

Gender & Family

What is a gendered family?

Week 6 Discussion

Demise of the American Family?





- ▶ Think about the various families you know
- ▶ What did the text mean by the demise of the American Family?
- ▶ What do advertisements reveal about family?



Brief History

- ▶ The “nuclear family” comprising of a heterosexual couple (husband and wife) and their children was prominent in the mid-20th century but was never the dominant family form as media and family orgs have portrayed
 - ▶ Product of:
 - ▶ Sociocultural/historical time
 - ▶ Industrial Revolution
 - ▶ Men working outside of home for paid wages
 - ▶ US after WWII
 - ▶ Servicemen’s Readjustment Act (GI Bill of Rights)
 - ▶ Gave primarily white veterans opportunities for home ownership and a college education

Policies promoting heteronormativity;
primarily a 50s & 60s middle-class
White phenomenon



Women AND Men worked outside of the
home in marginalized racial and ethnic
minority groups and low-income White
families

Family & Gender Socialization

- ▶ **Gender socialization:**

- ▶ Process of learning gender roles through interacting within social institutions, such as our families

- ▶ Different expectations based on gender vary by:

- ▶ Culture
 - ▶ Values/Beliefs
 - ▶ Religion
 - ▶ Class
 - ▶ Rituals
 - ▶ Gender expression (masculinity, femininity, androgyny)

- ▶ Families contribute to what we are taught, what we practice, and what we come to expect from family members, children, partners (based on gender).

- ▶ Gender roles, gender expectations, gender norms, gender stereotypes



Gender Socialization through Parenting

- ▶ Parents' gender-stereotypical expectations
 - ▶ Personality traits, abilities, activities
 - ▶ Expecting/encouraging boys to be aggressive
 - ▶ Expecting/encouraging girls to be good in school/reading
 - ▶ Girls play softball / boys play baseball
 - ▶ Parents' gender-role modeling
 - ▶ Women in workforce
 - ▶ Domestic responsibilities → Women's work
 - ▶ Active involvement of father in childcare
 - ▶ LG parents → children are less likely to endorse gender stereotypes
 - ▶ Differential treatment of daughters & sons
 - ▶ Encouragement of gender-stereotyped activities through toy/activity selection
 - ▶ Trucks = boy
 - ▶ Dolls = girls
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- A cartoon illustration of a young girl with red hair in pigtails, wearing a pink polka-dot dress and a red belt. She is standing next to a blue dollhouse. On the floor around her are various toys: a blue airplane, a baseball, a football, a video game controller, and a small doll. The background is a solid light blue.



Breakout Room Discussion: Gender, Family, & Role modeling



Think about our family and your experiences as a child

- Who in our family did what household tasks?
- How was household tasks divided?
- How did your family “model” gendered expectations about housework tasks?
- What did the ads reveal?

Feminist sociological perspective

► Asks and challenges:

- Assumptions that a gendered division of labor in families is
 - Traditional
 - Universal
 - Divinely ordained
 - Based on biological differences (bio reductionist view)

Gender & the division of housework

- ▶ Homemakers in the U.S. today spend as much time on housework as their 1790s counterparts.
- ▶ Why?
 - ▶ Higher standards of hygiene and larger homes



Gender & the division of housework

- ▶ Feminized/stereotypical tasks
 - ▶ Meal prep, cleaning, laundry,
 - ▶ Repetitive, emotionally taxing, never-ending tasks, time consuming tasks
- ▶ Masculinized tasks
 - ▶ Household repairs, car maintenance, yard work
 - ▶ More flexible, less time consuming

Housework varies depending on the type of marriage/family

Nuclear, Heterosexual Marriage

- ▶ In a heterosexual marriage, husbands create an extra 5-7 hours of housework for wives; wives save husband about an hour of housework a week
- ▶ Women's employed outside of the home work a "second shift" of housework as men's housework participation does not increase

Cohabiting, or 2nd marriage

- ▶ Divide household labor in more egalitarian ways

Same-sex couples

- ▶ Report more egalitarian allocation of family responsibilities than heterosexual couples
 - ▶ Gay men specialize, split tasks evenly
 - ▶ Lesbians share household tasks

Women, on average, do more housework than men

Marriage/Relationship Types

Traditional

- ▶ Equality in terms of giving to relationship, not division of tasks
- ▶ Provider role: “help” at home but not responsible, main decision maker
- ▶ Caretaker role: nurturer, take care of home, defer to husband
- ▶ Same-sex couple versions of this?

Near peer (aka: gender legacy)

- ▶ Wanted to share everything equally or thought it would be, but didn’t happen
- ▶ Task allocation based on preference, but always aligned with gender
- ▶ Same-sex couple versions of this?

Egalitarian or Peer marriage (Schwartz, 1994)

- ▶ Consciously work to create patterns based on mutuality
- ▶ No greater than 60-40 split of domestic labor
- ▶ Both have decision making power; control over money
- ▶ Both work situations equally valued/flexible

Breakout Room Discussion:

Based on your gender socialization around household tasks:

- ▶ What expectations would you or do you have out of a partner (wife, husband, boyfriend, girlfriend)?
 - ▶ Have you confronted differences in gendered expectations?
 - ▶ How do you/would you negotiate household tasks?
- ▶ Which type of relationship do you/would you strive for:
 - ▶ Traditional
 - ▶ Near peer
 - ▶ Egalitarian
 - ▶ What influences this decision?
- ▶ **Think intersectionally!**

Why is equality so hard to accomplish?

How we define and legalize family is heavily embedded in U.S. policy

Inequality is perpetuated by U.S. work & family policies

- Housework is not defined as labor
- Women earn lower wages than men, even for the same work
- No guaranteed childcare or paid leave in U.S.
- Health insurance and other benefits are often dependent on employment

Thoughts on defining housework as valuable labor deserving of pay

How would this work?

If you don't think this is ok, how do you feel about paying for a maid or nanny or gardener or cook, etc?

What is the difference?

What about paid parental leave?

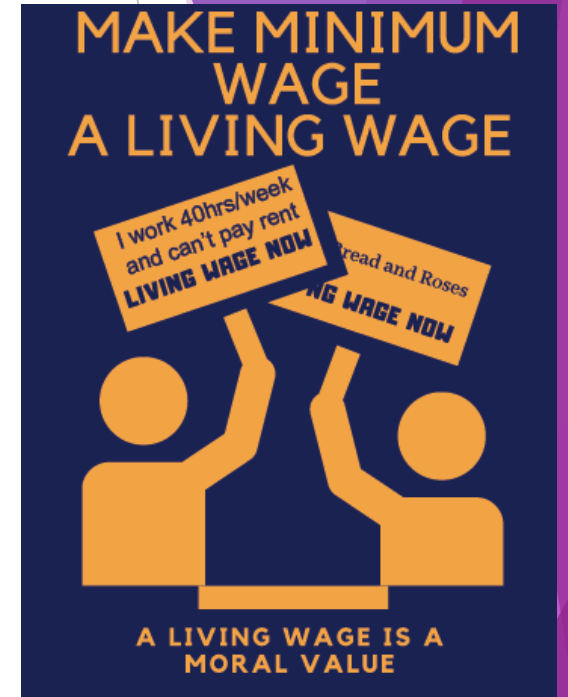
What issues do you see with paying primarily poor women of Color to take care of affluent families, often White?



Discuss

Other policies to create a better balance

- ▶ Livable wages for all workers?
 - ▶ Flexible work schedules?
 - ▶ Free child care?
 - ▶ Allowances to pay for household help?
 - ▶ Other social justice initiatives?
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- ▶ Equal division of Labor at home for working parents? Not exactly (CNN)
 - ▶ <https://www.cnn.com/2015/11/04/health/work-life-balance-gender-divide-pew-research-center/index.html>



Presidential Debate

Key Topics

- ▶ Supreme Court vacancy
- ▶ COVID-19
- ▶ Healthcare
- ▶ Race & (state sanctioned) violence
- ▶ Economy
- ▶ Climate Change



Policy

- Who privileges from certain policies? Who suffers?
- Pay attention to how these topics impact the health and wellbeing of people based on:
 - Gender
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Social Class
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Religion