

## Issues of Sex and Gender

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ROME - Rita Levi Montalcini, a Nobel Prize-winning scientist, said Saturday that even though she is about to turn 100, her mind is sharper than it was when she was 20.



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- **Sex**—the biological characteristics that distinguish males and females.
- **Gender**—social traits a group considers proper for its males and females.

## Gender Difference in Behavior

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What contribution do you think biology and culture make to gender differences?

Biology or Socialization?

Testosterone/estrogen or social factors?

## Gender Difference in Behavior

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- Males tend to be more aggressive than females
- Females tend to enter nurturing professions more so than males

Should females be considered a minority group?

(remember minority groups receive some government benefits via affirmative action)?

Females are classified as a **minority group** because they are denied equal access.

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**Origins of Patriarchy**-male dominance of a society.

What caused this to be?

### Three Revolutions to Reduce Male Dominance

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1. **Women's suffrage in early 1900s**  
--1917 picketing of the White House  
--right to vote in 1920 in U.S.
2. **Women's fight for equal jobs and pay**  
--1960's to present

### Three Revolutions

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3. **Push for changes in work and societal values**

--need to emphasize different values: cooperation, sensitivity to others, interdependence

--concern for women in least industrialized nations

### Gender Inequality in the United States

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**Feminism**—the view that biology is not destiny and that stratification by gender is wrong.

### Gender Inequality in the United States

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In **higher education**, degrees sought tend to follow gender stereotypes.

a. **"Gender tracking"** -degrees obtained follow gender patterns (library science; health services)

b. **Jobs in education**—women have lower ranks and pay

### Gender Inequality in the United States

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In the **workplace**, there is stratification by rank and pay in jobs

Women work at lower job levels and are paid less for same job

During unemployment, women are sometimes the first released

## The Glass Ceiling

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—the most invisible barrier that keeps women from reaching the executive suite in the workplace.

What causes this to happen?

## The Glass Ceiling

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- Men who dominate the workplace stereotype potential leaders as people who **look like themselves**.
- Women **lack mentors and coaches** as well.

## The Quite Revolution

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- The number of women in the workforce has grown rapidly
- This change in the workforce is creating changes:
  - to employee relationships and work policies (flex time),
  - in **families** (the "Double Shift")

## The Double Shift

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**How can women work AND have a family to?**

- Look for role models
- Ideally obtain a profession that allows you some flexibility
- Marry someone who is willing to share the responsibilities

## Sexual Harassment

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- **Sexual Harassment**—unwelcomed sexual attention at work or at school, which may affect a person's job performance or create a hostile work environment.
- **Sexual desire is not a necessary condition for "sexual harassment"**, as ruled by the U.S. Supreme Court.

## The Changing Face of Politics

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- Eight million more women than men are of **voting age**.
- **Women are underrepresented** in politics because:
  - They are less likely to go into careers from which politicians come
  - The irregular hours are undesirable to mothers

## Theories and Gender

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What would you guess are the views of a functional theorist?

Conflict theorist?

Symbolic Interactionist?

## Theories and Gender

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- Sexual stratification serves a variety of **functions** for society
- Men don't want to give up their **dominant position (conflict view)**
- **Labels** such as "sexual harassment" have helped to heighten awareness of women's issues

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The End