarchy originated centers on childbirth. Because only women give birth, they assumed tasks associated with home and child care, while men hunted and performed other survival tasks that required greater strength, speed, and absence from home. This woman, who is harvesting rice in Guizhou, China, also takes care of her child—just as her female ancestors have done for millennia.

The burqua worn by Arab women is viewed by many as a form of male domination, a way to suppress women's individuality, freedom, and sexuality. After the Taliban in Afghanistan were deposed by U.S. troops, one of the first things some women did was to throw off their burquas and veils.

Even today, patriarchy is always accompanied by cultural supports designed to justify male dominance—such as certain activities designated as "not appropriate" for women.

As tribal societies developed into larger groups, men, who enjoyed their power and privileges, maintained their dominance. Long after hunting and hand-to-hand combat ceased to be routine, and even after large numbers of children were no longer needed in order to reproduce the human group, men held on to their power. Male dominance in contemporary societies, then, is a continuation of a millennia-old pattern whose origin is lost in history.

Gender Inequality in the United States

Gender inequality is not some accidental, hit-or-miss affair. Rather, the institutions of each society work together to maintain the group's particular forms of inequality. Customs, often venerated throughout history, both justify and maintain these arrangements. Although men have resisted sharing their privileged positions with women, change has come.

Fighting Back: The Rise of Feminism

To see how far we have come, it is useful to see where we used to be. In early U.S. society, the second-class status of women was taken for granted. A husband and wife were legally one person—him (Chafetz and Dworkin 1986). Women could not serve on juries, nor could they vote, make legal contracts, or hold property in their own name. How could times have changed so much that these examples sound like fiction?

A central lesson of conflict theory is that power yields privilege; like a magnet, power draws society's best resources to the elite. Because men tenaciously held onto their privileges and used social institutions to maintain their position, basic rights for women came only through prolonged and bitter struggle.

Feminism, the view that biology is not destiny and that stratification by gender is wrong and should be resisted, met with strong opposition—both by men who had privilege to lose and by women who accepted their status as morally correct. In 1894, for example, Jeannette Gilder said that women should not have the right to vote because "Politics is too public, too wearing, and too unfitted to the nature of women" (Crossen 2003).

feminism the philosophy that men and women should be politically, economically, and socially equal; organized activities on behalf of this principle

The women's struggle for equal rights has been long and hard. Shown here is a 1919 photo from the "first wave" of the U.S. women's movement. Only against enormous opposition from men did U.S. women win the right to vote. They first voted in national elections in 1920.

Feminists, then known as suffragists, struggled against such views. In 1916, they founded the National Women's Party, and in 1917 they began to picket the White House. After picketing for six months, the women were arrested. Hundreds were sent to prison, including Lucy Burns and Alice Paul, two leaders of the National Women's Party. The extent to which these women had threatened male prerogatives is demonstrated by their treatment in prison.

> Two men brought in Dorothy Day [the editor of a periodical that espoused women's rights], twisting her arms above her head. Suddenly they lifted her and brought her body down twice over the back of an iron bench. . . . They had been there a few minutes when Mrs. Lewis, all doubled over like a sack of flour, was thrown in. Her head struck the iron bed and she fell to the floor senseless. As for Lucy Burns, they handcuffed her wrists and fastened the handcuffs over [her] head to the cell door. (Cowley 1969)

This *first wave* of the women's movement had a liberal branch that wanted to reform all the institutions of society, and a conservative branch whose concern was to win the vote for women (Freedman 2001). The conservative branch dominated, and after the vote was won in 1920 the movement basically dissolved.

The *second wave* began in the 1960s. Sociologist Janet Chafetz (1990) points out that up to this time most women thought of work as a temporary activity intended to fill the time between completing school and getting married. To see how children's books reinforced such thinking, see Figure 11.1. As more women took jobs, however, they began to regard them as careers. Women then started to compare their working conditions with those of men. This shift in their reference group changed the way they viewed their conditions at work. The result was a second wave of protest against gender inequalities. The goals of this second wave (which continues today) are broad; they range from raising women's pay to changing policies on violence against women.

This second wave of the women's movement also has its liberal and conservative branches. Although each holds a different view of what gender equality should look like, the two share several goals, including equality in job opportunities and pay. Both liberals and conservatives have a radical wing. On the liberal side, radicals call for hostility toward

Figure 11.1

By looking at the past we get an idea of how far we have come. This illustration from a 1970s children's book shows the mind-set of the day. You can see how children who grew up during this period were taught to view gender and work.

Source: Anthony Cortese, *Provocateur: Images of Women and Minorities in Advertising,* 2nd ed. Boulder, CO: Rowman and Little Publishers, 2003.

men; on the conservative side, radicals favor a return to traditional family roles. All factions—whether radical or conservative—claim to represent the "real" needs of today's women. It is from these claims and counterclaims that the women's movement will continue to take shape and affect public policy.

A *third wave* of feminism is emerging. Three main aspects are apparent. The first is a greater focus on the problems of women in the Least Industrialized Nations (Patel 1997; Spivak 2000). The second is a criticism of the values that dominate work and society. Some feminists argue that competition, emotional invulnerability, toughness, and independence represent "male" qualities and need to be replaced with cooperation, openness, connection, and interdependence (England 2000). A third aspect is the removal of impediments to women's love and pleasure (Gilligan 2002). As this third wave develops, we can assume that it, too, will have its liberal and conservative branches.

Although women enjoy fundamental rights today, gender inequality continues to play a central role in social life. Let's look at gender relations in health care, education, and everyday life, and then, in greater detail, at discrimination in the world of work.

Gender Inequality in Health Care

In Chapter 19, we will pursue the issue of sexism in medicine further, but for now let's consider how gender discrimination in health care can be a life-and-death matter. This is the topic of the Down-to-Earth Sociology box below.

Gender Inequality in Education

In education, too, a glimpse of the past sheds light on the present. Until 1832, women were not allowed to attend college with men. When women were admitted—first at Oberlin College in Ohio—they had to remain silent at public assemblies, do the men students' laundry, clean their rooms, and serve them their meals (Flexner 1971).

Educators thought that women didn't belong in higher education because their female organs dominated their minds. Referring to menstruation, Dr. Edward Clarke, of Harvard University, expressed the dominant sentiment this way:

> A girl upon whom Nature, for a limited period and for a definite purpose, imposes so great a physiological task, will not have as much power left for the tasks of school, as the boy of whom Nature requires less at the corresponding epoch. (Andersen 1988)

Because women were so much weaker, Clarke urged them to study only one-third as much as young men—and not to study at all during menstruation.

DOWN-TO-EARTH SOCIOLOGY

Subtle Sexism Can Be Deadly

Medical researchers were perplexed. Reports were coming in from all over the country: Women were twice as likely as men to die after coronary bypass surgery. Researchers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles checked their own records: Of 2,300 coronary bypass patients, 4.6 percent of the women died as a result of the surgery, compared with 2.6 percent of the men.

These findings presented a sociological puzzle. To solve it, researchers first turned to biology (Bishop 1990). In coronary bypass surgery, a blood vessel is taken from one part of the body and stitched to an artery on the surface of the heart. Perhaps this operation was more difficult to perform on women because they have smaller coronary arteries. To find out, researchers measured the amount of time that surgeons kept patients on the heart-lung machine while they operated. They were surprised to learn that women spent *less* time on the machine than men. This indicated that the operation was not more difficult to perform on women.

As the researchers probed, a surprising answer unfolded: unintended sexual discrimination. Physicians had not taken the chest pains of their women patients as seriously as they took the complaints of their men patients. They were *ten* times more likely to give men exercise stress tests and radioactive heart scans. They also sent men to surgery on the basis of abnormal stress tests, but waited until women showed clear-cut symptoms of heart disease before sending them to surgery. Having surgery after the disease is further along reduces the chances of survival.

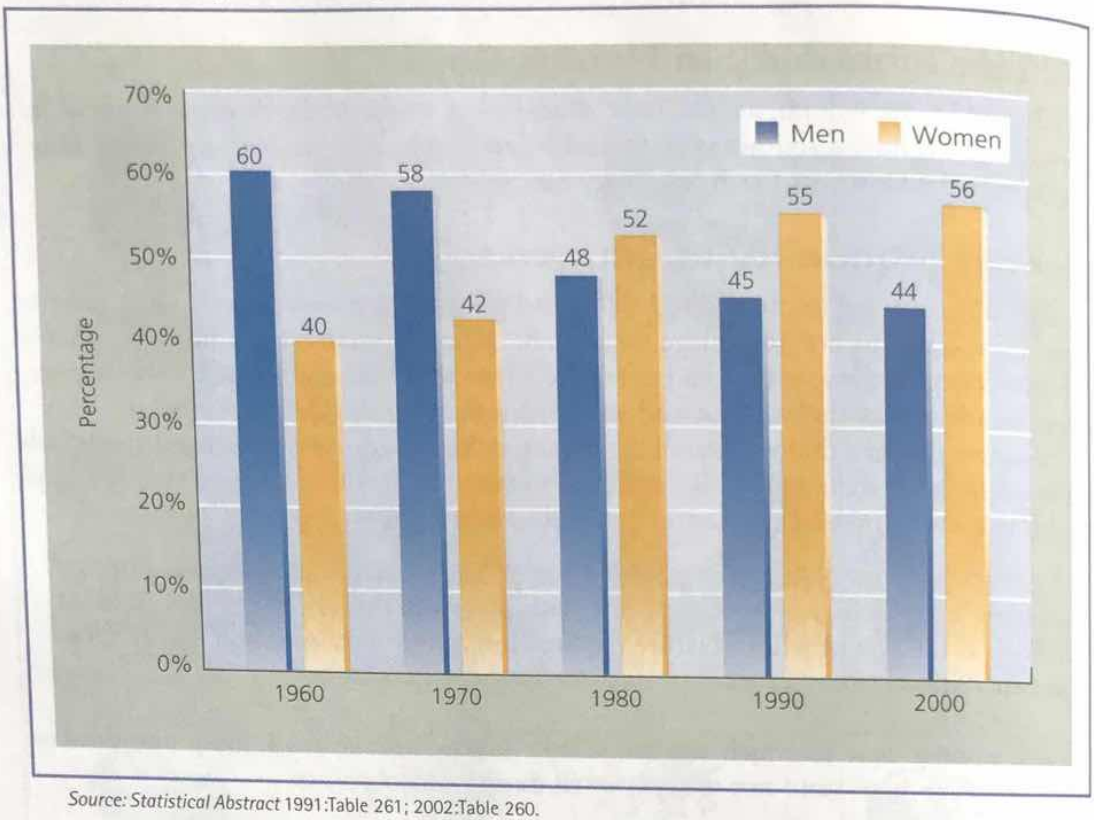
As more women become physicians, perhaps this will change. We know that women doctors are more likely to order pap smears and mammograms (Lurie et al. 1993), so it is likely that they will be more responsive to the health complaints of women. If so, more women will choose women doctors. To be competitive, men doctors will have to become more responsive to women's health problems, too.

For Your CONSIDERATION

In short, gender bias is so pervasive that it operates beneath our level of awareness and is so severe that it can be a matter of life or death. It is important to note that the doctors in these studies had no intention of discriminating against anyone. In what ways does gender bias affect your own perceptions and behavior?

Figure 11.2 Changes in College Enrollment, by Sex

What percentages of U.S. college students are female and male?



Source: Statistical Abstract 1991:Table 261; 2002:Table 260.

Like out-of-fashion clothing, these ideas were discarded, and women entered college in growing numbers. The change has been so great that of today's college students 56 percent are women (see Figure 11.2.). Women also earn 57 percent of all bachelor's degrees and 58 percent of all master's degrees (*Statistical Abstract* 2002: Table 276). Because men are now lagging behind, some have begun to call for *affirmative action for men*, especially for African American men (Kleinfeld 2002a). To see why, look at Figure 11.3.

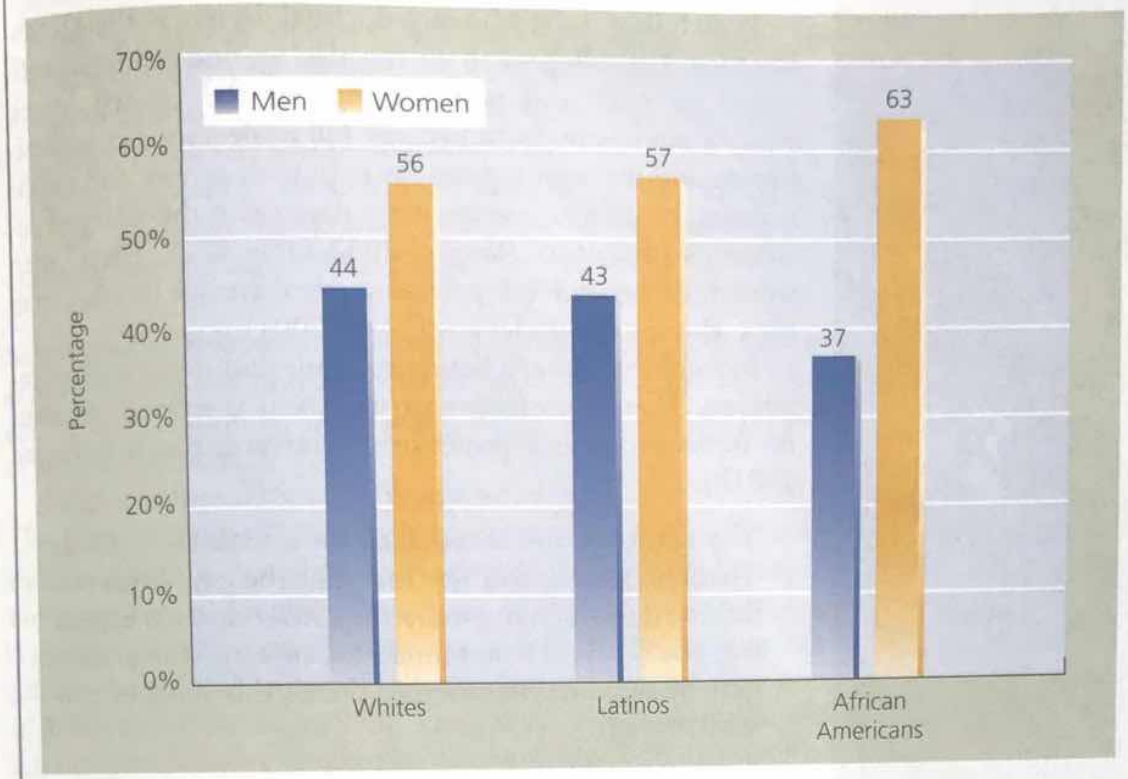
Figure 11.4 illustrates another major change. From this figure, you can see how women have increased their share of professional degrees. The greatest change is in dentistry: In 1970 across the entire United States, only 34 women earned degrees in dentistry. Today, about 1,700 women become dentists each year.

Women earning more bachelor's and master's degrees than men and entering the professions in growing numbers are certainly major breaks with the past. If we probe beneath the surface, however, we still find old practices. Women's sports, for example, are usually considered less important than men's sports (Fisher 2002). And whenever I attend a high school football or basketball game, I still see a group of girls in short, brightly colored skirts wildly cheering the boys from the sidelines—but no such group of boys leading organized cheers for the girls when they play *their* sports.

Then there is the matter of *gender tracking;* that is, degrees tend to follow gender, which reinforces male-female distinctions. Here are two extremes: Men earn 81 percent of bachelor's degrees in the "masculine" field of engineering, while women are awarded 88 percent of bachelor's degrees in the "feminine" field of home economics (*Statistical Abstract* 2002:Table 279). Because gender socialization gives men and women different orientations to life, they enter college with gender-linked aspirations. It is their socialization—not some presumed innate characteristics—that channels men and women into different educational paths.

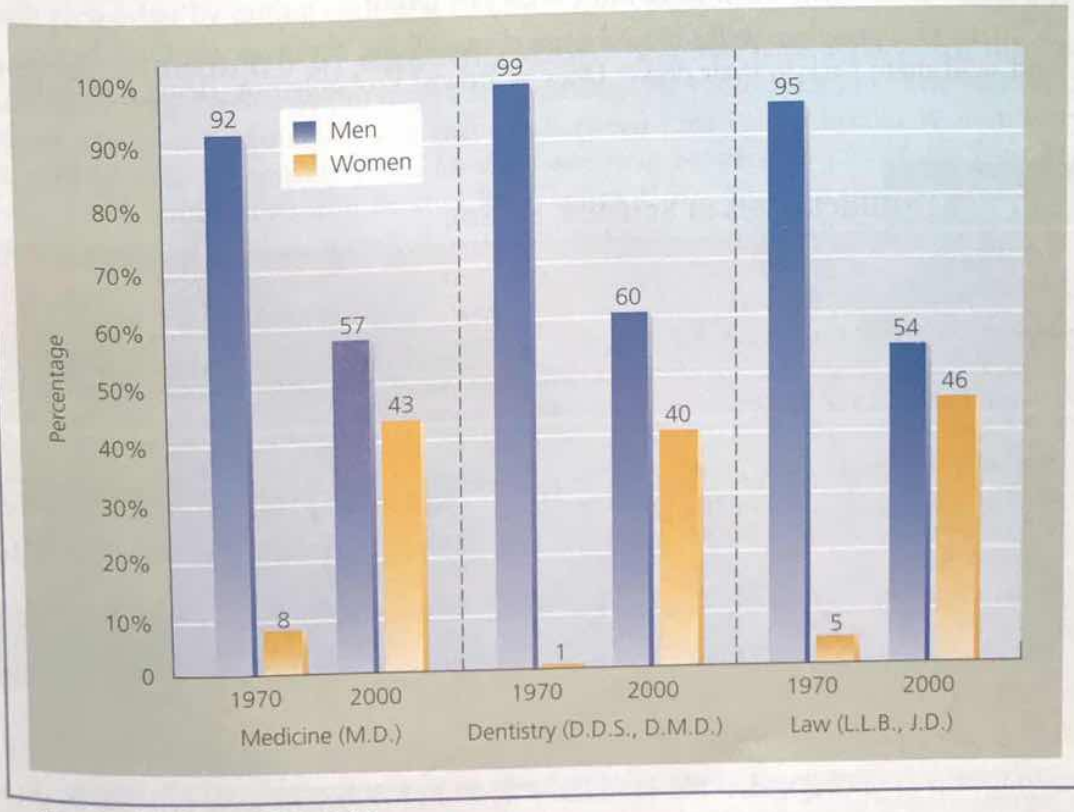
If we follow students into graduate school, we see that with each passing year the proportion of women drops. Table 11.2 on page 308 gives us a snapshot of doctoral programs in the sciences. Note how aspirations (enrollment) and accomplishments (doctorates earned) are sex linked. In five of these doctoral programs, men outnumber

Figure 11.3 Current College Students, by Sex and Race-Ethnicity

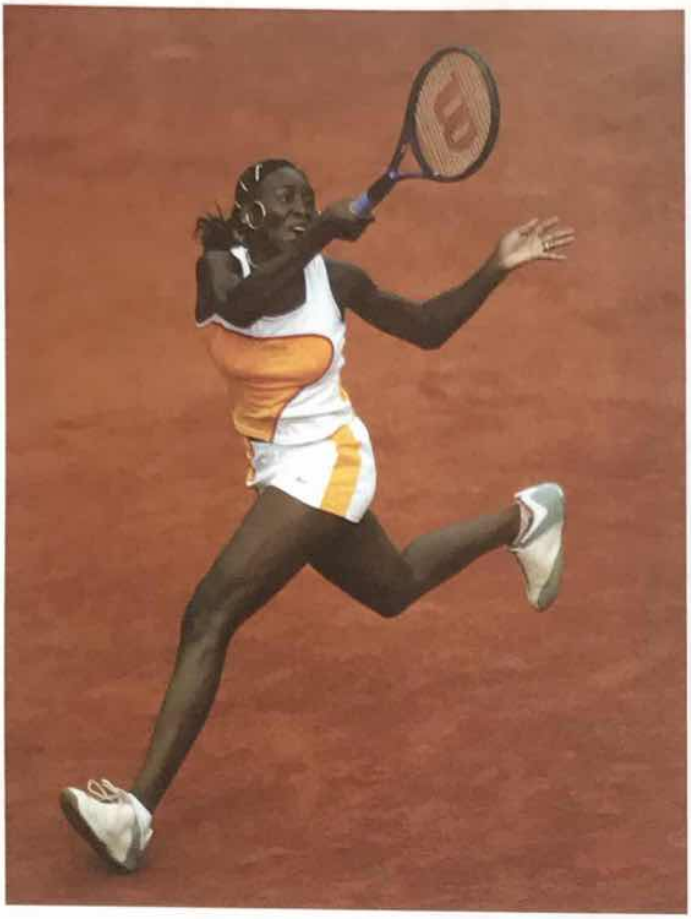


Source: *Statistical Abstract* 2002:Table 260.
Note: Only these groups are listed in the source.

Figure 11.4 Gender Changes in Professional Degrees



Source: *Statistical Abstract* 2002:Table 281.



From grade school through college, male sports have been emphasized, and women's sports underfunded. Due to federal laws (Title IX), the funding gap has closed considerably, and there is an increasing emphasis on women's accomplishments in sports. Shown here is a Venus Williams, who took the tennis world by storm. Venus, who was coached by her father since she was 4 years old, turned professional at age 14.

women, and in three women outnumber men (in two by a very small margin). In *all* of them, however, women are less likely to complete the doctorate.

If we follow those who earn doctoral degrees to their teaching careers at colleges and universities, we find gender stratification in rank and pay. Throughout the United States, women are less likely to become full professors, the highest-paying and most prestigious rank. In both private and public colleges, professors average more than twice the salary of instructors (*Statistical Abstract* 2002:Table 272). Even when women do become full professors, they average less pay than men who are full professors (Wood 2001).

Beyond the pay gap lies more subtle and invasive discrimination. Women professors are not taken as seriously as men. As Barbara Grosz, a professor at Harvard, put it (Zernike 2001b).

> The first time you're mistaken for a secretary is funny. The 99th time is not. The first time the guys [men professors] don't include you in the conversation at a meeting, you think, "I'm not interested anyway." But a whole year of these conversations—there's this kind of constant erosion.

Gender Inequality in Everyday Life

Of the many aspects of gender discrimination in everyday life that we could examine, we have space to look only at two: the general devaluation of femininity in U.S. society, and male dominance of conversation.

General Devaluation of Things Feminine

> Leaning against the water cooler, two men—both minor executives—are nursing their cups of coffee, discussing last Sunday's Giants game, postponing for as long as possible the moment when work must finally be faced.
>
> A [male] vice president walks by and hears them talking about sports. Does he stop and send them back to their desks? Does he frown? Probably not. Being a man, he

Table 11.2 Doctorates in Science, By Sex

Field	Students Enrolled		Doctorates Conferred		Completion Ratio* (Higher or Lower Than Expected)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Computer sciences	29%	71%	16%	84%	-44	+18
Engineering	20%	80%	16%	84%	-25	+5
Agriculture	42%	58%	29%	71%	-31	+22
Mathematics	35%	65%	25%	75%	-29	+15
Physical sciences	30%	70%	24%	76%	-20	+9
Social sciences	51%	49%	43%	57%	-16	+16
Biological sciences	52%	48%	46%	55%	-12	+15
Psychology	72%	28%	67%	33%	-7	+18

*The formula for the completion ratio is X minus Y divided by Y, where X is the doctorates conferred and Y is the proportion enrolled in a program.

Source: *Statistical Abstract* 2002:Tables 769, 771.

is far more likely to pause and join in the conversation, anxious to prove that he, too, is "one of the boys," feigning an interest in football that he may very well not share at all. These men—all the men in the office—are his troops, his comrades-in-arms.

Now, let's assume that two women are standing by the water cooler discussing whatever you please: women's liberation, clothes, work, any subject—except football, of course. The vice president walks by, sees them, and moves down the hall in a fury, cursing and wondering whether it is worth the trouble to complain—but to whom?—about all those bitches standing around gabbing when they should be working. "Don't they know," he will ask, in the words of a million men, "that this is an office?" (Korda 1973: 20–21)

As indicated in this scenario, women's interests, attitudes, and contributions are not taken as seriously as those of men. Masculinity is valued more highly, for it represents strength and success; femininity is devalued, for it is perceived as symbolizing weakness and lack of accomplishment.

Sociologist Samuel Stouffer produced a classic study of World War II combat soldiers. In *The American Soldier* (1949), he reported that officers used feminine terms as insults to motivate soldiers. To show less-than-expected courage or endurance was to risk the charge of not being a man. An officer might say, "Whatsa matter, Bud—got lace on your drawers?" A generation later, accusations of femininity were still used as motivating insults to prepare soldiers to fight in Vietnam. Drill sergeants would mock their troops by saying, "Can't hack it, little girls?" (Eisenhart 1975). The practice continues. Male soldiers who show hesitation during maneuvers are mocked by others, who call them girls (Miller 2001).

In sports, we see the same thing. Anthropologist Douglas Foley (2001) notes that football coaches insult boys who don't play well by saying that they are "wearing skirts," and sociologist Donna Eder (1995) notes that junior high boys call one another "girl" if they don't hit hard enough in football. Sociologists Jean Stockard and Miriam Johnson (1980), who observed boys playing basketball, heard boys who missed a basket being called a "woman." In professional hockey, players who are not rough enough on the ice are called "girls" (Gallmeier 1988:227).

These insults represent a devaluation of females. As Stockard and Johnson (1980:12) point out, "There is no comparable phenomenon among women, for young girls do not insult each other by calling each other 'man.'"

Gender Inequality in Conversation You may have noticed that men are more likely than women to interrupt conversations. They also are more likely to control changes in topics. Sociologists note that talk between a man and a woman is often more like talk between an employer and an employee than between social equals (West and Garcia 1988; Smith-Lovin and Brody 1989; Tannen 1990, 2003). In short, conversations between men and women mirror their relative positions of power in society.

Interrupting conversations and using "woman" and "girl" as terms of insult are only the tip of the iceberg. Underlying these aspects of everyday life is a structural inequality based on gender that runs throughout society. Let's look at this structural feature in the workplace.

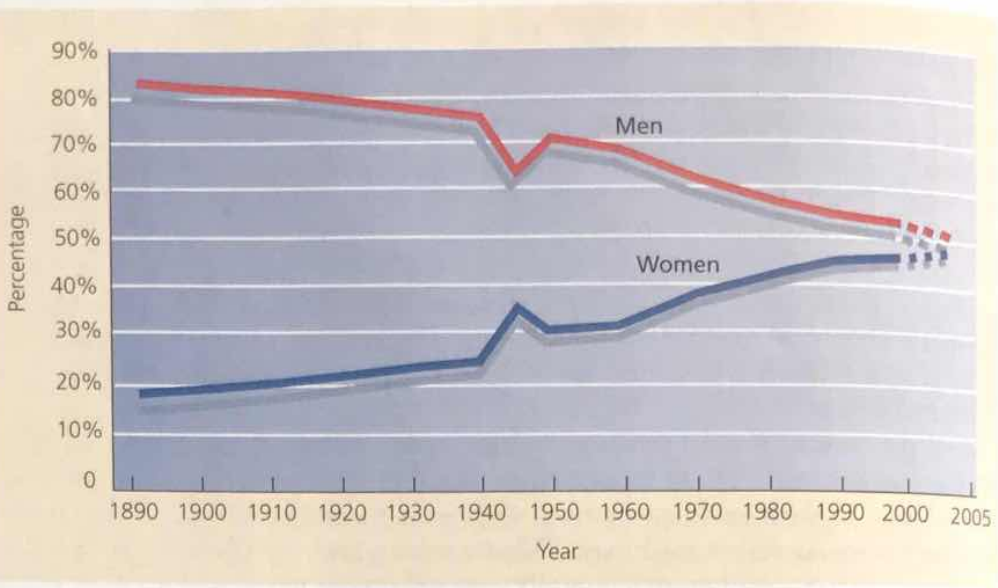
Gender Inequality in the Workplace

To examine the work setting is to make visible basic relations between men and women. Let's begin with one of the most remarkable areas of gender inequality at work, the pay gap.

The Pay Gap

One of the chief characteristics of the U.S. work force is a steady growth in the numbers of women who work outside the home for wages. Figure 11.5 shows that in 1890 about

Figure 11.5 Women's and Men's Proportion of the U.S. Labor Force



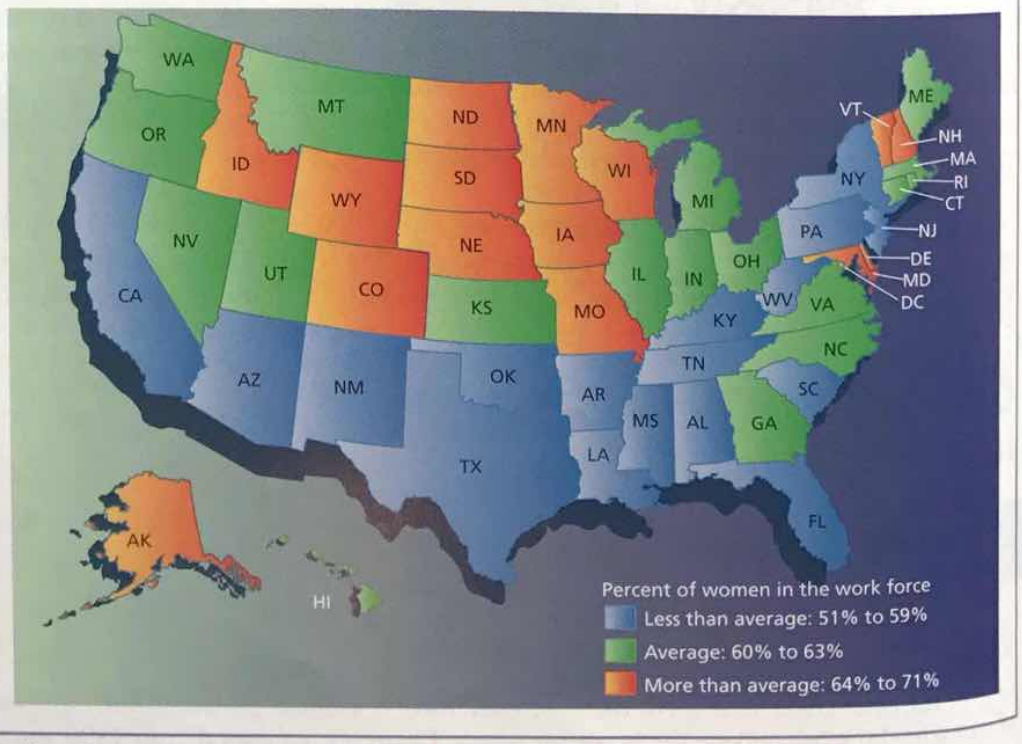
Note: Pre 1940 totals include women 14 and over: totals for 1940 and after are for women 16 and over. Broken lines are the author's projections.

Sources: By the author. Based on 1969 *Handbook on Women Workers*, 1969:10; *Manpower Report to the President*, 1971:203, 205; Mills and Palumbo, 1980:6, 45; *Statistical Abstract* 2002:Table 564.

one of every five workers was a woman. By 1940, this ratio had grown to one of four, by 1960 to one of three, and today it is almost one of two.

Women who work for wages are not evenly distributed throughout the United States. From the Social Map below, you can see that where a woman lives makes a difference in

Figure 11.6 Women in the Work Force



Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 2002:Table 565.

how likely she is to work outside the home. The geographical patterns evident in this map reflect regional-subcultural differences of which we currently have little understanding.

After college, you might like to take a few years off, travel a bit, and sit under a palm tree and drink piña coladas. But chances are, you are going to go to work instead. Since you have to work, how would you like to earn an extra $1,200,000 on your job? If this sounds appealing, read on. I'm going to reveal how you can make an extra $2,500 a month between the ages of 25 and 65.

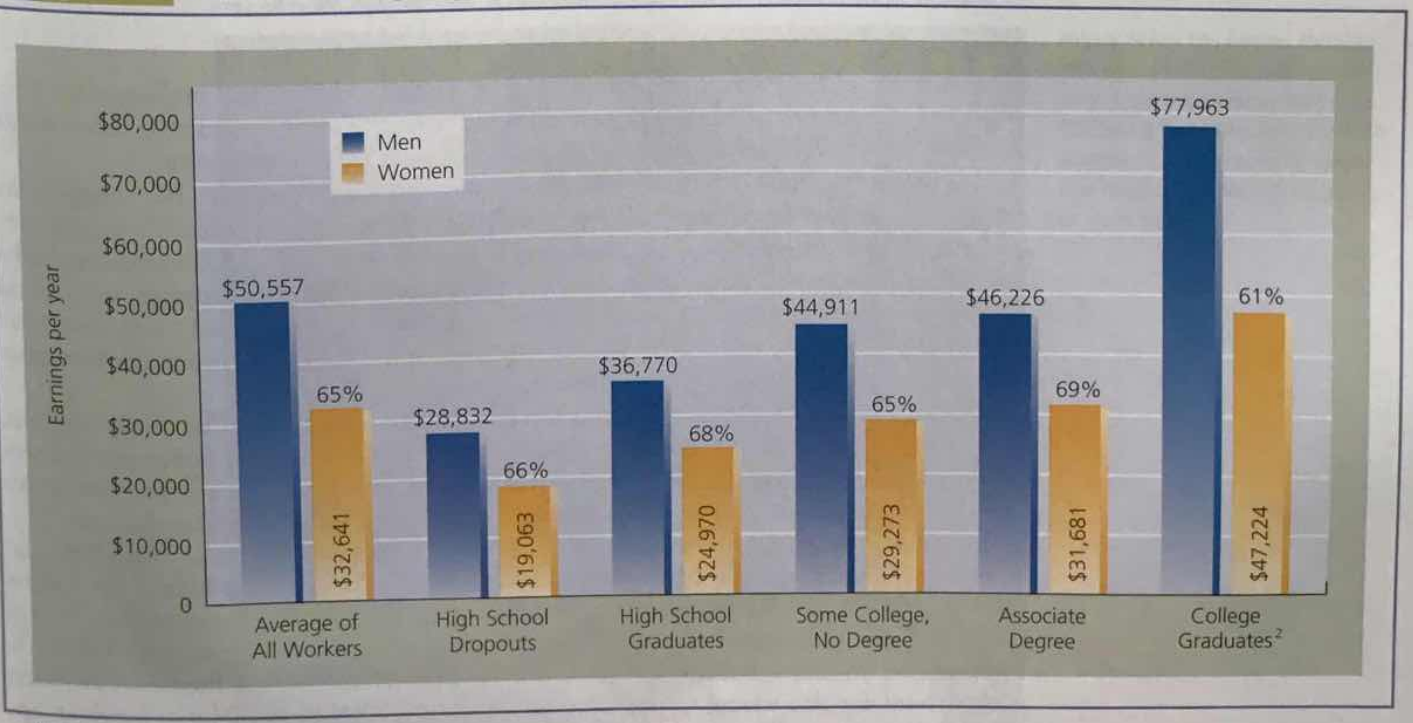
Is this hard to do? Actually, it is simple for some, but impossible for others. As Figure 11.7 shows, all you have to do is be born a male and graduate from college. If we compare full-time workers, this is how much more the *average male* college graduate earns over the course of his career. Hardly any single factor pinpoints gender discrimination better than this million-plus dollars. But here is another. As you can see from this figure, the average woman who graduates from college earns about the same as the average man who drops out of college. You can also see that the pay gap shows up at *all* levels of education.

The pay gap is so great that U.S. women who work full time average *only 65 percent* of what men are paid. Figure 11.8 on the next page shows that the pay gap used to be even worse. You can see that the gap closed a bit during the 1980s, but then it grew during the 1990s. It is now back to where it was 15 years ago. The gender gap in pay occurs not only in the United States but also in *all* industrialized nations.

What logic can underlie the gender pay gap? Earlier we saw that college degrees are gender linked, so perhaps this gap is due to career choices. Maybe women are more likely to choose lower-paying jobs, such as teaching grade school, while men are more likely to go into better-paying fields, such as business and engineering. Actually, this is true, and researchers have found that about *half* the pay gap is due to such factors. And the balance? It consists of a combination of gender discrimination (Kemp 1990; Jacobs 2003) and what is called the "child penalty," women missing out on work experience while they care for children ("Redefining . . . " 2000; Hundley 2001).

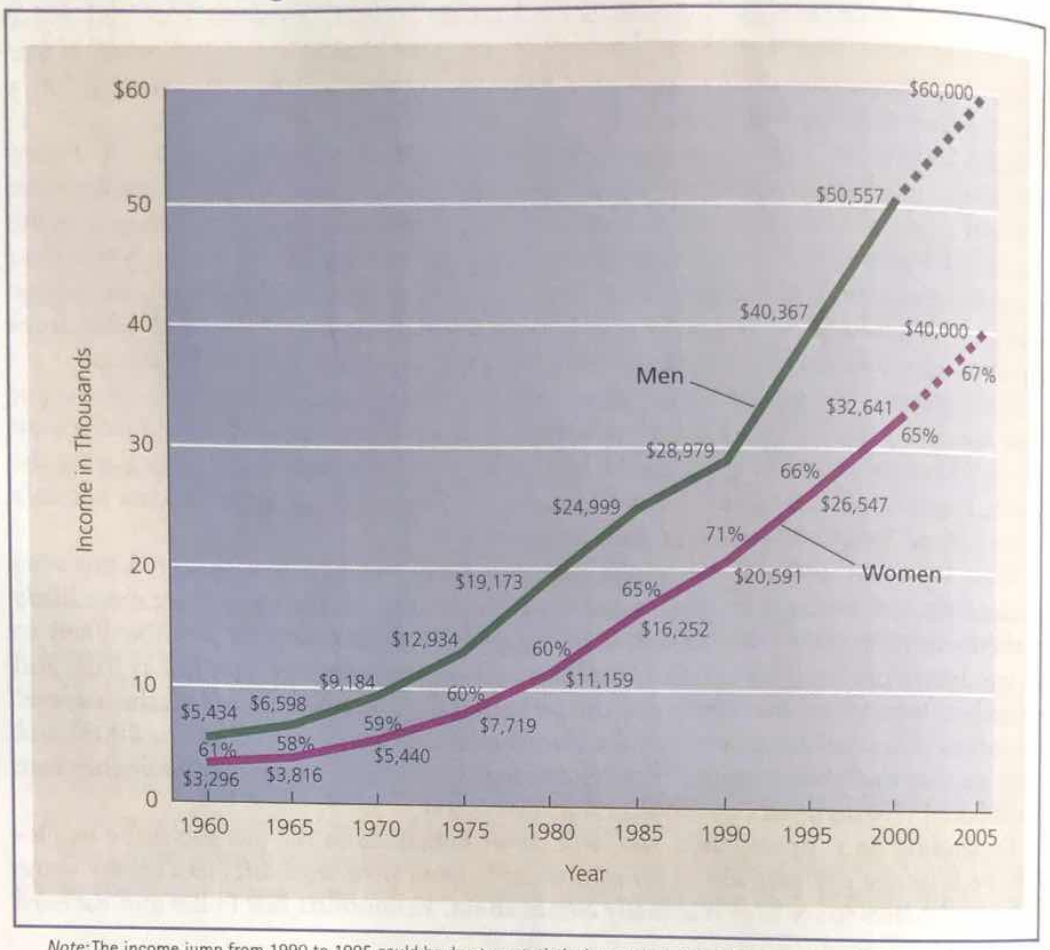
Depending on your sex, then, you will either benefit from the pay gap or be its victim. Because the pay gap will be so important in your own work life, let's follow some college graduates to see how it actually comes about. Economists Rex Fuller and Richard

Figure 11.7 The Gender Pay Gap, by Education[1]



[1]Full-time workers in all fields.
[2]Bachelor's and all higher degrees, including professional degrees.
Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 2002:Table 666.

Figure 11.8 The Gender Gap Over Time: What Percentage of Men's Income Do Women Earn?



Note: The income jump from 1990 to 1995 could be due to a statistical procedure. The 1995 source (for 1990 income) uses "median income," while the 1997 source (for 1995 income) merely says "average earnings." How the "average" is computed is not stated. For a review of this distinction, see Table 5.2. Broken lines indicate the author's estimates.
Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract* 1995:Table 739; 2002:Table 666, and earlier years.

Schoenberger (1991) examined the starting salaries of the business majors at the University of Wisconsin, of whom 47 percent were women. They found that the women's starting salaries averaged 11 percent ($1,737) less than those of the men.

You might be able to think of valid reasons for this initial pay gap. For example, the women might have been less qualified. Perhaps they had lower grades. Or maybe they completed fewer internships. If so, they would deserve lower salaries. To find out, Fuller and Schoenberger reviewed the students' college records. To their surprise, they found that the women had *higher* grades and *more* internships. In other words, if women were equally qualified, they were offered lower salaries—and if they were more qualified, they were offered lower salaries—a classic lose-lose situation.

What happened after these graduates had been on the job a while? Did things even out, so that after a few years the women and men earned about the same? Fuller and Schoenberger checked their salaries five years later. Instead of narrowing, the pay gap had grown even wider. By this time, the women earned 14 percent ($3,615) less than the men.

As a final indication of the extent of the U.S. gender pay gap, consider this. Of the nation's top 500 corporations (the so-called "Fortune 500"), only 5 are headed by women (Hehir 2001). And 5 is a record-breaking number! I examined the names of the CEOs of the 350 largest U.S. corporations, and I found that your best chance to reach the top is to be named (in this order) John, Robert, James, William, or Charles. Edward, Lawrence, and Richard are also advantageous. Amber, Katherine, Leticia, and Maria, however, apparently draw a severe penalty. Naming your baby girl John or Robert might seem a little severe, but it could help her get to the top. (I say this only slightly tongue-in-cheek.)

The Glass Ceiling and the Glass Escalator

What keeps women from breaking through the **glass ceiling**, the mostly invisible barrier that keeps women from reaching the executive suite? Researchers have identified a "pipeline" that leads to the top—the marketing, sales, and production positions that directly affect the corporate bottom line (Reich 1995; Clarke 2000). Men, who dominate the executive suite, stereotype women as being less capable of leadership than men (Heilman 2001). Viewing women as good at "support," they steer women into human resources or public relations. There, successful projects are not appreciated in the same way as those that bring corporate profits—and bonuses for their managers.

Another reason the glass ceiling is so powerful is that women lack mentors, successful executives who take an interest in them and teach them the ropes. Lack of a mentor is no trivial matter, for mentors can provide opportunities to develop leadership skills that open the door to the executive suite (Heilman 2001).

The glass ceiling is cracking, however (Solomon 2000; Lane 2002). A look at women who've broken through reveals highly motivated individuals with a fierce competitive spirit who are willing to give up sleep and recreation for the sake of career advancement. They also learn to play by "men's rules," developing a style that makes men comfortable. Most of these women also have supportive husbands who share household duties and adapt their career to accommodate the needs of their executive wives (Lublin 1996).

Then there is the *glass escalator.* Sociologist Christine Williams (1995) interviewed men and women who worked in traditionally female jobs—as nurses, elementary school teachers, librarians, and social workers. Instead of bumping their heads against a glass ceiling, the men in these occupations found themselves aboard a **glass escalator.** They were given higher-level positions, more desirable work assignments, and higher salaries. The motor that drives the glass escalator is gender—the stereotype that because someone is male he is more capable.

glass ceiling the mostly invisible barrier that keeps women from advancing to the top levels at work

glass escalator the mostly invisible accelerators that push men into higher-level positions, more desirable work assignments, and higher salaries

The "Mommy Track"

Most women, even though employed full time, have the primary responsibility of taking care of the children and doing the housework. To help resolve this conflict, Felice

Nancy Pelosi has broken through two glass ceilings in politics. Not only is she a Representative from California, but also she is the first woman to be the minority leader (the head of the party that is not in the majority).

Schwartz (1989) suggested that corporations offer women a choice of two parallel career paths. The high-powered "fast track" would require out-of-town meetings and a briefcase jammed with work that has to be done at night and on weekends. Less would be expected of a woman in the "mommy track," which would emphasize both career and family.

The "mommy track" has met severe criticism. Critics say that it would encourage women to be satisfied with lower pay and fewer promotions, and relegate women to an inferior position in corporate life. And unless we have a "daddy track," it also assumes that child rearing is women's work (Starrels 1992). A better way to resolve the conflict between work and family, they say, is for men to take on greater responsibilities at home and for firms to provide on-site day care, flexible work schedules, and paid parental leave. Others maintain that the choice between family and career is artificial, that there are ample role models of family-oriented, highly successful women, from Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, to Ann Fisher, astronaut and physician.

Gender and the Control of Workers

Conflict theorists analyze how capitalists exploit gender divisions among workers in order to control them. This does not come in an overt form, such as "Men, if you don't agree to what we are proposing, we'll hire women to take your place." Rather, owners and managers divide workers in subtle ways. For example, a Silicon Valley manufacturing firm specifies the color of the smocks that it requires its workers to wear. The color of the men's smocks depends on the particular job they do, but all the women wear the same color, regardless of their jobs.

Why should management have such a policy? According to sociologist Karen Hossfeld (2000), who studied these workers, the underlying message is: No matter what your job is, you are primarily a woman. Encouraging the women to think of themselves not as workers, but as *women* workers, makes them easier to control. For example, Hossfeld found that when their bosses flirted with them the women were less inclined to file grievances.

This same company has a "Ladies' Corner" in its newsletter. Because the newsletter has no "Men's Corner," the subtle message is that the newsletter is directed to men, with a little space for women. In other words, men are the *real* workers, but women are there, too.

Sexual Harassment and Worse

Sexual harassment—unwelcome sexual attention at work or at school, which may affect a person's job performance or create a hostile work environment—was not recognized as a problem until the 1970s. Before this, women considered unwanted sexual comments, touches, looks, and pressure to have sex to be a personal matter.

With the prodding of feminists, women began to perceive unwanted sexual advances at work and school as part of a *structural* problem. That is, they began to see them not simply as a man here and there doing obnoxious things because he was attracted to a woman, but, rather, as men abusing their positions of authority in order to force unwanted sexual activities on women. Since women have moved into positions of authority, they, too, have become sexual harassers (Wayne et al. 2001). With most authority vested in men, however, most sexual harassers are men.

As symbolic interactionists stress, terms affect our perception. Because we have the term *sexual harassment,* we perceive actions in a different light than did our predecessors. The meaning of sexual harassment is vague and shifting, however, and court cases constantly change what this term does and does not include. Originally sexual desire was an element of sexual harassment, but no longer. This changed when the U.S. Supreme Court considered the lawsuit of a homosexual who had been tormented by his supervisors and fellow workers. The Court ruled that sexual desire is not necessary and that sexual harassment laws also apply to homosexuals who are harassed by heterosexuals on the job (Felsenthal 1998).

Central to sexual harassment is the abuse of power, a topic that is explored in the following Thinking Critically section.

sexual harassment the abuse of one's position of authority to force unwanted sexual demands on someone

THINKING Critically

Sexual Harassment and Rape of Women in the Military

Women raped at West Point! Other women raped at the U.S. Air Force Academy!

So shrieked the headlines and the TV news teasers. For once, the facts turned out to be just as startling. Women cadets, who were studying to become officers in the U.S. military, had been sexually assaulted by their fellow cadets.

And when the women reported the attacks, *they* had been swiftly punished. The women found themselves charged with drinking alcohol and socializing with upperclassmen. For the most part, the women's charges against the men were ignored. The one man who faced a court martial was acquitted (Schemo 2003).

This got the attention of Congress. Hearings were held, and the commander of the Air Force Academy was replaced.

A few years earlier, several male Army sergeants at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland had been accused of forcing sex on unwilling female recruits (McIntyre 1997). The drill sergeants, who claimed that the sex was consensual, were found guilty of rape. One married sergeant, who had pleaded guilty to having consensual sex with 11 trainees (adultery is a crime in the Army), was convicted of raping another 6 trainees a total of 18 times and was sentenced to 25 years in prison.

The Army appointed a blue-ribbon panel to investigate sexual harassment in its ranks. When Sgt. Major Gene McKinney, the highest-ranking of the Army's 410,000 noncommissioned officers, was appointed to this committee, former subordinates accused him of sexual harassment (Shenon 1997). McKinney was relieved of duties and court-martialed. Found not guilty of sexual harassment, but guilty of obstruction of justice, McKinney was reprimanded and demoted. His embittered accusers claimed the Army had sacrificed them for McKinney.

A civilian panel recommended that the services remain integrated, but that platoons (the smallest units, with fifty soldiers) be segregated by sex (Mersereau 1998). The Navy didn't like this recommendation, saying it wanted men and women to work together and to sleep in the same building, as they would on a ship. The Army and Navy continued as they were.

Although rape in the military has been covered up by military personnel, it is not an isolated event. Researchers who interviewed a random sample of women veterans found that 4 of 5 had experienced sexual harassment during their military service, and 30 percent had been victims of attempted or completed rape. Of the women who had been raped, one-third had been raped more than once. Three-fourths of the women who had been raped did not report their assault (Sadler et al 2003).

For Your CONSIDERATION . . .

How can we set up a structure to minimize sexual harassment and rape in the military? Can we do this and still train men and women together? Can we do this and still have men and women sleep in the same barracks and on the same ships? Be specific about the structure you would establish.

Gender and Violence

The high rate of violence in the United States shocks foreigners and frightens many Americans. Only a couple of generations ago, many Americans left their homes and cars unlocked. Today, fearful of carjackings, many lock their cars even while driving. Fearful of rape and kidnappings, many parents escort their children to school. Lurking behind these fears is the gender inequality of violence—the fact that females are much more likely to be victims of males, not the other way around. Let's briefly review this almost one-way street in gender violence.

Violence Against Women

In the Thinking Critically section above, we considered rape in the military; on pages 299 and 300, we examined violence against women in other cultures; and in Chapter 16 we shall review violence in the home. Here, due to space limitations, we can review only briefly some primary features of violence.

Forcible Rape Being raped is a common fear of U.S. women. As with rape in the military, which we just discussed, this fear is far from groundless. According to FBI statistics, each year 7 of every 10,000 females age 12 and older are raped. From the National

Crime Victimization Survey, however, we know that only about 32 percent of rape victims report this crime to the police (*Statistical* Abstract 2002:Table 290 and page 180). A more accurate total, then, is *three* times the official rate, or about 21 victims per 10,000 rather than 7. Despite these high numbers, women are safer now than they were just a few years ago, as rape has been declining for the past decade.

Although the victims of sexual assault include babies and very old, frail women, the typical victim is 12 to 24 years old. Contrary to stereotypes, most victims know their assailant. About two of five (38 percent) of rapes are committed by strangers (*Statistical Abstract* 2002:Tables 295, 296).

An aspect of rape that is usually overlooked is the rape of men in prison. With prison officials reluctant to let the public know about the horrible conditions behind bars, our studies are far from perfect. Those we have, however, indicate that about 15 to 20 percent of men in prison are raped. From court cases, we know that some guards even punish prisoners by placing them in cells with sexual predators (Donaldson 1993; Lewin 2001b).

Date (Acquaintance) Rape What has shocked so many about date rape (also known as *acquaintance rape*) is studies showing that it does not consist of a few isolated events (Collymore 2000; Goode 2001). Some researchers even report that most women students experience unwanted, forced, or coerced sex (Kalof 2000). Others report much smaller numbers. Researchers who used a representative sample of courses to survey the students at Marietta College, a private school in Ohio, found that 2.5 percent of the women had been physically forced to have sex (Felton et al. 2001). About as many men (23 percent) as women (24 percent) had given in to pressure to have sex when they didn't want to, but—and this is no surprise—none of the men had been physically forced to have sex.

Most date rapes go unreported. A primary reason is that the victim feels partially responsible because she knows the person and was with him voluntarily. However, as a physician who treats victims of date rape said, "Would you feel responsible if someone hit you over the head with a shovel—just because you knew the person?" (Carpenito 1999).

Murder Table 11.3 summarizes how gender fits into U.S. patterns of murder. Note that although females make up a little over 51 percent of the U.S. population, they don't even come close to making up 51 percent of the nation's killers. Note also that one-fourth of all murder victims are female—and nine times out of ten the killer is a male.

Violence in the Home Women are also the typical victims of family violence. Spouse battering, marital rape, and incest are discussed in Chapter 16, pages 000-000. A particular form of violence against women, genital circumcision, is the focus of the Cultural Diversity box on page 300.

Women in the Criminal Justice System There is another side to gender and violence. Although women are much less likely to kill, when they do kill, judges tend to be more lenient with them. As Table 11.4 shows, women are more likely to be given probation for murder (as well as for robbery, burglary, and all crimes listed on this table). Sexual stereotypes probably underlie these decisions—such as the idea that women are less of a menace than men and should be given another chance. It is also possible that women defendants have less of a criminal history ("rap sheet") when they are charged with crimes. We need research on this topic.

Table 11.3 Killers and Their Victims

The Victims	The Killers
Female 24% Male 76%	Female 10% Male 90%

Source: Statistical Abstract 2002:Tables 288, 299.

Feminism and Gendered Violence

Feminist sociologists have been especially effective in bringing violence against women to the public's attention. Some use symbolic interactionism, pointing out that to associate strength and virility with violence—as is done in many areas of U.S. culture—is to promote violence. Others use conflict theory. They argue that men are losing power, and that some men become violent against women as a way to reassert their declining power and status (Reiser 1999). Perhaps this is a reason for the violence featured in the Mass Media box on the next page.

Table 11.4 Going Easier on Women

When Men and Women Are Convicted of the Same Crime, Who Gets Off Easier?*

Crime	Prison		Probation	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Murder	97%	89%	1%	5%
Robbery	78%	67%	9%	13%
Burglary	55%	43%	19%	23%
Aggravated Assault	54%	30%	18%	26%
Larceny	42%	28%	24%	34%
Fraud	39%	31%	28%	41%
Drug Dealing	50%	37%	20%	26%
Weapons	49%	28%	22%	30%

*This table examines the extremes of sentencing; totals do not add to 100 percent because of jail sentences and unspecified "other" dispositions.

Source: Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1997:Table 5.50. (Table dropped in later editions.)

massMEDIA *in Social Life*

Beauty and Pain: How Much Is an Ad Worth?

The studio audience at *Super Jockey,* a popular television program in Japan, waits expectantly. They've seen it before, and they can't get enough. A young woman, clad in a revealing bikini, walks onto the stage. Cringing with fear, she is lowered into a glass tank of scalding hot water.

The studio audience eagerly watches the woman through the glass. The national audience watches at home. Both break into laughter as the girl writhes in pain.

To make sure the young woman gets the full treatment, a man ladles hot water over the woman's breasts—just as though he were basting a chicken. The television camera zooms in for a close-up shot of her reddening breasts.

Most women last only three or four seconds.

The camera follows as the young woman scrambles out of the tub, where she jumps up and down in pain and rubs ice all over her body.

The audience howls with glee.

Why do the women do it? For every second they stay in the hot water, they get one second on the program to advertise any product they wish. Most advertise their place of employment, their pain a favor to their boss (Strauss 1998).

It is often difficult to understand other cultures. *Super Jockey* wouldn't be tolerated in the United States. If some company tried to air a U.S. version, protests would erupt. The studio would be picketed, its sponsors boycotted.

Instead of trying to explain the intricacies of a culture that finds this behavior amusing (*Super Jockey* is a comedy show), we can turn the focus onto our own culture. Why do we find the rape of women a source of entertainment? How can I say that we do? It is apparent from *our* television—from our "dramas" and police shows in which the story line centers on women who are raped. Of course, in order to get the public's seal of approval, producers see to it that the rapist is apprehended and punished. As further evidence that this entertainment is meritorious, the rapist may commit suicide, get shot by the police, or get run down by a car as he tries to escape into his netherworld.

If you think that I've stretched things a bit, consider how entertaining our society finds the murder of women. The Halloween shocker-thriller-slasher films are outstanding examples. Audiences, simultaneously titillated and terror-stricken, watch crazed, masked killers hunt down college coeds with knives, axes, even chain saws. Audiences seem to find the screams of the victims especially entertaining. And the prettier, shapelier, and more skimpily clad the victim, the higher the entertainment value.

For Your CONSIDERATION

It is difficult to understand cultures—especially to explain why people find certain things amusing or entertaining. Why would Japanese and Americans find the victimization of women to be a scintillating source of entertainment?

Solutions

There is no magic bullet for this problem of gendered violence, but to be effective, any solution must break the connection between violence and masculinity. This would require an educational program that incorporates schools, churches, homes, and the media. Given the gun-slinging heroes of the Wild West and other American icons, as well as the violent messages so prevalent in today's mass media, it is difficult to be optimistic that a change will come any time soon.

Our next topic, women in politics, however, gives us much more reason for optimism.

The Changing Face of Politics

What do these nations have in common?

Canada in North America

Argentina, Bolivia, and Nicaragua in Latin America

Britain, Finland, France, Ireland, and Portugal in western Europe

The Philippines in Asia

Israel in the Mideast

Poland in eastern Europe

India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka on the subcontinent

The answer is that all have had a woman president or prime minister. To this list, we can add even such bastions of male chauvinism as Haiti, Turkey, and Bangladesh (Harwood and Brooks 1993).

Then why not the United States? Why don't women, who outnumber men, take political control of the nation? Eight million more women than men are of voting age, and more women than men vote in U.S. national elections. As Table 11.5 shows, however, men greatly outnumber women in political office. Despite the gains women have made

Table 11.5 U.S. Women in Political Office

	Percentage of Offices Held by Women	Number of Offices Held by Women
National Office		
U.S. Senate	13%	13
U.S. House of Representatives	14%	60
State Office		
Governors	12%	6
Lt. Governors	36%	18
Attorneys general	14%	7
Secretaries of state	20%	10
Treasurers	16%	8
State auditors	14%	7
State legislators	23%	1,672

Sources: National Women's Political Caucus 1998; *Statistical Abstract* 2000:Tables 463, 471, 472; 2002:Tables 381, 389; 2002 election results.

in recent elections, since 1789 over 1,800 men have served in the U.S. Senate, but only 33 women have served, including 13 current senators. Not until 1992 was the first African American woman (Carol Moseley-Braun) elected to the U.S. Senate. No Latino or African American women have yet been elected to the Senate (National Women's Political Caucus 1998; *Statistical Abstract* 2002: Table 382).

Why are women underrepresented in U.S. politics? First, women are still underrepresented in law and business, the careers from which most politicians emerge. Then, too, most women find that the irregular hours kept by those who run for office are incompatible with their role as mother. Fathers, in contrast, whose ordinary roles are more likely to take them away from home, are less likely to feel this conflict. Women are also not as likely to have a supportive spouse who is willing to play an unassuming background role while providing solace, encouragement, child care, and voter appeal. Finally, preferring to hold on to their positions of power, men have been reluctant to incorporate women into centers of decision making or to present them as viable candidates.

These factors are changing, however, and we can expect more women to seek and gain political office. In 2002, for example, a watershed event occurred when Nancy Pelosi was elected by her colleagues as the first woman minority leader—the most powerful woman ever in the House of Representatives. There are other indicators. As we saw in Figure 11.4 (on page 307), more women are going into law. The same is true for business. In these professions, they are doing more traveling and making statewide and national contacts. Increasingly, child care is seen as a mutual responsibility of both mother and father. This generation, then, is likely to mark a fundamental change in women's political participation, and it appears to be only a matter of time until a woman occupies the Oval Office.

Glimpsing the Future—With Hope

By playing a fuller role in the decision-making processes of our social institutions, women are going against the stereotypes and role models that lock males into exclusively male activities and push females into roles that are considered feminine. As structural barriers fall and more activities are degendered, both males and females will be free to pursue activities that are more compatible with their abilities and desires as individuals.

As sociologists Janet Chafetz (1974), Janet Giele (1978), and Judith Lorber (1994) have pointed out, the ultimate possibility is a new conception of the human personality. At present, structural obstacles, accompanied by supporting socialization and stereotypes, cast most males and females into fairly rigid roles. Overcoming these obstacles and abandoning traditional stereotypes will give males and females new perceptions of themselves and one another. Females and males will then be free both to feel and to express needs and emotions that current social arrangements deny them. Females will likely perceive themselves as more in control of their environment and to explore this aspect of the human personality. Males will likely feel and express more emotional sensitivity—to be warmer, more affectionate and tender, and to give greater expression to anxieties and stresses that their gender now forces them to suppress. In the future, we may discover that such "greater wholeness" of males and females entails many other dimensions of the human personality.

As females and males develop a new consciousness both of themselves and their own potential, relationships will change. Certainly distinctions between the sexes will not disappear. There is no reason, however, for biological differences to be translated into social inequalities. The reasonable goal is to have an appreciation of sexual differences coupled with equality of opportunity—which may well lead to a transformed society (Gilman 1911/1971; Offen 1990). If this happens, as sociologist Alison Jaggar (1990) observed, gender equality can become less a goal than a background condition for living in society.