

# Chapter 8

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## Toward Gender Equality: Progress and Bottlenecks

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Is the significance of gender declining in America? Are men's and women's lives and rewards becoming more similar? To answer this question, I examine trends in market work and unpaid household work, including child care. I consider whether men's and women's employment and hours in paid work are converging, and examine trends in occupational sex segregation and the sex gap in pay. I also consider trends in men's and women's hours of paid work and household work. The emergent picture is one of convergence within each of the two areas of paid and unpaid work. Yet progress is not continuous and has stalled recently. Sometimes it continues on one front and stops on another. Gender change is also asymmetric in two ways: things have changed in paid work more than in the household, and women have dramatically increased their participation in formerly "male" activities, but men's inroads into traditionally female occupations or household tasks is very limited by comparison.

I consider what these trends portend for the future of gender inequality. Robert Max Jackson argues (see chapter 7, this volume) that continued progress toward gender inequality is inevitable. I agree with him that many forces push in the direction of treating similarly situated men and women equally in bureaucratic organizations. Nonetheless, I conclude that the two related asymmetries in gender change—the sluggish change in the household and in men taking on traditionally female activities in any sphere—create bottlenecks that can dampen if not reverse egalitarian trends.

### TRENDS IN PAID WORK, OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION, AND THE PAY GAP

The story of women's increasing employment for pay is familiar, although the explanations are debated. Economists attribute rising women's employment to ris-

ing wages, which increased the opportunity cost of being a homemaker (Bergmann 2005). This was aided by disproportionate employment growth in the service occupations that had always hired mostly women (Oppenheimer 1970). Many believe that women's increased employment was motivated by the increased need for two paychecks—in other words, by a decline in men's real wages. It is true that, adjusted for inflation, men's wages in the United States are lower today than they were in the early 1970s (Bernhardt et al. 2001), so this may have motivated the employment of some wives. However, during most of the century, women's employment gains occurred while men's wages were also rising. Moreover, today, employment levels are approximately the same for women with high-earning as with low-earning husbands (Jackson 1998, 98), and highly educated women are *more* likely to be employed than women with less education (Juhn and Murphy 1997). Women's employment is increasingly explained more by how much they can earn than by how much income husbands provide (Cohen and Bianchi 1999). Now that many wives are employed, the increased living standards their paychecks afford create social comparison processes that make other couples perceive a need for comparable income.

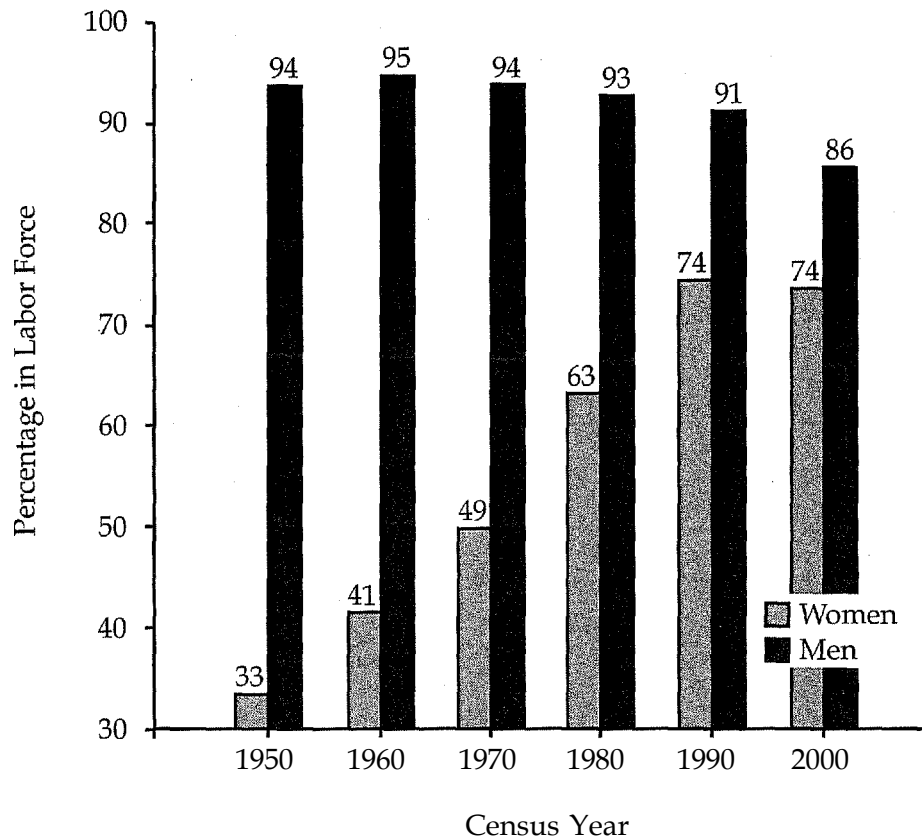
Women's labor-force participation has increased while men's has gone down, but men's decline is much smaller than women's increase. The decrease in men's labor-force participation results from staying in school longer, retiring earlier, availability of state payments for those who are disabled, and a growing phenomenon of discouraged workers giving up and dropping out of the labor force. Figure 8.1 maps women's and men's labor-force participation together for the prime employment ages of twenty-five to fifty-four, showing movement toward convergence. However, after decades of increase, women's labor-force participation rates did not change between 1990 and 2000.

Table 8.1 shows more detail on women's employment increases. A snapshot in one week of 1978 showed 56 percent of women employed for pay, and by 1998 this figure was up to 71 percent. The proportion of women working full-time (at least thirty-five hours per week) was 38 percent in 1978, moving to 51 percent in 1998. In both years, wives with children under six were less likely to be employed and, if employed, were less likely to be employed full-time. Yet in percentage terms, wives with young children showed larger increases, moving from 38 percent to 58 percent employed, and from 21 percent to 35 percent employed full-time. If we look at annual hours of paid employment, which reflects both weeks per year and hours per week worked, table 8.1 shows a 41 percent increase for all women (from 1,002 to 1,415) and a 47 percent increase for wives with children under six (from 583 to 1,094).

We can make two generalizations: women's employment has converged toward men's through women's increases and, to a much lesser extent, men's decreases; and married women with small children always have lower employment than other women, but their employment has increased more rapidly than has that of other women.

As women entered paid employment, most went into predominantly female occupations. Men have predominated in management, the most prestigious profes-

FIGURE 8.1 / Labor-Force Participation by Men and Women Twenty-Five to Fifty-Four Years of Age, 1950 to 2000



*Source:* Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample from 1950 to 2000 census data on men and women twenty-five to fifty-four years of age. See Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman (2005). Reprinted with permission.

sions, blue-collar crafts, durable manufacturing work (such as autos, steel), transportation, and construction. Women have numerically dominated professions such as nursing, teaching, and librarianship. Nonprofessional but white-collar occupations of clerical and (noncommission) retail sales work have been largely done by women, as have manufacturing jobs in non-durable-goods industries (electronics, garments), and domestic and child-care work. Most of these patterns of which sex does which job persist, although occupational sex segregation has declined, as shown in figure 8.2.<sup>1</sup> (See also Jacobs 1989, 1999, 2001, 2003; Reskin and Roos 1990.) In particular, many women entered "male" professions (law, medicine, academia, the clergy) and lower and middle management (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2004). Yet blue-collar crafts have integrated little; they remain male domains (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2004; Jacobs 2003). Similarly, caring labor, such as child care, nursing, and elementary school teaching have integrated little, remaining dominated by women (England, Budig, and Folbre 2002). Segregation declined more in the 1980s than the 1990s.

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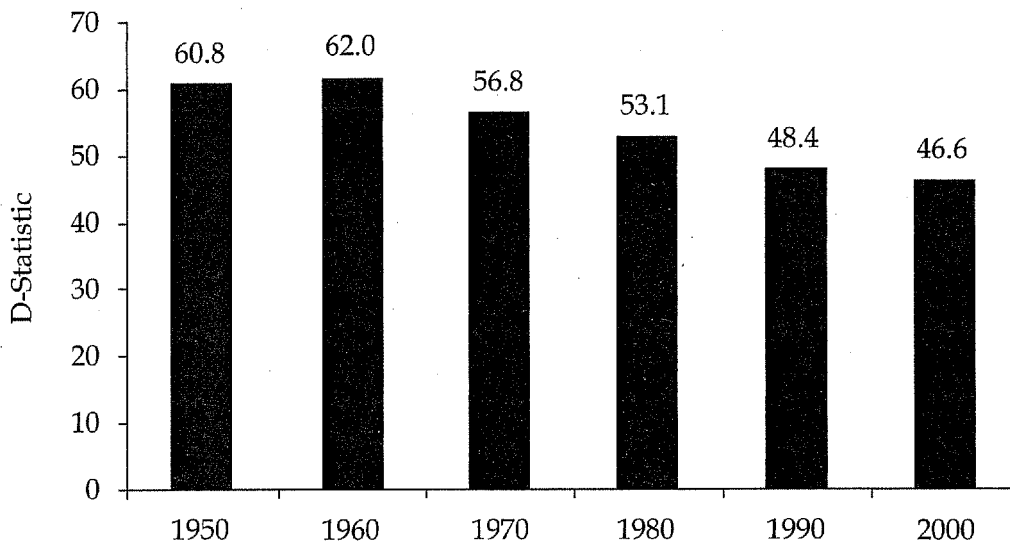
TABLE 8.1 / Change Between 1978 and 1998 in Indicators of Paid Work of Women  
Twenty-Five to Fifty-Four Years of Age

	1978	1998	Percentage Change
Percentage employed the week before the survey			
All women	56	71	27
Wives with children under six	38	51	53
Percentage employed full-time the week before the survey			
All Women	38	58	34
Wives with children under six	21	35	67
Annual hours of paid work the previous year			
All women	1,002	1,415	41
Wives with children under six	583	1,094	47

Source: Based on Casper and Bianchi (2002, table 10.1, 290), © 2002 by Sage Publications. Reprinted by permission of Sage Publications, Inc. Data are from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys.

<sup>a</sup> Includes women not in the labor force all year.

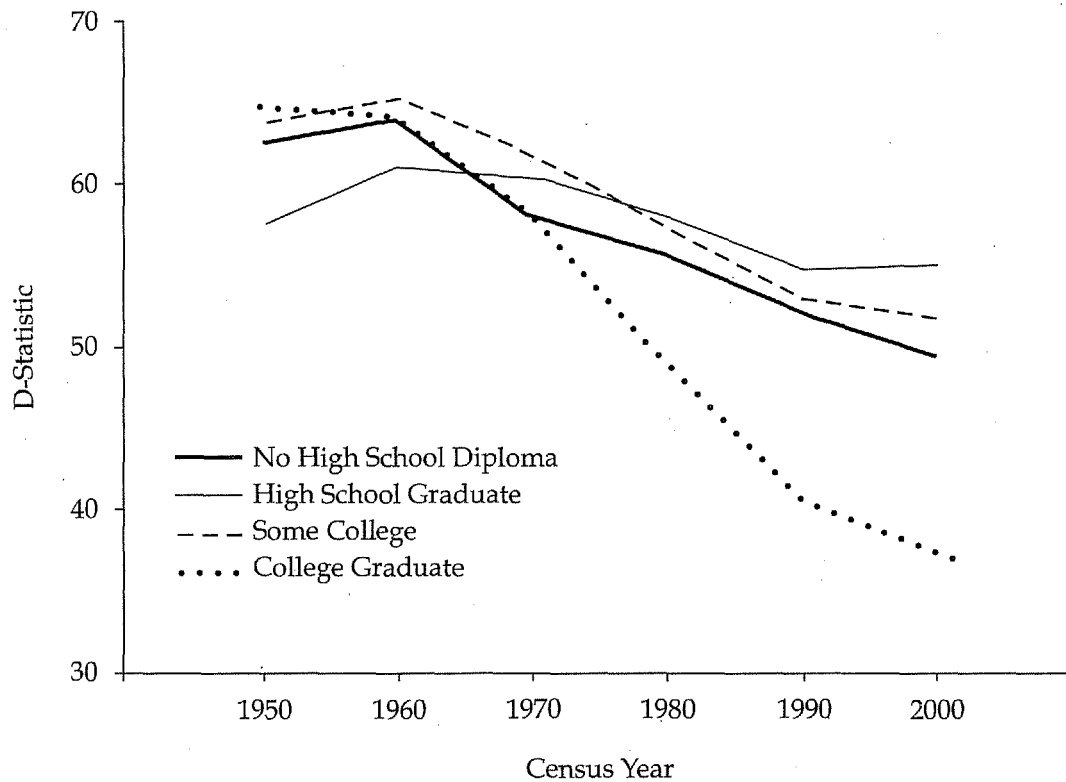
FIGURE 8.2 / Occupational Sex Segregation, 1950 to 2000



Source: Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample from 1950 to 2000 census data for men and women twenty-five to fifty-four years of age. Segregation is computed using the index of dissimilarity (see note 1) and using the most detailed occupational categories possible while still keeping consistent categories for all decades. See Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman (2005). Reprinted with permission.

Note: N = 179 occupations.

FIGURE 8.3 / Occupational Sex Segregation by Education, 1950 to 2000



Source: Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample from 1950 to 2000 census data on men and women twenty-five to fifty-four years of age. Segregation is computed using the index of dissimilarity (see note 1) and using the most detailed occupational categories possible while still keeping consistent categories for all decades. Original calculations provided by David A. Cotter, Joan M. Hermsen, and Reeve Vanneman. Note: N = 179 occupations.

Integration has not happened evenly across the class structure. Much more integration of women into "male" occupations has occurred in managerial and professional white-collar areas than in other jobs (Jacobs 2003). Figure 8.3 shows the trends in segregation separately by the education of the individuals holding jobs. Differences by education level are dramatic. While the segregation of those with a high school degree has declined only about five points (on the hundred-point D scale), the index dropped over twenty-five points for college graduates.

There is no more important indicator of gender inequality than the pay gap. Explanations of the sex gap in pay include sex differences in experience and seniority (Wellington 1994), segregation, and the fact that employers offer lower pay in predominantly female occupations than in male occupations, even relative to their skill demands (England 1992). Trends in pay among full-time year-round workers are shown in table 8.2. The ratio of (median) women to men's pay hovered around .60 for decades preceding 1980. Then within a decade it rose rapidly from .60 to .72. Declining hiring discrimination, declining segregation of jobs, and the declining sex gap in

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TABLE 8.2 / U.S. Women's Median Annual Earnings as Percentage of Men's, for Full-Time Year-Round Workers, 1960 to 2000

Year	Ratio
1960	.61
1965	.60
1970	.59
1975	.59
1980	.60
1985	.65
1990	.72
1995	.71
2000	.73

*Source:* Institute for Women's Policy Research (2005). Underlying data from Current Population Surveys.

experience and seniority all contributed to decrease of the sex gap in pay (Blau and Kahn 1997; O'Neill and Polachek 1993; Wellington 1993). However, there was little further progress in the last decade of the century; the ratio moved only from .72 to .73. Thus, here, as with employment and segregation, progress is stalling out.

## TRENDS IN UNPAID AND TOTAL WORK HOURS

Women have lower employment rates than men largely because of their responsibility for child rearing and other household work. As more women, including mothers of young children, work outside the home, we would expect reductions in their time in household work, but does men's time spent doing household work increase? How does any such increase compare in size with women's increase in employment and decrease in household work? We could imagine a set of changes with complete symmetry by gender and by household versus market sector. Under such symmetry, we would observe that for every hour of housework dropped by women, men pick up one, and for every hour of employment increase by women, men drop one. Is this the pattern, or is it easier to get women into paid work and out of some housework than to get men into household work?

To answer these questions, consider table 8.3, which contains computations from two data sets containing time-diary information from probability samples of Americans. The first study was done in 1965 by researchers at the University of Michigan, as part of the Multinational Study of Time Use (Converse and Robinson 1980). The 1998 data are from a study by researchers at the University of Maryland (Bianchi, Robinson, and Sayer 2001; Sayer 2001). Both used time diaries. In the diary method, participants are asked to recount what they did every period of the previous day. For each time segment, respondents list what they were doing, and also if they were doing a second activity simultaneously (for example, cooking dinner while watching television). Time diaries are a more accurate means of gath-

**TABLE 8.3 / Average Hours Per Week Spent in Unpaid and Market Work by U.S. Married Men and Women Twenty-Five to Fifty-Four Years of Age, 1965 and 1998**

	Unpaid Work			Market Work			Total Work (Unpaid and Market)		
	1965	1998	Change	1965	1998	Change	1965	1998	Change
Women	50	34	—16	8	31	23	59	65	6
Men	12	21	9	47	39	—8	59	60	1
Difference (Women — men)	38	13	25	—39	—8	31	0	5	5

*Source:* Calculations provided by Liana Sayer from data described in text (see Sayer 2001). Nonmarket work includes housework, child care, and shopping. Market work includes time in paid employment and travel to work. All figures computed on respondents twenty-five to fifty-four years of age.

ering information on time use than questions that ask respondents how much time they generally spend in some activity per week (Bittman and Wajcman 2000; Sayer 2001). The figures in table 8.3, limited to married women and men in the prime employment and child rearing ages of twenty-five to fifty-four, show gender differences in self-reported time spent in unpaid and market work. Unpaid work includes housework, shopping, and child care. The table uses only the "primary activity" the respondent listed for each time segment to add up total amounts of market and unpaid work time.

As table 8.3 shows, in 1965, sex differentiation was extreme. Men averaged forty-seven hours per week in market work, while women averaged only eight (because most women were not employed). Women did fifty hours per week of unpaid work, while men did only twelve. If we total paid and market work, men and women worked the same number of hours, fifty-nine per week. The gender differentiation was in type of work done, not total hours.

By 1998 things had changed substantially. Women had almost quadrupled their hours of market work from an average of eight to thirty-one hours per week. They had dramatically cut their unpaid work from fifty to thirty-four hours per week. This reflects declining fertility, the increase in employment, and the use of child care during job hours. But since the increase in employment was more than the decrease in unpaid work, women's total work hours had increased by six hours, from fifty-nine to sixty-five hours. By contrast, men increased their total only one hour per week, reflecting the fact that their increase in unpaid work was within about an hour of the magnitude of their decline in market work. Men increased their unpaid work by nine hours per week, a bit more than an hour a day. However, their increase was less than women's decrease in housework (sixteen), and much less than women's increase in paid work (twenty-three hours). Men also decreased their market work by eight hours. Other data suggest that this reduction is not due to a reduction of hours for the typical employed man (which Jacobs and Gerson 1998 show to have been fairly constant for men in recent decades), but

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rather due to an increased proportion of men out of the labor force (seen in figure 8.1 as well). Labor-force withdrawals in this prime age group resulted in part from more discouraged workers dropping out of the labor force at the bottom of the class structure.

The net effect of all these changes was that, whereas in 1965 married men's and women's total work week (unpaid plus paid) was equal, by 1998, married women worked five hours a week more than men. The evocative title of Arlie Hochschild's 1989 book, *The Second Shift*, suggested this relative and absolute speedup for women. The metaphoric title suggested that in the old days men and women each had one full-time job (him at "work," her at home), but now men have one and women have two (one at "work" and one at home). As table 8.3 shows, this imagery is exaggerated, since the average woman still works fewer hours in the market than men, men have picked up some household work, and total work hours, while greater for women, are certainly not anything remotely like eight hours a day more for women than men. However, Hochschild's metaphor captured something correct in diagnosing a trend toward women's total work burden increasing relative to men's.

Moreover, the gender disparity may be even greater than the figures here suggest, because they use only primary activities. Much child care is recorded by respondents as a secondary activity. For example, Michael Bittman and Judy Wajcman (2000) use Australian time-diary data to show that a higher proportion of women's than men's leisure activities are done while simultaneously doing child care (which is reported as the secondary activity). A higher percentage of men's leisure time is not combined with any work activity. In addition, there are many hours during which a woman at home does not record child care as a secondary activity, but she nonetheless can't leave because she is the one on call for the children. For these reasons, figures undoubtedly understate women's continued disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work. Whether or not the gender gap in total work is greater than indicated in table 8.3, an important point is that changes were not symmetrical. Men took on less traditionally female responsibility than women added in traditionally male responsibility.

## HOW INEVITABLE IS MOVEMENT TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY?

What is the trajectory of change in gender? Is a move to equality inevitable? A thoughtful and provocative 1998 book by Robert Max Jackson argues that it is. In *Destined for Equality: The Inevitable Rise of Women's Status*, Jackson documents the many arenas in which women's opportunities have increased, relative to men's, in the past hundred fifty years in the United States. He chronicles women's advances in such areas as the right to vote, rights to property ownership, legislation making sex discrimination in pay and hiring illegal, increasing educational attainment, and employment. Similar trajectories can be seen in most affluent nations. Why did women gain opportunities and rights in all these spheres? He sees the key to



be the shift of activities and power out of the household into modern business, political, and educational institutions. While individual men retain an interest in retaining patriarchal control over women and children in their own families, the logic and structure of modern bureaucratic organizations gives men less interest in women's subordination. Modern ideologies of equal opportunity and meritocracy also work against sexism in these institutions. (See chapter 7, in this volume, for Jackson's most recent statement of this position.)

Although Jackson does not draw on them, neoclassical economists offer an analogous argument that suggests that labor-market discrimination by sex should erode if competitive market forces are allowed to operate. Economists argue that competition in labor and product markets erodes discrimination because employers who won't hire women pay more than they need to for labor. Eventually this should make it hard for them to stay in business, as they need to charge higher prices (which may result in reduced product market share), or take lower profits (which should make it hard to borrow money in competitive capital markets). Even if discriminators don't go out of business, they should come to represent a smaller share of employment. (For an overview of economists' views of discrimination, see Arrow 1998; for a critique, see England 1992, chapter 2.)

Both Jackson's arguments and the economic thesis suggest that the trend toward gender equality should continue, at least outside the household and where the issue is allowing women into formerly "male" jobs or reward levels. I agree with Jackson and with economists that modern bureaucratic forms and competitive markets push against treating equally qualified men and women differently. However, the U.S. trends considered above show that progress toward gender equality sometimes falters. We see this in the slowdown of women's employment, desegregation of occupations, and convergence in pay since 1990.

The reason that I do not see "modernizing" trends as creating an inexorable move to gender equality lies in two related asymmetries that create bottlenecks to gender change: the greater tenacity of gender as an organizing principle in household and family behavior (relative to behavior in other "public" or "market" settings), and 2) the greater resistance to change that involves men taking on traditionally female activities than to change that involves women taking on traditionally male activities. Some concrete patterns, such as the limited involvement by men in the care of their children, illustrate both principles simultaneously. My point is not merely that the modernizing forces discussed by Jackson do not produce change directly in the household or in increasing men's involvement in previously "female" activities, but also that these factors feedback onto progress in other spheres, impeding women's ability to enter and succeed in traditionally male careers. I consider these two asymmetries in turn.

First, as Jackson's own thesis says, sexism dies hard in the family. This is not to deny the profound changes in family behavior. Indeed, the changes are dramatic—increases in the age at marriage, more cohabitation, more nonm

child care. (Useful overviews of recent trends are provided by Casper and Bianchi 2002 and Blau 1998.) But the changes more often take the form of men and women living apart than of a diminution in the extent to which gender structures family life. The retreat from marriage, high divorce rates, and single motherhood are examples of a trend away from men and women living together. But gender structures the life of single parents as much as or more than that of married parents. Mothers generally have custody of children when the parents have broken up (whether they were ever married or not). Single mothers now do a higher proportion of the child rearing than wives in traditional 1950s breadwinner-homemaker families! What has changed is that mothers also take most of the responsibility for financial support of children. In 2001, on average, single mothers between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five drew 76 percent of their household income from their own earnings, 6 percent from child support and alimony, and 6 percent from welfare and public assistance (not including Social Security or EITC).<sup>2</sup> What seems most resistant to change is the social assignment of the primary responsibility for child rearing to women. Put another way, it is men's participation in child rearing and other household work that seems the slowest to move.

It is important not to overstate the case here. The huge increase in the employment of mothers and the more modest increase in dads' participation in unpaid work (seen in table 8.3) *are* reductions in gender as an organizing principle in the family. But reductions in the proportion of the typical adult lifetime spent co-residing with a person of the other sex seems the more dramatic change. This is seen in increasing age at marriage and continuing high divorce rates. This juxtaposition of the two possible responses was well put by Frances K. Goldscheider and Linda J. Waite (1991), who titled their book *New Families, No Families*, and argued that unless families change, women may increasingly opt out of having families.

The second asymmetry is that there is greater difficulty in changing men's behavior so that they embrace traditionally female activities than in changing women's behavior to include traditionally male activities. This is true at home and in the labor force. The devaluation of women and, by extension, activities and characteristics associated with women, is deeply inscribed in cultural norms. It is reflected in the greater esteem and reward associated with male activities. Thus, when women seek to enter traditionally male activities—employment, male occupations, roles of political or religious or military leadership—they are entering roles that are well respected and well rewarded. The notion that these activities are inappropriate for women may deter them, and men may sometimes conspire to keep them out, but the rewards and respect associated with the activities nevertheless encourage movement in this direction. On the other hand, there is little incentive for men to enter female activities. The notion that the activities are inappropriate for men may deter them, and in addition, they lose respect and money for doing so. While women's opportunity to access rewarded roles has increased, there is little evidence that the cultural devaluation of female roles has decreased. I know of no evidence that the esteem associated with the unpaid roles of being a full-time homemaker, or with the activities of unpaid housework or child care, have gone up. Neither has the pay penalty for being in female occupations or in

occupations involving the quintessentially female-associated tasks of caring labor (jobs such as child care, therapy, teaching) declined (England, Thompson, and Aman 2001).

We can think of the two kinds of changes going on in the family, the degendering of family life and the decline of men and women living together, as examples, respectively, of two broader trends that we might call "exit" and "voice."<sup>3</sup> In this view, consistent with game theory or exchange theory, women's increased access to earnings gives them more bargaining power within marriage to negotiate for whatever they want in relationships (which might include greater male participation in household work) and more ability to leave marriages if they cannot successfully negotiate for wanted change (England 2000; England and Kilbourne 1990; Lundberg and Pollak 1996). Indeed, this theoretical perspective sees the possibilities of exit and voice to arise from the same resources: employment and increased earnings give women the possibility of leaving marriage and still supporting themselves and their children, and this makes it more plausible for them to strike better bargains within marriage. But some things may be harder to bargain for than others. I suspect that it is easier for women to bargain for a greater say in family expenditures than it is to enlist men in traditionally female activities such as household work, child care, and the emotional work of relationships. This is because of the deep cultural devaluation of activities associated with women, and the resistance of men to taking on these activities. The fact that the gender gap in total hours of work increased (table 8.3) suggests this bargaining difficulty. When attempts at "voice" fail, women may leave. The fact that two thirds of divorces are initiated by women is consistent with this interpretation (England 2000).

In both gendered marriages and single-parent families, women do most of the work of child rearing. What is the consequence of this for labor-market inequality? Clearly, women's child-rearing responsibility has a disparate impact on their ability to participate in the job world on an equal footing with men. This is what Jackson's (1998) thesis ignores. His argument hinges on the (unintentional) egalitarian impulse in modern bureaucratic institutions that erodes differential treatment based on sex. While agreeing that this impulse has important consequences, I see nothing in the fundamental structure or logic of these institutions that erode policies that have an adverse impact on those who spend considerable time caring for children. Employers have little incentive to accommodate employees' family responsibilities, particularly when they can make higher profits by hiring and promoting workers with no family responsibilities beyond making money. Indeed, rationalization and profit maximization push employers to try to avoid costs such as health care for children, sick-child leave, parental leave, and so forth, except when a shortage of labor makes such policies pay (It is, in my view, an open empirical question whether such policies decrease or increase profits.) Given this, as long as families assign child rearing disproportionately to women (even when the couple has broken up), or absent vigorous state and other collective action to change norms and employer policies in a more parent-friendly direction, achieving gender equality in the labor market is by no means inevitable. Employers are sure to

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resist changes in policies that in essence ask them to absorb more of the costs of child rearing currently borne by individual parents and disproportionately by mothers. I agree with the moral argument that they *should* bear more of these costs, since they benefit from a well-reared next generation of employees, and equity requires that they contribute to the availability of these benefits, but it is in their immediate interest to keep these costs borne by others, and there is nothing in bureaucratic or market logic that pushes them to change these policies.

If motherhood hurts gender equality, as I am arguing, we should see that mothers fare worse in the labor market than women without children. Recent research documents a "motherhood penalty" in wages (Budig and England 2001; Waldfogel 1997, 1998). Some of it results from women's exits from employment when children are young, which reduces the experience and seniority that employers' wage systems reward. Some of the penalty results from mothers' working in part-time employment while their children are young, which generally leads to lower hourly wages and less wage growth. Even after controlling for all these factors, and many measures of the type of job held, there remains an additional unexplained portion of the motherhood penalty. This may reflect effects of motherhood on productivity, or employers' discriminatory treatment of mothers. Recent experimental work suggests that at least some of it is caused by discrimination against mothers (Correll and Bernard 2005). Both married and single mothers suffer the motherhood wage penalty (Budig and England 2001). The fact that motherhood creates differentials among women implies that the sex gap in pay is driven in part by differences between men and women's responsibility for children. This is consistent with prior research showing the role of experience, seniority, and part-time work in the sex gap in pay (Blau and Kahn 1997; O'Neill and Polachek 1993; Wellington 1993). Clearly, many widely accepted policies of employers, policies that may well be rational for profit maximization, have an adverse impact on those women with significant child-rearing responsibility.

"Adverse impact" is language from Title VII discrimination case law, which distinguishes between differential treatment and adverse impact (sometimes called "disparate impact"). Differential treatment involves treating similarly qualified men and women differently on the basis only of sex. Adverse impact involves rules or standards that are applied equally to men and women but disadvantage women because of their characteristics or situation. For example, a rule that barred people under a given height from a job has a disparate impact—an adverse impact—on women since they are shorter than men, on average. Here I am interested specifically in rules and criteria that have an adverse impact on anyone who has extensive child-care responsibilities; such criteria *de facto* will impact women much more than men, given the current gender division of labor in the family and the fact that women generally have custody of children after couples break up. Examples of policies that are fully consistent with bureaucracy, meritocracy, and profit maximization as usually understood, but that have a disparate impact on those who care for children include raises based on seniority, promotions contingent on putting in long or unpredictable hours of work, the unavailability of

health insurance in many part-time jobs, and the lesser availability of part-time work in high-level jobs (Williams 2001).

The 1971 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.* stated that where plaintiffs show that an identifiable policy has a disparate impact on a protected class (for example, women), the burden of proof, which otherwise remains with plaintiffs, is shifted to defendants to show that the policy is a "business necessity." Thus, courts will sometimes strike down as illegal discrimination policies that have a disparate impact, even though the policies apply equally to men and women. Often, however, it is sufficient for the defendant to provide some evidence that the policy helps them hire more productive employees or lower their costs for the court to conclude that the policy is not illegal discrimination, despite its disparate impact. (For a review of cases in which discrimination against mothers has been contested using disparate impact and other doctrines, see Williams and Segal 2003. These authors are optimistic that the courts under some circumstances will rule that policies having a disparate impact on mothers or fathers with significant caretaking responsibility are discriminatory.) Even if court cases can sometimes be won in this area, there is nothing inexorable leading employers to get rid of many policies that have a disparate impact on responsible parents. While it is possible that restructuring work to get rid of these barriers would increase productivity, as Joan Williams (2001) argues, and this "business case" can be used to get employers to make policies more "mother-friendly," employers apparently don't think such changes are in their interest or they would be making them voluntarily. Thus, I don't see any broad structural trend eroding the portion of gender inequality in the labor market that results from the sex gap in parenting responsibility. To change this, either women will have to negotiate their way out of an unequal share of parenting responsibility (and the child-care status quo seems particularly resistant to change), or it will take a major push of collective action to force employers to adopt more parent-friendly policies, or both. Another possibility is continued declines in fertility to levels substantially below replacement levels, as we see in Japan and some countries in Europe now (McDonald 2000). Without these changes, this combination of family arrangements in which women do most of the parenting, and employer policies that have an adverse impact on those with parenting responsibility will continue to disadvantage women.

The resistance to change in men's roles in the family is part of a larger picture of asymmetry of gender-role change. There has long been more stigma for men adopting women's roles than vice versa. For example, as ideas about gender have changed, more parents have started to encourage daughters to participate in sports than have encouraged sons to play with dolls. Women get more approval for integrating male professions or trades than men do for entering female fields. This asymmetry results, as I argued above, from an underlying devaluation of women and, by extension, activities associated with women. Both peer pressure and economic incentives mitigate against men taking on traditionally female activities. This is most true for those quintessentially female-identified activities of unpaid child care and housework. But even outside the household, male resis-

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tance to participation in traditionally female jobs is an impediment to sex integration and thus to gender equality. Basing their investigation on a series of case studies of occupational change in the 1970s, one pattern Barbara Reskin and Patricia Roos (1990) identified was the "tipping" of occupations. The idea is that in an occupation that women start to enter, when a certain percentage female is reached, men no longer want to stay in or enter the job. Men may shy away from jobs that are in the process of "feminizing" because they fear the wages will decline, or they fear the stigma of doing a "girl" thing. This asymmetry makes it hard to achieve a stable, integrated equilibrium in jobs. One recent analysis of academic fields from 1971 to 2001 has shown this phenomenon (England et al. 2003); increases in the number of women entering academic fields in the humanities and social sciences led to fewer men choosing those fields for doctoral study five years later. However, another analysis of whether rising female participation between 1983 and 2001 deterred male entry into occupations in the economy at large failed to find evidence of such tipping (England et al. 2004). Men's abandonment of or disinclination to enter a field when it gets "too female" does not violate nondiscrimination laws or the rules of any bureaucratic institutions. Yet it is hard to see how integration can be achieved through one-way movements of women into male jobs. This asymmetry, stemming from a disinclination of men to enter female spheres, is further reason for doubting that progress toward gender integration is automatic.

## CONCLUSION

I have reviewed trends in selected indicators of gender inequality, looking at the last half century, and offered some speculations about future trends. Women's employment has increased and segregation and the pay gap have decreased, but all three trends have slowed down since about 1990. Men's participation in unpaid work increased nine hours per week between the 1960s and 1990s, but this increase was not enough to replace the decrease in women's unpaid work, and was substantially less than the increase in women's employment over the period.

I considered Jackson's claim that continued progress to gender equality is inevitable (Jackson 1998, and chapter 7, in this volume). I agree with him that the logic of modern organizations moves us toward sex-blind treatment of individuals by employers and governments. However, as he concedes, these structural forces do not directly dislodge gender as an organizing principle of family life. They do little to change the informal assignment of child rearing to women. Nor do they do much to change employer policies that have a disparate impact on whoever has primary responsibility for child rearing—still mostly women. Such policies reward seniority, favor one full-time over two part-time workers, and reward workers who can work long, unpredictable hours. Women's responsibility for child rearing, combined with these policies, leads to significant gender inequality in earnings.

The largest bottlenecks to gender equality are the continuing organization of families by gender (especially the assignment of child-rearing responsibility to

women), and the resistance of men to taking on traditionally female activities in the family or workplace. Neither of these are eroded by the forces of bureaucracy and institutional universalism. Both are serious contemporary impediments to gender equality. While I agree with Jackson's thesis that most of the momentum for increased gender equality to date came as an unintended result of structural changes rather than feminist organizing, it is likely to take feminist organizing for state action to remove these remaining barriers to gender equality.

What policies would break the bottlenecks inhibiting gender equality? The problems are not amenable to policies as straightforward as those appropriate to job discrimination against women seeking to enter male occupations and to be paid equally in them, although vigilant enforcement of antidiscrimination laws would be helpful here. How can legislation change men's disinclination to enter predominantly female jobs? Perhaps comparable-worth policies would help this (England 1992); if female jobs didn't pay less, men might be less averse to sharing jobs with women. But to the extent that social stigma is what stands in the way of men working in fields with many women, cultural education that challenges the devaluation of everything associated with women is needed. It is hard to imagine legislating men's equal participation in household labor and child rearing. But there are policies that could help. In Sweden, the state replaces a portion of a parent's pay after the birth of a child, and recently instituted a policy so that couples who have the entire leave taken by one parent receive less paid leave. The "use it or lose it" rules are increasing male take-up somewhat (Gornick and Meyers 2003). One can imagine a regulatory (rather than spending) approach to getting rid of parent-unfriendly policies; the Family and Medical Leave Act embodied this approach, requiring that large employers hold a worker's job for a six-week unpaid leave after a birth. The time could be extended, employers could be forced to pay as much per hour for part-time as full-time work, to prorate benefits for part-time workers, and so forth. These things might reduce the motherhood wage penalty if combined with vigilant enforcement against discrimination in hiring mothers (since regulations making employers accommodate employees' child rearing would increase incentives for simply not hiring mothers).

A spending rather than regulatory approach would assume that people who care for children will inevitably be penalized by the market, and would use state subsidies to make up for this. A rationale for such policies is that the work of caring for children has positive externalities; many third parties benefit when children grow up to be good friends, workers, spouses, and neighbors to others who did not contribute to the costs of their upbringing (England, Budig, and Folbre 2002; England and Folbre 1999). (Pro-natalism might also be a rationale for such policies, though I would argue on ecological grounds in favor of increasing immigration instead of attempts to increase the fertility of the native-born.) Policies subsidizing those who deliver care might provide a family allowance to anyone doing unpaid care of a child at home (universal family allowances are common in Europe) and credits toward Social Security (based on child rearing rather than on marital history, as is currently the case in the United States). Wages for paid caring labor might be state-subsidized in recognition of their positive externality-pro-

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ducing function (England, Budig, and Folbre 2002). Such policies providing state funding for those who do currently paid and unpaid care work would collectivize some of the costs of rearing children, reduce the ability of men and nonparents to "free ride" on women's caring labor, and in so doing, redistribute resources from men to women (England and Folbre 1999; Folbre 1994).

Policies that seek to increase the rewards of traditionally female work are not without their critics. One argument against comparable worth, the effort to increase the relative pay of predominantly female occupations, or paid parental leave, is that these policies may encourage women to stay in traditionally female roles—at home as child rearers or in "female" jobs. Of course, the same programs increase the incentives for men to enter female jobs or to take parental leave, but if the cultural stigma is such that few men can be induced, then the net effect might be to further entrench gender differentiated roles and jobs. While increasing the incentives for women to remain in traditionally female roles, the policies would simultaneously decrease the penalty for doing so, so it is unclear, on balance, whether women would gain or lose in earnings in the long run. We see here the split between liberal feminism and what Nancy Folbre (2001) has called social feminists. Liberal feminists, such as Barbara Bergmann (2005, especially chapters 9 and 10) argue against anything that might decrease incentives for women's employment and movement into male-typical occupations. Social feminists such as Folbre (2001) recognize these dangers, but also see a danger in underinvestment in (paid or unpaid) caring labor. The dangers are not just in the unfair economic penalty paid by those who contribute to the public good through care, but also in the possible inefficiencies for the economy and society of an undersupply of care (England and Folbre 2003). (See Gornick and Meyers 2003 for discussion of how to structure parental leave to make it more likely to reduce than increase gender inequality.) One policy that both groups can agree on is state-supported child care. This redistributes resources to parents, including single mothers, from others. It also unambiguously increases female employment. It is unclear under what conditions state policies providing replacement wages for paid parental leave increase or decrease women's continuity of employment relative to men's, so some parental leave policies may reduce and some increase gender equality.

I believe that movement toward a society in which women don't do more than their share of child rearing and in which those who do child rearing are not penalized for this is both possible and desirable. However, unfortunately, there is nothing inexorable in the logic of either markets or rationalized bureaucratic organizations that will get us there. It will take persuasion, education, and collective action.

## NOTES

1. The statistic used to measure segregation is the index of dissimilarity,  $D$ , which, roughly speaking, tells us what percentage of men or women would have to change occupations in order for the proportion in each occupation of males and females to match that of all



employed persons. More precisely,  $D$  is a ratio in which the numerator is the proportion of women (men) who would have to change occupations from the current distribution in order to integrate occupations and the denominator is the number of moves women (or men) would have to make to integrate occupations if, instead of the current distribution, occupations were maximally segregated such that all occupations were entirely of one sex or the other. Occupations are considered to be integrated when women's (men's) proportion of each occupation is the same as women's (men's) proportion of the labor force as a whole.  $D$  is self-weighting; that is, occupations employing more people count more than smaller ones. This is appropriate if we want to know how segregated the job experience of the average person is. For discussions of how much of the decline comes from integration of specific occupations and how much from disproportionate growth of more integrated occupations, see Francine D. Blau, Patricia Simpson, and Deborah Anderson 1998; David A. Cotter, Joan M. Hermsen, and Reeve Vanneman 2004). Maria Charles and David B. Grusky (2004, chapter 2) have criticized  $D$  and proposed an alternative log-linear-model-based measure,  $A$ . This measure also shows a decline over recent decades with some slowdown in the 1990s (this author's own calculations, using Current Population Surveys).

2. Author's calculations from 2001 Current Population Survey, March supplement.
3. I am borrowing the terms "exit" and "voice" from Albert O. Hirschman (1970), who argued that when people are dissatisfied with what a firm or the state does, they have three options—to leave and go elsewhere (exit), to bargain with the authorities (voice), or to accept the status quo (loyalty).

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