

Gender and Family

Chapter 4

Outline

- Studying Gender
- Believing in Gender Differences
- Learning Gender Roles and Playing Gendered Roles
- Gendered Family Experiences

Studying Gender

- **sex**

- the biological aspect of being male or female.
- As such, it includes chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical characteristics that differentiate most females from most males.

- **gender**

- how one sees oneself
- The expectations one forms of others based on their being females or males
- the roles one plays in households and families,
- the opportunities one has in the wider world of education, work, and politics

Gender and Inequality

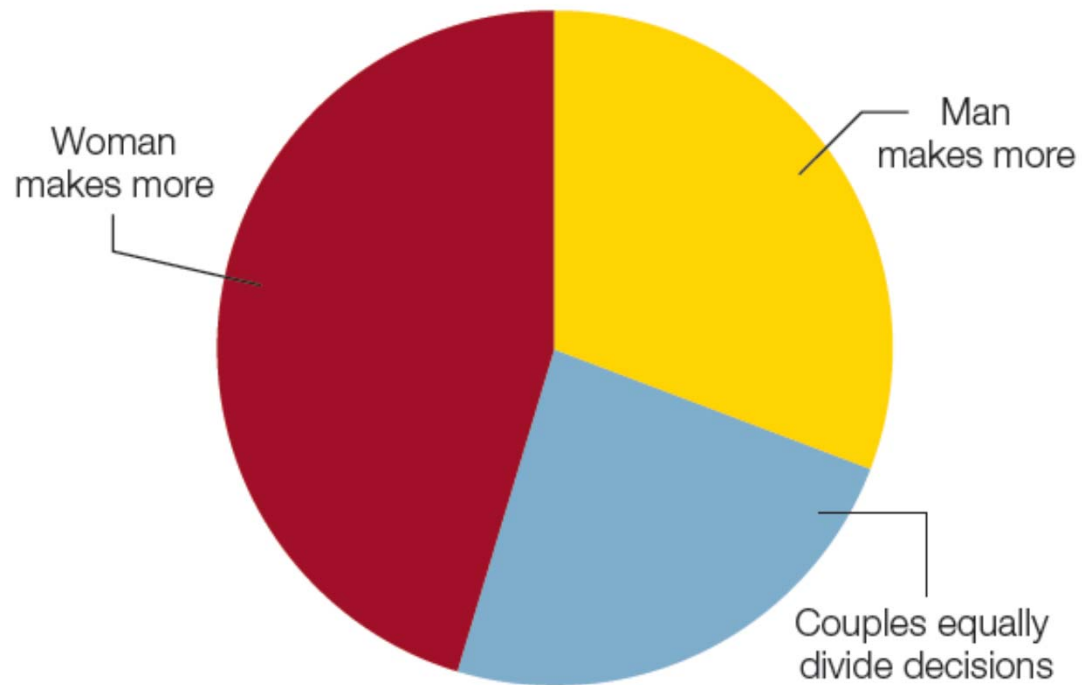
- **gender stratification**

- inequality between females and males
- Most societies, both past and present, have been characterized by gender stratification
- The majority are considered patriarchies

2008 Median Usual Weekly Earnings, Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers

	Male	Female	Female as % of Male
All Races	\$798	\$638	80%
White	\$825	\$654	79%
African American	\$620	\$554	89%
Asian American	\$996	\$753	78%
Hispanic	\$559	\$501	90%

Figure 4.2 Who Makes the Decisions at Home?



Gender Identities, Gendered Roles, and Gender Stereotypes

- Gender role
 - the role a person is expected to perform as a result of being male or female in a particular culture.
- Gender-role stereotypes
 - beliefs that males and females, as a result of their sex, possess distinct psychological and behavioral traits.

Believing in Gender Differences

- Culturally, we tend to view the genders as *dichotomous and opposite*
- In reality, men and women are more similar than different.
- Innate gender differences are generally minimal.
- Differences are encouraged by socialization.
- Within any society there are multiple versions of masculinity and femininity, one of which comes to dominate our thinking about gender.

Gender Theory

- Begins with two assumptions:
 1. male–female relationships are characterized by power issues and
 2. society is constructed in such a way that males dominate females.
- Focuses on
 - How specific behaviors or roles are defined as male or female.
 - How labor is divided into man's work and woman's work, both at home and in the workplace.
 - How different institutions bestow advantages on men.

Gender Socialization

- Social Learning Theory

- Emphasizes learning behaviors from others through rewards and punishments and modeling.
- This approach has been modified to include cognitive processes, such as the use of language, the anticipation of consequences, and observation.

- Modeling

- Playing “dress up” is one way children model the characteristics and behaviors of adults. It is part of the process of learning what is appropriate for someone of their gender.

Learning Gender Roles and Playing Gendered Roles

- Although biological factors, such as hormones, clearly are involved in the development of male and female differences, the extent of biological influences is not well understood.
- Along the way, numerous agents of socialization contribute to our development as males and females.

Childhood and Adolescence



- Parents are major influences in our gender development.
- How Parents Socialize Children. Four very subtle processes:
 1. Manipulation
 2. Channeling
 3. Verbal appellation
 4. Activity exposure

Other Sources of Socialization

- **School**

- Around the time children enter day care centers or kindergarten, teachers and peers, discussed become important influences in their overall development and also their gender socialization.

- **Peers**

- A child's age-mates, or peers, become especially important when the child enters school

- **Popular Culture and Mass Media**

Continued Gender Development in Adulthood

College

- Within the college setting, many young adults learn to think critically, to exchange ideas, and to discover the bases for their actions.

Marriage and Parenthood

- People's experiences in marriage and parenthood can also lead to changes in gender attitudes, beliefs, and behavior.

The Workplace

- Experiences in the workplace can also lead to changes in one's attitudes and expectations.

Gendered Family Experiences

- **Women's Roles in Families and Work**
 - Traditionally, women's lives centered around marriage and motherhood.
- **Traditional Female Roles**
 - Among middle-class whites the emphasis is on being a wife and mother.
 - Among African Americans, women are expected to be instrumental; there is no conflict between work and motherhood.
 - Among Latinos, women are deferential to men generally from respect rather than subservience; elders, regardless of gender, are afforded respect.

Gendered Family Experiences

- **Men's Roles in Families and Work**

- Central features of the traditional male role—whether among Caucasians, African Americans, Latinos, or Asian Americans—stressed male dominance and men as breadwinners.

- **Traditional Male Roles**

- A man's central family role has been viewed as being the provider.
- For women, there is greater role diversity according to ethnicity.

Continued Constraints of Contemporary Gendered Roles

- Both women and men often reinforce traditional gender-role stereotypes.
- Despite the limitations that traditional roles may place on us, changing them is not easy.
- Even though substantially more flexibility is offered to men and women today, contemporary gendered roles and expectations continue to limit our potential.

Limitations of Contemporary Gender Roles: Men

- The provider role limits men's father and husband roles.
- Difficulty in expressing feelings.
- A sense of dominance that precludes intimacy.

Limitations of Contemporary Gender Roles: Women

- Diminished self-confidence and mental health.
- Association of femininity with youth and beauty creates a disadvantage as women age.
- Ethnic women may suffer both racial discrimination and gender-role stereotyping, which compound each other.

Social Movements Dedicated to Changing Gender Roles

- Gender-reform feminism
- Gender-resistant feminism
- Movements designed to emphasize how gender overlaps with other bases of oppression, like age, race or class.
- Profeminist men's movements
- Most current men's movements attempt to reconnect men with families.