

How Does Gender Affect the Type of Work We Do and the Rewards We Receive for Our Work?

The Gender of Work

What did you want to be when you grew up? Do you think your answer to that question or the way people reacted to your answer was connected to your gender? Did anyone ever tell you that you couldn't be what you wanted because of your gender? How do certain jobs get defined in more or less gendered ways? Assuming that a job is where you do something called *work*, exactly what is work? How is gender important in determining what kind of work people do and how much work they do? What criteria do we use to reward people for the work they do, and how are gender, sexuality, race, and class all important to those decisions? How important is the amount of money you get paid for a job to your decision about whether it's something you'd like to do or not? Do you think the importance of money varies by gender? Are men more invested in a high-paying job, and why would that be? What are the differences in what women and men are paid? How have those differences changed over time, and how do we explain those differences? Does gender influence the types of jobs for which we think men or women are better suited? How does gender impact how well people do in the jobs they have, including their likelihood of being promoted or getting a raise? Does gender have an impact on who gets hired for a job? What would a workplace without gender look like?

These are the questions we'll be exploring in this chapter on gender and the world of work, another important institution where gender is enacted and which helps to create and reinforce our ideas about what gender is. As the preceding questions reveal, determining exactly what we're talking about with a focus on work is not an easy task. In the last chapter, we discussed the important historical development within Anglo-European societies of

the separation of spheres. The separation of spheres is important to our consideration both of family and work because it sets up a fundamental division between these two realms of social life, and this has important gendered implications for the world of work. The separation of spheres affected families by removing some aspects of productive work from within the house. The doctrine of separate spheres affected work in Anglo-European societies by creating a whole new sphere that largely did not exist before: the workplace as separate and distinct from the home. In this way, the separation of spheres forever changed the way many people in the world thought about work. Work became something done largely by men, outside of the house, for pay. What happened to all of the many other tasks that are done by women, inside the home, or for no pay?

Take the example of Haruko, a wife and mother in Bessho, a rural farming community in Japan (Conway-Turner & Cherrin, 1998). Haruko described herself as “just a housewife” who had a lot of free time, but anthropologist Gail Lee Bernstein observed Haruko, like many other women in her village, laboring side by side with men in the rice paddies weeding, transplanting, and harvesting (Bernstein, 1993). Haruko called this work “helping her husband” rather than “work,” because Haruko was not paid for her labor in the field. As far as the abundance of free time Haruko had, Bernstein (1993) described the daily worklife of this Japanese housewife as follows:

Haruko's daily round of chores began at six o'clock. Every morning she prepared a breakfast of *mososhira*, boiled rice, and green tea. After sending the children off to school at eight o'clock in a flurry of last-minute searches for clothing and books and hastily delivered instruction, Haruko ran a load of wash in the washing machine and hung it out to dry. As the woman of the house, Haruko also had several community obligations that were impossible to shirk.

In addition to being a homemaker, Haruko was the family's chief farm worker. Haruko also worked with her mother-in-law and husband on a neighborhood team husking rice. One of Haruko's principal farm chores was feeding pigs. Twice a day, once in the morning and once at night, the couple fed the ninety pigs and cleaned the pigsty.

By early November, Haruko usually looked for part-time wage-paying jobs. Haruko was taken on as a *dokata*, or construction worker (literally a “mud person”), and she worked on a team with two other women and three men. In most other wage-paying jobs women and men worked apart, at distinct kinds of work, but on the construction teams they worked side by side. The female *dokata's* work was physically demanding: women hauled heavy boulders, climbed down into trenches to lay irrigation pipes, constructed bridges over irrigation ditches, and shoveled snow from steep mountain slopes. (pp. 226–229)

Some of the things that Haruko did may seem somewhat foreign to women outside of her particular cultural context. If you asked most people in the United States to guess the gender of a construction worker (which is essentially what a *dokata* is), their safest bet would probably be male. In fact, some people in the United States might tell you that construction work is a job that men are inherently better suited for based on their belief in

men's greater overall strength. Yet Haruko, and many women like her around the world, move boulders, lay irrigation pipes, and shovel snow—largely without the aid of the modern implements that reduce the amount of physical strength involved in these tasks in places like the United States. The case of Haruko begins to reveal the ways in which our sense of how certain jobs are gendered or better suited to one gender or the other may be a product of our own cultural biases.

The labor for which Haruko is *not* paid may sound more familiar to the experiences of those from Anglo-European societies. Certainly, many women prepare breakfast and do laundry, even if fewer women (and people in general) are responsible for many of the farm tasks included in Haruko's round of daily chores. Are doing the laundry, making sure children are prepared to go to school, feeding pigs, or husking rice somehow less important than the work Haruko's husband does in the paid labor force? Why is Haruko's work not really considered work, even by Haruko herself, who describes herself as *just a housewife*? Her story is typical of women around the world, not necessarily in the specific tasks she performs (not everyone has pigs to feed), but in the amount of work she does, the many different work roles she occupies, and in the devaluation of all her tasks as not really work (Conway-Turner & Cherrin, 1998). We begin with Haruko's case to make an important point in our ongoing examination of work. Many ways of accounting for work and discussing work within the social sciences have historically ignored the lives of people like Haruko. If we want to examine the relationships between gender and work, we must first make sure that we become aware of the gender biases that are already there as soon as we use the word *work*.



Can you think of other examples of hidden work that is performed by women and not usually seen as work?

MEASURING THE WORLD'S WORK

The difficulty in deciding exactly what constitutes work makes it hard to do very simple things like measure who works around the world and exactly how much work they do. On a global level, organizations like the United Nations are interested in measuring the amount and kinds of work done by people in different countries, and the statistics they produce can have important implications for decisions about who receives much-needed international aid. Some evidence indicates that there is an important link between the economic growth of a country or region and the rates of employment of women, and this makes measuring the amount of work done by women an important task (International Labor Office, 2008). Initially, many of the statistics collected by international organizations like the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund simply excluded the work women did outside of the paid labor market. This meant that most of the work Haruko did on a daily basis was not accounted for in these numbers. If her construction work included some kind of legal

contract, an hourly wage or salary, or some kind of paycheck from which taxes were taken (meaning the income was reported to the government), then this is **formal paid labor**. But much of the labor that takes place around the world is **informal labor**, which means there is no legal contract for the work, not necessarily a set hourly wage or salary, and none of the income is reported to the government by the employer or employee. Women are far more likely worldwide to be employed in the informal labor market than are men, so there's a strong chance that Haruko's part-time position as a construction worker still did not include her in the official statistics once collected by the United Nations.

In the wake of the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women held by the United Nations, the United Nations began to reconsider its methods for measuring work and employment. The current United Nations usage of "economically active" persons includes those who are own-account workers and those who are contributing family workers (International Labor Office, 2008). **Own-account workers** are those who are self-employed with no employees working for them. Cottage industry work is often an example of own-account work, and it involves individuals making or producing some product in their home to sell for cash. If Haruko grows her own pigs to eventually sell on the market, she is an own-account worker, and is counted as "economically active" under new United Nations measures. **Contributing family workers** are a kind of own-account worker who works without pay in an establishment operated by a related person living in the same household. If Haruko's husband is the one who gets the money from raising and selling the pigs, while Haruko receives no pay in return for her part of the labor, she becomes a contributing family worker. Both these categories help account for much of the work done by women and children that is outside the formal labor market but still important to the economic functioning of families as well as nations as a whole.

When the category of economically active people is used, worldwide there are less than 70 (66.9) economically active women for every 100 economically active men (International Labor Office, 2008). This rate of economic activity has been fairly stable in the 10 years since 1997, and it indicates the large share of the world's work that is done by women, excluding any of the domestic work they do that does not directly contribute to family income. Making breakfast, sending children to school, and doing laundry are still not included in these calculations of what it means to be economically active. The rate of economically active women is highest in Europe and the developed world, where there are 82 women working for every 100 men. Northern Africa and the Middle East present some of the lowest rates, with 35 and 39 economically active women for every 100 men, respectively.

Expanding the ways in which we define work to include a wide range of activities is important in that it begins to dismantle our very gendered notions of work as something that is primarily done by adult men. In fact, much of the world would come to a grinding halt if we tried to survive solely on the labor of adult men. But on a global scale, there are important differences in the kinds of economic activity in which women and men are engaged. The types of economic activity women are more likely to be engaged in worldwide are labeled by the United Nations as *vulnerable employment*. Over 60% of women who work worldwide are employed in the informal sector, including jobs like own-account worker and contributing family member (Women, 2005). These include the work Haruko does to help her husband in the rice fields and to care for the family pigs. Worldwide, women's work in the informal sector includes women like Cherifa, a woman in Tunisia who

began selling pastries to friends and family members when her husband squandered her family inheritance (El Amouri Institute, 1993). Cherifa makes the pastries out of her own home, and while one of her sons has set up a shop selling the same pastries and paying taxes, Cherifa neither counts her money nor reports income from what is her own business. In Colombia, women like Auntie Donkor and Madam Faustina participate in the informal economy and support their families by illegally selling foodstuffs like fish and produce at a market in the city (Okine, 1993). They cannot afford the taxes and fees required to legally sell food at the market, so they sell after 4:00 p.m., when the police are less likely to see them, and establish a network of customers who know where to find them. Like Cherifa, both of these women support their families through the income they gain from these informal activities.

The activities of these women are considered **vulnerable employment** for several reasons, including the very basic fact that these jobs are lower paid overall relative to jobs in the formal economy. One household member working a job in the informal economy will find it difficult to raise his or her family out of poverty on that one income, and this is an especially troubling fact in much of the developing world, where fully 50% to 80% of nonagricultural employment is in the informal sector (Women, 2005). When the majority of jobs are in the low-paying informal economy, moving vast numbers of families out of poverty in the global South becomes a nearly impossible task. These types of employment make women and their families vulnerable to falling into or remaining in poverty, but because they are in the informal economy, they also make women vulnerable in other ways. Those working in the informal economy are less likely to have access to basic social services while being more likely to be fall prey to illness, property loss, disability, and death. Their lack of access to social services, because they are not *officially* employed in the informal economy, means that they have reduced ability to deal with contingencies such as illness, property loss, and disability; workers in the informal economy are not eligible for or cannot afford the very things that help to buffer the effects of these life events, like health insurance, home insurance, life insurance, and disability insurance. Not surprisingly then, those in the informal economy have lower levels of health, education, and longevity relative to their counterparts in the formal economy. They experience fewer of the rights and benefits that come with employment and are therefore often cut out of the very decision-making processes in government or marketing institutions that might help to improve their situation. For example, organizing a union in the world of the informal labor market is difficult, and this leaves these workers with limited options for improving their working conditions or pay. Within the government, informal workers are not acknowledged as officially employed, and this affects their status relative to government institutions.

Given these disadvantages of working in the informal economy and women's concentration worldwide within these jobs, it's safe to say that many women are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to the work they do. On top of that, add the fact that no country keeps track of the "housework" that women do in their calculations of economic activity. When you hear figures about the GDP or GNP of a country—their gross domestic product or gross national product—this does not include the hours and hours of work necessary for caring for children and maintaining a household done by family members, unless that activity generates income for the family. Does changing dirty diapers generate income for a family? Not according to national statistics, but it is a task that has to be done in order to

reproduce a new generation of children—and if there were not someone in the family doing this task for no pay, someone would have to be paid to do it. Almost all of the tasks that fall under the umbrella term of *housework* are tasks that can be, and often are, outsourced to someone outside of the family. Even what we think of as the highly emotional and intimate job of raising children has historically and sometimes continues to be done by employees who are not related to the children at all: nannies, babysitters, and au pairs. A person who does all these jobs for free within the family is saving the household a great deal of money and so contributing to the family's income. In the United States, the annual cost of child care for a 4-year-old ranges from \$3,016 to \$9,628, while for infants, the cost can be as high as \$13,840 annually (Matthews, 2006). For many poor, single working mothers, over half of their cash income goes toward the costs of child care. Why are these activities, then, treated as if they exist outside of the real economy when they are done by family members?



What would happen if women (and other people) around the world demanded to be paid for the labor they currently do for free? What would a world in which whoever does the child care and housework in your family had to be paid for that labor look like? How would the ways in which we think about work be different?

The simplest answer is that work has become a deeply gendered institution. Just as the world of the family is presumed to be a feminine domain, work is seen as the territory of men. This ideology is so strong that it makes the work that women do around the world largely invisible. Their work is not counted in official statistics gathered by international and national organizations (Bonvillian, 2007). The role of women in determining the distribution of economic resources within families is often ignored and subsumed under the larger unit of the household, without analyzing the complex gender dynamics that take place within any given household. As we've seen with women like Haruko, women themselves do not consider what they do work, but merely as helping their husband or being a housewife and mother. Given all these realities, it is important at the beginning of this chapter to point to the ways in which much of the world's work currently is and always has been done by women. The story we will explore later in this chapter about the increasing labor force participation among women in many Anglo-European cultures is just one particular narrative about women's relationship to work. This story suggests that women working is a relatively new and novel phenomenon, but to tell the story in that way ignores the many other kinds of work women have always done and continue to do around the world.

A MAN'S JOB: MASCULINITY AND WORK

While much of the work that women do is ignored or made invisible, work becomes for men an unspoken expectation that is often seen as defining the very core of a man's

identity. In almost any industrialized society, adult men are expected to have jobs, and any deviation from this expected course of events is viewed as not just a personal failing on the part of the man, but a failure of his masculinity. A man who is successful in the world of work is seen as successful at the all important task of being a man. Thus, in places like the United States we follow the dictum, the “bigger the paycheck,” the “bigger the man” (Gould, 1974, p. 99). This lines up with the dictum of contemporary manhood we discussed in the last chapter: that men should “Be a Big Wheel.” To demonstrate the particular power that work has in men’s lives, we need only look at what happens to men who do not work or men whose work does not provide the kind of status derived from having a big paycheck. A wealth of sociological research demonstrates what happens to men with work lives characterized by various kinds of failure, whether that means actual unemployment or working-class jobs that do not provide the kind of status associated with high-paying, high-status careers (Liebow, 1967; Rubin, 1976; Rubin, 1994). These failures in their work lives affect other relationships, souring friendships, placing a strain on relations between husbands and wives, and altering patterns of fatherhood. As one unemployed machinist in Lillian Rubin’s (1994) study of working-class families described it,

When you get laid off, it’s like you lose a part of yourself. It’s terrible; something goes out of you. Then, on top of that, by staying home and not going to work and associating with people of your own level, you begin to lose the sharpness you developed at work. Everything gets slower; you move slower; your mind works slower. (p. 110)

As Rubin (1994) pointed out in her study, when you ask most men to tell you about their identities, they are most likely to first describe their job, or what they do for a living. Some women, and probably increasing numbers of them, will also mention their jobs, but Rubin argued that a woman’s work identity is still situated within a more complex set of competing interests, including her family obligations. For men, work is connected to the very core of their selves, and it’s therefore not surprising that men who lose their jobs feel like they have lost a part of who they are. In her study, Rubin detailed the sense of loss and helplessness experienced by men who have lost their jobs largely due to layoffs. Some of these men are afraid to sit still and stop doing things around the house for fear that they’ll never get up again or feel that they have not earned the “right” to sit still anymore since they are no longer employed. Though they are generally part of mass layoffs, and so are the victims of larger economic trends in society, they still often blame themselves and try to figure out what they could have done differently to keep their jobs. Men facing unemployment describe having lost not just a job, but a whole way of life because many of their friendships were grounded in work experiences. These men often become violent or turn to alcohol to deal with what are feelings of loss and depression due to their unemployment. Children describe their fathers as suddenly always mad about something and therefore unapproachable. Even the sexual lives of these men are affected, due to the anxiety, fear, anger, and depression that begin to characterize the lives of unemployed men.

The importance of work to men’s lives is also demonstrated in the ways in which social class identity and masculinity intersect, affecting the dynamics of family life. In her study of class-based masculinities, Karen D. Pyke (1996) argued that the ways in which masculinity

is enacted differs greatly among working-class and middle-class men, in part due to the status they are able to gain from their work experiences. Lower-class husbands follow a form of **compensatory masculinity**, an exaggerated form of masculinity involving drugs, alcohol, and sexual carousing that is used to demonstrate defiance and independence from both the control of their wives and the establishment (higher-status men) (Pyke, 1996). This form of masculinity helps working-class men to compensate for their experiences in the everyday work world, where they occupy a subordinated status relative to higher status men who are their bosses and employers. This does not necessarily mean that working-class men are more likely to use drugs, go out drinking with their friends, or engage in sexual infidelity; rather, Pyke and others argue, working-class men are less able and willing to disguise these activities than are middle-class men, for whom the same set of activities are seen as markers of ambition. For example, the working-class man who goes out drinking with his coworkers is seen by his wife as being "immature," "lazy," and "not ambitious." The higher-class man who engages in many leisure activities outside of the home, like playing golf, going to the gym or club, or having drinks with coworkers, is seen by his wife and others as seeking to further his career. Compensatory masculinity not only allows working-class men to express their own masculinity and to provide justification for their activities; it also allows higher-class men to define themselves in contradiction to the behaviors of working-class men. Because higher-class men do not supposedly engage in these types of behaviors, they are able to represent their own version of **egalitarian masculinity** as more civilized, refined, and closer to a situation of gender equity.

This relationship between compensatory masculinity among working-class men and egalitarian masculinity among higher-class men is a good example of the ways in which gender is important not just in making distinctions between women and men, but in creating hierarchy within groups of men or groups of women. The version of masculinity performed by working-class men is judged inferior to the masculinity of higher-class men, and it therefore leaves working-class men less privileged relative to their higher status counterparts. Pyke (1996) pointed to the way these inequalities become manifested in the division of household labor within these families. Though both working-class and higher-class husbands by and large tend to avoid household labor, the explanations for opting out of housework provided by higher-class men are granted more legitimacy than those provided by lower-class men. The career priorities and role as main provider give higher-class men more power to be legitimately excused from helping out around the house in ways that working-class men's status as workers does not. Because working-class men were not seen as having careers and because their lower earnings provided them with less status as providers within the household, Pyke argued that working-class families rely more on a rigid gendered division of labor based in traditional gender ideology to divide household tasks. This lower status for working-class husbands was often also exacerbated by the need for wives to work to supplement family income. In this way, the work life of working-class men and their higher-class counterparts has real effects on the amount of power they can exert within their household. It's not much of a stretch to argue that the status of a man's job also has an effect on how he is perceived in the world outside of work as well.

CULTURAL ARTIFACT 1: MEET THE PARENTS

The importance of a man's job to his identity is demonstrated to comic affect in the film *Meet the Parents*, starring Ben Stiller and Robert De Niro. In this film, Ben Stiller's character, Gaylord "Greg" Focker, meets his former CIA father-in-law Jack Byrnes (Robert De Niro) and acts out many of the common anxieties experienced by heterosexual men meeting their future in-laws. Consistent with the doctrine of separate spheres and the good provider role, many of these anxieties center around the career and economic prospects of the future son-in-law. In *Meet the Parents*, these issues are crystallized in Greg's job: male nurse. The very first scene of the movie plays on the novelty of Greg's profession as we see him rehearsing his marriage proposal to his girlfriend with a patient in a hospital who mistakes him for the doctor. Later in the movie, Greg's future mother-in-law mistakes triage for a job that's "better than a nurse," while his future father-in-law, Jack, notes the absence of many men in Greg's profession. When Greg meets two friends of the family who are doctors, he's introduced as being "in medicine." When he clarifies that he's a nurse, both the male doctors laugh, assuming he's making a joke. Later, his fiancé's ex-boyfriend assumes that Greg does male nursing as charity work, rather than as his paid job. The plot of the movie hinges on a claim Greg makes about his performance on his MCAT's, the exam used to gain entrance to medical school. Greg says he did very well on the MCAT and decided not to become a doctor because he wanted more interaction with his patients. Jack, as former CIA, uses his connections to investigate Greg's claims and initially concludes that Greg is lying because no Greg Focker is registered as having taken the MCAT. It is eventually revealed that Gaylord Focker did do well on the MCATs, and so Greg and Jack come to a grudging acceptance of each other. Besides being funny, *Meet the Parents* reveals a great deal about the intersections between jobs, money, prestige, and masculinity. That he's a male nurse isn't the only reason Greg's father-in-law finds him suspect as a husband for his daughter, but throughout the movie, it lowers Greg's status in countless interactions and makes him an easy object of ridicule. What's more, the movie suggests the ways in which Greg's status as a male nurse is seen as sign of a potential failure (he wasn't smart enough to be a doctor), rather than as an intentional decision. Would a future daughter-in-law's status as a nurse be called into question in the same way? Would the premise of *Meet the Parents* work if the gender of the main character were changed? Are women judged on the basis of their careers or jobs in the same way that men are? And if not, what criteria would be used to judge the suitability of a future wife for one's son?

Given this connection, depriving men of the ability to work at all or to work in the kind of job that provides a degree of status has important repercussions for their ability to successfully perform masculinity. In the United States, one of the groups that faces some of the most serious and seemingly intractable barriers to employment is African American men. Interviews with employers in the Chicago area revealed a multitude of reasons used to explain why black people from inner-city areas of the city do not make good employees, including their lack of education, lack of basic skills, lack of work ethic, and lack of socialization into good work habits. These beliefs extended to African Americans in general, but were especially directed at black men. One study conducted by the Urban Poverty and Family Life study revealed that 77.9% of all employers were more positive toward the employment of black women over black men (Wilson, 1996). The problems employers cited for black men ranged from the high level of job turnover demonstrated in their work histories to their tardiness and absenteeism. Especially, young African American men from inner city areas in Chicago were described as having problems taking directions from authority figures and being undesirable employees because of the public perception of black men; employers acknowledged that most people are afraid of young black men, and though this is largely beyond the control of any individual black man, it is still used as a criterion that makes African American men less desirable as employees. Few of the employers being surveyed cited discrimination as a reason for the high levels of unemployment among inner city black men, though 179 of them mentioned engaging in discriminatory activities in their own decisions about whether or not to hire black men.

Many African American young men are prevented from using work as a resource and way to demonstrate masculinity. In fact, some scholars who study the lives of inner city youth argue that whereas past generations of black men were esteemed for being hard workers and important role models for their race and community, younger generations of black men do not see work as an important way to express their masculinity (Anderson, 1990; Anderson, 2000). On a structural level, this may be partly explained by the different types of jobs that are now available to many African Americans living in inner city neighborhoods. In previous generations, many factories were still located in cities, providing unionized and therefore higher paying manufacturing jobs for minorities living in the inner city. With these jobs, it was often possible for a man to support his family with a blue collar, but respectable, job. With deindustrialization beginning in the 1970s, many of these factories left the cities, especially northern cities, and moved out of the United States or in search of cheaper labor in places like the American South and Southwest. The fewer jobs that are available to unskilled workers in today's cities tend to be service jobs, and these jobs are generally lower paid and bring with them fewer benefits such as health insurance. In addition, these jobs have a high turnover rate built in; employers know that if their employees only work for short periods of time, they will not be with the company long enough to earn benefits such as health insurance or vacation time. This high turnover rate is acceptable to the employees, but it creates an uneven work history for those forced to take these jobs (Wilson, 1996). Service jobs also require the ability to effectively serve and relate to the public, and it was precisely these skills that many of the employers in the survey emphasized that they believed inner city black men lack.

These barriers to employment for many young black men in the inner city help to explain why this generation would be less invested in work as a potential source of

masculinity. If a good job that allows you to support your family is increasingly hard to come by, it makes sense to turn to other sources for displaying masculinity. For some urban African American men, this means turning to illegal activities that exist outside of the formal economy, such as dealing drugs. But even for those black men who do not turn to crime as a means to achieve financial success, the very orientation necessary for success in the white, middle-class world becomes stigmatized and labeled as not masculine. These explanations of differing forms of masculinity echo our discussion of compensatory masculinity and egalitarian masculinity above, and they draw on arguments about oppositional culture. **Oppositional culture** is “a coherent set of values, beliefs, and practices which mitigates the effects of oppression and reaffirms that which is distinct from the majority culture” (Mitchell & Feagin, 1995, p. 68). As applied to the specific situation of young, black, urban men, oppositional culture explains that one response to the oppression experienced by this group in the form of blocked and reduced job opportunities is to develop their own beliefs and practices for defining what it means to be masculine. This oppositional way of defining masculinity both helps to deal with the lack of job opportunities and demonstrates clear distinctions with the hegemonic, or dominant, masculinity. In this particular version of masculinity, the main provider role that is defined as so important to masculinity in the doctrine of separate spheres becomes less important than the kind of toughness (Anderson, 2000) exemplified in music forms like rap music, which is itself a form of oppositional culture (Mitchell & Feagin, 1995). Some evidence suggests that oppositional culture is also important in explaining the lower academic achievements of African American youth relative to other groups, especially when gender is combined with the effects of race (Farkas, Lleras, & Maczuga, 2002). African American high school students are more likely to experience stigma from their peers for their academic achievement because doing well in school is perceived as “acting white,” but survey evidence suggests that though both black women and men experience this stigma, it is greater for young black men.

All of these examples demonstrate the ways in which work and masculinity are connected and the ways in which the relationship between gender and work are not uniform across different groups in any given society. Work can be an important source of status for men, but when these opportunities are blocked, the content of what it means to be masculine can change and shift to reflect the particular social context of that group. This reminds us again that part of our quest in understanding gender is not to identify what is the norm or standard in terms of how gender is lived but, rather, to identify which particular definition of gender has the most power in society. The particular relationship in which masculinity becomes an important source of status and identity may not be true of the majority of men around the world, and even if it is, that is not to say that this is the normal relationship between work and masculinity. What is true is that gaining status through work is a task that is most easily achieved by men in powerful positions, which in the United States generally means white, upper-class, heterosexual men. Though working-class men and African American men may resist this particular hegemonic version of masculinity, this dominant form of masculinity remains something that exists to be resisted, and it thereby exerts some pressure on their lives. Drawing on theories of intersectionality, which we discussed in Chapter 2, this becomes a good example of the ways in which gender, race, and class overlap. In these situations, gender is used to enforce what are class and racial differences. The case of African American men and employment

specifically demonstrates that race and gender do not add up in simplistic ways, so that being black and female (and therefore occupying two oppressed identities) is more difficult than being black and male (and occupying only one oppressed identity). Rather, gender and race interact in complicated, historically and structurally contingent ways so that, at least in the case of inner city employment, the gender of black men can put them at a distinct disadvantage relative to their female counterparts.



In many inner-city African American communities, there are more female-headed households (households in which a woman is the main provider) than male-headed households. How might this fact also affect the way gender works in these communities?

One last example of the ways in which the work a man does and the status he occupies can be connected comes from research on men in predominantly female occupations. These cases demonstrate the ways in which the status of any particular job or career is determined not just by how much the job pays or how much authority and prestige is gained from the job, but also from what kind of people generally do the job. Jobs that are done primarily by women tend to be seen as lower status, especially for men in these particular occupations. For example, the general set of daily tasks performed by a general practitioner doctor and a nurse practitioner are not that different, as the increasing prevalence of nurse practitioners in the United States demonstrates. Yet doctors, who are still predominantly male, have higher status (and higher pay) than do predominantly female nurse practitioners. Historically, as women enter a particular occupation or field in large numbers, the status associated with that occupation decreases, along with the compensation. How does working in a predominantly female occupation affect the status and overall identity of men?

Christine Williams (1991, 1992) studied both men in predominantly female occupations and women in predominantly male occupations. Focusing on men's experiences in predominantly female occupations such as librarian, elementary school teacher, nurse, and social worker, Williams found that men faced little discrimination within their jobs, either in their hiring or from their coworkers once they were on the job. For heterosexual men in occupations such as librarian or elementary school teacher, they often found a distinct advantage in being able to bond with other males in their work environment, and these other males were often in supervisory positions. Gay men in these occupations were sometimes forced to disguise their sexuality, in part by exaggerating acceptable "masculine" qualities. For example, one male physician stated that he preferred all male nurses in his operating room, unless the male nurses were gay. Men in general in predominantly female occupations face little hostility from their female counterparts. Though they are sometimes forced to take care of the more "masculine" tasks associated with their jobs, like discipline cases in elementary schools, on the whole, the men Williams interviewed found their women coworkers to be supportive of their careers and eager to have men enter into their

fields. Though men often felt uncomfortable in these settings, their female coworkers often went as far as to include the men in social gatherings of coworkers, including bridal showers and baby showers.

Within the actual workplace environment, then, men receive something of a status boost from being one of the few men in a predominantly female occupation. The stigmatization of a man working as a nurse or librarian comes largely from the world outside of work for these men—from patients, parents, and clients as well as from friends, family members, acquaintances, and strangers. From these sources, men receive messages that male nurses are gay, male librarians are wimpy and asexual, and male social workers are feminine and passive, while male elementary school teachers are suspected of being pedophiles. The principal of one male elementary school teacher shared the following concerns expressed by the parents of one student: “How can he love my child; he’s a man?” and “Aren’t you concerned about homosexuality?” (Williams, 1992, p. 261). Another male elementary school teacher described the reaction he gets from other men when he tells them what he does for a living: “If I tell men that I don’t know, that I’m meeting for the first time, that that’s what I do . . . sometimes there’s a look on their faces that, you know, ‘Oh, couldn’t get a real job’” (Williams, 1992, p. 262)? This male teacher’s wife, who was also an elementary school teacher, was perceived by her husband as receiving an increase in status from the fact that she worked at all, while the specific nature of his job decreased his status in the eyes of other men. Most of the men Williams (1992) interviewed felt that to outsiders, their job represented a distinct step down in status, and this may be part of the reason why there are so few men in these occupations. Doing work that is labeled as women’s work makes it more difficult for men to make the connection between the status derived from a job and masculinity.

SEX SEGREGATION

One of the most important concepts that came out of Williams’s (1991, 1992) work on men in predominantly female occupations was the idea of the glass escalator, which is a very different phenomenon from the glass ceiling faced by women. The glass escalator identified by Williams describes the experiences of men when they enter occupations that are predominantly held by women. Do they face the same set of disadvantages described by the metaphor of the glass ceiling? As we already discussed, men in female occupations face little job discrimination when it comes to their hiring, and they often enjoy a preference based on their gender. Librarians described a preference for hiring males over females, while male elementary teachers talked about how marketable they are due to their gender. One pediatric nurse was told by the supervisor who hired him that it was nice to have a man around in such a female-dominated occupation. Once these men are hired for the job, they are often tracked into certain areas or specialties in large part because of gender expectations. Male social workers, nurses, elementary teachers, and nurses are all tracked toward administrative jobs more so than their female counterparts, and often regardless of whether they express an actual interest in doing administrative work. This is what Williams (1992) called the **glass escalator**, the invisible pressure that men in these occupations face to move upward in their professions. On the glass escalator, men in these specific

professions have to work extra hard just to stay in the same place and to resist the pressure from their superiors, coworkers, and others to move up in their career.

The **glass ceiling**, on the other hand, refers to the fact that despite the progress women have made into many managerial positions in the business world, they are still far less likely than men to have jobs that involve exercising authority over people and resources (Wharton, 2005). The glass ceiling is often described as invisible and unbreakable, and it serves as a useful metaphor in describing the experiences of both women and people of color in attempting to obtain positions of power and authority both inside and outside of the business world. Hillary Clinton used the glass ceiling as a metaphor in her speech conceding the United States Democratic presidential nomination when she said, “Although we weren’t able to shatter that highest, hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you, it’s got 18 million cracks in it” (Milbank, 2008). Women’s blocked opportunities to positions of authority often also translate into an inability to climb beyond a certain point in the corporate ladder, and therefore an inability to achieve a certain level of earnings or to penetrate certain occupations or types of jobs (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman, 2001). Though the glass ceiling is sometimes also used to describe the situation of people of color in the corporate world, it is largely a term for women’s experiences in business settings that are male dominated.



How does the concept of androcentrism connect to the idea of the glass ceiling or the glass escalator? What about the idea of gender polarization?

The example of one librarian in Williams’s (1992) study demonstrates how the pressure of the glass escalator works on men in female-dominated occupations. This particular public librarian specialized in children’s collections, a heavily female-dominated specialty within a career that is already populated primarily by women. In his evaluation for his very first job, his supervisors were happy with his work in storytelling and other activities related to the children’s collection, but they critiqued him in his evaluation for “not shooting high enough” (Williams, 1992, p. 237). These negative reactions to his desire to remain where he was, as a librarian in the children’s collection rather than an administrator, followed him through his 10-year career. Some men appreciate being given a ride on the glass escalator, but others, like this children’s librarian, would actually prefer not to do administrative work.

The phenomena of both the glass escalator and the glass ceiling raise a more fundamental question about the relationship between gender and work: How do occupations such as social worker, nurse, elementary school teacher, and librarian become predominantly female in the first place? And why are some other occupations and jobs decidedly male, like CEO of a large corporation or United States senator? We’ve already discussed the sexual division of labor, a very old and universal way of dividing all kinds of tasks in a society—a concept that covers all the kinds of work people do on a daily basis around the world, including taking care of children, caring for crops, and writing memos or fetching coffee.

The household division of labor covers the way in which people in a family divide up the tasks that are necessary to keeping a household up and running and is something that makes sense only with the separation of spheres and a clear division between the work that takes place outside of the house and the work that takes place inside of a house. When we shift our focus specifically to the world of paid work within the formal economy, a new gendered division emerges—occupational sex segregation. **Sex segregation** refers to the concentration of women and men into different jobs, occupations, and firms (Wharton, 2005, p. 167). Sex segregation in general is something that exists to varying degrees in many cultures around the world; in the United States, we use sex segregation for most public bathrooms and locker rooms (though interestingly, we do not sex segregate the private bathrooms in our homes). In some cultures, sex segregation is enforced within the family home, as women are secluded in certain rooms or certain parts of the house while men are confined to others. When we use sex segregation here, we are focusing specifically on the ways in which not just physical spaces, but whole career paths, become dominated by either women or men.

You might think that in places like the United States, with programs such as affirmative action in place to redress past discrimination against women and people of color, occupational segregation should largely be a thing of the past. Some of the questions with which we began this chapter had to do with the aspirations you might have had as a child and whether anyone encouraged or discouraged you based on your gender. Surely we live in a time where all little girls are told they can be whatever they want to be, and the same is true for little boys. Or is it? The rates of occupational sex segregation (as well as occupational segregation by race) are still considerably high in the United States, and they have become a part of the taken-for-granted landscape of our everyday lives. In the United States, fewer than 10% of workers have a coworker or colleague of a different gender who does the same job, for the same employer, in the same location, on the same shift. This statistic begins to point to the complexity of sex segregation in the workplace and to the many levels at which sex segregation exists. Women and men can be segregated by the particular shifts they work (graveyard or day shift), the locations (branch office or headquarters) in which they are placed, the employer for whom they work (cashier at Wal-Mart as opposed to cashier for a locally owned health food market), as well as by the seemingly simplistic notion of the actual job they do. When you throw all these complex factors together, very few women and men work alongside people of a different gender who are doing exactly the same work. Many of us have a sense that there are large numbers of women in the paid workforce in the United States, but how are those women actually distributed across jobs, occupations, and firms? Of the 66 million women in the United States who do paid work, 30% of them work in just 10 out of the 503 occupations listed in the U.S. Census. Another way of saying this is that a third of all women in the United States who work are concentrated in just 10 out of the myriad occupations supposedly available to them.

These figures may be hard to believe, though you can try them out for yourself by looking at Table 9.1, which lists rates of sex segregation by some selected occupations. Most of us don't spend a lot of time thinking about the prevalence of sex segregation in occupations until someone points it out to us, in part because in the complex, bureaucratic world of today's society, it's sometimes hard to figure out exactly who does what. But to begin to put these numbers into context, you need only begin to think about all the different types of

Table 9.1 Sex Segregation by Occupation and the Gender Wage Gap for Selected Occupations, 2009

Occupation	Percent Women	Gender Wage Gap
<i>Management Occupations</i>	37.4	.72
Chief executives	25.0	.72
Food service managers	45.7	.80
Financial managers	54.7	.67
Computer and information systems managers	29.0	.79
<i>Legal Occupations</i>	49.8	.57
Lawyers	32.4	.75
Paralegals and legal assistants	85.9	*
<i>Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations</i>	74.6	.78
Dentists	30.2	*
Pharmacists	49.3	.75
Physicians and surgeons	32.2	.64
Physicians assistants	57.1	*
Registered nurses	92.0	.95
Veterinarians	61.2	*
<i>Education, training, and library occupations</i>	74.3	.78
Preschool and kindergarten teachers	97.8	*
Elementary and middle school teachers	81.9	.86
Secondary school teachers	54.9	.91
<i>Life, physical, and social science occupations</i>	46.8	.79
<i>Community and social service occupations</i>	62.9	.83
Social workers	80.7	.94
Clergy	17.0	*
<i>Arts, design, entertainment, sports, media occupations</i>	46.6	.81
Athletes, coaches, umpires, and related workers	40.1	*

Occupation	Percent Women	Gender Wage Gap
Writers and authors	62.7	*
<i>Healthcare support occupations</i>	89.4	.85
Dental assistants	97.6	*
<i>Protective service occupations</i>	22.3	.75
Police and sheriff's patrol officers	15.5	.83
Firefighters	3.4	*
<i>Food preparation and serving-related occupations</i>	55.7	.91
Chefs and head cooks	20.7	*
Cooks	41.5	.93
Bartenders	56.4	.75
Waiters and waitresses	71.5	.87
<i>Construction and extraction occupations</i>	2.6	.94
Construction laborer	2.7	*
Pipe layers, plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	1.3	*
Brickmasons, blockmasons, stonemasons	.1	*
<i>Office and administrative support occupations</i>	74.5	.92
Secretaries and administrative assistants	96.8	*

Source: Based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table 39. Median weekly earnings of full-time and salary workers by detailed occupation and sex and Table 11. Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

*Data are not shown where base (number of people in that category) is less than 50,000. This means that for these particular occupations, there are not more than 50,000 women or more than 50,000 men in that occupation.

workplaces you encounter and to reconstruct what you know about the gender of the people in those settings and the kinds of jobs they're doing. If you're a regular at a particular restaurant or coffee shop, is there a gender pattern to who is more likely to be serving you your food and who is more likely to be preparing it? Think about all the teachers you had throughout your school career, from kindergarten all the way up to your current classroom. How many male teachers did you have in elementary school, or throughout your whole educational career? What kinds of subjects did those male teachers tend to teach? Who worked in your school libraries, or who works in the public libraries you may go to?

How many doctors have you ever encountered who were women, and what kind of doctors were they? What was the gender of the person who sold you your car, or your computer, or your shoes, or your clothes? Is a man or a woman more likely to be the person cashing your check at the bank, changing the oil in your car, doing your dry cleaning, preparing your taxes, renewing your driver's license, delivering your mail, or pulling you over for a speeding ticket? We'll discuss what the actual answers are for some of these occupations, jobs, careers, and specialties in more detail below. For now, some of them may appear obviously sex segregated; fewer of us have probably had a female police officer give us a ticket because only 20% of law enforcement officers in the United States in 2006 were women. In other settings, the degree of sex segregation might be more difficult to see from the outside; how do you know who's cooking back in the kitchen at a restaurant, and how can you tell whether the person cashing your check at the bank is a cashier or a manager filling in for the moment?



Make a list of all the jobs you've occupied. In those jobs, did you ever have someone of the same gender in the exact same job as you? Were there people of a different gender in that workplace, and were there trends in the types of jobs they tended to do? Can you think of examples of racial segregation in jobs you've worked?

Sex segregation is complicated and can exist at multiple levels within a single institution or company. Take a college campus. Upon first glance, a college campus might look like an institution with a pretty good balance of women and men working together. If you begin with the faculty, chances are still good that you have more male professors than female professors, and this will especially be true at the higher ranks of academia (associate and full professor, as compared to assistant professor). Nationwide in the United States, college professors as a whole are about 41.2% female, which is a marked improvement from the past (American Association of University Professors, 2010). But what happens when you begin to look at how those positions are distributed across disciplines? How many female professors are there in the natural and physical sciences as compared to the English department? If your college follows a typical pattern, you'll probably have a great many more women in the English department than in the biology or physics departments. What happens when we look at the security personnel on the average college campus? The student life and resident life staff? Cafeteria workers? "Maintenance" at a college might include those who clean the buildings, those who do physical repairs, and those who maintain the physical grounds of the college (landscaping), but the gender makeup of each of those types of jobs is very different. Women are more likely to do indoor cleaning, while men are concentrated in grounds keeping and physical repairs. What about the administration at your college? What's the gender makeup of the president, vice presidents, deans, provosts, or department chairs? How many men and women sit on the board of trustees? How many men serve as secretaries or executive assistants on your campus?

To help make sense of this complexity in relation to sex segregation in the workplace, researchers look at sex segregation at two different levels, focusing on three different units of analysis at each level. The first level is **occupational sex segregation**, and this quite simply refers to the concentration of women and men in different occupations. Occupations are categories defined by the U.S. Census to describe the kind of work people do, and because the census seeks to collect information about large proportions of the United States population, their categories are fairly broad. The more people you're gathering information about, the harder it is to include a lot of detail about their lives. So examples of census occupations include college and university teacher, truck driver, cook, salaried manager, cashier, nurse's aide/orderly, secretary, guard, and bookkeeper. Most of the research that has been done on sex segregation was done at the level of occupational sex segregation because the census conveniently provides a lot of information on this particular level of sex segregation. The examples seem straightforward enough, until you start to unpack all the different types of people that might fit into some of these broad occupational categories. Who exactly is a salaried manager? The manager at a fast food restaurant is a salaried manager, as is the person who works as an office manager at a prestigious New York advertising firm, the plant manager at a slaughterhouse in Iowa, and the manager of a publishing house in San Francisco whose position is the second highest in the company as a whole. How similar are these jobs to each other? Looking at sex segregation at the level of occupation is easiest, but because it is the broadest category, it will also tend to capture less segregation than more finely tuned units of analysis. If women tend to be the managers in fast food restaurants rather than plant managers, those distinctions are lost in the broad outline of the census category of salaried manager.

Job level sex segregation focuses on "the specific positions that workers hold within specific establishments" (Reskin, 1993, p. 243). This is a more finely tuned way of examining sex segregation in that it allows us to make distinctions between the McDonald's manager and the manager at the Iowa slaughterhouse. Information on job level sex segregation is harder to come by than is occupational level sex segregation because large data sources like the United States Census don't collect information about the exact type of position someone holds or the specific place they work. Collecting this kind of information is painstaking social research work, but when it has been done, the extent of job level sex segregation is much higher than sex segregation by occupation. One study found that during the 1970s, the index of job level sex segregation was 30 points higher than that for occupational level segregation (Bielby & Baron, 1984). The same study, based in California, analyzed 645 occupations in 290 work organizations and found that over three fourths of the men or women would have to be reclassified in order to degender the occupational categories (Bielby & Baron, 1986). In that same study, 96% of the 10,525 different job titles were gender segregated, and only 8% of the workers shared a job title with a member of a different gender.

Whichever particular level of sex segregation is used, the evidence indicates that workplaces in the United States are highly segregated both along gender and racial lines, and these identities often intersect and cross-cut in interesting ways. In his reporting on the social world inside a North Carolina slaughterhouse for *The New York Times*, Charlie LeDuff (2000) documented the complex ways in which jobs in the plant were distributed along gender and racial lines. Black women were assigned to the chitterlings room, where they

scraped feces and worms out of intestines. White men were the supervisors and mechanics, except for the occasional white prisoner who might be assigned the dirty work along with other African Americans and Mexicans. Some Native Americans and Mexicans were given the job of assembling boxes. Outside of the kill floor, a mixture of black women and Mexican men and women skinned the hog carcasses and butchered them into various parts. Outside of a rare Mexican man, all the people on the kill floor where the pigs were ushered into the plant and killed were black men. Jobs on the kill floor set the pace for the rest of the factory, and they paid a higher wage than others in the factory—as high as \$12 an hour. There were quotas to be met, and the competition for jobs on the kill floor was high. The reasons given by workers for why the kill floor consisted primarily of black men rather than the Mexican, Native American, or white men included that Mexicans were too small or that they didn't like blood or heavy lifting. There were no reasons for why any of the women—black, Mexican, or Native American—didn't work in the kill floor because it was assumed that this was work that women were not capable of doing. One of the final reasons for why black men worked on the kill floor, as provided by one black male worker, was that, "We built this country and we ain't going to hand them everything," where the "them" referred to Mexican immigrants.



Levels of both sex and racial occupational segregation are fairly high in the United States, yet they seem to go largely unnoticed. Why do these forms of segregation seem to be taken for granted? What does this reveal about how we think about gender, race, and work?

The quote begins to suggest the level of tension that exists between the various racial groups in that particular North Carolina slaughterhouse. Black workers felt that the entrance of Mexican immigrants into a factory or an occupation drove down the wages because the immigrants were willing to accept less money than are their African American counterparts. That assessment accurately reflects what employers have in mind because one of the central dynamics driving both sex segregation and racial segregation in the workplace is precisely the desire of business owners to lower their costs and increase their profits by paying their workers less. If they can create a sense that there are two different groups competing for jobs, this helps along the process of driving down the wages for a particular occupation or in a particular firm. When places like the United States began to industrialize in the 19th century, whether it would be primarily women, men, children, or some combination of all three working in the factories was up for grabs. As we mentioned briefly in Chapter 8, farming families initially sent their unmarried daughters and younger sons to work in factories because their labor was least needed on the farm (Lamphere, 1987). Young women in this system could be paid less because there was no expectation that they needed a wage that could support a family; manufacturers boarded and watched over the moral lives of these young women, while paying them a wage that allowed them to save for a trousseau (a dowry, or money and/or goods a groom received upon marrying

a woman, sometimes in the form of a wedding dress, clothes, or other items necessary to getting married or setting up a first home), pay off a mortgage (for their family), or send a brother to college. Thus, these young women's work benefited their family as a whole back on the farm, including contributing to their potential upward mobility through wealth creation (owning their own home or property) and increasing levels of education (sending a son to college). In addition to not having to pay female factory workers as much, many owners preferred women because they also felt they were more docile than their male counterparts, despite early attempts by some women to unionize themselves. The men at the head of the families to which these young women belonged were initially happy to have them working for the extra income they brought into the family (Lorber, 1994). What changed in places like the United States, so that now our typical image of a factory worker is certainly not a young, unmarried farm daughter?

As industrialization progressed, farms disappeared while factory jobs increased. Jobs in manufacturing became a larger percentage of all paid work, and that women were working these jobs became a threat to men's interests. If women could earn their way in the factories far from home and support themselves while men could not, the power of men within families and in society in general to control women would be greatly reduced (Walby, 1986). At first, men began to work in factories as the supervisors of women and children workers, but as industrialization progressed, supervising did not provide enough jobs for all the men displaced from farms and in need of work. The initial solution to this problem of monopolizing some jobs as solely for men was to declare certain machines within any given factory as "women's machines" and others as "men's machines." Sonya Rose (1987) described how this process worked within the context of the hosiery industry in England in particular. At first, hosiery was organized as a **putting-out industry**, which meant that rather than workers traveling to one central building (the factory) where everyone assembled hosiery, the raw materials needed to assemble hosiery were distributed to individual households where individuals assembled them on their own schedules and within their own homes. This method of production, also called **piece-meal work**, or **cottage industry**, is still used in many places around the world, including the United States. In the hosiery industry, families bought or rented frames, a kind of machinery used to make the hosiery, and usually the entire family participated in the job of producing the final product, for which they were paid on a piece-meal basis; rather than being paid for working so many hours in a factory, families received so much money for every finished product they made. Mothers and daughters were more likely to be engaged in the stitching and knitting part of production, but they also operated frames. The production that took place within the household was under the supervision of the husband or father, and the income received was a family income, rather than an individual wage.

Gradually, the work of making hosiery shifted from individual homes into the factory setting. These factories were gender segregated from the beginning, with women again doing much of the needlework. But as many women had operated the framing machines in their own homes, there were also small numbers of women who operated frames within these first factories. However, a woman working in a factory was no longer under the control of her husband or father; she was paid an individual wage directly to her rather than a family wage that was filtered through the male head of the household, and this introduced potential tension within the gendered power structure of families. The fierceness of the

competition between women and men for these jobs was driven by the fact that employers had great incentive to want to hire women as their workers. In a system dictated completely by economic rationality in terms of minimizing labor costs, employers would always prefer female over male employees because they could consistently pay women less. The owners of hosiery factories in England were no exception, and the all male unions of hosiery workers responded by striking when they began to be replaced by women who were perfectly capable of doing their jobs. The response of the factory owners was to threaten to take the factory somewhere else, and editorials in local papers urged the male workers to accept their female counterparts rather than risk losing the factories as a source of jobs for the community.

The solution to this problem was gradually worked out by the unions when they integrated and allowed women workers to join. Men in the union wanted to demand a set price for each piece of hose produced, but the women were afraid that such a demand would lose them their jobs. The women were therefore willing to accept a lower price for their labor than the men; even at this lower price, these factory jobs were far superior to the other jobs available to women during that time period. Obviously, if women were willing to make hosiery for a lower price than were men, factory owners were still motivated to replace men with women, which they continued to do. The best solution the union could settle upon was to arbitrarily designate some framing machines as "women's machines" and some as "men's machines" and to develop different pay scales for each type of machine. The differences between these machines were fairly arbitrary, but the solution allowed men and women to work in the same factory while doing what could be defined as slightly different jobs and being paid differently.

This specific story contains all the basic building blocks of our current system of sex segregation. The differences in the jobs (i.e., working on different types of machines) came to be justified through the use of gender even though originally it was clear that both women and men could effectively operate the machines. Men's machines came to be defined as more expensive and complex, and women were seen as lacking the technical skills necessary to either use or take care of these machines. Men and women became sex segregated within the same factory, and the justification for women's lower wages, should they ever question them, became built into the very structure of the workplace; women worked on inferior machines and, therefore, should be paid less. This method of associating a certain set of skills with a type of job or work and then defining those skills as masculine or feminine in order to monopolize access to those jobs took place in other industries, including among cotton spinning and English printing (Rose, 1987).

Allowing women to continue working within a factory but creating sex segregation within the factory was one solution to the competition between women and men for jobs in early industrialization. Another widely employed solution was the passage of protective labor legislation. Keep in mind that in the case of hosiery work and many other kinds of work, women and children had historically performed all kinds of labor within the household unit of production. **Protective labor legislation** argued that women could not work too many hours in factories or do certain kinds of labor because of the detrimental effects on women's health and their ability to perform their crucial household duties as wife and mother (Kessler-Harris, 1982). Even feminists of the period, such as Lucy Stone, argued that the special sensibilities developed by women in the private sphere as mother and wife

(such as compassion, nurturance, and a better-developed sense of morality) needed to be preserved in the competitive world of wage labor (Kessler-Harris, 1982, p. 185). So women were gradually prevented from working in places that sold alcoholic beverages, as it might corrupt their morality, and then from grinding and polishing metal, as it would clog their lungs. Work in underground mines would coarsen women's gentler natures, while any kind of work that could bring women into contact with strangers was also seen as putting them in danger; this made the jobs of messenger, elevator operator, meter reader, letter carrier, and taxi driver all off limits for women. Other legislation focused on limiting not the types of jobs women could work, but rather their working conditions. The most familiar of these was the length of the work day, and arguments to change to a 10-hour work day depicted women as physically weaker than men and desperately in need of protection from long work hours because of their "special physical organization," (Kessler-Harris, 1982, p. 187), including their childbearing and maternal functions. In hearings before the Supreme Court in 1908, physicians argued that women had a greater disposition to diseases and were in periodic "semi-pathological" states of health. Between 1909 and 1917, legislation that restricted the number of hours women could work in a day passed in 19 states.



Is protective labor legislation a bad thing? Should women and children specifically be protected from certain working conditions? Or should men be protected from these working conditions as well? What does the idea of protective legislation reveal about femininity and masculinity?

The reduction in the number of hours a woman could work benefited married women, and many more married women began to move into the labor force in the period after World War I. Married women did not have to support their families on their income, and a shorter working day gave them more time to do household chores and care for children. The major problem with protective labor legislation aimed at women was that it assumed all women were in fact mothers or wives and needed to be protected primarily as such. The work day of women was limited in a period well before the institution of any minimum wage, and for a woman trying to support herself or her family through her job, cutting short her working hours meant cutting short her total income. This effort to protect women, then, also had the convenient effect of reducing their overall earnings and providing another justification for occupational sex segregation by excluding women from some of the better-paying jobs or defining their jobs differently and as less valuable within the same factory walls.

Thus, the early history of industrialization in places like the United States and England was a history characterized by competition between women and men for the exact same jobs. Many who study the intersections between work, gender, and race argue that this competition continues in contemporary labor markets, like those of the slaughterhouse described previously. Especially since the second wave of the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s, women do enter into occupations, jobs, and firms that are predominantly inhabited by men. But the usual result when enough women do so is resegregation of that

particular area of the workforce. During the 1970s, when women were believed to be making significant progress into many predominantly male occupations, only 33 of the 537 occupational categories actually saw an increase in the numbers of women of at least 9% (Reskin & Roos, 1990). For the smaller percentage of women who did actually enter predominantly male occupations, they most often found themselves witnesses to a process of gender turnover in that occupation. In 1970, women were 33% of all personnel, training, and labor relations specialists, but by 1980, they made up 47%; by 1988, they made up 59%; and by 2005, they made up 71%. Women made up 30% of insurance adjusters, examiners, and investigators in 1970, 60% in 1980, 72% in 1988, and 87% in 2005 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005; Reskin & Roos, 1990). Almost all of the jobs we currently think of as predominantly female occupations were once predominantly male, including real estate agents, secretaries (who used to be called clerks), and elementary school teachers. In these occupations, men exited as women entered in large numbers, resegregating the occupation.

How exactly does this process happen for any given occupation? When the first woman is hired in a particular factory or office, do the men pick up and leave at once? Where do all those men go, and what predicts which jobs in particular are likely to resegregate? In the beginning, before either segregation or resegregation occurs, an employer would be smart to discriminate against men rather than women because women are generally conscientious, hard workers and can be paid less (Bielby & Bielby, 1988). Men can prevent women from being hired in a particular job or occupation by monopolizing the skills and training necessary to do the job. The simplest example for many years in the United States was to prevent women from attending colleges and other educational training programs. If women are not able to acquire the skills or knowledge necessary to do a certain job or are prevented from doing it effectively or at all by protective labor legislation, then employers have no choice but to hire only men. If you're an employer and the particular job for which you want to hire workers seems to carry a certain set of skills or knowledge, you're probably going to have to pay your workers more to do it, and if you're hiring mostly men, you'll probably have to pay them more than women. This is in part because women are willing to accept less pay because of the fewer jobs that are available to them, but it is also because of the connection between the perceived knowledge and skills necessary to do a job and gender; as we've already discussed, the jobs that men do are generally seen as more skilled than the jobs women do.

The hypothetical employer who wants to lower labor costs has several options available. She or he can move her or his factory somewhere with a ready supply of cheaper labor. Usually, this means an area with weaker unions (as unions can negotiate for higher pay) and more competition among potential employees for jobs. For example, many factories have moved to the rural South in the United States, both because there is little tradition of labor organization in these communities and because the decline of agriculture and the high levels of poverty mean that there are few jobs available to workers in those areas. If you're desperate for a job and there aren't a lot of other options around, as a worker you're willing to accept lower pay for your work than you would in a situation with more available options. Another option available to the business owner who wants to reduce his or her labor costs is to change the nature of the work being done by de-skilling or automating it, or making it part-time or home-based. If you can break what was a complicated and skilled job into a series of routine and easily learned steps, usually along with automating many

of the steps, you can justify paying your workers less than if more training is required to perform the job. Part-time workers cost less because you don't have to provide them with benefits like health insurance or vacation time, and you can maintain high rates of turnover. If none of your workers stay at the job very long, they're not around long enough to get a raise and therefore cost you less to employ. Moving labor into the homes of your workers saves your overhead costs you would have to pay to provide space to work in, as well as the cost of paying someone to supervise workers.

In their study of several occupations that had transitioned from predominantly male to female beginning in the 1970s, Reskin and Roos (1990) found that these jobs became available to women largely because they became less attractive to white men. Men left occupations such as personnel manager, computer operator, insurance agent, and real estate salesperson when the jobs became de-skilled, earnings declined, job autonomy was reduced, and working conditions deteriorated. Employers contributed to these processes by creating better jobs for men within their organizations or by making some positions part-time (Lorber, 1994). Women took these jobs that had just been made less attractive because they were still better than many of the jobs the women had occupied before. This process of downgrading jobs as a way to reduce costs and then resegregating the jobs by gender creates a strong connection between gender and the type of work people do. Women are willing to accept lower salaries because their jobs are structured in ways that justify lower salaries. Hiring more women to do a job, paying less for the job, and reducing the quality of the job are all processes that go hand in hand.

Once a job has been converted from a man's job to a woman's job, gender ideology is employed to justify that occupation as inherently suited to women. This naturalizes some occupations as appropriate for women and others as appropriate for men, reinforcing the system of sex segregation in the workplace. For example, in the 1970s, residential real estate agent began to transition from a predominantly male to a predominantly female occupation. In a process similar to many other occupations, men did not completely vacate the real estate business, but rather the real estate industry underwent the process of ghettoization by gender. **Ghettoization** happens when lower paid "women's" jobs are separated from the better-paid "men's" jobs within an occupation, job, or firm through the use of informal gender typing (Lorber, 1994). During the economic recession of the 1970s, residential real estate became much less profitable than it had been in the past, and it therefore became a less desirable occupation for white men. Men moved into commercial real estate, which brought much higher commissions and therefore better earnings, leaving residential real estate open for an influx of women. When employers began to hire large numbers of women to sell residential real estate, they began to argue that women were uniquely suited to these jobs because of their experience running their own homes as wives and mothers and their knowledge of neighborhood schools and playgrounds; that women were good at residential real estate came to be seen as natural, despite the fact that this had been a primarily male job until this time (Thomas & Reskin, 1990).

Resegregation happens in the workplace when an entire occupation transitions from one gender to another, usually from a predominantly male to a predominantly female occupation. This term covers the whole process of disproportionate numbers of women entering a male occupation and their eventual disproportionate representation in that occupation, which results in the work associated with that occupation being labeled as

women's work (Roos & Reskin, 1992). During the 1970s, the occupations of typesetter and composer underwent a process of resegregation from a predominantly male to a predominantly female occupation, from 30% female in 1970 to 72% by 1989. In their study of various occupations that had experienced a large shift in the gender composition of workers, Patricia A. Roos and Barbara Reskin (1992) found no examples of occupations that truly represented integration of women and men into the same workplace and the same jobs. Ghettoization was the most common outcome, with men and women existing in the same occupation, but doing slightly different jobs or having different specialties. Resegregation was the other path, but no occupations actually achieved a level of integration, meaning anything approaching equal numbers of women and men.

Today, electronics manufacturers prefer women to men because they argue that women have greater finger dexterity than do men, the same argument used to justify why women should do needlework in 19th century hosiery factories. Other jobs are seen as off-limits for women because of the amount of physical strength required, such as construction jobs. Teaching from the level of kindergarten through high school is now seen a job uniquely suited to women in the United States because of the flexibility it provides, especially for mothers. A teacher's schedule generally coincides with the schedule of children, making it easier for women to combine work and child care, and therefore, teaching becomes women's work. But in the 19th century in rural America, teaching was viewed as and designed to be most compatible with men's work. Farmers could use teaching as a source of income during the months of the year when their labor was not needed in the fields. Male ministers, politicians, shopkeepers, or lawyers could use teaching as a good avenue for increasing their public visibility within the community (Strober, 1984). When the number of children attending school increased and schools were broken down into individual grades with specific curriculums, more formal credentials were required and the school year lengthened. Rather than increasing the compensation for teachers because of the increase in the skill level required for the job, schools kept the pay low and began a concerted effort to recruit more women into the field (because they knew women would accept the lower pay). Teaching became the ideal profession for single, educated, middle-class women, and for many years, female teachers were not allowed to continue to work when they married. This historical evolution of teaching from good work for men, to the perfect job for women—but only single, unmarried women—to teaching as well-suited to married women with children demonstrates the ways in which the gender of different jobs and occupations is highly flexible and can change over time to justify whatever the gender status quo is in that occupation at the time. Ghettoization exists in the education field as well, as elementary teaching is now seen as women's work in that it involves nurturing and is also low paid, brings little autonomy, and has high rates of turnover. Men are overrepresented in the ranks of administrators and principals, where their work is stable, has high chances for promotion, and offers higher wages (Lorber, 1994).

Though much of the research on sex segregation in the workplace has been performed in the United States and other parts of the global North, these trends persist in the global South as well. Just as with farmer's daughters in the United States in the 19th century and in developing nations in Asia and South and Central America, daughters from farming families are sent to work in factories where their lives are largely controlled by their employers. Women between the ages of 16 and 24 make up 80% to 90% of the export-processing

labor in Mexico, Southeast Asia, and other nations that engage in large scale export production (Tiano, 1987). In Mexico's *maquiladoras*, assembly plants largely owned by American and other foreign companies that are located along the Mexico-U.S. border in order to take advantage of the supply of cheap labor across the border, 85% to 90% of the workers are women (Lorber, 1994). Most of the people working in the export zones around the world are women, and this means that the access to cheap products in the developed world depends upon the low wages and poor working conditions of these women in the global South. Sex and racial segregation in the workplace are crucial components of what make the global economy as we know it function.

The Wage Gap: Why Sex Segregation Matters

When we take a step back from the specific details of sex segregation, we're left with a familiar question. All around the world, women and men do different types of paid work, just as women and men do different kinds of work inside and outside the household (as in the previous chapter). Does this difference have to carry negative implications? Is difference necessarily bad? Some of our discussions of sex and racial segregation have already begun to suggest an answer in this specific case. Regardless of whether women are working in completely different occupations or doing different kinds of jobs within the same occupation, women are paid less than their male counterparts. Researchers call this rather stark fact the **gender wage gap**, and it is usually calculated as the ratio of women's average earnings in an occupation to men's average earnings in the same occupation. In the United States for 2006 among full-time, full-year workers, the gender wage gap was 76.9 (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2008). This ratio is often translated into real dollar amounts, meaning that in 2006, women on average in the United States made about 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man. The gender wage gap varies across countries, reaching a high of 89 in Sweden and a low of 71 in Greece and the Netherlands (Wharton, 2005). The gender wage gap exists even when women and men have comparable qualifications, and it is uniform across occupations, regardless of the degree of sex segregation within that particular occupation.

Historically, the gender wage gap has decreased in the United States since 1955, but in recent years, progress has largely stalled. Between 1980 and 1990, the gender wage gap gained 11.4 percentage points, but it gained only 5.4 percentage points over the next 15 years (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2008). The current gender wage gap has been relatively stable since 2001, indicating no progress in closing the gap between what men and women earn for doing the same jobs and occupations. These trends are especially true for women with higher levels of education. In 2006, college-educated women between the ages of 36 and 45 earned 74.7 cents in their hourly wage for every dollar earned by men in the same group. In 1996, women in the same group were earning 75.7 cents for every man's dollar (Leonhardt, 2006). White women as well as women of color have lost ground relative to white men in recent years in regard to the gender wage gap.

How are sex segregation in the workplace and the gender wage gap connected? This returns us to our recurring question about the relationship between difference and inequality. Clearly, sex segregation enforces a sense of difference; the fact that women are concentrated in certain types of jobs and occupations helps to create and reinforce gender

ideologies about the different skills, abilities, and needs of men and women relative to work. This relationship between gender and work becomes a kind of endless loop, where because men do certain types of work, this work is seen as better suited to men, and therefore primarily men will continue to do what is defined as men's work. This endemic system of sex segregation makes the idea of equal work for equal pay attractive in principal, but difficult to reinforce in the real world. In a world where men and women so rarely do the exact same kind of work, whether it's the type of machines they're using in a hosiery factory, the exact task they perform in a slaughterhouse, or whether they're selling a house or a commercial building, how can we establish exactly what equal work is? The differences that are established by sex segregation make the gender wage gap easier to justify by establishing two very different work worlds for women and men. As Bielby and Baron (1987) described this situation, "Men's jobs are rewarded according to their standing within the hierarchy of men's work, and women's jobs are rewarded according to their standing within the hierarchy of women's work. The legitimacy of this system is easy to sustain in a segregated workplace" (p. 226).

The gender wage gap is therefore connected to sex segregation in two ways. First, in any occupation, job, sector, or segment of the workforce that is composed primarily of dominant men, which in the United States means white middle- or upper-class men, the wage scale will be higher than in those occupations, jobs, sectors, or segments composed primarily of either men of color or of women, regardless of their racial background. When women or people of color are concentrated in some area of the workforce, the compensation will be less (Tomaskovic-Devey, Kalleberg, & Marsden, 1996), and when women enter an occupation, the wages for that occupation fall (Treiman & Hartmann, 1981). This is true because of the processes we outlined previously; women's entry into an occupation or job coincides with a loss of wages in that occupation or job, and so when women enter new areas of the workforce in large numbers, the pay for workers declines. There are some men who work in predominantly female occupations and some women who work in predominantly male occupations. Men in areas of the economy dominated by women make less on average than their male colleagues in predominantly male occupations, but they still make more than their female counterparts in those same jobs; remember the case of male elementary school teachers, nurses, social workers, and librarians riding the glass escalator. The women who work in predominantly male occupations also make more than their female counterparts in occupations that are dominated by women; but unlike men in predominantly female occupations, these women still make less than their male counterparts in the same occupation or job. This is largely because women in a predominantly male workplace are less likely to be promoted, and therefore, their earnings do not compete with those of men.

The second way in which the gender wage gap and sex segregation are related is in the tendency for higher paying jobs to also involve more authority or supervision than lower paying jobs. A plant manager within a factory is paid more than the worker on the floor, and a doctor is paid more than a nurse—in part because both of these positions are endowed with more authority and involve supervising the work of others. Jobs that require workers to interact with people in a nurturing or interpersonal way pay less than jobs that do not. For example, when the primary role of flight attendants was seen as caring for airline passengers, keeping them happy, and creating a pleasant trip, flight attendants were

paid less. When this job was upgraded to include safeguarding the safety of the passengers in the event of a crash or other emergency, the pay for this job increased to reflect the new authority associated with the position; literally, the authority of flight attendants became enforced in the United States by the federal government because it's against federal law to not follow the directions of a flight attendant. Obviously, authority and supervision versus nurturing and interpersonal interaction have a distinctly gendered component. Women are supposed to be better at interpersonal interactions and nurturing, while men are seen as natural authority figures. The sorting of men and women into these different types of jobs helps to recreate the gender wage gap by placing men in higher paying positions with authority and women in lower paying jobs that draw on their skills as nurturers.

EXPLAINING SEX SEGREGATION AND THE GENDER WAGE GAP

Researchers have established that as much as 90 % of the explanation for the gender wage gap lies with the prevalence of sex segregation (Petersen & Morgan, 1995; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993b). The gender wage gap is important because it remains an important determinant of inequality between women and men. We live in a culture where money and income provide power and prestige. That women make less money on average than men gives them less power within family settings, where we've already discussed how income relates to decision making in the home. In female-headed households in the United States and around the world, women's income is the sole source of support for children and other family members, and the gender wage gap makes it more difficult for women to sufficiently provide for their families. On a global scale, the lower pay and stability inherent in the jobs into which women are segregated have implications for global levels of poverty; development organizations and workers have discovered that women's income can affect poor families in ways that men's income does not. Namely, women's income is more likely to be directed toward supporting a family and potentially providing upward mobility for a family than are men's wages. The gender wage gap matters at the lower economic levels of society as well as at some of the highest levels. The lack of women in positions of power and prestige in corporations, universities, and the government means that women have less power over the shape these various institutions take and, therefore, less of an impact on the important decisions made in these institutions in general.

In all these ways and more, the gender wage gap remains an important barrier to equality between women and men. How, then, do we explain why this gap exists, which means explaining why sex segregation persists across the workplace? We've seen how an occupation ghettoizes or becomes resegregated historically, but how does segregation continue to persist across many different occupations today? There are several different theoretical answers to these questions that help explain the different forces at play in the process of sex segregation. Like the sociological theories of gender we explored in Chapter 2, these theories can be grouped into different levels: individual, interactional, and institutional. Here we will discuss individual and institutional approaches, but keep in mind that no single theory is sufficient to fully explain the existence of sex segregation; each perspective reveals a different aspect of how this complicated process works. As many researchers who study these theories concede, a social phenomenon that is as widespread and entrenched

as sex segregation is probably kept in place simultaneously by many of the causal factors identified in these theories.

Socialization as an Explanation for Sex Segregation

We'll start with individual theories, which focus on the decisions workers make about the types of jobs they want to have and the ways in which the skills they have can influence the types of jobs they seek. The first individual-level theory is **socialization theory**, and you should not be surprised to find a discussion of socialization categorized as an individual-level theory of gender. Remember that individual theories include theories of socialization because these theories view gender as something that becomes internal to an individual. Once gender is internalized, it impacts the decisions, thoughts, and feelings of an individual in uniquely gendered ways. Like other individual theories, gender operates from the inside out according to this perspective. As applied to the question of sex segregation, socialization theory argues that our experiences with gender socialization lead men and women to prefer different types of jobs, and so socialization is important to explaining sex segregation through the mechanism of shaping worker preferences. The question posed in the beginning of this chapter that asked you to think back on what your career aspirations were when you were younger is important to a socialization argument about sex segregation.

Socialization theory as an explanation for sex segregation receives some support from a study on the differences in job aspirations between older and younger women (Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993b). If socialization is an important component in determining the types of jobs women and men aspire to do, then shifting gender roles should alter patterns of socialization. In his study, Donald Tomaskovic-Devey (1993b) did find that younger women were more likely than older women to be employed in sex-integrated jobs. This could suggest that younger women responded to changes in gender roles by choosing jobs that were less typically defined as women's work. This pattern did not hold true for men, however, as there were no differences between the level of sex segregation in the jobs of younger and older men. This could indicate that the socialization experiences have changed for women in ways that they have not changed for men.

Socialization theory as an explanation for sex segregation works well as good common sense, and there's a chance it has a role to play in explaining the grouping of men and women into different types of jobs. We learn a great deal about what it means to be gendered and how to be gendered at a fairly early age, and these lessons affect the future lives we imagine for ourselves in a wide variety of ways. It makes sense that these gender lessons would also include predispositions to do certain kinds of work and not others. Empirically, there's little research beyond the study by Tomaskovic-Devey (1993b) that supports this particular approach, and even this study has potential flaws. Older women could be in more sex-segregated occupations because they chose those jobs based on their gender socialization, but it could also be the case that more sex-integrated jobs were simply not open or available to them when they began their work lives. Changing jobs becomes more difficult with age, and older women could simply be stuck in the sex-segregated occupations and jobs with which they began their careers, despite the fact that they'd like to be in more sex-integrated occupations or jobs. Other research suggests that the aspirations we form when

we're young, though they tend to be fairly gender typed, are usually not the jobs in which we eventually find ourselves (Marini & Shu, 1998; Stroeher, 1994). Just compare what you wanted to be when you were very young with what you envision currently as your future career or with the job in which you are currently engaged. Do they match? The answer to what you want to be when you grow up changes as children age, usually becoming less gender typed, but often bearing little relationship to the series of careers a person might have as an adult. Other empirical research reveals no real differences in the kinds of work-related values held by women and men. An extensive study using data from 12 national samples, and spanning a time period from 1973 to 1990, found that men and women consistently ranked the same set of values in the same order when asked what was most preferred by them in a job (Rowe & Snizek, 1995). The most important qualities in a job described by both men and women in order from most to least preferred were a feeling of accomplishment, high income, chance for advancement, job security, and short working hours.

Human Capital Theory

The next individual-level theory comes from an economic perspective. **Human capital theory** is influenced by economic thought in its emphasis on an individual's choice of occupation as resulting from her or his attempt to maximize the benefits and reduce the costs involved in any particular job. As its name suggests, a concept central to this theory is that of human capital. **Human capital** refers to the skills workers may acquire (through education, job training, and job tenure) that affect their ability to be productive in their job (Seccombe & Beeghley, 1992). A simple way to think about human capital is that it includes anything that increases a worker's productivity. In a manufacturing setting, productivity is simply the number of products produced on an hourly or weekly basis. Factory workers are generally faster when they have had some training and when they have been on the job longer, so training and job tenure increase their productivity. Education is an important source of human capital in that many jobs (like doctor, nurse, and lawyer) require workers to achieve a certain level of education before they can adequately perform the job. But education throughout one's career theoretically improves a worker's human capital, as in the case of those in business or education who go back to school for advanced degrees. In many cases, employers pay the costs for their employees to obtain these degrees and other kinds of education and training based on the belief that this education will improve the overall productivity of their employees.

Human capital theory is a general theory in the discipline of economics, but as it applies to the specific case of sex segregation, there are three important assumptions. The first is a basic assumption of economics as a discipline in general—that human beings are rationally motivated. Within sociology, this approach to the study of behavior is called rational choice, and it assumes that people act in ways to maximize the rewards and minimize the costs for any particular course of action. According to this perspective, for each decision that we make as individuals, we perform a careful calculus, like a list of pros and cons assembled in our head, and pursue the action with more pros than cons. The second assumption of human capital theory as it applies to sex segregation follows from the first: If we are rational actors who seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs, then it is rational for workers to invest in their human capital whenever possible. Increasing our human

capital increases our productivity, and increasing our productivity means that we make more money at our job. Rational choice theory allows that we can be motivated by rewards that are not necessarily monetary, but certainly monetary rewards are among the more powerful rewards sought by people in capitalist societies like the United States.

Gender enters into the picture with human capital theory in the third assumption. According to human capital theory, women and men, on average and as groups, make different kinds of human capital investments. Everyone may be rational, but the unique position of women leads them to make decisions that take into account a different set of factors than do men when it comes to investing in their human capital. Namely, this difference is women's ability to bear children. According to human capital theory, not all women will bear children, but most do and many more plan to do so at some point in their lives. Women's experiences of both marriage and childbearing pose problems to their future careers that are not faced by men, and therefore, when women think about their future career trajectories, they calculate how to maximize their human capital investments differently than do men. Women anticipate that the demands of being a wife and mother will have an affect on their jobs and careers in ways that being a husband and father will not. Based on these assumptions, women have two options to pursue relative to their human capital. First, they might choose simply to invest less in their job-related human capital (Chang, 2004). If their job or career will always be in competition with their role as mother and housewife, one option is to rationally choose to invest less in that particular area of their life. The second option open to women is to choose jobs or occupations that will allow them to maximize their human capital while still meeting the demands placed on them by their roles within the family.

This second option open to women becomes the focus of much of the research on human capital theory because it implies concrete predictions about what kinds of jobs most women will gravitate toward. If you're a woman who wants to maximize your human capital while retaining room for the demands that will be made upon you in your role as mother and wife, what kinds of jobs would you be more likely to choose? Human capital theory predicts that women will choose jobs and occupations that are more family or child friendly, or jobs which include flexible hours and lesser penalties for reentry into the job after a period of absence. Flexible hours allow women to fit the responsibilities of child care or elder care into their work schedules. Low penalties for reentry into a job or occupation make it easier for women to take time off for giving birth and caring for children or other family members. Teaching, as we discussed previously, is seen as an ideal occupation in which women can maximize their human capital. The work hours often correspond to the hours during which children are in school, making child care easier for women with children. In addition, there are few penalties for teachers for leaving the workforce for a period and then returning. The converse is that jobs or occupations that require full-time or beyond full-time hours and continuous labor force participation in order to be successful will have fewer women. High-powered managerial positions often require more than a full-time work week and provide little in the way of flexibility. In addition, leaving these jobs for a year or two to take care of family members would have negative effects on an employee's chances for upward mobility. According to human capital theory, a rational woman seeking to maximize her human capital should avoid these types of jobs and occupations (Chang, 2004).



How would you rank the qualities that are most important to you in a job or career? Do you think you would find differences between your ranking and the rankings of those of a different gender?

Human capital theory is another example of an individual approach to explaining sex segregation because women and men as individuals are choosing different occupations based on a rational calculus that seeks to maximize returns on their human capital. When many individual women and individual men make these same sorts of decisions, the end result is the systematic sex segregation we see in societies like the United States. The evidence in support of human capital theory is mixed: Some studies demonstrate potential support for this way of thinking about sex segregation, while others find weak relationships between human capital variables and sex segregation. Certainly, when we look at a profession such as teaching, which at the level of elementary and middle school education was 82% female in 2005, this seems to provide some support for human capital theory. Among chief executives, on the other hand, only 24% were women in 2005. But you may have already thought of some potential flaws in the basic argument proposed by human capital theory. Men and women are different because women bear children, but what about women who have no desire to bear children? What predictions would human capital theory make about them? Or what about men who might want to take on full responsibility for child care or caring for other family members? Would human capital theory predict that these men would behave more like women in their choice of occupation and their methods for maximizing their human capital?

The research testing human capital theory explanations of sex segregation has little to say about the case of men who “look like women” in their desire to assume responsibility for care in the family, but there is research on the women who “look like men” in the sense of women who are not married and do not have children. According to the predictions of human capital theory, single and childless women should be less likely to work in predominantly female occupations; women without these family demands should rationally choose to maximize their human capital in other occupations and jobs. Research indicates, though, that single and childless women are just as likely to be employed in predominantly female jobs as are married women and women with children (Beller, 1982; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993a). Another prediction of human capital theory is that any job that is predominantly female should also be more family friendly. After all, the family-friendly nature of the job is the reason that so many women choose to work in that particular area. Again, research suggests that jobs that are predominantly female are not any easier to reenter after leaving the labor force than are predominantly male jobs and are no more flexible in regards to the working hours (England, 1982; England, 1984; England & Farkas, 1986; Glass, 1990).

CULTURAL ARTIFACT 2: TRANSGENDER IN THE WORKPLACE

Discussions of gender discrimination in the workplace don't even begin to touch on the discrimination faced by those who live outside our convenient gender and sex categories. All the different kinds of discrimination discussed in this section are illegal in the United States when directed against women or men. An often costly and lengthy court case is required to prove when discrimination has taken place, but sex category is one of the categories legally protected against workplace discrimination (along with race, ethnicity, and religious background). Gender identity and sexual identity are not statuses that are protected uniformly across the United States. Though various cities, states, and individual employers have passed laws and policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual identity, there is no federal law that prevents gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgender individuals from being discriminated against in the workplace. Many transgender individuals face a unique set of concerns in the workplace as they transition from living as one gender to living as another. The number of individuals to whom these concerns apply is difficult to measure, but one survey conducted by the financial firm JPMorgan Chase estimated that roughly 0.2% of their employees self-identify as transgender. The number of businesses with policies directed toward the GLBT community has increased dramatically in recent years. In 2003, only 27 of the Fortune 500 companies had policies in place prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity. By 2008, that number had increased to 153 of the Fortune 500 companies (Luther, 2008). Four hundred of the 500 companies attend conferences like the Out and Equal Workplace Summit, while companies like General Motors, New York Life, and IBM recruit at the Transgender Career Expo (Belkin, 2008). Much of this progress is due to the tireless work of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender civil rights organization in the United States. In addition, corporations are motivated to adapt their policies to be more inclusive because diversity has become a powerful recruiting tool for the innovative employees necessary to compete in today's marketplace. Personal stories bear witness to this change, as in the case of Jillian T. Weiss, who transitioned from a male lawyer in the 90s but saw keeping her job in a New York firm after her surgery as simply outside the realm of possibility. Instead, in an interesting sex segregation twist, she got a job as a legal secretary after her transition, where her paper trail was harder to follow. Weiss's gender transition literally led her to follow the contours of sex segregation by occupation, going from an occupation (lawyers) that was 29.2% female in 2002, to an occupation (legal secretary) that was 82.2% female. Ten years later, Breanna L. Speed found the workplace component of her transition from living as a man to

living as a woman to be the “simplest” part (Belkin, 2008). She stayed in the same job as a data administrator and was assisted by the human resources department in her company with her gender transition. After laying the ground work for several months, Wendell eventually left work on Friday to be replaced by Breanna on Monday. While not all transgender individuals are as lucky as Ms. Speed, not all transgender individuals are necessarily forced to leave their jobs altogether as did Ms. Weiss. How do transgender individuals fit into this discussion of sex segregation in the workplace and the gender wage gap? In the past, women have sometimes passed as men in order to gain access to fields that were denied to them based on their gender. This is certainly not the motivation of transgender individuals today, but how will their presence potentially reshape the way gender operates in the workplace? Do male-to-female transsexuals experience the same kind of downward mobility in the workplace as Ms. Weiss? What about female-to-male transsexuals? What would a genderless workplace look like, or a workplace in which switching gender from Friday afternoon to Monday morning was not seen as such an unusual thing?

Gendered Organizations

Individual-level explanations of sex segregation focus on the decisions made by individuals and how those decisions result in a workforce that is segregated along gender lines. Other potential explanations focus on discrimination that might occur interactionally in the workplace and on how the structure of work itself has gendered implications. This institutional-level approach examines how gender gets built into the very functioning of organizations. It makes sense to call this approach **gendered organizations** or institutionalized barriers. Gendered organizations theory should be familiar from our discussion of this theory in Chapter 2. Joan Acker (1990), one of the main proponents of gendered organizations, argued that organizations like businesses are gendered in fundamental ways. Sex segregation is maintained not just because of an aggregation of individual choices or because of tendencies toward discrimination in interactional processes. Rather, any workplace is an inherently gendered institution from the beginning. Organizational routines, jobs, and behavioral assumptions are all fundamentally gendered, and the fact that employers and employees are operating within a context that is fundamentally gendered is also a fact that is by and large taken for granted (Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993a). This explains the power and persistence of sex segregation because sex segregation is not just one particular outcome of the workplace; it is a fundamental part of how businesses work and therefore an integral part of their functioning.

The gendered nature of organizations in the workplace becomes taken for granted, in part, through the supposedly neutral ways of defining basic concepts like jobs and wages, which actually carry highly gendered meanings. Acker (1990) pointed to the way in which a *job* is supposedly a gender neutral term, a position that can be filled by any abstract human being. Yet for many employees, the ideal human being to fill that job is a male worker whose family responsibilities are being taken care of by a wife at home. In her historical examination of wages, Alice Kessler-Harris (1991) pointed to a similar dynamic in regard to how men and women are paid. *Wages* at first appearance is a gender neutral term that simply describes the money that a worker receives in compensation for her or his labor. But throughout the history of business and government debates about what constitutes an acceptable wage, gender has always been front and center in discussions about how much money women and men should make. Traditionally, debates about appropriate wages reflected a long tradition concerning the **family wage**, or the sum necessary to sustain all family members. Regardless of what the reality on the ground is or has been, the ideal family wage has often been conceived of as a male wage, reflecting the idealization of the sole male breadwinner. If a family wage is supposed to be a male wage, where does that leave women's wages? A woman's wage was often conceived of as supplementing those of other family members, rather than as solely providing for the sustenance of all family members. This obviously provided justification for paying women less than men; a whole family was depending on a man's wage, while women's income was merely a welcome addition to the main source of income. Of course, this ignores the many women historically who were the sole breadwinner for their families and the men who were not, in fact, supporting a family but still experiencing the benefit of receiving a family wage. Maintaining this way of thinking about wages was a way of simultaneously preserving a social order in which women were dependent upon men and were kept out of the labor force. The idea of a wage, then, is not a gender neutral term, but one that carries a heavy history of ideas about how wages could be used to maintain women's dependency.

In a more contemporary context, gendered organizations theory points to the way in which other seemingly gender neutral practices have very gendered implications. **Internal labor markets** describe the ways in which larger firms frequently provide structured opportunities for advancement to those who are currently employed within the firm (Wharton, 2005). Essentially, many large organizations promote from within. This practice in and of itself appears to have few gendered implications, until we consider the ways in which gender segregation works within many workplaces and the complex system through which internal labor markets function. Promotions are more likely to be given to individuals in certain types of jobs and areas within a firm than to others. Research demonstrates that women tend to be segregated into occupations and jobs that have fewer positions of authority than male occupations and positions (Huffman & Cohen, 2004). Women segregated within a firm in an area with few opportunities to demonstrate their authority are less likely to be promoted within the firm. A secretary or administrative assistant has little job authority and is much less likely to be promoted to management level than other jobs within a firm that are less female dominated. Existing systems of sex segregation and ghettoization of women make the apparently gender-neutral practice of using internal labor markets into a system that favors men's internal promotion over that of women.

Another example of the ways in which work organizations have gender built into their basic functioning is in the tools and techniques used in different types of jobs and occupations. In occupations or positions that have traditionally been performed by men, the tools and techniques used to do those jobs come to reflect the needs and interests of men. An example of how the very design of tools can have gendered implications comes from a study by Barbara Reskin and Heidi Hartmann (1986) of women working outdoor jobs for the telephone company, AT&T. Injury rates for women working these jobs were higher than the accident rates for men until lighter and more mobile equipment was introduced. The choice of the previous heavier and less mobile equipment was probably not intentionally chosen to make it more difficult for women to perform the job; rather, they were chosen for the men who had in the past been the ones primarily doing the job. This neutral decision about what kind of equipment to use in a job setting can have exclusionary practices, making it more difficult and dangerous for women to do certain types of jobs.

TRANSMEN AT WORK

These three theories of sex segregation suggest very different mechanisms through which the sorting of men and women into different jobs happens. In her study of female-to-male (FTM) transsexuals in the workplace, Kristen Schilt (2006) suggested that the case of FTMs can serve as a unique case for testing these different theories of sex segregation and discrimination in the workplace. Female-to-male transsexuals have a potentially unique perspective on gender discrimination in the workplace due to their “outsider-within” position. Female-to-male transsexuals were born as women, and in her study, many had experienced being a woman in the workplace. Though they became categorized as *within* the category of men, their prior lives as women also provided them with an *outsider’s* perspective on masculinity at work. What happens to these individuals when many transition into being a man, some within the same workplace environment? Will their gender socialization as women trump their new adult transition to living as men? Will the same individual with the same education, skills, and abilities (human capital) be treated differently when her gender status changes to that of a man? How does the gendered organization of their workplace settings affect those who are moving out of one sex category and into another?

Though there are important variations in the experiences of the female-to-male transsexuals in Schilt’s (2006) study, which we will discuss later, two thirds of the 29 respondents she interviewed reported receiving some kind of advantage at work after their transition to being a man. Schilt categorized these advantages into four main types: gaining authority and competency, gaining respect and recognition for hard work, gaining “body privilege,” and gaining economic opportunities (p. 476). Several interviewees, like Henry, reported experiencing firsthand the authority gap that researchers have identified between women and men in the workplace (Ellitott & Smith, 2004); of his interactions in the workplace after having transitioned to being a man, Henry said, “I’m right a lot more now. . . . Even with folks I am out to [as a transsexual], there is a sense that I know what I am talking about” (Schilt, 2006, p. 476). Another respondent noticed the way customers bypassed his female boss and came directly to him with questions, reflecting an assumption that he would

know more as a man. Paul, who openly transitioned in the field of secondary education, noticed how he was called upon to speak at meetings more often as a man than he had been as a woman. In one especially interesting anecdote revealing the increased competency attributed to these individuals post-transition, Thomas told a story about a fellow attorney who congratulated his boss for firing "Susan" (a pseudonym for Thomas's name before his transition) because she was incompetent, while noting that the new guy (Thomas) was "just delightful" (Schilt, 2006, p. 477). Thomas and Susan, in this anecdote, are the exact same person, but while Thomas was seen as delightful, Susan was seen as incompetent.

In the area of respect and recognition for hard work, transmen reported often having to work less hard than they had as women while receiving more respect and recognition as men. Preston transitioned openly while remaining at his blue collar job as a forklift operator. As a woman, Preston received little support as a female crew supervisor, often finding herself short of staff yet still expected to carry out the job competently. These problems disappeared when he transitioned to being a man, and in his last three performance reviews on the job, he received the highest performance ratings of his career. These high ratings were despite Preston's admission that he was doing nothing differently than he had done as a woman and that actually he was working less in his transition to part-time. Another transman, Crispin, reported losing jobs as a female construction worker despite his extra effort because employers gave preferential treatment to male employees based upon the assumption that men had families to support (Schilt, 2006).

Gaining body privilege was another kind of reward that men received after their transition. *Body privilege*, here, means the freedom from unwanted sexual advances or undue attention to their sexuality. One man reported being relieved to be free from "having my boobs grabbed and being called 'honey' and 'babe'" as he was in a job waiting tables before his transition. Another FTM reported his relief at being free from the sexual harassment of his boss, while a transman in a blue collar job noted that "obvious dykes" (Schilt, 2006, p. 480) in these workplaces we're still subject to sexualized comments and unwanted inquiries into their sexuality; as a man, these concerns largely disappeared.

Finally, becoming a man brought many of the men in Schilt's (2006) study increased economic opportunities in a variety of forms. Carl, who started and now owns his own business, believed this career path would have been impossible for him had he remained a woman. Another respondent, Henry, attributed his success as a lawyer to his gender transition, especially because he would not have been able to succeed in law as an obvious dyke and he had no interest in conforming to the gender norms that would have been necessary for him to succeed in law otherwise; though Henry admitted that he might have been successful as a female lawyer, it would have involved "dressing the part" in skirts and other attire worn by female lawyers, and to him, this felt like a kind of drag. Another transman was openly discriminated against in his job before his transition because of his gender ambiguity. His boss told him he could not appear in the front, public area of the restaurant at which he worked because his appearance would scare people. This discrimination is something he no longer feels he has to face after his transition. Though none of the men in Schilt's study magically found themselves making more money after their transitions to life as men, they did encounter a decided lack of barriers to employment, promotion, and entrepreneurship.

Based on these findings, Schilt (2006) concluded that the experiences of the female-to-male transsexuals in her study provided little support for gender socialization or human capital theory as explanations for workplace discrimination and the gender wage gap. The unique case of female-to-male transsexuals who openly transitioned in the same work setting provided strong evidence against human capital theory. In the case of the lawyer, Thomas, his exact same set of skills, capabilities, and education were judged completely differently (as incompetent) when he was Susan than they were after he became Thomas (as delightful). Female-to-male transsexuals were socialized as women, and gender socialization theory predicts this should condition the jobs they choose for themselves, as well as how they approach those jobs and interact within them; because FTMs have already been socialized as women, they should retain these internalized disadvantages even with their transition to men. Yet this does not seem to be the case for the men in Schilt's study; though they were raised as women, they were still able to succeed as men after their transitions.

The theory we have discussed that the case of female-to-male transsexuals seems to most clearly support is that of gendered organizations. The experiences of transmen are important because the advantages that biomen (men who were born biologically male rather than becoming male through surgical intervention) receive in the workplace are often invisible to them. Those within the gendered organizations perspective argue that this is true because of the subtle ways in which gender is built into the functioning of workplaces as organizations. Take the case of Crispin, the construction worker discussed previously. Crispin knew after her transition that women were often let go from construction jobs because of an assumption that jobs were more valuable to men with families than they were to a single woman. She knew this because she had actually been told this by foremen in her life as a woman. But to the biomen who do construction work, it is difficult to understand that keeping your job is the result of gender bias built into the functioning of an organization; you may not even be aware that anyone else has lost his or her job while you kept yours, and you are more likely to assume that you kept your job because you are competent, rather than because you are a man. The outsider-within perspective of transmen allows them to see the hidden dimensions of gender that are hard at work in the world of their jobs.

Masculinity benefits some, but not all, of the transmen in Schilt's (2006) study. Pointing us again to the importance of considering overlapping identities, Schilt found that the *patriarchal dividend* that accrues to female-to-male transsexuals is most powerful for tall, white men who are farther along in their hormonal treatments. The **patriarchal dividend** is "the advantages men in general gain from the subordination of women" (Schilt, 2006, p. 466) (Connell, 1995). But this gain is not distributed equally to all men in Schilt's study. A black transman summarized his experiences in the following way: "I went from being an obnoxious Black woman to a scary Black man" (Schilt, 2006, p. 486). This African American female-to-male transsexual as well as several others interviewed by Schilt felt they had to carefully manage their identities as black men and that this sometimes negatively impacted their work experiences. After their transition, black men were labeled as threatening or aggressive. An Asian American transman felt that he was denied any advantages at work because of his height (being short) and the stereotype of Asian men as passive and, therefore, less masculine.

Height points us to other ways in which the patriarchal dividend was sometimes denied to female-to-male transsexuals. Some FTMs who did not use hormonal treatments felt there was little change in their work experiences, perhaps because this group was still seen as women by their coworkers who often slipped into the use of feminine pronouns to refer to them. In addition, some FTMs who were in the early stages of their transition using hormones also felt less of an advantage due to their status as men. Early in this transitional process, FTMs may not be taking hormones or may have just begun hormone therapy, and therefore may not have facial hair. This lack of facial hair makes many female-to-male transsexuals appear like younger men. One FTM commented that he went from looking like 30 (as a woman) to looking like 13 (as a man). FTMs in this category also reported not experiencing a clear advantage after their transition, indicating the important ways in which gender and age intersect to provide privilege. This also seemed true for height. Hormones can make biological women grow facial hair, but they cannot change their height. FTMs who were shorter (between 5'1" and 5'5") felt that their height also placed them at a disadvantage as men and reduced the amount of authority they had in workplace settings.

Considerations of age, height, appearance, and race all demonstrate the important ways in which the patriarchal dividend is not equally accessible to female-to-male transsexuals, but also to men in general. This is a good example of the importance of an intersectional approach to gender, focusing our attention on the ways in which race, age, and other identities condition how we experience gender. It is also consistent with what we know about hegemonic masculinity as a theory. Remember that hegemonic masculinity teaches us that in any specific setting, certain masculinities are privileged over others. For many of the transmen in Schilt's (2006) study, being white and tall and looking older brought the greatest advantages post-transition.

COMPARABLE WORTH

If the research of Schilt (2006) at least suggests some evidence in support of gendered organizations as an explanation for sex segregation and the wage gap, what are some possible solutions based on this theoretical approach? Comparable worth is a method proposed by many in the second wave of the feminist movement for redressing the gender wage gap, and it can be aligned with a gendered organizations approach. **Comparable worth** as a policy seeks to raise the wages of the low-paying jobs occupied predominantly by women by demonstrating the gendered ways in which jobs are socially constructed. Using job evaluation, comparable worth seeks to unpack the complex relationship between the gender composition of a particular job or occupation, the relative evaluation that job or occupation receives, and the compensation for that job or occupation. Under the Equal Pay Act of 1963, men and women are supposed to be paid the same amount in jobs that are "equal" (Giele & Stebbins, 2003). But how exactly do you determine how jobs are equal when no two jobs are ever really the same? **Job evaluation** is one way of answering this question by determining how pay is assigned to jobs and also evaluating those pay rates as fair or unfair (Wharton, 2005). In comparable worth cases, job evaluation is used to generate rankings of jobs within an organization or firm, and these rankings consistently

demonstrate that women receive lower average wages in jobs that are comparable to those occupied by men. In cases where one consistent job evaluation plan is used to set pay throughout a firm or organization, women nearly always receive higher wages relative to men than is true in firms or organizations that do not use job evaluation (England, 1992). In this way, comparable worth corrects for this particular way in which gender is built into the structure of organizations by standardizing the methods for distributing pay for different jobs regardless of the particular gender composition of that job.

Gendered organizations as a theory explaining sex segregation and the gender wage gap draw our attention to the structure and rules of institutions like corporations and other workplaces. A strength of this theory is that it helps to explain the persistence of these practices because they are deeply embedded in the working of organizations. Undoing sex segregation from a gendered organization perspective involves changing the ways in which organizations work in fairly fundamental ways. The ways in which the normal practices of any business can have unintended gender implications must be revealed and then redressed, and this is an extensive project to say the least. One potential weakness in gendered organization theory emerges from this connection between the normal functioning of organizations and the gendered consequences. If all organizations are gendered in these fundamental ways, how do we imagine what a genderless organization would look like (Britton, 2000)? It is also difficult within a gendered organizations perspective to account for variations in the extent to which sex segregation occurs in different businesses or across different occupations. Why are some firms more or less gendered, exemplifying higher or lower levels of sex segregation? Gendered organizations draw our attention to the subtle ways in which gender can be built into the basic structures of business and the economy, but it leaves other questions unanswered.

JOB QUEUES

The final theory of sex segregation is an institutional level theory that incorporates many of the insights of previous theories in order to include a consideration of the different factors that may come into play in relation to gender and the workplace. Queuing theory attempts to explain historically how some jobs came to be sex segregated, how jobs and occupations continue to experience resegregation and ghettoization, as well as how existing levels of sex segregation are maintained. Queuing theory is an institutional approach in that it focuses not just on the practices of business organizations, but on how the labor economy as a larger social structure functions in ways that have gendered and racial implications. **Queuing theory** focuses on the importance of rank ordering on the part of both workers and employees in term of what are desirable jobs and who are desirable workers in ways that take into account race and gender and, therefore, have implications for sex and racial segregation in the workplace. To understand this theory, we must first define the types of queues that are important, including labor queues, job queues, and gender queues. A **labor queue** is made up of all the available workers who might potentially fill a job; employers form a labor queue that ranks the most desirable workers they would like to fill a particular job, and so a labor queue takes into account the perspective of employers. **Job queues** are the set of jobs available to workers, and they involve potential workers creating

a rank ordering of the most desirable possible jobs; these rank orderings of jobs are developed from the perspective of potential workers.

The particular type of people who will be concentrated in any given job or occupation is determined by an interaction between labor queues and job queues, or between the ranking of workers used by employers combined with the ranking of jobs used by potential workers. Groups of workers who are upwardly mobile vacate jobs in order to move up the job queue and obtain a higher status and higher paying job. Their movement out of one particular occupation or job creates a vacancy that employers are motivated to fill with a group of workers who are most desirable according to the ranking of the labor queue. This new group of workers is motivated to take the newly vacated jobs because they are more highly ranked in the job queue than the jobs they previously occupied. These basic dynamics explain the shifting history of sex segregation across different jobs and occupations. Simply put, "employers hire from as high in the labor queue as possible, and workers accept the best jobs available to them" (Reskin & Roos, 1990, p. 30) within the job queue.

A historical example demonstrates how queuing theory helps to explain the transition in clerical work from a predominantly male to a predominantly female occupation. Clerical work is what we now commonly refer to as *secretarial work* or *administrative assistance*, and it is now a primarily female occupation seen as appropriate women's work. But in 1870, these jobs were barely 9% female and were performed primarily by men. Women, especially in places like New England, were more likely to be working in mills than as clerical workers. Roughly in the period following the American Civil War in the United States, the nature of clerical work changed. As organizations became more bureaucratic, the autonomy attached to clerical work decreased, and clerical work became much more specialized. The introduction of the typewriter decreased the amount of training necessary to perform clerical work and, therefore, also led to a reduction in the wages associated with this occupation. These changes led to an increasing feminization of clerical work, which further contributed to the declining wages. Prior to these changes, clerical work had paid better than a manufacturing job, and particularly so for men. As the wage advantage of clerical work decreased and the job became more feminized and involved less autonomy, men left these jobs in increasing numbers. In the language of queuing theory, clerical work moved down the job queue for men, becoming a less desirable occupation. Many men moved up the job queue to jobs in manufacturing or in sales, advertising, or administrative work (Reskin & Roos, 1990). As the supply of available men to do clerical work declined, employers were faced with the problem of finding another group to fill these occupations. An empty space had opened in the labor queue, and employers increasingly turned to white, English-speaking, middle-class women. This particular group of women was situated below white men in the labor queue and so were more desirable to employers than men or women who were not white or did not speak English. These white, English-speaking, middle-class women were able to move up the job queue into clerical work that was higher paid, cleaner, and easier than the mill jobs they had previously occupied. In this way, job queues and labor queues interacted to create a dramatic transition in the gender composition of clerical workers in the 19th century.

As this example demonstrates, at least three different factors potentially come into play in understanding how these different queues interact. The size of queues is the first factor to consider. The number of workers available to fill a job or the number of job or occupational openings

can affect the movement of different groups into or out of an occupation or a job. For example, the loss of male workers during periods of war creates shifts in sex segregation as employers turn to the next group in the labor queue, usually white women, to fill the newly vacant jobs and occupations. This has ripple effects all along the labor queue, as black men may move up to take the jobs vacated by white women, and black women may move up to take the jobs vacated by black men. The second factor is how employers rank groups in the labor queue. Here, queuing theory draws on several of the other approaches we've considered to explain why employers see certain types of employers as preferable to others. A definite **gender queue** dictates that male workers are generally seen as superior to female workers, although this can be mitigated by race or other characteristics. A gender queue emerges for a variety of reasons, including the following: the sex-typing of certain types of jobs as women's or men's work; the use of gender as a proxy for determining factors related to productivity, such as educational attainment, experience, and group membership; the fear that introducing women workers will decrease productivity and increase labor costs due to the negative response of existing male workers; the lack of a need for some employers to cut wages at all; and the willingness of some employers to accept higher wages as the price for favoring men (Reskin & Roos, 1990, pp. 36–37).

The third factor to consider in understanding how labor queues and job queues interact to affect sex segregation connects to supply-side, or individual-level accounts previously discussed. Employers create labor queues of desirable workers, but workers also fashion their own job queues of what are the most sought-after jobs. How do workers determine which jobs are most desirable? From a queuing theory perspective, there are few gender differences in the ways in which male and female workers rank the most desirable jobs. In contrast to both human capital theory and socialization theory, neither skills nor internalized gender norms or values create significant differences in how women and men conceive of what makes a good job. Most workers will attempt to maximize their income, social standing, autonomy, job security, congenial working conditions, interesting work, and the chance for advancement. Their rankings of jobs within a job queue reflect these basic job characteristics, largely irrespective of their gender. Thus, in the case of clerical workers, men left these occupations because of the loss of income and job autonomy, reflecting the importance of these characteristics in the job queue.

The advantage of the queuing theory perspective is that it works to integrate many of the theoretical perspectives we have already discussed and to explain the ways in which sex segregation is maintained at multiple levels. Mechanisms of discrimination, as well as the gendered nature of organizations, can all be incorporated to explain the complex interplay between job queues and labor queues and the ways in which those queues take on a gendered dynamic. In addition, queuing theory can be used to make predictions about when resegregation or ghettoization will occur within an occupation, job, or firm. When a job or occupation becomes less desirable to the group of workers who occupy that job or position, that group will move up their job queue and create a vacancy for a group beneath them in the labor queue to fill. Historical and contemporary examples seem to demonstrate repeatedly how this process happens. When we turn to the question of what to do about sex segregation and the gender wage gap, queuing theory suggests a fairly fundamental transformation of the very way our job market as an institution is structured. Thus, the policy implications for reducing sex segregation from a queuing perspective are multipronged, including changing social attitudes and reducing discrimination and reducing the amount of male resistance to women's entrance into occupations (Reskin & Roos, 1990).

In conclusion, the experiences of women and men in the workplace are deeply shaped by the historical legacy of the separation of spheres in Anglo-European societies. This inevitably influences the ways in which we think about what work is, often disguising the fact that much of the important work around the world is performed by women, regardless of whether or not they're paid for it. The historical legacy of the doctrine of separate spheres makes work especially important to the identity of men and to masculinity, placing extra pressure on men to be successful. These assumptions about work as something inherently masculine continue to shape women's experiences in the paid workplace. Though the gender wage gap has lessened over time, it still exists and shows little signs recently of closing altogether. In the paid workplace of Anglo-European societies, men and women exist in two different worlds because of sex segregation. In a world that places a great deal of value on monetary success and wealth, the glass ceiling places real limits on women's power. In all these ways, we see how gender permeates every aspect of the work we do and how we think about it—yet another example of the power of gender in our lives.

BIG QUESTIONS

- In this chapter, we discussed how much of the work performed by women throughout the world goes largely unmeasured by official labor statistics and, therefore, remains invisible. What questions does this raise about what we consider to be work and what we don't? How is gender built into the ways in which we think about what work is and what it means to work?
- In Chapter 8, we talked about the sexual division of labor and that some gender theorists argue this division is the key to understanding gender inequality. How does what you've learned in this chapter on the gender of work connect to this perspective on the sexual division of labor? Does the information in this chapter seem to support the view that the sexual division of labor is central to gender inequality, and how so?
- Throughout this book, we've asked questions about the relationship between gender difference and gender inequality. In this chapter, we discussed sex segregation and that women and men generally work different kinds of occupations and jobs. This leads to the gender wage gap, but can you imagine a world in which men and women worked different kinds of jobs and occupations but this did not lead to inequality in the form of a gender wage gap or other kinds of inequality?
- How important is it that women earn less than men on average? In many parts of the developing world, this affects overall poverty rates. What are other implications of the gender wage gap? How important do you think this gender inequality is relative to other examples of gender inequality we have discussed so far in this book?
- The implications for how to correct sex segregation in the workplace are very different depending on whether you take an individual, interactional, or institutional level approach. What are the implications of an individual-level approach? An interactional approach? An institutional approach? How do those implications influence the way you think about these different approaches to explaining sex segregation?
- Several of the theories and approaches discussed in this chapter suggest that gender inequality is built into the very structure of economic systems and society. Do you

agree with this perspective? What evidence might you assemble in support of this argument? What evidence might you assemble to contradict this argument? What are the implications of this perspective for reducing gender inequality in relation to work?

GENDER EXERCISES

1. Do your own investigation on the gender wage gap and sex segregation. Information for the United States is available at the following website: www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf. Pick some occupations you're interested in and look up the percent female in that occupation, and then calculate the gender wage gap. What's surprising about this information? Can you find an occupation in which women make more than men? What theories might you develop about which occupations tend to be more segregated than others and which have a larger gender wage gaps?
2. How have attitudes about gender and work changed across time? Interview people from different generations—older and younger women and men—about their experiences with work and how they feel about work. You might ask older women and men questions about what kind of jobs they had, what kind of jobs were appropriate for different genders during their time, what the attitudes were then toward women and men working, and so on. Interview younger individuals and compare how the gender of work has changed over time.
3. Pick a firm or organization with which you are familiar, and conduct an audit of its level of sex segregation. Make a list of all the jobs within that firm or organization and the gender of the people occupying those jobs. Pay attention to details and to the subtle differences between jobs. For example, which jobs are supervisory (have authority over other workers), and is there a gender trend in who occupies those jobs? What are potentially subtle differences in what seem like relatively similar jobs? For example, in a law firm, who does more pro bono (free) legal work? Do different lawyers tend to take different kinds of cases?
4. Test some of the assumptions of the theories we discussed in this chapter explaining sex segregation in the workplace. Interview people who are already in the workplace or those who are preparing for future jobs. Ask them how they decided on their particular career or occupation. As predicted by human capital theory, do women choose careers with childcare and family considerations in mind while men do not? How does socialization seem to impact their career choice? If they are already working, have they faced any discrimination or advantages in the workplace due to their gender? What is their sense of the gender breakdown of their particular job, occupation, or firm?
5. Go to the library and find books or articles on the work lives of women or men in several different societies. Find a mix of industrialized societies and other kinds of societies. What are the important tasks to be accomplished in each of these societies? Among these tasks, which seem to be considered work and which are not? Is this related to gender (are the things men do more likely to be considered work than the things women do, or vice versa)? What kinds of tasks seem to be considered men's work or women's work, and how does that vary across the different societies?
6. Do a content analysis of some popular culture medium. What does this particular media outlet say about the gendering of work? For example, you might compare men's and