

TEN LESSONS IN INTRODUCTORY SOCIOLOGY

THIRD EDITION

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Do you think the boys' team is known as the Gentlemen Hornets?

Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality

Amalia Leguizamón

"A Woman's Place is in the House." So read the T-shirt some of my female students at Tulane University began wearing in late 2016. It was the time of the presidential election: Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were on the ballot. Clinton was running to be the first female president of the United States. These students were part of an on-campus group called Women in Politics, and their T-shirt was a clever pun on traditional gendered arrangements. Traditionally, women are expected to be housewives, housebound, while men are expected to be breadwinners by working for pay outside the home. The pun lies in the fact that the "House" that my students' T-shirt alluded to is an exceptional one: the White House, the epicenter of American political power.

My students were very excited about this election, because they understood it was a critical historical moment to break the **glass ceiling** of women's political representation: that invisible barrier that prevents women from reaching senior-level positions. I shared in their excitement. That is why I was puzzled when so many other female students told me they were disenchanted by the election and were not voting for Clinton. They had wanted Bernie Sanders to win the Democratic primary instead. They told me that gender representation was not a primary concern; instead, environmental protection was. Sanders championed the Green New Deal, a radical plan for climate justice, whereas Clinton did not prioritize climate change in her agenda. Granted, I teach courses on environmental sociology: my students are a self-selecting group who care strongly about environmental issues. Yet, I could not understand why they kept telling me that gender equality was of secondary importance to them. So, I asked them. They argued that their generation—*your* generation, the postmillennial Generation Z—was so diverse and open-minded, embracing gender and sexual diversity, that gender-based discrimination did not matter as an urgent concern.

It is easy to see why a female student attending college in the United States in the 2020s can feel so empowered. Women are indeed the majority on American college campuses. Yet this gender parity will not follow women after graduation, even if they make a career in higher education. According to a 2017 report by the American Council of Education, female students have earned over half of all bachelor's degrees since 1982 and over half of all doctoral degrees since 2006 (Johnson 2017). Yet, female faculty

members represent only a third of full professors, the position with the highest pay and prestige. Even at the same rank, female faculty members make less than their male counterparts: on average, \$73,782 compared to \$89,190. Women are less likely to become university presidents (they represent only 30 percent of all presidencies across all higher education institutions) or take a seat in university governing boards (men outnumber women by more than two to one). Women are also less likely to reach the highest executive levels in the corporate world. Barely forty-one women run the top five hundred Fortune companies—and that is a record for 2020 (Fuhrmans 2020). As you already know from the 2016 and 2020 election results, there has yet to be a woman to take the top seat in the White House, although Kamala Harris made history in 2020 when she became the first woman (and the first Black person and first South Asian American) to become vice president of the United States.

Have you ever spent any time thinking that both women and men should be afforded equal rights and privileges to access positions of political and economic power? Why would you think that matters? And how can it be done? In this chapter, we will apply our sociological imagination to answer these questions. We will learn how social institutions, including politics and the economy, are gendered and help shape gendered individuals. We will also discuss how gendered individuals often maintain and reproduce gendered divisions and inequalities, but, at times, they also challenge and change them. Last, suppose you are, like my students and most postmillennials, troubled by climate change but not concerned about gender inequality. I will show you how challenging gender structures is crucial to addressing the climate crisis. But before we do all that, let's set the building blocks for this discussion and define our key terms and dynamics.

SEX AND GENDER: NATURE OR NURTURE?

The first categories we need to distinguish are sex and gender. **Sex** refers to our biological anatomy tied most significantly to our reproductive organs. By observing their genitals at birth, doctors assign newborns to a sex category: male or female (even if sometimes there is ambiguity). **Gender** refers to the socially and culturally assigned characteristics to being male or female, that is, the norms, rules, and behaviors that are culturally appropriate for men and women in a set society. What it means to be womanly, or feminine, changes across history and cultures. I invite you to hear this hilarious podcast by the Dollop that traces women's history in transportation (Anthony and Reynolds n.d.). The hosts tell the many ways in which women in the US were banned from riding bicycles and taking trains because "experts" argued the uterus was a "tender" organ that could be harmed by trembling. This fact is so outrageous in twenty-first-century America that it makes us laugh out loud, but it might have gone unquestioned for people at the time. Think about

this: wearing pants, voting, and working for pay are now taken for granted by American women. Yet these are relatively recent gains: White middle- and upper-class women won the right to vote in 1920; African American women (and men) were disenfranchised until the Voting Rights Act of 1965; poor women and women of color could never afford not to work for pay. Pantsuits were the uniform of the **suffragettes**, the activists who campaigned for women's right to vote in the 1920s.

Now think about you and your siblings and friends. What behaviors do you feel are appropriate for girls and women of your generation? And what about proper behaviors for boys and men? What would you think if a male friend of yours decides to marry right after graduation and become a stay-home dad, responsible for housework and the children and dependent on his wife's income? Would you be proud of his decision, or would you try to convince him to do otherwise? And what if this were a female friend? Would it be less awkward then? Considering that there is a word for "housewife" in English but not for "househusband," we can already tell how common this career path was once for women but not for men.

Sociologists say that gender is **socially constructed** to refer to how we are socialized into behaving in feminine or masculine ways in line with our biological constitution and how we reproduce gender stereotypes in interaction with others. Sociologists thus make a clear distinction between the physical aspects of sex and the social expectations for femininity and masculinity. This is not uncontroversial. Many believe that men and women are hardwired to act in specific ways: men to be ambitious and aggressive, women to be emotional and caring. But hormones and genes alone do not explain the vast diversity of behavior we observe in our social worlds: men are capable of being nurturing, caring, and emotional, just as women are equally capable of killing their children and leading nations to war. If our behavior were an instinctive response to our bodily impulses, then these behaviors would be shared solidly across the human species, like it is in the case of other animal species. But we can observe that human behaviors—and the norms that guide these behaviors—change over time; therefore, they are not purely determined by our biological composition.

Because of the general emphasis on tying a person's gender to their sex, we tend to categorize sex and gender in binary terms: XY/XX, male/female, man/woman. However, the relationship between our biological makeup and our gender identities isn't this tight. Some non-Western societies have different systems of gender differentiation that recognize the existence of more than two genders. For example, the hijra in India and the muxe among the indigenous Zapotec are recognized as a third gender that combines masculine and feminine traits (Hines 2018). Young people across the United States, Europe, and Latin America are increasingly challenging the gender binary and favoring an understanding of gender and sexuality that is more fluid. They seek to understand gender and **sexual orientation** as existing across a spectrum, making room for gender identities beyond the **cisgender**

(when gender identity matches one's sex assigned by birth) to include the **transgender**, the **genderqueer**, and the **agender**, among others. The growing practice of using gender-neutral and gender-inclusive pronouns (like they/them/their and ze/hir/hirs) reflects increasing respect towards trans and gender-nonconforming individuals and interest toward greater gender equality (<https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/>).

There is no "solution" to the **nature/nurture** debate. Instead of trying to decide if they are biological or social forces those who have primary ascendancy in explaining gender, gender scholars like Anne Fausto-Sterling (2012, 111) propose that a more fruitful approach is to understand gender and sex as "a developmental dynamic in which the social, the cultural, and the body" are "intertwined." As sociologists, we will apply our sociological imagination to analyze how social forces shape individual bodies and, most significantly, how gender dynamics create differences, divisions, and hierarchies among people.

GENDERED INEQUALITIES: FROM THE SELF TO THE INSTITUTION

Let's dig deeper into the notion that gender is socially constructed. In 1987, Candace West and Don Zimmerman wrote an article called "Doing Gender" that is now considered a classic in sociological theory. Here, the authors break down the categories outlined earlier: the distinction between sex, sex category, and gender. This article was a breakthrough. West and Zimmerman argued that gender is not something that we are or have (the innate biological traits), but rather, something that we "do." Following an **ethnomethodological** perspective (see Lesson 3), they argued that gender is a "routine, methodological, and recurring accomplishment" (West and Zimmerman 1987, 126). Like Erving Goffman, who studied how the self emerges from the activities in which we engage in everyday life, West and Zimmerman focus on how individuals perform gender and construct their gendered selves in social interaction.

There are multiple ways in which people do gender: from the ways we speak and dress to how we parent children and negotiate housework, salary raises, or safe sex. We often follow the rules that guide "how to do gender" appropriately without much questioning. Let me give you a personal example. I was born and raised in Argentina. *Fútbol* in Argentina, the sport Americans call "soccer," is a masculine sport. The gender rules that define appropriate behavior for Argentine girls say that *fútbol* is out of boundaries for them: they are not to play it or be interested in it to gain expert knowledge. I grew up not questioning this, even though *fútbol* is our national pastime. All boys are raised kicking a ball, every day there's a match on television, every four years the World Cup brings the country to a standstill, and Maradona and Messi are our national heroes. In everyday life, Argentine men perform masculinity by playing or talking about soccer with their male friends and family members. Argentine women perform femininity by

being responsible for food and drinks when games are on and (if they are to speak at all during a match) by commenting on the personal characteristics of *fútbol* players: how handsome or muscular they are, their haircuts, whom they are dating. All the while, the men discuss skill and strategy or shout at the television. Imagine my surprise when I moved to the US and found out that soccer is a *girl's* sport in America! The reason soccer is suitable for girls, I was told, is because soccer is a team sport, and women are good at collaborating and working in groups. American football, on the contrary, is reserved for men because it is aggressive and tough—exactly what I was told about our football while growing up in Argentina!

We learn appropriate gender roles through the process of **socialization** (see Lesson 3). We then become so used to following them that they become our inner nature. But here is the key: when we are doing gender in everyday life, we are creating differences (between boys and girls, men and women) that, as we've learned earlier, are not essential or biological. Yet, "once these differences have been constructed," West and Zimmerman (1987, 137) argue, "they are used to reinforce the 'essentialness' of gender." Gender is, overall, a classification system that organizes people into different groups, placing them in a hierarchy—establishing these differences as natural or biological serves to justify the inequality between the sexes.

Gender, therefore, is something more than personal traits: it is a **stratification** system. It is "not just about difference but also about the distribution of power, property, and prestige" (Risman 2018, 27). In a gendered society, men (mainly White, upper- and middle-class, heterosexual men) hold power and prestige over women; their relationship is based on men's domination over women (Kimmel 2013). The sociological imagination allows us to see how gendered relations of domination and oppression express in individual bodies and how gendered individuals interact in gendered institutions.

Sociologists favor a multilevel understanding of gender that explores the three levels of sociological analysis (individuals, interactions, and institutions) to explain gender difference and gender inequality. West and Zimmerman (1987) focused on individuals "doing gender" in interaction. Barbara Risman (2004) focuses on the institutional dimension: she conceptualizes gender as a social structure to highlight how gender is a structuring force of social inequality, just like politics and the economy. She argues that we need to understand the structural mechanisms by which gender shapes individual choice and social interaction, both directly (as a constraint to action) and indirectly (by shaping perceptions, so that we follow gender norms out of habit). Risman also calls us to pay attention to how macroinstitutional forces shape individuals and how we can act on social structures. We *can* challenge and change the status quo. We can rebel and refuse to do gender. We can do gender differently and create alternative forms of femininities and masculinities. As we move through this chapter, I will give you examples of how gender is structured in institutions like the family, politics, and the economy and how young people are collectively challenging the gender structure.

A COMPLEX INTERSECTION: CLASS, RACE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

When sociologists study social inequality, they break down the multiple categories that divide and rank people. As you have been learning across this textbook, the focus is often on race, class, and gender because these social groupings make the most difference in terms of where we stand on the stratification system. We can also look into how age, sexuality, education, being able-bodied, nationality, and immigration status, among other things, matter to understand who we are and how much (or little) power and privilege we may have in society.

While sociologists may analyze these categories independently, they don't exist separate from each other in real life. I am a cisgender woman *and* an Argentine. I am a documented immigrant *and* a Latina in the United States. I am also able-bodied, heterosexual, highly educated, *and* part of the middle classes. I belong to these multiple groups simultaneously. Altogether, they shape who I am and how I do (and undo) gender in everyday life. We tend to think of stratification as a ladder: we move up or down the power and privilege scale by falling in the either/or of a binary category (male/female, for example). On the contrary, an **intersectional** approach invites us to think of social stratification as a complex web, as a matrix made up of multiple binaries, to consider how oppression and domination based on class, race, gender, sexuality, etc., are interrelated to exacerbate inequality.

In her book, *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins (2000) explains how and why African American women are placed at the bottom of this matrix of interdependent binary oppositions. She looks at how stereotypes are used to justify intersecting oppressions of gender, race, class, and sexuality. She focuses on how the images of the mammy, the matriarch, the welfare mother, and the “hoochie” provide ideological justification for the oppression of Black women in the United States.

Let's take the matriarch's stereotype as an example to disentangle how this “controlling image,” in Hill Collins's words, serves a symbolic function in maintaining intersecting oppressions of class, race, gender, and sexuality. The matriarch represents the strong mother figure in Black homes, the single mother who financially supports her family. The matriarch image supports class oppression as it is used to explain the persistence of poverty in Black households. “Assuming that Black poverty in the United States is passed on intergenerationally via the values that parents teach their children,” Hill Collins (2000, 76) writes, “dominant ideology suggests that Black children lack the attention and care allegedly lavished on White, middle-class children. This alleged cultural deficiency seriously retards Black children's achievements. Such a view diverts attention from political and economic inequalities that increasingly characterize global capitalism. It also suggests that anyone can rise from poverty if he or she only received good values at home. Inferior housing, underfunded schools, employment discrimination, and consumer racism all but disappear from Black women's life. In this sanitized

view of American society, those African-Americans who remain poor cause their own victimization."

This stereotype of the "bad Black mother" to explain economic disadvantage among African Americans connects class and gender ideologies to justify the "extreme distributions of wealth that characterize American capitalism" (Hill Collins 2000, 76). The matriarch stereotype also labels Black women as unfeminine and aggressive. It further blames Black breadwinning single mothers for being single instead of blaming the US criminal justice system for imprisoning Black men at a disproportionately higher rate, thus reducing the number of Black men available to marry Black women. This gendered stereotype also stigmatizes them as unfeminine for being assertive and strong and as "bad mothers" for being unavailable to their children.

Sexuality is also categorized in an opposing binary: **heterosexuality** is opposed to, and ranked higher than, **homosexuality** (the romantic and sexual attraction toward people of the same sex). Traditional gendered arrangements normalize, presume, and promote heterosexuality (in other words, they are **heteronormative**). Gender norms dictate that appropriate female sexuality must be directed toward men and that women should be passive, while men should be active. The stereotypes Hill Collins investigates also serve to explain control and domination over Black women's sexuality. The hoochie stereotype for Black women defines them as deviant, as "a woman whose sexual appetites are at best inappropriate and, at worse, insatiable" (Hill Collins 2000, 83). In the stereotype of the matriarch, Black women's sexuality is linked to their fertility. "The matriarch represents the sexually aggressive woman, one who emasculates Black men because she will not permit them to assume roles as Black patriarchs. She refuses to be passive and thus is stigmatized" (Hill Collins 2000, 84).

Finally, the stereotype of the matriarch also maintains the racial oppression of Black women. "Black family structures are seen as being deviant because they challenge the patriarchal assumptions underpinning the traditional family idea," writes Hill Collins (2000, 77). "Under scientific racism, Blacks have been construed as inferior, and their inferiority has been attributed either to biological causes or cultural differences. Thus, locating the source of cultural difference in flawed gender relations provides a powerful foundation for U.S. racism. Black women's failure to conform to the culture of true womanhood can then be identified as one fundamental source of Black cultural deficiency" (Hill Collins 2000, 77).

By analyzing these four stereotypes, or controlling images, Hill Collins shows how oppressions based on class, gender, sexuality, and race intersect and have a synergistic effect. She also shows how cultural ideas are powerful tools to justify social inequality, guiding us from blaming the political, economic, and social policies that create Black disadvantage. As we move through this chapter, we will keep applying an intersectional approach to analyze gender inequality. I will include Latino/a and Latin American sociological perspectives to move beyond the Black/White racial binary that permeates sociological scholarship in the US, thus bringing a more

FOOD FOR THOUGHT**HARD SELTZER: WHITE CLAW AND THE DISCOURSE OF A GENDER-NEUTRAL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE***Justin Sean Myers*

For a long time, alcohol advertising has reinforced the gender binary of masculinity versus femininity, men are from Mars, women are from Venus, you are either one or the other. Such advertising sold beer as a man's drink, wine as a woman's drink, dark alcohol (e.g., Scotch, rum, and whisky) as a man's drink, and clear alcohol (e.g., vodka and gin) as a woman's drink. Such advertisements generally sold alcohol to men as a way to bond with the guys during game day or literally score with the ladies, while for women alcohol was a pathway to sisterhood or a way to cope with the stresses of work and motherhood. Yet, as millennials and Generation Z become core consumer demographics and entered the advertising profession, the question becomes whether this rigid gender binary will break down. Will advertising reflect alternative gender performances, ones that don't rely on the binary of men as active, women as passive, men as strong, women as weak, men as rational, women as emotional? Will there be a new beverage that caters to the so-called gender-neutral or postgender world of millennials and Generation Z?

The case of White Claw would appear to answer in the affirmative. While many alcoholic beverages still have a clear gender divide, White Claw is favored by both men and women, to the tune of nearly a fifty/fifty split. This has led to the familiar refrain that White Claw is reflective of the postgender world of millennials and Generation Z. This wasn't always the case though; initially the split was 80 percent female, 20 percent male, and the origin of hard seltzer goes back to 2012, when a brewer at a small beer company saw a group of women downing vodka sodas over lunch. He wondered if he could create a similar brewed drink. This lunch encounter eventually led to the creation of SpikedSeltzer (now Bon & Viv), and the emergence of others, such as White Claw and Truly, which account for 85 percent of hard seltzer sales, with White Claw being a power unto itself, constituting about half the market share of hard seltzer. With hard seltzer being named the unofficial drink of "summer 2019" and sales projected to reach \$2.5 billion by 2021, such numbers would imply that gender-neutral beverages might be the new face of the alcohol industry. But is this in fact the case? Is hard seltzer, and White Claw in particular, gender neutral or the reflection of changing gender relations and performances in the twenty-first century, performances that still reinscribe a division and a hierarchy between masculinity and femininity?

I claim it is the latter, and this realization becomes more salient as we peer into the social processes shaping the rise of hard seltzer, how White Claw markets itself, how men engage with White Claw, and why White Claw is the most popular hard seltzer among men. First, the growth of hard seltzer is interconnected with the growth of the wellness industry and the health consciousness of millennials and Generation Z, who are invested in keto, paleo, and CrossFit and are ditching beer and soda because of their high calories and excess sugar. For men, hard seltzer is replacing beer; for women it is replacing mixed drinks and beer. The ascendancy of postmaterialist and aspirational lifestyles within millennials and Generation Z has contributed to the explosion

Food for Thought *continued*

of seltzer sales in general too, for example, La Croix, Bubly, and Spindrift, which primes people for trying hard seltzer because it is something they are already familiar with.

At the same time, White Claw is a fruity beverage, coming in flavors like Ruby Grapefruit, Mango, and Black Cherry, and is thus historically coded as feminine, a femininity that is played up by other hard seltzer brands. Bon & Viv cans have two mermaids on them. Truly cans have bright fruit displays. White Claw is different: their cans have a white background, gray text, and a signature wave logo, all of which avoid the bright colors or floral patterns of other hard seltzer brands. Does the marketing of the White Claw can play a role in its dominance? Possibly. According to industry insiders, their ads definitely appeal to millennials and Generation Z. Unlike traditional alcohol ads, those of White Claw don't fall into the gendered tropes of masculinity and femininity. Men are not ogling after women, and women are not hapless prey. Both are prominent in ads, both with agency and power, engaging in kayaking, football, boating, playing frisbee, celebrating an outdoor lifestyle in general. But the bodies in the ad still reinforce dominant perceptions of how a masculine and a feminine body should look: the male body is chiseled with muscles and a six pack and fits the ideal of the "Adonis complex," while the female body is thin, yet toned, reflecting the mainstreaming of the soccer, basketball, or CrossFit athlete as what a woman should aspire to become. The ads underscore that the wellness industry, which is not body positive, still glamorizes certain bodies as "good" and "attractive" and creates a world where everyone, regardless of their gender, needs to be fit and active in order to be perceived as attractive and worthy of social status. White Claw's popularity is therefore reflective of how the mainstreaming of the wellness industry is the mainstreaming of metrosexuality, where men are told to care about their grooming practices, their clothes, and what they eat. White Claw represents a world where men must now count calories and reduce their salt, sugar, and saturated fat consumption to pack on muscle, hence the advertising on the can that it is only "100 calories."

And here is where we gather some more insights about the relationship between White Claw and gender. Given that possibility that hard seltzer can facilitate emasculation, how do men invested in hypermasculinity engage in the work of remasculinizing White Claw? They do so by connecting it with the conventional attributes of hypermasculinity. Case in point, comedian Trevor Wallace created a YouTube video about White Claw, which has been viewed over five million times, that was oozing hypermasculinity and the attributes of physical strength, aggression, and sexual conquest: "Ain't no laws when you're drinking Claws!", "You like the lime ones? You probably like missionary too!", "It's like Perrier that does squats," "Ingredients: carbonated water, alcohol, my dick!", "Who's trying to let me hit it raw while I White Claw?", "100 calories, but 100% down to fuck!"

Given the emasculating potential of hard seltzer, Trevor Wallace's video can be read as an attempt to reassert traditional masculinity onto White Claw. Wallace's video continues the fusion of alcohol with physical dominance and sexual conquest and thus reclaims White Claw as a drink for "bros." It formulates a "brosexuality" that fuses metrosexuality with hypermasculinity in a way that is totally manly. The destigmatization

Food for Thought continued

of hard seltzer, or at least White Claw, by men doesn't mean that the drink is gender neutral or postgender; it merely means that it is not coded as feminine by men. So, unlike a wine cooler, a Smirnoff Ice, or a Mike's Hard Lemonade, White Claw won't emasculate a self-proclaimed dude.

Therefore, in spite of the advertising of White Claw and the fifty/fifty parity in gender consumption, the popularity of Wallace's video raises the question about the actual relationship between White Claw, hard seltzer, and gender. I contend that rather than being an outlier to the gender binary of alcohol consumption, White Claw is being utilized by bros in ways that reproduce the binary within a drink category rather than between drink categories and, in so doing, provides insights into the relationship between alcohol and gender among millennials and Generation Z.

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comprehensive approach to studying multiple, interconnected oppressions (Baca Zinn and Mirandé 2020; Baca Zinn and Zambrana 2019). This scholarship highlights additional intersecting axes of domination, such as citizenship, ethnicity, migration, and language, and provides a transnational perspective to study how changes in the global economy impact vulnerable, gendered individuals. Next, let's apply this broadened view of intersectionality to a very gendered institution: the family.

GENDERED FAMILIES

From a sociological perspective, families are institutions because they structure social life (see Lesson 4). The family is a gendered institution because it establishes and reproduces gendered differences and inequalities among its members. In the traditional family, the women (mothers, wives, daughters)

are responsible for housework and caring for the children, while the men (fathers, husbands, sons) work for pay outside the home.

Contemporary American families, however, do not represent or claim to agree with this normative ideal. Women in the United States represent over half of the total labor force (Shaw et al. 2020, 2). Men and women say they agree on their support of gender-egalitarian principles: the belief that men and women should share their time equally at home and work (Dernberger and Pepin 2020). Yet, while there is social acceptance for mothers working for pay outside the house and even for equal job opportunities for men and women, household labor continues to be divided along gender lines (some statistics on this fact will follow). Moreover, many continue to support traditional views, where the mother's employment is secondary to that of the father. In a quantitative study, Brittany Dernberger and Joanna Pepin asked young people in the US what they desired their future family to look like. Using data from the Monitoring the Future surveys from 1976 to 2014, Dernberger and Pepin (2020, 37) selected "a nationally representative probability sample of 12th-grade students, to examine whether increasing proportions of young people prefer parents equally sharing time at work and time at home." They found that the most desired family arrangement among contemporary high school students is a conventional one: where the husband works full time and the wife stays at home. The authors show that even though young people are more flexible toward gender egalitarianism than previous generations, they are still far from desiring egalitarian principles to divide paid and unpaid work. They may accept the reality of women working for pay outside the home but do not prefer a future where mothers and fathers share equally on their income and caring responsibilities.

Remember the question I posed earlier? I asked how you would feel if a male friend of yours decided to become a full-time dad, dependent on his wife's income. If you felt uncomfortable with this idea and thought you would not desire this option for your own family, then your attitude aligns with Dernberger and Pepin's findings. Surprisingly, these results do not significantly differ by gender, but they differ by race: Black youth are more supportive of a more egalitarian division of labor. This is likely because Black families have long adopted family arrangements composed of cobreadwinners or led by a single working mother—the consequence of the racialized political and social policies identified by Patricia Hill Collins as the cause of the matriarch stereotype.

As you already know from reading about Janet Gornick and Marcia Meyers's work in Lesson 1, there are significant structural barriers to gender progress. Public policy in the United States, compared to European countries, does not support dual-earner families: here, there are no federal policies that provide paid family leave, regulation of working time, or free child care. The lack of such policies exacerbates gender inequality and makes life worse for all because parents feel overburdened, women earn less than men, and children get to spend less time with their parents and underperform at school (Gornick and Meyers 2003).

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gender inequality among heterosexual couples (Shaw et al. 2020). In the US, women have disproportionate workloads for unpaid household and care work (taking care of the children and the elderly). On average, women spend 5.7 hours a day doing unpaid work, compared to 3.6 hours for men. That is, women spend 37 percent more time on household and care work than their male partners (Hayes, Hess, and Ahmed 2020). For Black and Latina women, that number goes up to nearly 50 percent (Shaw et al. 2020). Imagine what happened when the pandemic hit, states ordered stay-at-home orders, and the schools and day cares across the nation shut down? Who do you think was more likely to take up the extra work? You probably guessed right. Women have been much more affected by additional child-care requirements during the COVID pandemic (Alon et al. 2020).

The pandemic has exposed the lack of public support for working parents. In addition to the lack of policies identified by Gornick and Meyers (2003), the lack of public policies for paid sick and family leave has put people in a most difficult position: forced to choose between keeping their job and leaving children at home alone (and face contagion at work) or quitting their job and becoming unemployed. The greatest toll has fallen on poor, Black, and Latino/a households led by single mothers (Heilman, Castro Bernardini, and Pfeifer 2020). Because these women are more likely to be employed in the retail and service sectors—sectors that offer inflexible working hours, the lowest wages, and minimum benefits—they have been the most likely to quit their jobs to care for children (Maheshwari and Corkery 2020). According to the US Census Bureau, amid the pandemic, a third of unemployed women are not working because of child-care needs (US Census Bureau 2020). Unsurprisingly, this puts women and their children at a higher risk of poverty.

Research on gendered family relations often presumes heteronormativity. But gendered power relations are not exclusive to relationships composed of two people with different biological sexes. Hierarchies that result in differences in the division of labor in the family also exist in relationships between women and in those between men. How is gender produced and reproduced in same-sex relationships? Mignon Moore (2008) and Katie Acosta (2013) study the shared lives of Black women and Latinas, respectively, using an intersectional approach to highlight issues unaddressed by most scholarship on lesbian families, which centers on White, upper- and middle-class, college-educated women.

Mignon Moore (2008) studies gendered power relations among Black, lesbian stepfamilies. She analyzes how they organize the division of housework, paid work, and child care and compares with both the practices and the beliefs of traditional heterosexual gendered relations and those of White lesbian couples. From her qualitative study, Moore derives three key insights. First is the importance of economic independence. While research on White, college-educated lesbians shows they share a feminist ideology and practice toward egalitarianism, Black women, in contrast, emphasize financial independence and autonomy. Second, Moore (2008, 343) reveals “the importance of the status of ‘mother’ in creating hierarchies in lesbian stepfamilies.”

Moore shows how, in Black lesbian stepfamilies, biological mothers take more responsibility and authority over their children. They also tend to undermine and challenge their partners' authority by aligning with their children when they question their authority (even when the biological mother agrees with the principle established by the partner). This behavior pattern resembles that of stepparents in heterosexual unions, who also tend to have more distant relations with their partners' children. Third, Moore (2008, 343) shows "how gendered presentations of self in black lesbian relationships are associated with the types of household tasks that partners perform." Biological mothers in Black lesbian stepfamilies, just like heterosexual ones, take on additional household and child-care work to gain authority via controlling household labor. But in contrast, their lesbian partners "have less access to the economic provider role as leverage for their position in the household. This leaves them as less powerful actors relative to men in stepfamilies" (Moore 2008, 353). Thus, Moore concludes, while power differentials among Black lesbian stepfamilies may not be centered around finances and income, gendered power differentials do exist and are centered around expectations and identities.

In her book *Amigas y Amantes*, Katie Acosta (2013) studies the ways Latinas in New York City negotiate sexuality and the family. Using qualitative data collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews, she reveals the unique issues and struggles affecting lesbian, bisexual, and queer (LBQ) Latinas. In particular, Acosta highlights the difficulties in negotiating interracial and interethnic relations, as well as cultural clashes, in and between their family of choice and family of origin. She also highlights the struggles affecting poor and undocumented LBQ mothers. Acosta thus moves away from the traditional accounting of the division of labor in the household we explored earlier (hours of household and care work) to consider emotional work, that is, the invisible labor necessary to manage the emotions of both families of choice and origin. LBQ Latinas struggle to reconcile traditional gendered standards for femininity and motherhood set by their own cultures and the ways those gender norms influence how their families of origin relate to their sexual "transgressions" (Acosta 2013, 15). Families of origin use culture and religion to reject and judge their kin, and while they may tacitly accept their kin's partner, they tend to invisibilize their relationship. In other words, they may accept the partner's presence as a family member, but not as their kin's sexual partner. Furthermore, Acosta shows that protection and recognition for same-sex Latina families are made even more difficult by the structural barriers of poverty and legal status. Undocumented LBQ mothers struggle to secure good jobs and access welfare benefits and protections, all the while fearing the risk of deportation.

While there is a heavy emotional burden that comes from navigating these constraints, Acosta argues that the resiliency LBQ Latinas develop from negotiating these struggles represents an opportunity to develop a shared collective identity, a mestiza consciousness. The mestiza consciousness embodies the resilience to account for multiple identities, becoming a "mechanism by which one can learn to tolerate the contradictions, ambiguities,

and marginalization in life” (Acosta 2013, 147). An intersectional approach, Acosta reminds us, is about domination as much as it is about empowerment. Its goal is “praxis”: to connect theory with activism to bring forth a more just society (Baca Zinn and Zambrana 2019, 690–92). In the next section, we will connect gender theories with feminist and LGBTQ activism, the movements to expand rights and empower women and sexual minorities to create a more equitable, fair, and just society for all.

POWER AND POLITICS

In its 232 years of democratic history, the United States of America has had forty-six presidents. In 1789, George Washington became the first. On January 20, 2021, Joe Biden was sworn as the forty-sixth. All of those presidents were men. Except for Barack Obama (2009–2016), all of them were also White.

The demographics of the country are not represented at the highest levels of political power. The US Census Bureau (2021) estimates that, for 2019, 50.8 percent of the American population is female and 60 percent identify as non-Hispanic White. On that basis, in a perfectly equal world, at least half of American presidents should have been women and a third non-White. We certainly don’t live in a perfectly equal world. According to the 2020 *Global Gender Gap Report* of the World Economic Forum (2019), over the past fifty years, across 85 of the 153 countries covered in the report, *none* has had a female head of government. Despite claiming to be the world’s Beacon of Democracy, America trails far behind. In Political Empowerment, an index measuring the gap between men and women at the highest levels of political decision-making (ministerial and parliamentary positions, in addition to the ratio of the number of years with a female head of state in the past fifty years), the United States ranked 86th—well below almost all countries from western Europe, South Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean (World Economic Forum 2019). All western European countries, except Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden, have (at least once) elected a woman for the top job. Margaret Thatcher was elected prime minister of the United Kingdom in 1979 and Theresa May in 2016. Angela Merkel became Germany’s chancellor in 2005. She remained in office for fourteen years, making her the longest-serving woman in an executive office and the longest-serving leader of the democratic world.

The world’s first elected female head of state was Sirimavo Bandaranaike in Sri Lanka in 1960 (Wills, Smith, and Hicks 2019). In 1966, India elected Indira Gandhi, and Israel elected Golda Meir in 1969. In the Americas, Isabel Perón became president of Argentina in 1974, after being elected the first female vice president and the passing of the president (her husband), Juan Domingo Perón. Violeta Chamorro became the first female elected president in the Americas in 1990. While trailblazing, these first women to break the executive glass ceiling worldwide were also reproducing gender inequality. Overwhelmingly, they were afforded the highest levels of executive power as a result of their family ties (Jalalzai 2013). However, in the twenty-first century, we may be slowly

moving away from the need to be “the wife of” or “daughter of” to become head of state. In Latin America in particular, women with no family connections to power have been elected president through a popular election and in stable political contexts: Michelle Bachelet in Chile (2006–2010, 2014–2018), Cristina Fernández in Argentina (2007–2011, 2011–2015), Laura Chinchilla in Costa Rica (2010–2014), and Dilma Rousseff in Brazil (2011–2016) (Jalalzai 2015).

These Latin American *presidentas*, particularly Cristina Fernández, have repeatedly highlighted the exceptionality of their position as women leaders in male-dominated institutions (Leguizamón 2019). Politics and the economic world—the “public sphere”—are traditionally men’s place. They are gendered institutions and reproduce gendered inequalities. Women in positions of power are thus often caught in a double bind. They must behave according to the gendered (masculine) standards of the offices they hold rather than to their gendered (female) identity. Yet, the public expects female leaders to act in feminine ways and to be motherly and caring (the Germans call Angela Merkel *Mutti*, mother). Still, their position requires them to be ambitious, strong, and ready to embrace the use of violent force as the nation’s commander in chief. This sets a dissonance that was most obvious during Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign.

As the first woman nominated as the presidential candidate of a major political party in the United States, Hillary Clinton was frequently subjected to sexism and gender stereotyping (Knuckey 2019). Clinton explicitly brought forward her gender during the campaign, and so did her opponent, Donald Trump. Trump attacked Clinton for playing the “woman card,” an overtly sexist appeal that significantly influenced voters’ behavior (Cassese and Holman 2019). Erin Cassese and Mirya Holman show how individuals with high levels of hostile sexism (defined as the threat to men’s power over women) reacted to the woman-card attack with increased enthusiasm, evaluating Trump more favorably and Clinton less favorably, and how it increased their political participation. People low in the hostile sexism spectrum, on the contrary, became demobilized and less likely to vote. Benevolent sexists (those who endorse positive and negative gender stereotypes) reacted to the negative campaigning by evaluating “both candidates more favorably and were more inclined to vote for Clinton,” a finding the authors attribute to “benevolent sexists’ protectionist attitudes toward women” (Cassese and Holman 2019, 56).

Trump’s election as the forty-fifth president was the catalyst for a new wave of **feminist** political organizing in the United States. The day after his inauguration, two million people across the country marched for women’s rights and equality (Fisher, Dow, and Ray 2017). The Women’s March of 2017 in Washington, DC, was one of the largest single-day protests in American history. What leads people to mobilize? As you will learn in Lesson 8, people organize in collective action motivated by a desire for social change. This wave of feminist activism energized a record number of women to run for (and ultimately win) office at the local, state, and national levels in the 2018 midterm elections: women won a record 28.7 percent of state house seats (Matthews 2020). Morgan Matthews (2020) studies gender representation

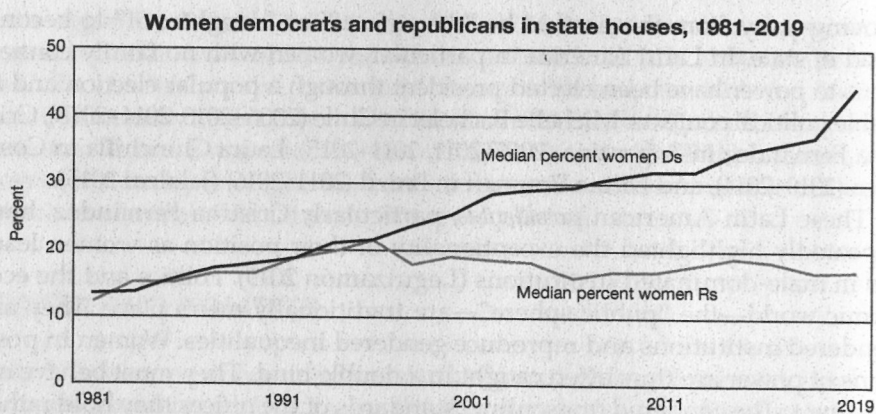


Figure 7.1. Women Democrats and Republicans in state houses, 1981–2019 (Matthews, 2020).

in state legislatures. Using quantitative data, she shows a pattern of gender polarization within the US party system: women’s advancement in state political representation is concentrated in the Democratic Party (see Figure 7.1). Thus, while the growth in the number of women in the state house could forecast future changes in the gender composition of higher office, because the majority of state houses are controlled by Republicans (60 percent of them), there is a glass ceiling to gender parity that is “structured and reinforced by the U.S. party system” (Matthews 2020, 70).

Why does representation matter? Political representation matters because it increases women’s presence in political power and decision-making bodies. This is a main goal for the feminist movement: to increase women’s proportion in governance to allow their democratic voice to be equal to men’s (Walby 2011, 38). Having access to decision-making bodies means having the power to decide how social life is organized: the ability to pass laws and regulations and to shape budgets for policy implementation. Think, for example, of the work done by late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg—which you can watch in the documentary, *RBG* (Cohen and West 2018). When Justice Ginsburg began her career as a lawyer, sex-based discrimination was permitted under the law. In the United States in the 1970s, employees in most states could legally fire a woman for being pregnant, banks could require women applying for credit to have their husbands as cosigners, and marital rape was generally not prosecuted. Justice Ginsburg successfully appealed to the Supreme Court for equal rights for men and women based on the Fourteenth Amendment, arguing that the amendment’s guarantee of equal protection should apply to sex discrimination as well as to racial discrimination (Greenhouse 2020). In the course of her long career, and as the second woman named to the US Supreme Court, in 1993, Justice Ginsburg continued to pass legislation that advances gender equality and women’s rights.

Of course, having more women in power does not mean that they will share a feminist agenda. Gender identity, as we discussed earlier, is intersectional and diverse. There are multiple reasons, including class, religion,

CAREER SPOTLIGHT 7.1: Liat Perlin

Major: Psychology; Minor: Environmental Studies (Environmental Sociology undergraduate thesis); Tulane University, 2017

Favorite sociology class: Sociology of Food and Agriculture

Favorite reading in sociology: John Bellamy Foster's work on ecological metabolisms has been incredibly influential in my career. His analyses on metabolic rift and society-nature relationships informs much of the work I do on the relationship between land use practices and out-migration in Guatemala.

Current position: Graduate Student, Master's Degree Candidate in Latin American Studies



How does your sociology education contribute to your work?

I wrote an undergraduate thesis on ecofeminist perspectives of agricultural production within an environmental sociology framework. This project led me to the US Peace Corps where I served as a rural agriculture agent in Guatemala and continued exploring the feminization of agriculture. My sociology education prepared me for my service in Guatemala and enhanced my understanding of the sociological underpinnings present in the functioning of the village where I lived for two years. My undergraduate experience with sociology contextualized my work with the Peace Corps and eventually led me back to graduate school, where I now study the relationship between ecological metabolisms and Central American out-migration.

What skills did you learn in your sociology education that contribute to your work?

My sociology education has taught me to be a community engaged scholar. As an undergraduate senior I fundraised with the sociology and environmental studies departments at my university to cohost a lecture by Vandana Shiva, renowned ecofeminist scholar and food sovereignty activist. I picked her up from the airport and took her to the French Quarter where she had her first beignet. My academic career in sociology continues to allow me to connect with communities at home and abroad, learning and growing alongside others.

Advice for sociology majors?

Know that your education is applicable both within and outside of the university context. Whether you get a job with an NGO, decide to do the Peace Corps, or continue in the academe, your degree in sociology will have a practical application and you can use your degree to make the world a more peaceful and cohesive place. A background in sociology equips you to really take on the problems of the world. Your understanding of the development and structure of human society allows you to deeply understand social problems and come up with valuable solutions. The world needs people like you right now in the face of a global pandemic, harsh political divides, and global climate change.

and party affiliation, why women may oppose equal rights. See the example of Phyllis Schlafly. She was a conservative activist who, in the 1970s, successfully led the campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment, a constitutional amendment that would guarantee equal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex (Martin 2016). (You can watch her story and the story of the feminist movement that promoted the Equal Rights Amendment in Hulu's *Miss America*. Cate Blanchett plays Ms. Schlafly). So, while having more women in power does not guarantee they will share a common agenda, we know that having women in higher office serves as an important role model for other women, motivating them to run for office (Ladam, Harden, and Windett 2018). We also know that women and racial and ethnic minorities in legislative positions are more likely to advocate for laws and policies that serve the constituents with whom they share a social identity (Lowande, Ritchie, and Lauterbach 2019). There are, therefore, clear democratic advantages in increasing diversity in political power.

How do we achieve political representation? Feminist activists have fought for women's political inclusion by demanding the state enacts gender quotas (Jaquette 2009; Walby 2011). Gender quotas require, by law, that all political parties nominate a minimum percentage of women candidates (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). In 1991, Argentina became the first country in the world to pass such a law, and the measure was quickly adopted in most Latin American and European countries—because quotas are largely seen as good for women and democracy (Piscopo 2015; Walby 2011). Since the 2000s, with the election wave of left-leaning governments across Latin America known as the Pink Tide, the region has become “a global standout, with the highest regional average for women in national legislatures” (Friedman and Tabbush 2018, 26). In Bolivia, the feminist women's movements' demand for quotas took place in the context of broader calls for inclusion, particularly for indigenous peoples (Mullenax 2018). Their success has turned Bolivia into the second country in the world to achieve a female majority in the legislature. The indigenous women's movement, led by the Bartolinas, also gained influential government positions, by election and by appointment in ministerial positions, under Evo Morales's administration.

In Argentina, as gender quotas gave women a seat in political power, women legislators have been able to pass many laws promoting and protecting the rights of women, including sexual health and reproduction laws, comprehensive sex education, protection from violence against women, and universal assistance for children. Between 2003 and 2015, under the center-left administrations of Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández, female legislators pressured by—and in alliance with—feminist, women's rights, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activists gained substantial rights and protections for women and LGBT people (Tabbush et al. 2018). The government established several welfare programs that gave direct cash transfer payments to poor and unemployed women and their families, including the Plan for Male and Female-Headed Households, the Families Plan, and the Universal Child Allowance (Leguizamón 2019). This period also saw notable, pioneering advancements of LGBT rights.

In 2010, Argentina passed the Marriage Equality Law, legalizing same-sex marriage (a law that would later pass in 2015 in the United States), and, in 2012, the Gender Identity Law. This law, while “it perpetuates a binary definition of gender, it does provide for changes to identity registries and documents without judicial or medical authorization, and it affirms health rights for transvestites, transexuals, and transgender people vis-à-vis surgical procedures and/or hormone treatments for those who seek them” (Tabbush et al. 2018, 86).

On December 30, 2020, after fifteen years of protest marches and court litigations, feminist and women’s rights activists in Argentina claimed their final victory. The Senate legalized abortion, making Argentina the largest Latin American country (and only one of a few, with Cuba, Uruguay, and Guyana) to permit elective abortions (Phillips, Booth, and Goñi 2020). Feminists and women’s rights activists launched the National Campaign for Legal, Safe, and Free Abortion in 2005 (<http://www.abortolegal.com.ar/about/>). Although Argentine activists won sexual and gender rights for years, they could not advance women’s reproductive rights. The influence of the Catholic Church (boosted by Pope Francis, an Argentine, assuming the papacy) and of President Cristina Fernández over her party’s legislators (she opposed decriminalizing abortion) became barriers to an earlier passing of the abortion bill (Tabbush et al. 2018).

Since 2015, however, the feminist movement gained momentum when tens of thousands of people marched in protest to the gruesome killings of two female teenagers (Phillips, Booth, and Goñi 2020). It all began with a Twitter campaign under the hashtag #NiUnaMenos—not one fewer, meaning no more girls and women lost to gender violence and **femicide** (Belotti, Comunello, and Corradi 2020). The campaign went viral, driven by young activists who led massive marches across the country, wearing their symbolic green scarves (you can see their images on Instagram, [@CampAbortoLegal](https://www.instagram.com/campabortolegal/?hl=en)). Adding fuel to these efforts were the #MeToo campaign in the United States and the feminist movements in Mexico and Chile protesting against violence against women (Pérez-Peña 2020). In Chile, the feminist collective Las Tesis, like the Pussy Riots in Russia, popularized art performances as a form of protest against sexual and gender violence (Tolokonnikova 2020). Their live performance about rape culture and victim shaming, “A Rapist in Your Path,” has been performed by feminists worldwide. (Watch it on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/s5AAscy7qBI>.)

The sociological imagination teaches us that, as much as individuals are shaped by history and structure, individuals do have agency and can, collectively, bring about social change. This brief history of women’s political representation shows us that, at least for Latin America, the United States, and Europe, collective action to expand women and LGBT people’s rights has been quite successful. Change may seem slow but has not stopped. Look at the results of the 2020 election. Kamala Harris has been elected vice president. The 117th Congress (2021–22) is the most diverse in US history, with a record number of women, racial and ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ people (Sprunt 2021). Furthermore, Native Americans now have their largest representation in Congress ever. New Mexico Representative Deb Haaland, who in 2018 was one

of the first two Native American women to be ever elected for Congress, won re-election. President Biden has now appointed her as Secretary of Interior, and she is the first Native American to hold such a high post. She has pledged to protect tribal rights to land, requesting community consultations in advance of extractive activities, a key to address climate change and environmental injustice (Haaland 2020). Moreover, the legalization of abortion in Argentina is likely to ripple through the Latin American region, as has happened with other laws expanding human and civil rights (Schiffrin and Quran 2020).

But while change is relentless, rights cannot be taken for granted. Rights are often not given, but won by organized and sustained social mobilization. As time passes, and particularly for new generations who did not experience past oppressions, it is easy to take the rights and liberties fought for by previous generations as a given, such as the right to vote, inherit, or divorce. Yet, with enough political opposition, rights could be taken away, such as in the case of abortion rights in the United States. Justice Amy Coney Barrett's appointment to the Supreme Court in October 2020 threatens to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, which upholds women's constitutional rights to end their pregnancies (Green 2020). If not defended, hard-won rights can be rolled back. Which rights and liberties will you and your generation fight for to pass on to the future generations?

GENDER, DEVELOPMENT, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Fifth Goal of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>). What is the relationship between gender equality, economic development, and environmental protection? This last section focuses on studying how global economic forces unevenly impact women and men as they create social inequality and environmental degradation. We will also look into the gendered grass-roots movements that have emerged in response.

In the late twentieth century, economic globalization expanded under the ideology of **neoliberalism** (see Lesson 9). To achieve economic growth, countries in the Global South opened their doors to transnational corporations and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These transnational institutions promoted economic liberalization (the opening of local markets) based on the logic of comparative advantage: countries should specialize in producing and exporting the products they are most competitive in—often meaning the resources they are naturally endowed with. When all countries do so and there are no barriers to trade, then the world market is believed to be the most efficient.

For the Global South, entering the globalization project required adopting structural adjustment programs (McMichael 2016). International financial institutions provided debt restructuring in exchange for privatization, fiscal and monetary reform, and the deregulation of labor markets and environmental protections, which benefited transnational corporations. In Latin

America and the Caribbean, a region rich in natural resources, neoliberal structural adjustment programs focused on commodity exporting for economic growth. In Mexico, as in Central American and Caribbean countries like Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Jamaica, the neoliberal export drive oriented toward establishing *maquilas*, assembly plants in free trade zones—the result of US businesses outsourcing jobs to lower wages and cut costs. South American countries, like Chile, Colombia, and Argentina, oriented instead toward the modernization of their agricultural and mining sectors to increase nontraditional commodity exports, like fresh fish, fruits, flowers, lithium, and soybeans.

The gender impacts of economic globalization are multiple and often contradictory. It has rapidly and massively incorporated women into the labor force, sending women out of the domestic sphere and into paid employment. Since the 1980s, the percentage of women in the labor force has increased worldwide, with the most significant variation in the Global South (Momsen 2004, 193–98). In Chile, for example, the transition toward an agro-export model based on the production of fresh fruits for export (including the grapes you buy in any American supermarket) has been marked by an increased feminization and seasonality of agricultural production (Bee 2000). The majority of the Chilean fruit export sector workers are women, temporary wage workers known as *temporeras*, working in the fields and the packing plants. Employment in the packing plants, in particular, is highly gendered, because women's "perceived and often imaginary 'female' characteristics such as manual dexterity have made [women] the desired labor for handling the delicate fruit" (Bee 2000, 256).

The transition toward large-scale, capitalized agriculture in Chile has dramatically impacted life and livelihood for smallholder peasant families. On the one hand, the entrance of large agribusinesses has transformed land tenure patterns, making it more difficult for rural women, often responsible for the family farm, to maintain access to land. On the other hand, wage employment for women, while unstable, temporary, and poorly paid, has shifted traditional household earning patterns. As she interviews Chilean *temporeras*, Anna Bee (2000) shows the complex situation women are in. Working on the family farm is backbreaking and quite risky, because families may not earn enough money when selling their crops. Working in the packing plant, in comparison, provides better working conditions (they are sheltered from a harsh environment, food is provided) and can even be "a liberating experience," as some of the women told her, because it allows them to make decisions over how to spend their time and their wages (Bee 2000, 260–61). At the same time, women report many problems, including long working hours; often standing, repetitive work; and sustained exposure to chemicals, both in the fields and in the packing plants.

The situation for women working in the *maquiladora* sector is not much different. Export-oriented economies in Latin America and South and Southeast Asia have increased employment opportunities for young women working on assembly factory floors. Transnational companies outsource

production to developing countries, searching for the “cheap, docile, and dexterous” work young women can provide. As Leslie Salzinger (2003) argues, however, these feminine traits are not inherent to women workers but instead created in the process of economic globalization. The ideal assembly worker—a Third World gendered self that is obedient, passive, and highly productive—is itself a product of the globalization process, shaped in such a way as to maximize productivity and profitability. In other words, “capital makes rather than finds such workers,” Salzinger (2003, 2) writes, and “gender is implicated in that process.”

Gender, through this process of productive femininity, is thus central to global production. Salzinger (2003) came to this conclusion after conducting nearly two years of ethnographic fieldwork in four different maquilas in Ciudad Juárez, on Mexico’s northern border. On the shop floors, she observed and often participated in a wide range of gender practices that create acquiescent and highly productive workers. Male managers in one factory she calls Panoptimex, for example, were obsessively vigilant of how a shop floor full of high-heeled young women workers looked and behaved. As Salzinger compares labor control mechanisms across four factories, she shows how this process of productive femininity engulfs both women and men and how women use gender strategically to resist managerial control.

Assembly factory workers across the Global South are exposed to a wide variety of occupational and health hazards. In countries like China, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Taiwan, where much of the world’s high-tech electronics are assembled, “workers labor under high-pressure, rapid pace, and long hours” (Grossman 2015, 71). In these factories, workers must handle toxic chemicals such as phenol, chloroform, trichloroethylene, mercury, glues, solvents, benzene, hexane, *n*-hexane, and methanol with little to no training or information about their health effects. Grossman (2015) reports that in 2014 Apple announced it would stop allowing its suppliers to use *n*-hexane and benzene in the final assembly of iPhones and iPads—though not in the early assembly stages. Many of these chemical solvents, like benzene, are carcinogenic, or, like *n*-hexane, neurotoxins. Men working in assembly plants in Indonesia have died of lung cancers and brain tumors. Women workers in Chinese, Indonesian, and Korean electronic plants report that miscarriages and menstrual problems are common among them. In addition, workers are exposed to dust, noise, and heat and must engage in long hours of repetitive, straining work, often on their feet all day, for meager pay. The health and environmental hazards of high-tech electronics expand throughout their life cycle, far beyond the factories where they are assembled: from the extraction of metals and minerals that make up circuit boards, batteries, and consoles (such as copper, gold, and lithium), to their disposal, as they are burned or buried as e-waste (Grossman 2015). As transnational corporations expand commodity chains globally, these impacts become invisible to us—the affluent consumers who live far from extraction, manufacturing, and waste sites—and a burden on rural and poor communities and communities of color worldwide (see Lesson 9).

A primary approach in the scholarship on gender and development centers on studying “the gendered nature of access and control of resources,

resource politics, and management” (Coles, Gray, and Momsen 2015, 81). Women are often responsible for household labor and for caring for children and the elderly. They also contribute significantly to agricultural enterprises, working in the family farms and watching over livestock. Yet, their work is often underplayed and ignored. This has significant consequences in resource management. Comparing cases of agrarian reform across Africa, Latin America, Asia, and eastern Europe, Susie Jacobs (2015, 98) shows that, only until very recently, nearly all land redistribution programs “allocated land titles or permits to men as ‘household heads.’” Women only qualify for landholding if they support dependent children, while men usually qualify solely because of their gender.

In consequence, land redistribution programs targeted to benefit small-holder peasants have unintendedly worsened life for married women (Jacobs 2015). On the one hand, controlling their own land helps peasant families increase food production and household income, securing their stability. On the other hand, having more land to cultivate increases women’s workload and the pressure to work more efficiently and bear more children to work on the farm. As farms become more efficient and profitable (and because some programs forbid off-farm work and migration), men’s presence on the farm and the household increases. Women are then relegated to the “housewife” position, lessening their decision-making power and autonomy. “Overall,” Jacobs (2015, 98) concludes, “within agrarian reforms, husbands tend to gain power and influence as well as material benefits, but often at the expense of wives.” Therefore, these land reform programs, while beneficial, also serve to reproduce and maintain a **patriarchal** gender order—the relation of domination of men over women.

In Latin America, neoliberal structural reforms geared toward the modernization of extractive sectors also have disproportionately disadvantaged women, particularly indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants. In Colombia, for example, national development plans focused on the agribusiness and mining sectors—gold in particular. In the early 2000s, the Colombian government granted mining concessions to multinational corporations without the prior consultation of local communities (Hernández Reyes 2019). White foreigners landed in the communities of Black and indigenous peoples with their backhoes and other mining equipment, protected by government laws and paramilitary forces. Castriela Hernández Reyes (2019) studied how Afro-Colombian women from La Toma, a small village in the northern Cauca region, responded to the advent of mining extractivism in their community. Traditionally, the people of La Toma rely on growing coffee and plantains and artisanal gold mining for profit and sustenance. Mining concessions created social and environmental violence. Locals were violently dispossessed of their lands and their means of subsistence by paramilitary forces. The river was dammed to divert water to the mine and away from the community. In response, Black women organized in protest. In 2014, they walked the four hundred miles that separate La Toma from Bogotá, Colombia’s capital city, in the first Mobilization for the Care of Life and Ancestral Territories. “Shouting slogans such as ‘Territories and life are not sold—they are loved

CAREER SPOTLIGHT 7.2: Samantha Tigner

Major: Environmental Studies, International Development; Minor: Sociology;
Tulane University, 2018

Favorite sociology class: Sustainable Development in Latin America or Global Political Economy and the Environment

Favorite reading in sociology: Perhaps my favorite book was *The Social Roots of Risk* by Kathleen Tierney. Throughout my undergraduate career I had an acute interest in the sociology of disasters, particularly as related to climate change and small island developing states, and this book opened up my perspective with new avenues for investigation and reimagined the way I conceive of disasters and risk. It eventually became a key piece of work I used as a foundation for some funded research I did pertaining to the United States Virgin Islands' disaster risk management response and recovery efforts following Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 and their treatment of underlying, socially generated, drivers of risk.

**Current position: Climate Change and Sustainability Analyst**

I work on environment and climate change focused projects for a variety of clients including US governmental agencies (US EPA and USAID) and international institutions (World Bank, Global Environment Facility). My work involves a lot of research, writing, and analysis for domestic and international climate change and environmental topics such as climate risk, resilience and vulnerability, climate risk management and assessment, mitigation and adaptation pathways, long-term decarbonization planning, emissions reductions modeling and scenario development, etc. It simultaneously involves management responsibilities for the breadth of projects I work on, so tasks like client communications, stakeholder outreach and engagement, data management, content development, and a slate of other operational tasks necessary to carry work forward on a day-to-day basis.

I feel like my job is a permutation of sociology in practice. I am fortunate enough to be a part of an organization where I can reflect upon the policies and institutions that are shaping the world we live in, evaluate the ways in which those processes or policies generate outcomes and impacts, and critically analyze how I, my colleagues, and all the other relevant stakeholders, can change or adjust those policies and processes.

How does your sociology education contribute to your work?

One example that I think highlights how my sociology education contributes to my work is through a recent project I've been working on that focuses on assisting countries to develop long-term strategies for emissions reductions to 2050. I worked primarily with the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Throughout the course of our work, we discussed the very specific challenges of small island nations and particularly about pursuing resilience in the aftermath of disasters. Thinking about COVID-19 of

Career Spotlight 7.2 *continued*

course, but also about hurricanes, which are a persistent and increasingly dangerous challenge for the Caribbean as climate change worsens. These conversations triggered a slew of questions for me: What are the impediments to addressing climate risks and fostering resilience? How are countries prepared (or not) to address increasing threats related to climate change? What are the secondary impacts on an economy that is nearly entirely dependent on a single or few key sectors? How can economic recovery efforts in the wake of COVID-19 encapsulate climate change considerations? How can long-term plans achieve synergistic outcomes that support both mitigation and adaptation/resilience objectives? Who are the stakeholders involved in decision-making processes? Who has a seat at the table and a say? What are the processes? Who has the power to make changes? These are complex questions that traverse institutions, stakeholders, priorities, and processes—but asking those questions is what sociology is about. And that has had a profound impact on the way that I conduct my work, in this project and all the others I work on. This framing and way of thinking reminds me to critically analyze processes I see or partake in and prompts me to continue asking challenging questions. I think it's crucial in interdisciplinary work like climate change programming to be deft at considering interconnections and addressing those overlaps which is something a sociology curriculum certainly primed me for. It also makes me remain cognizant of possible inequities and imbalances throughout my work.

What skills did you learn in your sociology education that contribute to your work?

My sociology education provided me with a rigorous analytical framework and skill set that I use nearly every day throughout the course of my work. I learned how to critically analyze an institution, pattern, or process; how to consider both granular details and broader structural patterns to paint a more comprehensive picture of a situation/process/etc. Being able to analyze at varying levels is crucial in arguably any work environment, but it has lent itself particularly well to my work as it helps me to focus in on key details without losing sight of the big picture of our goals. For example, to understand the necessity of reducing the emissions from a single source of greenhouse gases while straddling the importance of approaching climate change mitigation more broadly or comprehensively. There are so many others—qualitative and quantitative data analysis, overall research, writing, and communication skills, learning how to see things from different viewpoints (crucial in any work environment!), and probably more I have not yet thought to include here.

Advice for sociology majors?

Be open—there are so many places and ways in which this degree and your accumulated skills and education will be relevant and useful. Be willing to expand your conception of what your job “should” be. Welcome the range of opportunities! Tap into your network and network’s network. Starting a conversation with someone is never a bad idea, take an informational interview, and use those openings and opportunities to demonstrate the value you can bring to the table.

and defended!’ and ‘*Bateas* yes! [the wooden trays used for artisanal mining] Backhoes no!’ they denounced the illegal mining, water pollution, and loss of income created by extractivism and violence in their territories” (Hernández Reyes 2019, 218).

I explore the gendered dynamics of Latin America’s modernization processes in my research (see Leguizamón 2019, 2020). I study Argentina’s swift agrarian transformation based on the early adoption and intensive implementation of **genetically modified** (GM) soybeans. **Transgenic** soybeans have been modified to tolerate spraying with glyphosate-based herbicides—a technology branded by Monsanto (now Bayer) as Roundup Ready because the soybeans can resist spraying with Roundup, the company’s bestselling weed killer. Argentina is the third-largest global grower and exporter of GM soybeans, after the United States and Brazil. If you wonder if you have ever eaten any of these genetically modified soybeans, that is quite likely. Ninety-four percent of soybeans grown in the US are from herbicide-resistant seed varieties. Soybeans are used to make tofu and soymilk, as you could probably imagine, but the bulk of them are destined to make processed foods (crackers, chocolate, cereal, salad dressing, etc.) and for animal feed.

Argentine farmers began growing GM soybeans in 1996. After two and a half decades, soybeans now cover half of the country’s farmland. Argentines celebrate the soy boom because crop exports have brought economic growth and modernization to the country. Yet, soybean expansion has also created tremendous social and ecological harm: rural displacement, the concentration of land ownership, food insecurity, violence, and negative health effects via toxic agrochemical exposure. When I began my research back in graduate school, my main question did not revolve around gender dynamics. I was puzzled why there was so little resistance to GM crops when they were clearly creating social and environmental problems. I questioned Argentines’ acquiescence in the face of the social and environmental injustice brought by GM soybean expansion (Leguizamón 2020). Studying acquiescence is a tricky problem, however. How do you study a not-observable nonevent? My research strategy then became to explore in depth the adoption of this new agricultural technology to understand, first, the reasons behind its support.

As I continued my fieldwork, asking soybean producers and agribusiness employees why they chose to adopt the new GM biotechnology, something unexpected happened. I began to notice that most of my formal interviews were with men. Not because I decided to interview men, but because the agribusiness model in Argentina is male dominated: men of European descent are mostly in charge of organizing and performing production. Only later did I realize how much I took this fact for granted that I didn’t take it as something that needed to be problematized. But in one rural town—I call it Santa María in my book, *Seeds of Power*—it became clear that gender dynamics were central to understanding the problem of acquiescence. For once, I became fully aware that I was spending most of my “downtime” during fieldwork with the women in the family, but when “work” was to begin, the women would leave the room, and the men would be in charge of answering

my questions and taking me to farm visits. In the book, I explain how and why women, as well as indigenous peoples, have been historically excluded from decision-making power over large-scale farming to understand the present of soybean extractivism.

Most significant was the dissonance between the success story of technological innovation the men had to tell me compared to the worries and fears the women shared. In Santa María, I became very close to a tight-knit group of mothers who benefit from soybean production, mostly through their husbands' involvement in the agribusiness. Santa María is a rural town, like many others I visited, that is visibly reaping the economic and cultural benefits of the soy boom. The locals I met, like in many other of these "soy towns," would engage me in celebrating the modernized countryside, telling me things like "We do the best agriculture in the world" or "We all live off the countryside." The women of Santa María would often say the same—but not always, especially if the men were not around. As I gained their confidence, doubts, worries, and fears began to emerge in our conversations, shared in whispers. These women were worried about toxic agrochemicals, alarmed by rising cancer rates among neighbors, and concerned over children's health. Despite their fears, however, they never attempted to ask further. Much to the contrary, by the time a doubt emerged, they or other women in the room automatically stifled it—saying things like, "I don't know. No one knows" or "There has always been cancer" to put an end to our conversations.

Why would the women notice? And why won't they do something about it? These gendered interactions gave me the key to understand the puzzle of acquiescence. By sharing their fears over toxic agrochemical spraying, the women of Santa María unveiled the elephant in the room: the latent grievances that expose the workings of power. Thanks to these interactions, I learned that perceptions of environmental harm have an emotional, gendered component. Feminized subjects responsible for children prioritize care and precaution—a way of knowing that is opposed to what is presented by the (male and masculinized) producers and experts who emphasized no risk and prioritized profits and growth. But while these women's gendered selves allow them to "see" harm, their structurally disempowered social position forces them into silence.

The women of Santa María socially construct denial through doubt and silence, actively (though certainly not purposefully) creating their own acquiescence—even if at the expense of everyone's health. While they do not organize in protest, these mothers are not alone in noticing the harmful impacts of agrochemical spraying. Along my fieldwork, I also met the Mothers of Barrio Ituzaingó Anexo and the women activists of Malvinas Argentinas, women who have organized in collective action to protect their children's health from toxic agrochemical risk. These women activists frequently referred to a "mother's instinct" to protect their children. This sense of "duty" and "intuition" give them the clout to protest.

Women worldwide are leading environmental grass-roots movements, organized out of concern over children's health (Brown and Ferguson 1995;

Krauss 1993). In 1978, in Love Canal, New York, Lois Gibbs led a group of concerned neighbors demanding relocation (see Lesson 8). They learned that the local public school was built on an abandoned chemical waste site: the likely culprit for the high rates of cancers, leukemias, and miscarriages in their community (Levine 1982). The struggle of Love Canal's residents became emblematic for environmental health and environmental justice movements. In present-day central Appalachia, working-class women fight against the coal mining companies that threaten their communities' health and safety (Bell 2013). Like the Mothers of Barrio Itzaingó Anexo and many other leaders and members of grass-roots environmental justice movements, these women politicize motherhood. Drawing on motherhood as an identity is a strategy that gives women activists legitimacy and protection from those who may question (or silence) their activism.

As Shannon Bell (2013, 9) argues, "it is something greater than a 'motherhood identity' that motivates and legitimates the activism of many Central Appalachian women; rather, it is more precisely a broader 'protector identity' that drives their fight against irresponsible mining practices." This protector identity, Bell (2013, 9) continues, "both encompasses and extends the motherhood identity such that many women perceive the moral authority for their activism emanating not only from a calling to protect their children and grandchildren from irresponsible mining practices, but also from an obligation to protect their communities, their heritage, their family homeplace, and the physical landscape that surrounds them." As primary caretakers for children and the family, women become protectors of land and culture, of life and livelihood.

Ecofeminists emphasize the dimensions of gender in relation to the natural environment and link them to feminist struggles, connecting the dots between capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal oppressions (Mies and Shiva 1993). They propose a feminist ethic of care as a postcapitalist alternative (Elmhirst 2015). Instead of pursuing short-term profit maximization, feminized subjects are often motivated by social goals and desires that are not primarily economic. Instead, they prioritize social and emotional health, happiness, and well-being. Nurturing people and the environment, we should remember, is not a characteristic essential to women but the result of women's position in society. No matter our gender, we could all embrace an environmental ethics of care as a radical alternative to address the climate crisis.

Lesson Takeaways

- Gender refers to the socially and culturally assigned characteristics to being male or female. That is, the norms, rules, and behaviors that are culturally appropriate for men and women in a set society. What it means to be feminine or masculine changes across history and cultures.
- Gender is not something that we are or have, but rather something that we "do." Individuals perform gender and construct their gendered selves in social interaction.

- Social institutions like the family, politics, and the economy are gendered and help shape gendered individuals. Gendered individuals often maintain and reproduce gendered divisions and inequalities, but, at times, they also challenge and change them.
- Gender is more than different personal traits: it is a stratification system based on the unequal distribution of power, property, and prestige. A gendered society organizes men and women in a hierarchy, where one group (mainly White, upper-and middle-class, heterosexual men) holds power and prestige over women.
- An intersectional approach to studying gender and sexuality considers social stratification as a complex web, as a matrix composed of multiple binaries to consider how oppression and domination based on class, race, gender, sexuality, etc., are interrelated to exacerbate inequality.
- Across the world, collective action to advance rights for women and LGBTQ people have been quite successful. However, while there have been advances for women and sexual minorities to achieve positions of political power, the United States lags far behind the rest of the democratic world in achieving equal representation.
- The gender impacts of economic globalization are multiple and often contradictory. Women have been massively incorporated into the labor force, increasing their autonomy. Yet, they are also underpaid, overworked, and exposed to toxic working and environmental conditions. Women around the world are leading grass-roots movements for social and environmental justice.

Discussion Questions

1. In what aspects of your daily life (school, work, family, etc.) do you observe or experience divisions based on gender and sexuality? Are these distinctions also hierarchical? What social measures (laws, policies, regulations, etc.) could be implemented to level these inequalities?
2. To what extent do you agree with the idea that both men and women should be afforded equal rights and privileges to access positions of political and economic power? What policies or proposals would you support to get this done?
3. Do you see yourself becoming part (or are you already engaged in) any collective action effort to expand rights and empower women and sexual minorities?

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LESSON 7, PHOTO REFLECTION



The Midwood High School girls' soccer team, Brooklyn, New York.
Photo by Ken Gould.

Sports are sex segregated. With very few exceptions, same-sex teams play other same-sex teams, of the same sex, in same-sex leagues. Title IX created more opportunities for women in sports, but did little to erode sex segregation and has not resulted in anything close to parity in professional sports opportunities for women. Sports are gendered and binary, and sports participation in most cases requires more complex gender performances for women than for men. We chose this photo because it speaks to the gendered nature of sports. The US women's soccer team has won four Women's World Cup titles and four Olympic gold medals, most recently under the leadership of former sociology major Megan Rapinoe. The men's US soccer team has never won a World Cup or Olympic gold, but its players receive higher pay. If you were the photographer, what picture would you take to represent gender and intersectionality? Post your photo representing gender and intersectionality using #TLgender.