

BENEFITTS  
**SOC**<sup>5</sup>

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY




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# 9

## Gender and Sexuality

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## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1 Differentiate between sex and gender and describe societal reactions to LGBTs
- 2 Explain how gender stratification affects the family, education, workplace, and politics
- 3 Describe contemporary sexual attitudes and practices, including sexual scripts and double standards



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 4 Summarize abortion and same-sex marriage trends and explain why both issues are controversial
- 5 Describe and illustrate gender and sexual inequality across cultures
- 6 Compare and evaluate the theoretical explanations of gender and sexuality



## Sex and Gender

- **Sex:** Biological characteristics with which an individual is born
  - *Includes physical and physiological attributes that influence one's behavior*
- **Gender:** Learned attitudes and behaviors that characterize women and men
  - *Based on social and cultural expectations*

Discussion: What are the differences between males and females?

**Sex** LO-1

- **Sexual identity:** Ways in which one expresses his/her sexual values, attitudes, and feelings
  - *Incorporates sexual orientation*
    - **Sexual orientation:** Preference for sexual partners

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Physical characteristics such as breasts and beards indicate whether someone is a female or male, but sex is not always clear-cut. For example, **intersexuals** are born with both male and female external genitals or an incomplete development of internal reproductive organs.

## Sexual Orientation

### Homosexuals

- Sexually attracted to people of the same sex

### Heterosexuals

- Sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex

### Bisexuals

- Sexually attracted to both sexes

### Asexuals

- Lack any interest in or desire for sex

## Sexual Orientation (continued)

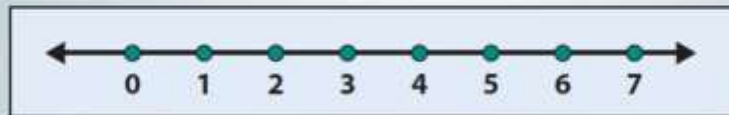
- About 3 percent of Americans identify themselves as lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual
- Biological factors that can affect sexual orientation
  - *Early influence of sex hormones after conception and around childbirth*
- Researchers speculate that genetic and cultural factors may impact sexual orientation

Culture shapes people's sexual attitudes and behavior, but it is hard to determine why people are straight, gay, bisexual, or asexual.

Sexual orientation is said to have biological roots, according to some researchers, because homosexuality exists in all societies and, across cultures, the gay population is roughly the same—about 5 percent.

Figure 9.1

## Sexual Orientation Continuum




- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 0 Exclusively heterosexual   | 4 Usually homosexual       |
| 1 Predominantly heterosexual | 5 Predominantly homosexual |
| 2 Usually heterosexual       | 6 Exclusively homosexual   |
| 3 Bisexual                   | 7 Asexual                  |

Sources: Kinsey et al. 1948, p. 638; and Kinsey Institute 2011.

LO-1

## Gender

- **Gender identity:** Perception of oneself as either masculine or feminine
  - **Transgender:** *People whose gender identity and behavior differ from the sex to which they were assigned at birth*
    - Categories - Transsexuals, crossdressers, and genderqueer
- **Gender expression:** Way a person communicates gender identity to others



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### Sociology in Media

**“New Passport Rules Ease Switch for Transgenders”** by Katy Steinmetz  
*Time.com*; June 12, 2010

On June 9 the state department is publishing new guidelines for citizens wishing to change the gender listed on their passports, embracing policy that will make the switch much easier. This is an example of sexual reassignment and its policy implications.

What is your perspective on sexual reassignment?

How do the rights of transgendered individuals impact others?

Discuss how your community sees the rights of transgendered people?

How do transgendered people’s rights affect you?

## Gender (continued)

- **Gender roles:** Characteristics, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that society expects of females and males
- **Gender stereotypes:** Expectations about how people will look, act, think, and feel based on their sex
  - *Fuel sexism*
    - **Sexism:** Attitude that discriminates against one sex, based on the assumed superiority of the other sex



Discussion: In what ways were you socialized into gender?

## Sex and Gender: Application

- Identify the concept - Sex, gender identity, gender role, and gender stereotyping
  - *Emma believes that it is the mother's responsibility to care for the children*
  - *Steven was born with a penis and testes*
  - *Three-year-old Valerie announces that she will be a cowboy when she grows up*
  - *John believes that all females are alike and not qualified to be president*

Answers:

Emma - Gender role

Steven - Sex

Valerie - Gender identity

John - Gender stereotype

## Societal Reactions to LGBTs

- Mixed attitudes
  - *Some countries include a third option under gender in documents*
  - *Legalization of same-sex marriages*
  - *Federal workers and Medicare recipients are eligible for sex-change operations*
  - *LGBT characters are appearing on prime time TV*
  - Issues - **Heterosexism and homophobia**



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There are many other indicators of greater LGBT acceptance.

In 2012, the Army promoted the first openly gay female officer to brigadier general.

In 2013, the Pentagon added benefits for same-sex partners, including services on U.S. military bases.

**Heterosexism** is a belief that heterosexuality is the only legitimate sexual orientation, pervades societal practices, laws, and institutions. It triggers **homophobia**, a fear and hatred of lesbians and gays. It takes the form of gay-bashing.

## Gender Stratification

- People's unequal access to valued resources because of their sex
- Enabled by gendered institutions
- In family life
  - *Women do less housework than they used to*
  - *Fathers spend more time in paid work*
    - Likely to join in with child care than to take over from mothers
    - More fathers are choosing to be stay-at-home dads

Discussion: Why are men experiencing greater work-family conflict?

**Table 9.1** As Rank Increases, the Number of Female Faculty Decreases

Rank	Percentage of Female Faculty Members
Instructor	56
Assistant Professor	49
Associate Professor	42
Professor	29

Note: Of the almost 762,000 full-time faculty in 2011, 44 percent were women.

Source: Based on Snyder and Dillow, 2013, Table 291.

## Gender Stratification (continued 1)

- In the workplace
  - **Occupational sex segregation:** Channeling women and men into different types of jobs
    - Male dominated occupations pay higher wages
  - **Gender pay gap**
    - Increases with higher education
    - Lower wages reduce women's savings, purchasing power, and quality of life



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Women are much less likely than men to move up the occupational ladder. In recent years, women have made progress in a number of the higher-paying occupations.

### Reasons for gender gap

- Women tend to choose fields with lower earnings (such as health care and education), whereas men are more likely to major in higher paying fields (such as engineering and computer science).
- Women on average work fewer hours than men, usually to care for children or other family members.

### Sociology in the Media

**"A Giant Leap for Women, but Hurdles Remain"** by Jeré Longman  
*New York Times*; July 29, 2012.

For the first time in Olympic history, all of the participating teams have female athletes. This is a major boost for gender equality. The fight for true equality is far from being won. For the first time, Saudi Arabia sent two female athletes to compete in London, along with at least one sports official. But the three women who participated in the opening ceremony walked behind the men, not among them.

Do the Olympics represent a general movement towards equality?  
Are female athletes in the United States treated the same as male athletes?  
What women athlete best fits your ideology?

## Gender Stratification (continued 2)

- **Sexual harassment:** *Unwanted sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or other conduct of a sexual nature in the workplace*
  - Includes physical contact and verbal and nonverbal behavior
- In politics
  - *Few women exist as decision makers in elective offices*
  - *Women's voting rates have increased in recent years*

Reasons for few women in political office

- Women do not consider themselves as qualified.
- **Hold the burden of proving their abilities.**
- U.S. presidents appoint more men than women to important positions.
- Sexism

## Sexuality

- Product of one's sexual identity, sexual orientation and sexual scripts
  - *Includes desire, expression, and behavior*
- Reasons why people have sex
  - *Reproduction and to experience pleasure*
  - *Range from physical to spiritual and altruistic to spiteful*

The majority of teenagers ages 15 to 19 have their first sexual intercourse with someone that they describe as “going steady,” but the percentage is higher for females (70 percent) than males (56 percent). Teenagers are also more likely to engage in sex at any early age if they use alcohol or other drugs or experience domestic violence.

## Sexuality Throughout the Life Course

- Adolescents have oral sex to:
  - *Maintain one's virginity*
  - *Avoid the risk of pregnancy and STDs*
- Marital sexual frequency decreases due to family obligations
- Sexual desire and activities reduce with age
  - *Linked to poor health and relationship problems rather than age*

Contrary to some stereotypes, adolescents are not sexually promiscuous and older people are not asexual.

## Sexual Scripts and Double Standards

- Specify the formal and informal norms of acceptable or unacceptable sexual behavior
- Hypersexualization of women
  - *Sexualized social messages are reaching younger audiences*
  - *Girls are imitating their mothers who dress and act in highly sexualized ways*
- **Sexual double standard:** Code that permits greater sexual freedom for men than women



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Sexualized social messages are reaching ever younger audiences, teaching or reinforcing the idea that girls and women should be valued for how they look rather than their personalities and abilities. Media images play a large role in girls' hypersexualization.

Discussion: Are Barbie dolls good for kids? Does the sexual double standard still exist?

# LEARNING OUTCOMES

## 1 Bacon 3 Way (Source: [www.about-face.org](http://www.about-face.org))



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## LEARNING OUTCOMES



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJlvtCzJPaQ>

## LEARNING OUTCOMES



[https://www.about-face.org/gallery\\_winner/unlimited-representation/](https://www.about-face.org/gallery_winner/unlimited-representation/)

## Social Issues About Sexuality: Abortion

- Abortion rates have decreased in recent years
- Anti-abortion groups
  - *Believe the embryo has a right to life*
  - *View abortion as immoral and endangering a woman's health, leads to stress disorders*

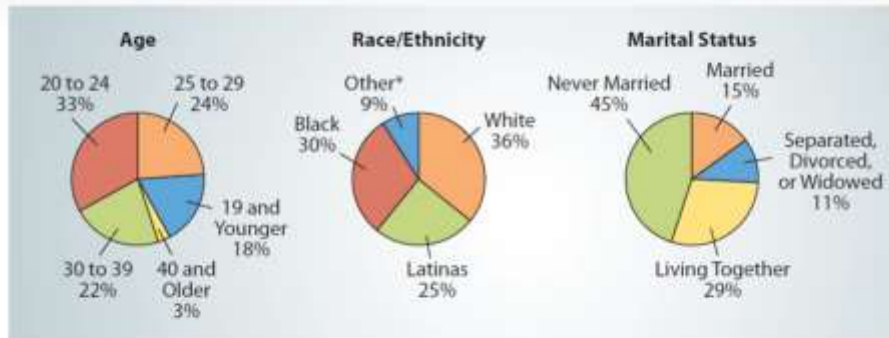
Abortion rates have decreased as of 2014 because at least half of the states had restricted access to abortion, but national data show that most of the decline in abortions is due to an overall drop in pregnancy rates, delaying childbearing until the economy improves, a more effective usage of contraceptives, and greater access to emergency contraception that prevents pregnancy.

Since its legalization, abortion has been one of the most persistently contentious issues in U.S. politics and culture.

Discussion: What are your thoughts on access to abortion in the U.S.?

Figure 9.6

## Who Has Abortions?



\*Other refers to Asian/Pacific Islanders, American Indians, and Alaska Natives.

Sources: Based on Guttmacher Institute, 2013, 2014.

## Social Issues About Sexuality: Same-Sex Marriage

LO-4

- Legalized by the U.S Supreme Court in 2015
- Opponents' argument
  - *Immoral and weakens the traditional idea of marriage*
- Supporters' argument
  - *People should have the same legal rights regardless of sexual orientation*



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More than half (55 percent) of Americans support same-sex marriage (up from 37 percent in 2006). Opposition is greatest among those who are Republican, white, male, regularly attend religious services, live in the South, are 55 and older, and hold conservative views on family issues.

## Gender Inequality Across Cultures

- Women's progress toward equality has been mixed in many countries
  - *Face discrimination in access to work, economic assets, and participation in private and public decision making*
- Higher rates of unemployment exist for women with advanced degrees
- Few women occupy political leadership positions in the U.S

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Women's economic participation depends on cultural attitudes, values, customs, and laws. Countries that have closed education gaps and have high levels of women's economic participation demonstrate strong economic growth. However, gender gaps still persist in senior positions, wages, and leadership.

Discussion: Why does the U.S. lag behind other countries in gender equality?

### Sociology in the Media

#### **"Baptist Leaders Face Challenge on Women's Roles"**

*National Public Radio; July 24, 2009*

The Southern Baptist Convention is losing members due to its stance on women. Examples include not allowing women to be senior pastors and if a church hires a women pastor they run the risk of being de-fellowshipped. Women at seminaries run the risk of not getting tenure.

What is the role of women in institutions you participate in?

To what extent are the experiences of women in the Southern Baptist Convention common in other churches in the U.S?

What is your perspective on women in the church?

## Sexual Inequality Across Cultures

- Violence against females
  - *Prevalent due to customs, laws, or nominal government protection*
  - *Issues - Physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, honor killing, dowry disputes, and female genital mutilation/cutting*
- Violence against males
  - *Homosexuality is illegal in many nations*
    - Gay men may be legally tortured, stoned, imprisoned, or killed

In 2014, 20,000 U.S. service members, representing nearly 5 percent of all active-duty women and 1 percent of active-duty men, experienced at least one incident of unwanted sexual contact. Nearly 35 percent of the assaults reported by men included rape and penetration with an object. Only 25 percent reported the incident.

## Sociological Explanations of Gender and Sexuality: Functionalism

LO-6

- Men and women have distinct roles that ensure a family's and society's survival
  - *Gender roles are complementary*
- An individual's earnings are based on the choices he/she makes and the accumulation of human capital
- Sexuality is critical for reproduction
  - *Sex outside of marriage is dysfunctional*
  - *Functionalists encourage marrying in one's mid-to late twenties*

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Traditional gender roles help explain occupational sex segregation because people differ in the amount of human capital that they bring to the labor market. *Human capital* is the array of competencies— including education, job training, skills, and experience— that have economic value and increase productivity.

Worldwide, sex outside of marriage is prohibited and arranged marriages—in which parents or relatives choose their children's future mates—are the norm.

Discussion: We often think of gender as fixed due to the biology of men and women. This means that each sex has an assigned set of roles and behaviors that they do in society. Are men and women born for particular roles?

## Sociological Explanations of Gender and Sexuality: Functionalism (continued)

LO-6

- Critical evaluation
  - *Women who played instrumental and expressive roles in the 1950s were ignored*
  - *Some people do not have the choice of playing only instrumental and expressive roles*
  - *Assumptions made in the human capital model is incorrect*
    - Gender pay gap is prevalent across all occupations
  - *Unintended pregnancies, within or outside marriage, is a cost to the government*

## Sociological Explanations of Gender and Sexuality: Conflict Theory

LO-6

- Sexuality is viewed as reflecting and perpetuating sexism and discrimination
  - *Capitalism explains gender roles and supremacy of men over women*
  - *Gender inequality gives men economic, political, and/or interpersonal power to control women's sexual lives*
    - Leads women to internalize sexism



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Conflict theorists argue that women's inequality is largely due to economic exploitation—both as underpaid workers in the labor force and doing most of the unpaid domestic work, especially housework and caring for aging family members. Conflict theorists agree that all men are not equally privileged, and that women in upper classes have more economic power, status, and prestige than men in lower classes.

## Sociological Explanations of Gender and Sexuality: Conflict Theory (continued)

LO-6

- Critical evaluation
  - *Women are not weak*
    - Negotiate with their employers for their demands to be met
  - *Common goals, attitudes, and comparable power strategies between men and women are ignored*
  - *Women's exploitation of other women is overlooked*

## Sociological Explanations of Gender and Sexuality: Feminist Theories

LO-6

- Emphasize on women's daily vulnerability to male violence
- Representation of women in media has decreased and sexism is highly prevalent
- Gender, race, and social class intersect to form a hierarchical stratification system
  - *Shapes men's and women's attitudes, experiences, and behavior*
- Commercializing sex demeans both women and men

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Feminist scholars, more than any other group of theorists, are especially concerned about men controlling women's sexual lives.

Men assert their power and control through rape, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, exploiting women through prostitution and pornography, forcing women to marry against their will, honor killings, FGM/C, and punishing women, but not men, for seeking a divorce or committing adultery.

## Sociological Explanations of Gender and Sexuality: Feminist Theories (continued)

LO-6

- Critical evaluation
  - *Men are not universally violent or sexually exploitative*
  - *Analyses are inclusive*
  - *Women's underrepresentation is overstated in some sectors*

## Sociological Explanations of Gender and Sexuality: Symbolic Interaction

LO-6

- Gender and sexuality are socially constructed
  - *Social interaction shapes gender inequality*
    - Cultivates or stifles abilities and interests
  - *Individuals learn to express sexuality differently over time and across cultures*



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Gender inequality is shaped by learning gender roles through daily social interaction. Believing in gender differences can actually produce differences. Women who begin college intending to become engineers are more likely than men to change their major and choose another career because they lack confidence, not competence.

Because sexuality is socially constructed, attitudes and behavior can change.

Discussion: How do we “create” or “do” gender?

## Sociological Explanations of Gender and Sexuality: Symbolic Interaction (continued)

LO-6

- Critical evaluation
  - *Social structures that create and maintain gender inequality are ignored*
  - *Fails to explain why:*
    - Identical twins can have separate sexual orientation
    - Women are subjected to sexual control and exploitation

## Sociological Explanations: Application

- Identify the following theories
  - *Inequality results from the capitalist system*
  - *Inequality in society is the result of sexuality*
  - *People learn how to be male or female*

Answers:

Capitalism system - Conflict theory

Sexuality - Feminism

Learning - Symbolic interaction



## Chapter Review

- Distinguish among the terms referring to male and female differences.
- What is gender stratification?
- What evidence do we have of gender inequality?
- What is sexual orientation?
- Describe the current controversies about gender and sexuality.
- How does sexuality vary across cultures?
- Distinguish among the sociological explanations of gender and sexuality.



## KEY TERMS

- Sex
- Gender
- Intersexuals
- Sexual identity
- Sexual orientation
- Homosexuals
- Heterosexuals
- Bisexuals
- Asexuals
- Gender identity
- Transgender
- Gender expression
- Gender roles
- Gender stereotypes
- Sexism
- Heterosexism
- Homophobia
- Gender stratification



## KEY TERMS

- Occupational sex segregation
- Gender pay gap
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual script
- Sexual double standard
- Abortion
- Same-sex marriage



## SUMMARY

- Sex and gender are used interchangeably, but they have different meanings
  - *Gendered institutions enable gender stratification*
  - *Sexuality comprises one's sexual identity, sexual orientation and sexual scripts*
- Abortion and same-sex marriages continue to be controversial
- Considerable variations regarding gender inequality and sexual oppression exist



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