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Unchanged gender expectations: Women in the Workplace

By

Sheena M. Mayo

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the University Honors Program
University of South Florida St. Petersburg

April 26, 2016

Thesis Director: Ella Schmidt, Ph.D.
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University of South Florida St. Petersburg

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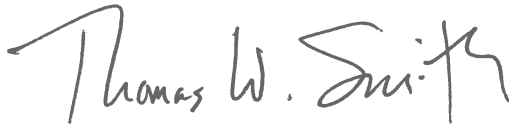
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American Society is based on gender regimes and ideals that have been socially constructed over time. Gender regimes are the structures of inequalities that can be seen in the workplace, in families, and other public and private areas of society (Tomlinson, 2007). Gender regimes have changed through history as women have joined the workforce, transitioning from a traditionally private, domestic role to the public sphere. In this transition what is expected of men and women has changed, though women have faced the harder challenge of adapting to a public, working role. Men and women face expectations in the form of stereotypes. These include women's dependency on men, women as caring and compassionate, men as providers, and men as strong and independent. A common question asked about women is if they will ever be able to break "the glass ceiling". This colloquial expression points to the limitations women face both in the work force and as a greater part of society, such as in the roles of mothers, wives, daughters, and students. Limitations include lower pay rates than men, unachievable expectations from society in both work and family life, and those that come from the sexualization of the female body. Expectations are not always reasonable or achievable because, although women are capable, expectations are not necessarily feasible. Expectations of women to have a job and be a mother cannot be accomplished by every woman. Female stereotypical qualities are constructed in contrast to what they are not: men.

Through a meta-analysis and literature review about social, political, and economic structures in the United States, one is able to understand the challenges women face both in the family, in the workplace, and in society in general. Some of the roles women fill are mother, housewife, career woman, sex object, and caregiver. Some of these are more stereotypical than others, but all reflect how women are perceived by Americans. Women are not only expected to

be wives and mothers, but also be desirable to men. This carries over into the workplace, and can result in sexual harassment. An example of women trying to satisfy sexual stereotypes imposed by men is the pharmaceutical industry, specifically the drug Addyi nicknamed “Viagra for women”. Addyi is the first drug to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) formulated to treat sexual disorders. Addyi is currently a prescription aimed at premenopausal women, and it is used to combat the physical signs of aging women experience such as atrophy of urogenital tissue, shortening of the vagina, and thinning of its mucosa (Puppo, 2016) as well as low levels of sexual desire. The fact that a prescription drug has now become available primarily for women with low sexual drive speaks volumes about American society's expectations of women. Women have become socialized to think that as sexually desirable objects they must perform for men, or satisfy a man’s sexual desire as a womanly duty. Being unable to do so results in a problem, one that must be fixed with a pill. Addyi is a fix to sexual performance problems, but the problem Addyi attempts to change is a result of societal stressors at large. Prescription drugs have become a fix-all for perceived problems, problems that have arisen through socialized expectations. Other drugs usually prescribed to women are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). SSRIs change the neurotransmitters in the brain and boost serotonin levels in order to help the brain send and receive messages (Mayo Clinic, 2016). SSRIs can elevate mood levels and decrease depressive and anxiety symptoms. The prescriptions given to women for SSRIs are a result of the need for women to contribute economically and financially, to the household changing overtime. American households can no longer be supported on one income. Yet women are still expected to continue to complete household tasks as well as work outside of the home. As women take on jobs stereotypically associated with men,

the amount of women taking mood stabilizers and antidepressants has risen. Taking SSRIs, it can be surmised, allows women to compete with men in the workplace. This competition includes being strong willed, aggressive in the workplace, fighting to take on traditionally male roles such as a CEO, and climbing the metaphorical ladder of business success. The expectation that women have to medicate in order to compete in the workplace is an example of how gender expectations have impacted women's roles in the workplace, and how expectations have changed over time. American standards for women in the workplace have become higher over time. Women are expected to be a professional as well as a wife and mother. Many working women who are also mothers face the phenomena of the second shift. This is the colloquial term for home life becoming a second job women take on due to the tasks they are expected to complete. Expectations for women to have careers, husbands, children, to be involved in Parent Teacher Associations, taking care of the home, and so on result in overwhelming feelings of depression and anxiety. These feelings cause working women to acquire SSRI prescriptions. While women are making strides in the workplace, they still face strong inequalities and obstacles based on gender expectations. Women are not expected to take on traditionally male roles in the workplace, resulting in women who do reach high level positions being ostracized by male equivalents, facing criticism, and being paid a lesser wage than male counterparts. Being a woman in America requires a balancing act between what is expected and progress. Progress in this context includes equal pay, acceptance of females in high level professional positions, and an end to the criticisms many female professionals endure, such as being thought less of when a woman does not have children or a husband. The problem for women is that as women's roles in society have changed, social structures have not. Social structures are still defined and dominated

by men. Women are still held to the expectations men have put in place for them. Expectations to clean, cook, bare children, get married, and in more recent years, add in a job to all their other responsibilities. Men hold women to unachievable expectations in both personal and professional arenas. A woman is expected to be “supermom” and a CEO, but also continue to sexually please their man.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are “associations between characteristics and a group at large” (Matsick, Conley, 2016). When a person is stereotyped, they are put into a box or mold that others expect they should fit into. The problem is that people are different. Society has built images of what males and females should be and what characteristics a man or woman should exemplify. This societal construct is explored in the article “Masculinities and femininities as communities of practice” (Paechter, 2003). Instead of attributing an act to the person, behavior is classified as being gender appropriate or inappropriate. When a woman changes a tire or becomes a CEO, she is stereotyped as manly or in male language. The same goes for men who are stay at home fathers or nurses for instance. Men in stereotypically female roles are labeled as “gay” or “womanly”. The problem is that stereotypes imposed on men and women are societal constructs, put in place to define differences and keep people ‘in their place’. However, believed gender differences have become rigidly specific, and thus stereotypes, due to the oversimplification of masculinity and femininity.

To understand gender, it is necessary to understand what gender is and how gender comes about. Carrie Paechter claims that gender is a social construct and changes based on specific contexts. Paechter states that men and women perform as masculine or feminine,

learning from *communities of practice*. A community of practice is a group participating in the same action, or practice. Through adolescence, learning community practices and understanding them becomes ingrained due to the culture. Children learn from an early age what is feminine and what is masculine. Feminine and masculine are seen in power situations, but also Paechter said in different forms of knowledge. Experience of meaning, practice within the community, learning as a process, boundaries, and locality are important to communities of practice. These communities of practice, Paechter points out, view heterosexuality as the norm, and thus homosexuality as the other, or abnormal. Five dimensions come from communities of practice that help to form identity. Parts of identity within a community of practice are clear visual markers that one is part of the group. To demonstrate masculinity or femininity, a group member outwardly appears as male or female. Children use activities such as sports to show which masculine or feminine group they fall into. This shows that children view inclusion into a community of practice as important, as well as proving that children learn from gradually joining and participating in communities of practice.

In a literary review of R.W. Connell's previous published works, Mimi Schippers' reflects and expands on previous work in order to "recover the feminine other" (Schippers, 2007) and provide a different lens through which to look at how gender hegemony works. Schippers' lays out Connell's work noting masculine and feminine gender differences. Masculinity is described in terms of social location, practices and characteristics, and the cultural and social effects that occur when masculine practices are performed (Connell, 1995). In summary, Connell's model includes hegemonic masculinity, emphasized femininity, complicit masculinities, and subordinate masculinities. In this model, women and gay men are subordinate

to manly men, or men that display power and behave in a socially acceptable, masculine way. Looking at hierarchy within feminine groups, Schippers references research done by Pyke and Johnson. Pyke and Johnson's research on Korean and Vietnamese second-generation women led Schippers to conclude two things. One, researchers are unable "to identify the relationship between femininities operating within race and ethnicity. Second, there is also no way "to identify how men benefit from" the relationship noted above. Judith Butler's model is also used by Schippers. Butler uses a heterosexual matrix, claiming that gender is not binary and the terms "man" and "woman" are symbolic. Female sexuality is constructed as sexual attraction to a man, while masculine sexuality is attraction to a woman. Being desired by a man is to be feminine, and vice versa. The social constructs that are femininity and masculinity provide men with a rational explanation for male dominance. Being masculine or feminine is a social interaction according to Connell.

These stereotypes discussed begin at an early age. Meagan Patterson conducted a study focused on perceived gender roles and stereotypes in elementary school aged children (Patterson, 2012). A term Patterson uses to describe the children's behavior is "gender-typical". In her study, gender-typical describes participation in "gender-typed" activities learned from cultural norms they observe in society. The populations Patterson included in her study included both high and low income families, and it must be noted that the population was primarily European American. Children who described themselves as gender-typical were more likely to participate in gender-activities that matched their perception of themselves and had a higher interest in these activities, as well as gendered occupations. The results of the study showed that learned information regarding gender roles impacts how men and women perceive themselves and their

behavior from a young age based on what is masculine and what is feminine. Stereotyped attitudes cause children to form ideas about gender that form their sense of self and their futures. The cultural impact is important, due to the fact that different cultures put various amounts of pressure on children to conform to norms. In this case, Patterson's participants felt a great of pressure from the culture and other children to conform to stereotyped behavior.

To better understand how various cultures in the United States enforce stereotypes, Amanda Durik and her colleagues studied four different ethnic groups in the United States and how the ethnic groups interpreted emotional expression in terms of gender roles (Durik, et. al, 2006). Durik studied what the stereotypes evident in gendered emotions were and how the emotions were accepted by the ethnic group. Overall, the stereotype is that women are more emotional than men. Women's emotions are also more accepted as a gender norm than emotions expressed by men. However, when specific emotions are given attention in the context of ethnic background and cultural stereotypes, some ethnic groups are more accepting of male emotions. African Americans rated anger, distress, jealousy, and shame as acceptable emotions to express. Overall, African American's are open to the expression of more emotions than European Americans in terms of gender. Hispanic Americans, according to Durik, on the other hand express more pride and shame than European Americans. A statistically significant difference was that Hispanic women express more disgust than Hispanic men, while European men express more disgust than European women. This significance shows the variations of stereotypes across ethnic and cultural background.

The difference, or variations, between cultural stereotypes and personal beliefs allow for stereotypes to persist. However, believing associations that culture makes with certain members

of society are depended on either low or high prejudice (Matsick, Conley, 2016, pg. 116). High-prejudice usually arises when a person belongs to a group that has strong stereotyped cultural systems and is highly discriminatory. Low-prejudice people are more likely to have grown up in a social structure that has few stereotyped beliefs. Prejudice can stem from learned experience, passing on of ideas from a community or family structure, or from society as a whole. People learn to be prejudice of difference and those who chose to live outside of socially approved cultural constructs. Whether or not a person endorses a stereotype is depended on their level of prejudice. A Caucasian person with low-prejudice is less likely to endorse stereotypes about African Americans that a Caucasian person with high-prejudice (Matsick, Conley, 2016). Unfortunately, due to the fact that stereotypes permeate society, even those with low-prejudice are susceptible to stereotype others. This includes when the stereotype is believed to be false. Low-prejudice individuals are not immune to cultural biases, marking the importance placed on stereotypes in American society. Stereotypes can occur due to group beliefs. This means that stereotypes are often learned behaviors. Stereotypes are learned from cultural norms and what is considered by a society to be ideal versus not ideal.

When cultures differentiate between what is appropriate for men from what is appropriate for women, stereotypes are formed. Whether men are allowed to be dancers or women are permitted to attend medical school, they are still subjected to gender stereotypes of emotion and gender-typical behavior. Stereotypes of hierarchy place women below men regardless of qualifications or abilities. Masculinity and femininity are forced upon men and women by society, and members of the society only reinforce gender roles and norms.

Expectations

Along with stereotypes come expectations. Expectations include the assumption that stereotypes are justified by societal norms. Society expects men and women to behave and show themselves in stereotypically masculine or feminine ways. The articles below discuss different expectations of people based on gender, environment, and societal pressure. This includes individual's expectations of one another and the types of behavior that are appropriate. College aged women, for instance, have expectations set upon them including how they dress, how they respond to sexual advances, and how they act towards the homosexual women they interact with. Gay men in certain groups expect others in the same group to look, dress, and act in ways that show they are part of the group. Both of these previous examples show that not only do people outside of a group make their expectations known, but men and women inside of a group have expectations of their members.

In much of the gender research that has been done, men and women are often focused on as different rather than similar. These differences are based on the American cultural system. Meta-analysis shows that sex differences are small and inconsistent. One of the main areas that sex differences are focused is mental abilities. Focus recently has moved towards personality and behavior. Some psychologists want to attribute differences between men and women's personalities and behavior to biological causes. Others believe that social pressures from peer groups are a greater influence.

There have been attempts to define masculinity and femininity as it pertains to psychology through the use of scales. The Bern Sex Role Inventory is the most well-known of the scales. It measures androgyny, or the presence of male and female traits. Of course, all of the

sex scales are based on stereotypical male and female traits as determined by American society and gender belief systems. Gender belief system stereotypes include women as “warmth-expressive” and men as competent. These are perceived, not necessarily accurate. It has also been recorded that men, more than women, are stereotypical of national stereotypes, an example of men being the ideal citizen. Recent research has shown that people’s perceptions of gender are becoming more fluid as gender belief systems are challenged.

Gender is a social construct and sex differences are created by society. After many studies, no evidence has been found to prove there are differences between genders in terms of intelligence. There have only been conclusions that there are no differences. There are, however, behavioral and biological differences between men and women. The factors of masculinity and femininity as determined by culture can be measured with an M-F scale, or masculine and feminine scale. The drawback of an M-F scale is its uni-dimensionality, or the assumed bipolarity of men and women. That is, women are described in terms of the opposite of men. Gender androgyny, a term brought into conversation by the Bern’s Sex Inventory, is an equal male and female score.

Gender belief systems can undermine psychological and sociological research by carrying out stereotypes and attitudes about gender. One stereotype is that men are competent while women are warmth-expressive. In this case men and women are unable to be androgynous. People are forced to be one or the other in society. It is even seen when looking at self-recorded responses. The national stereotype for a country is more like a male stereotype than a female one. Again, this confirms men and women as opposites.

How men and women are expected to act influences behavior. Beliefs turn into actions and attitudes are linked to behavioral outcomes. Nonconformity brings consequences such as ostracization from the group. In research, when a person does not meet a stereotype they become part of a subgroup. The outlier does not change the stereotype. Men and women may try to meet expectations, or they may experiment. One type of experimentation in which a child tries to find what is expected of him or herself by “trying on gender”.

Susan Williams defines the term trying on gender as “the process of anticipating, experimenting, retreating, and resisting” (Williams, 2002, pg. 30). Williams’ focus is on understanding why the transition from childhood to adolescence may be easier for some girls and more difficult for others. However, her main goal is to learn how girls transition into women and by what processes. Williams’ research began in 1992 and continued, through the process of checking in with participants, until 1998. A group of girls, age 13 years old, were interviewed and then filled out both “two open-end vignettes and the Eating Disorder Inventory” (Williams, 2002, pg. 32). The subject matter of the first interview included friendship and romantic relationships as well as control and influence.

Through her research, Williams’ found that the female participants in her study go through a trial and error process in order to construct gender and each girl had a different way of doing so. Williams’ identifies three types of gender processes; trying on tenuous, resistance, and emphasized femininity. She also comments that the geographical area in which the girls had been raised had an impact of how they “try on” gender. Thus, “gender regimes” are an important factor in the girl’s gender journey. The ability of the girls to “try on gender” and experience gender extremes is helpful long term because trying on gender aids in the process of entering

womanhood. Trying on gender is also beneficial because it allows for a social context to come to light for young girls, and identifies gendered experiences (Williams, 2002, pg. 31). Williams' also found that women can come full circle and go through the "trying on process" later in life. In her conclusion, Williams' emphasizes the importance of listening to and understanding young women in the greater context of women's mental health. Although it is not, at one point in time homosexuality was considered a mental illness as well as a choice. Homophobia can arise when lesbians do not conform to expectations, such as in college dorm settings. In college settings, and life, homophobia is often a product of fear from heterosexual groups or individuals because homosexuality in society is considered abnormal.

In Laura Hamilton's research and commentary of homophobia on a college campus, she brings to the forefront that homophobia is an issue both genders face. Hamilton focuses her research on female, college freshman all of who live on a single floor of a "party dorm". Much of Hamilton's findings come from interviews and interactions with the participants as well as observations of their behavior. In searching for reasons participants may distance themselves from one another, Hamilton found that in order for certain females to acquire status, male attention, and perceived fun as a part of the "party culture" on campus, many heterosexual females distanced themselves from their lesbian floor-mates. Along with placing physical and emotional distance between themselves and lesbians, heterosexual college females inhibit their lesbian floor mates making them feel inferior, uncomfortable, and out of place.

Hamilton wanted to examine this phenomenon and look at gender strategies for rising in the "erotic hierarchy", and how these strategies may contribute to homophobia. Participants were categorized based on partier and non-partier (also critical partier) status. This status gives insight

into the priorities the female participants had. Hamilton has examined the use of homoerotic practices by heterosexual females, and their use of this eroticism to gain the attention of males. In her discussion, Hamilton suggests that some of the homophobia the partier females felt was based on the dominance the male partiers held over them. In the context of this study, the male partiers were unaccepting of women that did not conform to the college parting culture. The women who chose to party did so at the discretion of the men throwing the parties, also known as the fraternity boys. The dominance the men had over the women in this case include the women being forced to conform to the will of the men in order to be included in the party culture. Also, homophobia may be linked to gender inequality or sexism. Hamilton concludes that less pressure to be heteronormative may encourage more gender fluidity and that homophobia is an unstable ground on which to build the hierarchy and status quo that was on the college campus and in the party culture.

Men experience stereotypical male expectations in homosexual situations as well as heterosexual. Bear culture is homosexual focus on “the husky man”. Clubs have been set up for those who participate in Bear culture internationally. Being a “Bear” includes physical features such as facial hair and stocky build, as well as attitude. Bear attitude is defined in wide terms, but to simplify it is very masculine. It is also tied to hegemonic masculinity. Bear men take on an exaggerated masculinity, similar to the popular lumberjack image. Hennen describes them as “the regular-guy”. However, Bears also challenge this image because of their sexual orientation.

Hennen gathered observational data from “Friendly Bear” events as well as conducted interviews with seven men who participate in Bear culture and identify as Bears. It is important to note that most Bears are middle class, white men. Bear men both conform to and resist

hegemonic masculinity. There is an emphasis on sexuality and genitals. This may lead to safer sex practices according to Hennen.

The examples used above give light to how societal expectations infiltrate every facet of social life. Homosexual adult men, heterosexual college women, and girls that are becoming adolescents all find their way to conform to norms. The expectations set on men and women by society are the rule, not the exception.

Even those homosexual men who are considered as breaking gender norms find themselves following expectations of society in the form of Bear culture. Expectations of society have a way of never fully being eradicated. Within a group, expectations hold members to their own expectations.

Language and Medicine

Stereotypes and expectations carry over into science, medicine, and language. The sheer strength of stereotypes is present in the language and how ideas are communicated. Phrases like “Talk like a lady” (Lakoff, 2004, pg. 43) indicate that communication is stereotyped and gendered. Women are expected to use language in a particular way, different from the way men communicate. Furthermore, descriptors and labels also lay out the difference of how men and women are perceived by society through language. An older, non-married woman is called a spinster. On the other hand, an unmarried man is always called a bachelor (Lakoff, 2004, pg. 62). This difference gives a negative connotation to unmarried women, but not unmarried men. When discussing marital status, generalizations of freedom are used in the terms spinster and bachelor.

Robin Lakoff looks at this language as sexually restricting for unmarried women, yet giving sexual freedom to unmarried men. This social inequality is most evident in language. The

inequality between men and women in language stems from men's perceived dominance in society. Men in society often make what are considered the important decisions, have authority, and are considered the leader of his social unit, i.e. the family (Hodgson, 2016, pg. 24). The transgression of this power dynamic is passed through language and the use, or performance, of dialogue (Hodgson, 2016, pg. 158). Power, as it is established by language, is dominated by men. "Language creates and reinforces power differences" (Blum, 2009, pg. 347) between men and in the man and woman relationship as it is shaped by society. Discussion and communication also allows men and women to perform their gender identity as it is sculpted by societal standards. These societal standards conform to what is expected of women and men in social constructs and groups.

Lakoff was a pioneer in analyzing gender differences in language. From her research, other projects have continued her work to look at the validity of her argument as well as delve deeper into questions Lakoff asked. One question Lakoff asked is, what the language of men can teach us if it is different than women's language. Furthermore, in what ways can "men's language" explain women's place in society (Kiesling, 2004, pg. 229). The language of men is placed upon masculinity and power. The relationship between these two aspects differentiates language between men and women. Men also use language as a way to "connect themselves with hegemonic cultural models" (Kiesling, 2004, pg. 233). The hegemonic model is based on a hierarchy that places the most economically superior at the top. Thus, men base their language on intra-diversity, or diversity as it applies within their own gender group. What is important to take away from this finding includes differences between masculinity and femininity as it relates to language. Expectations about speech, social structures, and expressing identities, however, can

restrain language because men and women attempt to use language to confirm cultural constructs (Kiesling, 2004, 234).

Language as it is used by men and women is also gendered and furthers gender stereotypes. The way men and women use language to communicate is an example of the expectations they embody. The use of language by a man is aggressive, assertive, and shows his leadership abilities. While women often appear tentative and less self-assured than men. Furthermore, when women use tentative language they are labeled as unable to communicate effectively and can lead to normative fit (Palomares, 2009, pg. 539-540). Normative fit occurs when “differences are socially meaningful and correspond to the collective norms within and between groups” (Palomares, 2009, pg. 541). Examples of normative fit as well as stereotyped language can be observed in the workplace. Specifically in office email correspondence. Of course, how men and women communicate via email is dependent upon the topic. When a topic is considered masculine, women used more tentative language in comparison to men. However, when a topic is labeled as feminine, the reverse is true only when men are in the context of the intergroup. An intergroup being emails between men and women, not just men. Surprisingly, when discussing gender-neutral topics men and women use the same amount of tentativeness in their correspondence. Nicholas Palomares tries to explain these results by acknowledging that perhaps tentativeness stems from a lack of knowledge on the topics. However, further research on this subject would need to be done to examine the strength of this argument.

Scientific, and specifically biological, terms are gendered. The language used to describe the male and female reproductive systems are inherently biased. Male biology is described in stereotypically male terms, as is female biology described in stereotypically female terms. These

include but are not limited to, male anatomy described as activating the eggs genes and the sperm as having “strong tails”. Female anatomy on the other hand is viewed as the egg being “swept” and the female body “wasting” eggs (Martin, 1991, pg. 476, 487). These misconceptions have been disproved in some cases, one of which being the hypothesis that the male sperm has enough power from the tail to go through the female eggs. Research done in the 1980s found that the sperm gets through the egg’s shell by chemical methods, and furthermore the tail exerts very little force (Martin, 1991). Later on Paul Wassarman at John Hopkins found that the egg coating is a receptor for the sperm and plays a larger role in the egg becoming fertilized. These two findings alone dispute the use of gendered language in regards to human reproduction. However, Wassarman, himself, continues to use gendered language when describing his findings using the terms “select”, “prepare”, and “protect” when referencing the fertilization of an egg (Martin, 1991). What needs to be accomplished in the field of science is the use of gender neutral language. When the language used is unbiased, the results are unbiased as well. Using gender neutral language would also have social implications on American culture.

Language that promotes cultural constructs is present in the description of human biology as well as the medical field in general. This includes pharmaceuticals such as birth control, and the way these medications are advertised. Birth control pills first became available in the 1960s and overtime became the primary means for women to control pregnancy. However, birth control pills are now used for other medical reasons including controlling menstrual symptoms, “hormonal profiles” (Mamo, Fosket, 2009, pg. 929), and when a period occurs. Birth control pills, and other forms of female birth control have given women greater control of their bodies, as well as their lives in being able to control when or if they have children. However, birth

control is also advertised as a way of “fixing” problems women have. This includes the “sanitary problem” of menstruation (Mamo, Fosket, 2009, pg. 930). More recent birth control pills, such as the drug Seasonale, are advertised as “lifestyle” medications. Seasonale in particular depicts menstruation as “problematic”, “undesirable”, and “unnatural” (Mamo, Fosket, 2009, pg. 931). This warped understanding of menstruation shows how society is male normative. Advertising techniques further this cultural construct by stressing the importance of changing women’s menstrual cycles, or even subduing the cycle for periods of time. Seasonale, for example, changes a woman’s cycle so that it only occurs every three months. Advertised as a way to become happier, more active, and a way to achieve a new body, Seasonale is trying to sell a new normal. Although birth control can be a way to empower women, it also can be disempowering. Women are shown on television, in magazines, and at the doctor’s office that what is biologically normal about them is abnormal to society. New birth control pills, like Seasonale, and the way these drugs are advertised force women to believe they need to change in order to fit society’s expectations of them and their bodies. Women lose the confidence that birth control use to give them because the use of birth control has changed from a way for women to be in control of their reproduction to a way of changing their biological makeup.

Gender-biased language is also used when describing animals, both biologically and behaviorally. This phenomenon was researched by Barbara Crowther in context of wildlife documentaries. Not only do wildlife documentaries use gender-biased language, many documentaries also use political language that supports a patriarchal social structure (Crowther, 1997, pg. 289). Crowther examines how documentaries of the animal kingdom (the term itself an example of the patriarchy she explores) are gender-biased in teaching about male and females of

a species. One way this occurs is in David Attenborough's script about crabs that he describes in *Trails of Life* (Crowther, 1997, pg. 290). The male crabs have "suits of armor" while the female crabs have soft shells. The male crab "claims" the female, the female is beneath the male in the mating process, and the male is the one whose genetics will be passed on through the young crabs the male and female produce. The mating process of a male and female crab as narrated by Attenborough is male dominated, occurs with a passive female, and benefits the male more than the female crab in terms of reproduction. The example of the crabs supports Crowther's argument. Documentaries reinforce the "myth", as Crowther calls it, of male dominance as a genetic predisposition. She calls the interpretation of animals in terms of human social structures the "male-dominated genre" (Crowther, 1997, pg. 299) and understands this genre as a way for a scientific establishment of the cultural constructs humans use in nature.

Contemporary Challenges and Transgressing Boundaries

The 1960s and 1970s when civil rights movements brought profound changes. The demands included equal rights for women, black men and women, and people who identify as gay. Civil rights movements created more opportunities for these minority groups, but not equality. Women, African Americans, and homosexuals still face discrimination in society and the workplace. Women currently do not receive equal pay to that of men, African Americans face generalizations and stereotypes that may hold them back from achieving career goals, and homosexuals are often still stereotyped as breaking the norm. Stereotypes that African Americans are subjected to include being not as smart as their white counterparts, untrustworthy in work environments, and lazy. Homosexuals can still be considered outcasts, or as breaking the societal expectations put on men and women.

In the 1960s a gay mythology was created by the lesbian and gay community. Then, in the 1970s a semi-liberation was achieved when gay and lesbians began coming out and revealing their sexual orientation. In the 1980s, however, there was a resurgence of the right wing in politics. Over these three decades mentioned, the environment for homosexuals in the United States evolved. Even more changes can be seen looking from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to the modern era. John D'Emilio discusses the family transformations brought on by capitalism and economic independence. He states that there is no "eternal homosexuality". Instead, D'Emilio argues that homosexual identity evolved because of capitalism and a change to family social structure due to industrialization. Prior to industrialization and then capitalism, family members were not economically independent from one another and sexuality was not separated from procreation. When capitalism began to develop, industrial jobs allowed individuals to remain outside of the heterosexual family unit, many times moving to urban centers where jobs were easily available. This led to gay people inventing ways to meet one another and sustain a group life, an example of which is gay bars in cities. D'Emilio also argues that due to war, specifically the World Wars, erotic situations were formed giving young people the opportunity to express homosexual tendencies. This was feasible because of the urban communities that were formed. Gay bars opened and private social clubs formed in order for gays to meet with one another. So, rather than creating homosexuality, capitalism formed the conditions for homosexual identity to be expressed as it was not previously.

Other forms of nonconformity include joining groups outside of traditional, mainstream society. Outliers form groups to express individuality and urges that may be considered unacceptable by the majority of society. The Goth lifestyle is an example of nonconformist

behavior. Amy Wilkins' analysis of the Goth scene looks at gender hierarchy and feminine expression. She states that Goth culture is the resistance of mainstream notions of passive femininity. Instead, sexuality is active and used to stake out gender independence for women who participate in the Goth scene. Words to describe the Goth scene include "babe feminism", "choice", and "empowerment". Wilkins first looks into how the Goth scene does promote feminism, but then discovers aspects that reinforce gender norms.

Gender egalitarianism benefits the Goth scene in a few ways. Women are able to be perceived as and feel sexy despite how they physically present themselves without being concerned about validation from the mainstream culture. The Goth scene allows women to sexually express themselves without stigma or danger. Also, by "repackaging" male entitlement, women are able to view themselves as feminists while being feminine and sexy. Two things that are not always associated with one another in mainstream heterosexual culture.

While the Goth scene is inclusive, the population represented is small. Most members of the Goth community are white, middle class, college educated, and childless. Women are allowed an "open sexuality" away from the mainstream community that may label them as sluts, slags, or whores. Their space is respected and many feel liberated. Unfortunately, the Goth scene is more mainstream than members would like to admit. Sexy apparel becomes a requirement rather than a choice. It is required for participation in the group, as is sexual openness. Furthermore, many Goth women identify as bisexual. This is used as an excuse to validate gender equality, and at the same time it serves men's fantasies. Goth men are almost guaranteed sex in the Goth scene because of "sexual openness". While Goth women claim there is an

absence of sexual objectification, men become benefactors of the free sexuality and emotional sophistications that defines the Goth scene.

Struggling to fit ones sexuality into society's norms is not only an issue in America, but also across the world. Other cultures view and practice sexuality differently. During her research in Indonesia, Evelyn Blackwood discovered a transgender culture of tombois. They describe themselves as men in the way they dress, act, and physical embodiment. Their place in society, however, is more complicated than men. While tombois are men outside of the home, when in familial settings tombois take on a few traditionally feminine roles. Sharon Davies makes the distinction that tombois do not identify as women, but they also do not try to be men either. Rather, to use Megan Sinnott's analogy, tombois create a hybrid of masculinity.

Twenty-eight tombois and or girlfriends of tombois were interviewed. Participants were overall from average mean families, between late teens and early twenties, and most were Muslim. Tombois were not forced by family members to dress in feminine clothing, but wore stereotypical male clothing. Though tombois were not forced to take on female roles in the house, such as cooking, some did help with some chores (i.e. cleaning). Tombois are given the freedom to move about without supervision. They go out with friends, drink, and have girlfriends that identify as heterosexual.

Exceptions to tombois freedom included expectation to marry. Though they consider themselves men, families often expect tombois to marry and have children to carry on the family line. This is the tradition of female bodied individuals, regardless of sexuality. Thus, families look for husbands for their female bodied children. This goes against the tombois view of

themselves as a man, and forces them to be a woman. Some tombois that Blackwood interviewed married, but with resistance, while others refused to marry.

Tombois can be described as “masculine females” in their communities. They have the ability to have privileges of both males and females. They can drink like men, but live with women outside of marriage. However, they face obstacles due to their female bodies.

Lesbian women face obstacles as well. Not only do they face discrimination in the workplace, but also in society as they start families. When lesbian partners decide to have children and start what is considered a non-traditional family, the two women are bombarded with criticism and reservations from both family and strangers (Grund, 2005). Lesbians also face a longer process and struggle than many man/woman couples do. Lesbian couples do not always have the option to adopt, as it is not legal for gays to adopt in all states. In vitro fertilization is sometimes lesbians only option to have children, but in vitro fertilization is expensive and not all couples can afford to try it.

When lesbian couples are permitted to adopt, they can face discrimination from adoption professionals (Kimberly, Moore, 2015). Some of the issues supposedly associated with lesbians raising children are concerns about children’s mental health, development, and adjustment. Obstacles that lesbians face during the adoption process, thus, are mainly based on attitudes and stereotypes that are formed by society about homosexuals.

However, when a lesbian couple is supported by family and friends, as well as able to afford in vitro fertilization, a family can be formed between the lesbian couple and their child (Grund, 2005). In the documentary “Making Grace” two women, Ann and Leslie, share their journey to have their child Grace. The obstacles they face included money, social stigmas, in

vitro fertilization, and work situations. Ann and Leslie go through similar decision making as heterosexual couples. Although, because they are lesbians, Ann and Leslie are often asked who is the father, where is your husband, and other heterosexually stereotyped questions that do not apply to them.

Working women

Challenges

Women specifically face discrimination in the workplace, usually from men, but also from other women. Some of the excuses for discrimination include women not having time to put into work because they are a wife and/or mother, women are unable to do the same jobs as men because they are not competitive enough, must pay higher insurance coverages, or women are not “made” to work in the public sector. Women who work outside the home still face discrimination and difficult life choices. In order to achieve career success, women are pushed to make decisions earlier on in their careers that effect their goals long term. Although America has faced three waves of feminism (Heywood, Drake, 2004) women continue to face challenges in the workplace. The first wave of feminism occurred in the United States during the early 1900s when women fought for the right to vote. The second wave of feminism was during the 1960s and 1970s in which women fought social and political systems for gender equality in schools, the workplace, and under the law (Heywood, Drake, 2004, pg. 26). The third wave of feminism is an ongoing battle for equal pay in the economic marketplace. Pay inequality affects women in all job fields, and is present even in fields where employees must have a college degree. This third wave of feminism hopes to achieve economic inequality where gender equality in the workforce has stopped.

Outside of the workplace, women face the challenge of family life and the so-called “second shift”. As American culture and economics have shifted it has become necessary for most families to become two income households. Though men on average earn more income than women, in the event that a wife earns more than a husband’s income money can become a separate challenge (Lane, 2009). A wife earning a higher salary than her husband challenges the traditional hierarchal relationships that men and women on average face in society. This relationship stereotypically includes a man as the “breadwinner” and above his wife. Over the last fifty or so years women joining the work force has become the norm, but it also has changed family dynamics. Men have had to adapt and take on traditionally female household roles in order to balance family dynamics (Lane, 2009). Many husbands take on these roles willingly and gladly. Thus a man’s role is changing and can become challenging as well. However, on average men still do less in the home than women. This includes when men and women work equal hours at their jobs (Miller, 2015)

Another challenge women face is gendered work. Gendered work can be described in terms of social constructs of gender roles (Marie, 2014). In America, certain jobs had become dominated by women and are usually work that includes “monotonous...tiring...and economically unrewarding” tasks (Marie, 2014, pg. 126). These jobs include nurses, teachers, social workers, and event planners (Elkins, 2015). Many jobs dominated by women have average salaries that are less than a male dominated profession. Women are struggling, even after they have achieve equality supposedly, to find opportunities in male dominated professions. This could be due to the fact that women are still seen as mother first, while men are socialized to make money for the family (Clark, 1999).

Prozac

American women have a long history and relationship with prescription medications associated with anxiety and depression. In the 1960s the tranquilizer Valium was nicknamed “mother’s little helper” (Blum, Stracuzzi, 2004). It was nicknamed this because the tranquilizing effect caused stay at home mothers to be subdued and less ambitious. In the 1980s, Prozac became popular because of its fewer side effects and low toxicity levels compared to competitors. Other well-known antidepressants and antianxiety drugs include Paxil and Zoloft. The use of these drugs has sky rocketed since they first hit the market. In 1998 it was estimated that 28 million Americans had used or were using a drug similar to Prozac (Blum, Stracuzzi, 2004). Women are twice as likely as men to be prescribed a psychoactive drug. Although, Prozac and other drugs like it are labeled as gender neutral, they are approved by the Food and Drug Administration for an overwhelming amount of health issues primarily diagnosed in women. These health issues include Premenstrual Symptoms and bulimia (Blum, Stracuzzi, 2004), as well as anxiety and lack of sexual drive.

Previous research on the prevalence of psychotropic drug use shows higher use among women than men. Reasoning for this trend include women being subjected to more stress than men, or women having a different effect towards stress than men have (Cafferata, Kasper, Bernstein, 1983). However, it has been found that when a man’s role closely resembles the traditional female role, men are more likely to use psychotropic drugs. This finding is interesting because it gives credence to the argument that working women use antianxiety and antidepressant medications to cope with stress from the workplace and home life. Another reason for higher rates of psychotropic drug use in women is that physicians may be more likely to

prescribe women these drugs then physicians are to prescribe the same drugs to men (Cafferata, Kasper, Bernstein, 1983). Family circumstances, such as working, providing for children, and taking on domestic roles tend to increase use of psychotropic drug use across genders.

As previously mentioned, a new drug has emerged called Addyi that was just approved in 2015 by the Food and Drug Administration. Addyi is used to treat hypoactive sexual desire disorder in women. Meant to be used by premenopausal women, Addyi also treats symptoms such as a “decline in desire and a decreased ability to achieve orgasm” (Puppo, 2015). Looking further into this problem, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-IV) describes a disorder in which women have no sexual interest or are unable to become aroused. This type of disorder seems to be driven by the drug industry in order to force a treatment and new prescription need onto the market for women. Addyi itself is another form of an antidepressant. However, unlike its predecessors Addyi is overt in being a treatment only for women. There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, women are stereotyped as housewives. Women who work are exceeding expectations society has for women, at least initially. Due to the fact that through most of history women have primarily taken on the domestic role, women in the workforce have taken on a role they are not stereotypically suited for. Second, women being more suited for domestic work face challenges by expectations usually defined as male qualities and placed on them by being in the workplace. Thus women who work and have families are overburdened. Lastly, this burden leads to feelings of anxiety, being tired, and being overworked. At least this is what cultural constructs says is the case. This reasoning leads women to seek help and then to prescriptions for drugs like Addyi that help women cope with their anxious and

depressed feelings. Addyi also enables these women who are overworked and burdened to enjoy sex and become aroused more easily, so the drug company claims.

The use of antianxiety and antidepressant medications by women in the work force is a prominent issue. Women begin to take these drugs to balance the stress and overwhelming feelings of inadequacy they may experience due to competition in the workplace or trying to balance a work life with a home life. It has also been proposed that women may feel obligated to take psychoactive drugs in order to protect themselves from “discrimination and maltreatment” (Poulin, Gouliquer, 2003). This theory comes from the stereotype that women are “crazy” or “mad” during their menstrual cycle and will be discriminated against due to the symptoms they may exhibit in the workplace during their period. Symptoms that are common before and during a menstrual cycle include cramping, anxiety, mood swings, and irritability to name a few (Mayo Clinic, 2016). In fact, PMS is now a diagnosable disorder, or even a disability, in the DSM-IV. This means that working women feel pressure to take psychoactive drugs to act “normal”. Of course, normal is based on a heterosexual, patriarchal model. Normal in this case being masculine behavior, competitive and assertive in the workplace.

Conclusion

Stereotypes and expectations are created by society, but they also inhibit the growth of culture. Stereotypes are a box that men and women from different backgrounds and orientations are forced to fit into. Men and women are beginning to break down the walls that surround them, but it is a battle as those who do not conform are labeled as outcasts and abnormal. Instead of encouraging those people who forge a new path, such as Bear men, Goth women, or women who

do not want to have children, outliers are pressured to conform. Expectations are passed down from generations, causing stereotypes to persist and change to come slowly.

From daughters to mothers, and from housewives to an integral part of the workforce, women's roles change throughout history and during their lifetime. Women's new roles in the workplace have resulted in growing pains in the categories of stereotypes, expectations, and in the field of medicine. Men and women are navigating the intricacies of women in multiple roles. Questions of balancing work and home life, managing stress and anxiety, and breaking stereotypes are still being worked out. Even after over fifty years of women's presence in the workplace, boundaries are continuously present while women struggle for equality.

The expectations for women to take on an abundance of roles have been demonstrated to lead to depression and anxiety. Society generates expectations of women based on stereotypes of the female gender. Women continue to work toward the breakdown of expectations put upon them by a male dominated society. Unequal pay, fewer promotions, and reduced job opportunities are only a few of the barriers women face when looking and continuing in a work position.

Societal pressure to work, raise a family, and run a household is a challenge all women in America face. The stereotype that women are expected to want all these things is limiting and untrue. Many women are frowned upon if they decide to be career focused and not have children, or, conversely, have children and not work. These expectations are not only reinforced by men, but also by other women. Unfortunately, women find it difficult to be a support system for other women and instead tend to protect societal norms.

Coping with expectations and stereotypes is more common than not for women. Types of coping include the use of antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications. Instead of trying to challenge the expectations set upon them, women sometimes find it easier to seek medical help in order to cope with the situation they are given. In order to alleviate the stress and anxiety working women feel, stronger measures need to be taken to equalize women in male dominated workplaces, support women who are not following expectations, and breakdown stereotypes.

Stereotypes do not only effect working women, they affect every racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender group. It is important to look around stereotypes, to break down barriers, and to fight for an end to societal constructs of expectations. Attempting to break down expectations will enable men and women to form their own roles, rather than be defined by society's structured norm. Rather than finding a way to deal with the expectations, it would be more beneficial for men and women to attempt to change expectations to fit society.

Women in particular are trying to do this by taking their health, careers, and personal lives into their own hands. The wage gap is lowering, more women are becoming CEO's and politicians, and new technology such as egg freezing are allowing women to choose when and if they want to build families. Although measures to help working women are improving, they are far from perfect. There is a long journey ahead to achieve equality between genders. Many obstacles have yet to be overcome, but if women continue to fight for higher pay and less criticism from society for their choices, progress will be made. Social structures and cultural constructs are deeply engrained, but, they are moldable. Time and perseverance are the allies of women. Previous milestones have included the Civil Rights Movement, the Gay Rights

Movement, and the first and second waves of feminism. These milestones are the foundation for women in the endeavor to push off stereotypes and find equality.

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