

inequalities in job opportunities, pay, and leadership declined. Tolerance for sexual minorities increased. Premarital sex lost much of its stigma.

But recent research has made clear that these matters do not go only in the direction of more permissiveness in sexual matters and more equality between men and women. Some changes have plateaued or even reversed. We've seen that many forms of gender equalizing—declining segregation of occupations, reduction of the sex gap in pay, and egalitarian attitudes—moved most dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s, with slow-downs or reversals since 1990. In the sexual arena, intercourse among teens became more common, but then the trend reversed more recently.

We've also seen that some things change much more than others. Gender change is discussed as “women's progress” because women modified their roles much more than men. More women entered employment, went farther in school, and entered previously male-dominated fields of study and occupations. Movements in the opposite

direction—of men becoming homemakers or entering female-dominated fields of study and occupation—have happened much less. In part this is because activities women have traditionally done pay less and receive less respect, and as long as that is true, men will have an incentive to avoid these roles, and women will have an incentive to abandon them.

Here is another instance of some things shifting much more than others: Women's dramatic movements into employment and traditionally male careers were not matched by large changes in how gendered sexual behavior is. The sexual script that sees men as the initiators of dates, sex, and proposals of marriage has not varied dramatically. And a sexual double standard still exists such that women are judged more harshly for casual sex.

One of the remaining puzzles for sociologists studying gender and sexuality is to understand which things change, why equalizing changes sometimes reverse, and why some things are so resistant to change.

The Big Questions Revisited 12

12.1 Where Do Gender Differences Come From?

Are differences between men and women all natural, or are they shaped by society as well as biology? This section explored the differences between men and women and examined where these differences come from.

Review the key ideas from this section.

Sex Versus Gender: The Social Construction of Gender

Learning Objective 12.1.1: Distinguish the concepts of sex and gender and explain how gender is socially constructed.

Gender Socialization

Learning Objective 12.1.2: Describe the process of gender socialization.

Gender Differences Vary by Setting and Time

Learning Objective 12.1.3: Explain how gender differences vary by setting and time.

The Impact of Stereotypes

Learning Objective 12.1.4: Discuss the role of stereotypes in constructing social expectations of gender.

Key Terms

gender (p. 266) sex (p. 269) intersex individual (p. 269) social construction of gender (p. 269) patriarchy (p. 270) transgendered (p. 270) random-assignment experiment (p. 271) stereotypes (p. 271)

12.2 How Have the Lives of Women and Men Changed in the Last 50 Years? Women's lives have changed so much in the last 50 years that we often call the changes a gender revolution. This section explored some of these changes and how they have affected men's lives.

Rising Women's Employment and Education

Learning Objective 12.2.1: Discuss reasons for the dramatic increase in women's employment and education since 1960.

Change in Women's Jobs and in the Pay Gap

Learning Objective 12.2.2: Describe occupational sex segregation and explain the gender pay gap.

The Impact on Men

Learning Objective 12.2.3: Discuss the impact of the gender revolution on men's roles.

Key Terms

feminist movement (p. 274) occupational sex segregation (p. 274)

12.3 How Are Our Sex Lives Shaped by Biology and Society? There is no question that sexual attractions and behavior are affected by biology, but as we discussed in this section, they are also strongly affected by social construction.

Sexual Orientation

Learning Objective 12.3.1: Discuss the relative influence of biology and society on sexual orientation.