WHY DON'T WOMEN RULE THE WORLD?

Why don't women rule the world? In most cultures across the globe, the rise of civilization meant that women were confined to domestic roles and denied positions of authority in the public sphere—including leadership positions in religion, civil society, and the marketplace. Of particular interest and concern to political scientists is the way that women's association with the household, children, and domestic responsibility has been used—not just in one culture, but in many—to exclude them not only from holding official positions of political authority but to deny them public voice and citizenship. Hence, this book explores the political status of women across the globe, with particular attention paid to women in the American context. It examines the tactics and strategies women use to insert themselves into the men-dominated arena of government and politics and also describes the way women currently participate in a wide array of political endeavors, ranging from protest politics and voting to running for elected office and serving as public officials. We also explore and address the **gender gap**, or the idea that women report less interest in participating in politics than men[1]—discussed more later in the section, Plan of the Book. Finally, we examine the ways in which particular policies either influence women or are *influenced by* women in both the United States and comparative context.

Before launching into in-depth details of these activities, it is important to understand the deep roots of women's subordination, which emerged along with the embrace of agriculture in the Neolithic age and spread across the globe as early agricultural-based civilizations flourished. Understanding this deep history is important for several reasons, not least is that it is difficult to dismantle a system of oppression without understanding why it was established in the first place. Moreover, understanding provides a response to those who use women's shared fate across much of the globe to claim that a gendered division of labor, with women excluded from the public sphere so that they can focus on children and the household, as simply "natural"—either divinely inspired or biologically determined. Those who only know the recent written history of women's subordinate status will be tempted to argue that **cisgender women's** (or women whose assigned sex at birth and intrinsic gender identity are both female) reproductive

capacity means that they are somehow naturally ill-suited for participation in politics and public life. In fact, an overview of the origins of civilization suggests that public spaces and political institutions were purposefully designed to exclude women rather than vice versa. Learning about the purposeful creation of **patriarchies**—or social systems where men's dominance over women and children in the family is extended to men's dominance over women in society in general[2]—makes it possible to consider explanations other than the natural order for women's exclusion from public life.

Understanding the patriarchal roots of modern civilization also serves a broader social justice agenda. Early civilizations' successful subordination of women inspired ongoing and more egregious versions of oppression. For example, successful efforts to control cisgender women's bodies to benefit from their sexual and reproductive functions led to efforts to control others' bodies as well, resulting in the adoption of caste systems, slavery, feudalism, and colonialism. Organizing society around a gendered division of labor—with clearly defined roles for men and women—also required patriarchal societies to enforce **binary gender categories**, or those of man/masculine and woman/feminine. Those who did not or could not comply by conforming to the masculine and feminine gender roles prescribed for their assigned sex at birth represented a threat to the society and were sanctioned, suppressed, and threatened. In short, understanding and uprooting social structures that exploit cisgender women should also help to understand and disrupt class inequality and oppression against racial and ethnic minorities, as well as discrimination against queer and transgender people who do not conform to patriarchy's insistence on binary categories that conflate sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

BOX 1.1: POLICY FEATURE

Feminist Activism and Same-Sex Marriage

The legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States provides an example of the way overcoming one form of oppression can have an unintended domino-effect that helps others. Unlike other major civil rights achievements—including women's suffrage or interracial marriage—public support for and legalization of same-sex marriage seemed to occur swiftly, taking mere decades instead of centuries.

Same-sex couples often found ways to cohabitate throughout American history.[3] Yet, it seems no partner in a homosexual relationship fought to legally establish same-sex marriage prior to the 1970s. In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal challenging the Minnesota high court's

decision that prohibiting same sex marriage was not a violation of the U.S. Constitution.[4] In response, several states enacted bans on same-sex marriage in the late 1970s. In 1993, the Hawaii Supreme Court, in *Baehr v. Lewin*,[5] suggested such prohibitions could be unconstitutional, while another decade later, in 2004, Massachusetts became the first U.S. state to legalize same-sex marriage in response to its own high court's decision in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*.[6] Both decisions resulted in spates of state laws and ballot initiatives—some legalizing same-sex marriage and some explicitly rejecting it—along with the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which prohibited the federal government from recognizing, and allowed states the option of refusing to recognize, such unions. Laws opposing same-sex marriage were soon targeted in the courts by pro-gay-rights organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union, Lamda Legal, and the National Center for Lesbian Rights, while gay rights advocates continued to press for changes through state policies. By 2012—when Maine, Maryland, and Washington became the first states to legalize same-sex marriage via legislation—same-sex marriage had become legal in 37 states and the District of Columbia, through a combination of court challenges, ballot initiatives, and state law. In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court deemed DOMA unconstitutional.[7] In a 2015 decision rejecting marriage bans in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee, the Court essentially legalized same-sex marriage in all 50 states and required states to recognize other states' same-sex marriage licenses.[8]

As these legal battles were playing out, public opinion on same-sex marriage shifted dramatically. In 2001, 57% of the American electorate opposed same-sex marriage, while only 35% supported it. By 2017, 62% of Americans (along with 73% of self-identified Democrats and 85% of self-identified liberals) supported such unions, while only 32% opposed them (along with 40% of self-identified Republicans and 41% of self-identified conservatives).[9]

Unlike previous advances in civil rights, this stunning shift in public opinion preceded the Supreme Court's decision to protect minority rights. According to historian Stephanie Coontz, author of *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage*,[10] same-sex marriage was able to gain acceptance so quickly not only because of the dedicated efforts of gay rights activists but also because it is the logical conclusion of egalitarian marriages that emerged from hundreds of years of feminist activism.

In Western culture, the institution of marriage mimicked the hierarchical structure of feudalism, featuring men as heads of the household with almost absolute authority over their wives and children. Marriages were arranged for economic advantage until the late 1700s, when people began to marry for love and to choose their partners. Notably, such matches dismayed traditionalists, who feared that men's ability to exercise authority over their wives would be diminished, and that an inevitable increase in divorced and unmarried

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single women would result in chaos. By the 1920s, more Americans considered sexual fulfilment an important part of marriage, and by the 1960s, married heterosexual couples gained the right to use contraception to avoid having children.[11] Even so, many second wave feminists and queer theorists alike saw the institution as a hopelessly patriarchal institution mired in binary gender roles and best avoided. Yet, reformers continued to advocate for women's rights within the institution of marriage—changing norms and laws about property ownership, child custody, bodily autonomy, and sexual consent until most Americans viewed marriage as an egalitarian partnership based on affection, rather than as an economic necessity. "As marriage has become less gendered—with women becoming breadwinners and men doing more housework and child care—it became more difficult to explain why two men, or two women, couldn't participate in the institution as well as a man and a woman could."[12] Hence, the chain of events that early feminists set in motion when they tackled the task of reforming marriage, with the goal of improving the lives of cisgender women who had few options other than marriage, helped to make marriage a possibility for LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer [or Questioning], Intersex, Asexual, etc.) individuals hundreds of years later.[13]

THE CREATION OF PATRIARCHY

Modern humans evolved about 200,000 years ago. For most of this time, up until around 7,000 years ago, humans lived in small bands of hunter-gatherers. Contrary to popular caricatures of men cavemen dragging women around by the hair and dominating other men with their size and strength, hunter-gatherers' societies were far more egalitarian than modern civilizations. Their social structures were not characterized by hierarchies where an elite ruling class makes all the decisions and demands loyalty and homage from lesser subjects. Even though men and women had different roles that grew out of their sex differences, these differences were not used to justify inequality. These prehistoric bands of hunter-gatherers—described by some scholars as **matristic societies** or as **matricentries**—often revolved around women's ability to care for their children. While we think about this historically, this way of organizing societies can also be seen in contemporary societies (see Box 1.2). While both sexes helped care for children, men often contributed to food needs by participating in big game hunting, while women focused on small game hunting and gathering. Both means of procuring food were valued, but women's activities were more reliable, and the majority of calories consumed often came from their efforts. One modern-day hunter-gathering tribe, the Hazda, provides an example of how people lived and survived prior to civilization. Among the Hazda, who have been hunter-gatherers

in the same region of Tanzania for thousands of years, men's big game hunting efforts are successful only 3.4% of the time. Food needed to sustain the community overwhelmingly comes from women's collective efforts to gather tubers. While the growth of a woman's first child is correlated with her ability to gather food, the survival of additional children after the first is correlated to their grandmother's success in digging tubers. Among the Hazda, and likely among the many hunter-gather societies that at one time characterized human society, grandmothers have been more important to children's survival than their fathers. These insights help to explain why human women live so long beyond their ability to reproduce, as well as why advanced social traits—like pointing, smiling, and laughing—emerge at such an early age among human babies and toddlers.[14] Given women's role in sustaining their communities, it is not surprising that despite gendered activities and despite distinct biological functions, these small, simple societies placed few restrictions on men and women based on sex differences.[15] Indeed, some evolutionary biologists believe that early human men's low levels of testosterone, in comparison to other male primates, provided humans with a distinct advantage. Human men, in comparison, for example, to chimpanzees, were less aggressive and more willing to cooperate with weaker men and with women. This dynamic allowed intelligence and innovation to drive group decision-making rather than brute force by an alpha male—and this cooperative feature was essential for much of our species' success.[16]

BOX 1.2: COMPARATIVE FEATURE

Complementarian and Matriarchal Practices in Other Countries

Some ethnic groups do not perceive of sex in a way that matches the patriarchal experiences of much of the rest of the world. Men do not control all social, political, religious, and economic institutions among these groups even though they may be dominant in given contexts. The Mosuo minority in China, along with Igbo and Aka of Africa, are examples of groups that consider women fit to have agency and to be leaders in some domains. The Mosuo, an ethnic minority of about 40,000, have lived in relative stability for hundreds of years in a region of southwest China near Lugu Lake. The Mosuo are matriarchal, with no marriage system, as well as no indigenous terms for husband or father. When a girl turns fourteen, she is considered an adult and is given an adult ceremony and her own room where she can host visits from a boyfriend. These relationships, which may be short term or long term, are called *zuo hun*, or walking marriages, because boyfriends are invited to spend the night with women, but then must walk back to their mothers' houses in the morning. He belongs to his mother's family, and she

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▶ **Photo 1.1** Two Mosuo women.

belongs to her mother's family—and multigenerational family members all related by blood rather than marriage live under one roof. In the Mosuo culture, the family carries through the mother's line, and children, cared for by their maternal aunts and uncles, stay with the mother their entire lives. A mother "passes" her power over family decision-making to her eldest daughter, although most decisions are made collectively with input from all family members.[17] As one photographer who spent a month documenting local practices noted, "Men and women are very much equals, but the women are just a little more in charge."[18]

Meanwhile, the Igbo, one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria with a population of over 30 million, have a **complementarian** society. Women in the Igbo group can achieve success normally attributed to men, such as acquiring wealth. Women who act in ways traditionally associated with men gain the full respect of their husbands and men peers. The politics of the Igbo people are collective and decentralized, but Igbo women tend to lack influence in politics as they play a consultative rather than active role. However, the Igbo have adopted a dual-sex political system, which allows women through women's groups to check men's power.

▶ **Photo 1.2** Igbo women resting together.

Similarly, the Aka people in central Africa are very egalitarian. Women and men share economic responsibilities with the exception of shooting arrows to kill elephants (typically performed by men). Women and men are often together when hunting and collecting plants. As with the Igbo, men are more dominant in politics, but they do not hold absolute power. Men influence politics through hospitality, persuasiveness, humor,

and knowledge. Aka women challenge men's authority regularly. Mothers are influential in the clan, and women participate in decisions about camp movements, extramarital affairs, and hunting. Violence against women is uncommon, which encourages women's autonomy and also supports the ability for men and women to work together. When disagreements occur, members of the Aka do not resort to physical or verbal abuse, but instead participate in a meditation or leave the camp until they have thought about reconciliation.

Anthropologists' insights into **prehistory**, or the long era preceding civilizations that recorded their own histories, are supported by egalitarianism characterizing the small handful of hunter-gatherer tribes that remain today. In these societies, both men and women influence decisions about where their group lives and who lives with them. Modern hunter-gatherer groups in the Congo and in the Philippines, for example, tend to live in groups of about 20 people, moving about every 10 days to hunt, fish, and gather in new locations. The result of equality in deciding who constitutes each core group is an array of loosely related individuals living together, with close kin scattered across a wider geographic area. If only men or only women influenced decisions about living conditions, however, anthropologists conclude the result would be more closely-related groups populated by one sex or the other's close relatives and siblings.[19] This clustering is precisely what happened with the dawn of agriculture in the **Neolithic Age** when men began to exercise more authority over collective decisions than women. The villages that emerged when humans began to focus on settled farming were organized around men's relatives—fathers, sons, uncles, nephews, and cousins. These living arrangements disadvantaged women, who sacrificed status in their own kinship groups to become laborers and producers—but not decision-makers or property-owners—for an entirely different kinship group. Women must have initially supported incremental decisions that made this transition possible, likely because these choices offered short-term benefits to their kinship groups, and they could not be expected to anticipate the long-term consequences for their sex that evolved over the centuries. Indeed, feminist historians and anthropologists prefer the word *subordination*, rather than the term *oppression*, to describe the gradual domination of men over women across time. Women, it seems, often voluntarily participated in creating a world that would undermine their own equality. Although they could not know it at the time, abandoning the egalitarian living arrangements that characterized past and current hunter-gathering societies had devastating effects on women's status in society; they became a resource acquired by men, similar to the way that land and domesticated animals became property acquired by men.[20]

Of course, this shift in living patterns happened gradually over thousands of years. In the beginning of the Neolithic Age, humans launched an agricultural

revolution, learning how to domesticate plants and animals as a source of food. Domesticating animals made people aware that men played a role in paternity and that women's sexual and reproductive functions could be controlled to provide a valuable resource for their communities. Both of these realizations had dramatic consequences for the way civilizations would evolve. As labor-intensive forms of agriculture increased the value of children, women's bodies—so essential for reproduction and group survival—became a sought-after commodity, one that could be exchanged for the benefit of their kin-group. By the end of the Neolithic Era, as agricultural societies became settled and hierarchical, men leaders emerged and expanded their strategic advantages with a set of common practices anthropologists have labeled the **Exchange of Women**. These common practices included offering women in negotiated marriages to establish alliances with other groups, providing sex with women as a gesture of hospitality to men visitors, and expecting women to participate in fertility festivals that incorporated ritual rapes designed to ensure abundance.[21]

While Marxist scholars such as Friedrich Engels have argued that the notion of private property was a prerequisite for the establishment of patriarchy, Gerda Lerner (1987), in her classic work, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, argues that men's appropriation of women's sexual and reproductive capacity as a commodity that could be exchanged for their own advantage actually serves as the foundation for notions of private property and ownership.[22] Lerner, a historian who relies on archeological evidence to explore how women's subordination took root in ancient Mesopotamia, concludes that "the first appropriation of private property consists of the appropriation of the labor of women as reproducers," and thus, "in the course of the agricultural revolution the exploitation of human labor and the sexual exploitation of women become inextricably linked".[23]

Gradually, over time, men's control over women's reproductive functions established the notion of ownership and private property. This process was exacerbated by men's awareness of their own paternity. After recognizing their role in procreation, men began insisting that brides be virgins and that their wives refrain from adultery after marriage. The desire to pass on fields and herds to their own male children helped extend the notion of men's control and ownership over *their* patriarchal family units, over *their* fields, and over *their* herds. As men organized their patriarchal households into settled communities, warfare increased which men used as an opportunity to expand the size, and hence the productivity, of their households by enslaving conquered women and children. Initially, slaves were integrated into domestic households, often as concubines and domestic servants. Yet, the practice of dominating women established the precedent that demographic traits could be used to determine people's status in society. Lerner's argument is straightforward and simple: "The stigma of belonging to a group which is enslavable is based on the precedent of seeing women as an inferior group."[24] Not long after this "crucial invention,"[25] men leaders began capturing and enslaving conquered men rather than killing them, institutionalizing more oppressive versions of slavery and forced labor. In short, men learned how

to dominate other people by first subordinating, commodifying, and exchanging women in their own close kinship groups—practices which Engels described as the historical defeat of the female sex.

Lerner additionally provides an in-depth account of the way the Exchange of Women first led to patriarchal family units and then to the establishment of patriarchal civilization in the fertile crescent surrounding Mesopotamia. Similar processes, with regional variations, took place across the globe. Notably, however, scholars from various social science disciplines ranging from anthropology to economics have found a connection between agriculture and patriarchy. Societies with the earliest Neolithic revolutions, where agriculture has been embraced for a longer period of time, still have stronger patriarchal values, more restrictions on women's role in public life, lower labor force participation, and less sex-based equality.[26] The type of agriculture pursued also was related to equality (or inequality). Regions that required intense physical labor, often characterized by dry irrigation and reliance on the plow, still have more distinct and restrictive gender roles, as do regions of the world where people have a higher percentage of ancestors who were plow users.[27] Meanwhile, regions requiring less intense physical labor—where women were not entirely excluded from the means of production—still see higher levels of women's participation in the economy.[28–31] (See Box 1.3 for a discussion of women's participation in the workforce today.) In addition, the type of crop mattered. Domesticated grain was essential for the rise of patriarchal archaic states. Unlike other crops, grain produces a surplus—most notably a surplus that is easily observed and measured. It grows above ground, can be planted in rows, and has to be harvested all at once, making it easier to tax and regulate. Grain, in particular, provided early patriarchs with the agricultural surplus they needed to transform themselves into the rulers of city-states. Notably, the adoption of the plow and reliance on grain was widespread across the entire continent of Europe, which had implications for the status of women in hierarchical civilizations that laid the foundation for Western cultures.[32]

BOX 1.3: POLICY FEATURE

Women in the Workforce

Over the last 20 years, we have witnessed progress in the world of work for women. This change has come through sex-based equality, education, and participation in the labor market, as well as efforts to reduce poverty and boost economic development by allowing women into the workforce with "equal pay for equal work."[33]

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According to the International Labor Organization in the United States, the percentage of eligible workers participating in the workforce is 65.3% men to 53.3% women; that is 12.9 million more men in the workforce, although the majority of eligible women outweighs men by 4.6 million.[34] Similar findings are seen in other democratic societies, such as Spain and Switzerland, where the eligible number of women outnumbers men, yet the rates of employment show similar disparities. In Spain, 53.8% of the men's population participates in the workforce as opposed to 42.2% of women. In Switzerland, 70.8% of men verses 59.7% of women are actively employed in the workforce.

Yemen fairs among the worst in the world in terms of percentage of women in the workforce. In Yemen, where the population of eligible working men to working women is comparable, only 4.3% of the women are employed in the workforce.[35] Similarly, in the Syrian Arab Republic, only 7.3% of eligible women are employed.[36] There are three underlying reasons for this low rate of employment. Challenges to women's economic participation include the following: "i) the patriarchal structure of states in the region, ii) dominant public-sector employment and weak private sector employment, and iii) an inhospitable business environment for women because of the conservative nature of gender roles and the lack of support for reproductive and family costs."[37] These regions lose an estimated 27% of income due to the employment gap in women's labor force participation.[38]

In stark contrast, countries like Cambodia where the available labor force between men and women only differs by 17,000, in favor of men, women are employed at 80.8% compared to their male counterparts at 88.5%. Cambodia has the highest level of women's participation in the workforce.[39] Nevertheless, in Cambodia, women report "earning $1 to $3 less per day than men for the same value of work. Furthermore, they often work jobs that are low-skilled, sign contracts with terms that they do not understand, and lack equal protections under the law."[40]

Overall, in the last 20 years, we have seen remarkable changes in closing the gap between men and women as it pertains to women's participation in the workforce—especially among developed and developing countries as well as democratic countries (see Table 1.1).[41] On the other hand, we have a long way to go in bridging those gaps. The worldview that women do not deserve equal and equitable employment even if they are eligible is a barrier. Women as the primary custodians of the household is another barrier. Religious and political views that place women in a lower status also are contributing factors. How women combat these blockades individually, politically, and collectively will be the determining mechanisms for access to equal and equitable reception into the labor market.

Table 1.1　Levels and Trends in Rates of Labor Force Participation and Unemployment by Sex, 2009–21

Country/region	Labor force participation rate (percentages) and sex-based gap (percentage points)					Unemployment rate (percentages) and women's-to-men's unemployment rate ratio				
	Men	Women	Gap (Men-Women)			Men	Women	Ratio (Women's rate/ Men's rate)		
	2018	2018	2009–18	2018	2018–21 (Projection)	2018	2018	2009–18	2018	2018–21
World	**75.0**	**48.5**	**D**	**26.5**	**I**	**5.2**	**6.0**	**I**	**1.2**	**I**
Developing Countries	81.1	69.3	D	11.8	S	4.6	6.1	D	1.3	I
Emerging countries	76.1	45.6	I	30.5	I	5.2	6.1	I	1.2	I
Developed countries	68.0	52.4	D	15.6	D	5.3	5.6	S	1.1	S
Northern Africa	71.9	21.9	D	50.0	D	9.1	19.5	D	2.2	I
Sub-Saharan Africa	74.0	64.7	D	9.3	D	6.4	8.2	D	1.3	I
Latin America and the Caribbean	77.1	51.5	D	25.6	D	6.8	9.5	D	1.4	I
Northern America	67.9	55.8	S	12.1	D	4.6	4.4	I	1.0	D
Arab States	77.2	18.9	I	58.3	D	6.8	16.3	I	2.4	D

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Country/region	Labor force participation rate (percentages) and sex-based gap (percentage points)						Unemployment rate (percentages) and women's-to-men's unemployment rate ratio				
	Men	Women	Gap (Men-Women)				Men	Women	Ratio (Women's rate/Men's rate)		
	2018	2018	2009–18	2018	2018–21 (Projection)		2018	2018	2009–18	2018	2018–21
Eastern Asia	74.7	59.1	I	15.6	I		4.8	4.2	I	0.9	I
South-Eastern Asia and Pacific	79.4	56.5	D	22.8	D		3.5	3.3	D	0.9	S
Southern Asia	79.0	27.6	D	51.4	I		3.7	5.2	I	1.4	D
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	63.4	51.6	D	11.9	D		7.9	8.2	I	1.0	S
Eastern Europe	67.0	51.8	I	15.2	D		5.6	4.9	S	0.9	S
Central and Western Asia	73.5	45.1	D	28.4	D		8.0	9.4	I	1.2	D

Source: Adapted from International Labor Organization (2018). World employment social outlook. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_619577.pdf

Developments for the periods 2009 to 2018 and 2018 2021 are marked with an "I" if the gap in labor force participation (unemployment rate ratio) is projected to increase by more than 0.1 (0.01) percentage points, a D if it is projected to decrease by more than 0.1 (0.01) percentage points, and a "S" if it is expected to hold steady

Numbers in the "Gap" column refer to the percentage point difference between the men's and women's labor force participation rates but may not correspond precisely due to rounding.

Contrary to the assumptions of later political theorists like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, who argued that people entered into a voluntary social contract with government to achieve a better life, most people did not flock to these fledgling city-states to benefit from civilization. Rather, archaic states emerged to institutionalize the elite position of the handful of men leaders (and their close relations) who benefited from the agricultural surplus they generated through the coerced reproductive labor of women and the forced labor of slaves. The patriarchal family unit, with a man in charge of wives, female relatives, children, and slaves provided the foundation on which civilizations were built, embedding hierarchy, subordination, and oppression into archaic states from their very inception.

As civilization evolved, the status of various groups within this formative patriarchal unit was embedded into formal law, and formal rule-based systems of slavery and oppression were established. This process fundamentally altered women's relationships to one another, as enslaved women and their children no longer shared a common fate, embedded within the family unit. Formalizing slavery led to distinct classes in society—and therefore distinct classes of women in society. All women were subordinate to men within their own class but were also separated from one another by their class status. In ancient Mesopotamia, for example, women attached to men rulers through marriage and kinship were at the top of this hierarchy, with slave women at the bottom, and slave-concubines holding a mid-level status.[42] While their own freedom and reproductive functions were controlled, wives still benefited from controlling the physical and reproductive labor of women beneath them in this social hierarchy. In patriarchal systems, men's class status results from their relationship to the means of production in society. For women, class status is mediated through their relationship to men.

Hence from their earliest versions, patriarchal systems were insulated from challenges by one half of the population by affording some women privileges at the expense of others. Wives who enjoyed status and privilege in ancient Mesopotamia, for example, were not likely to align themselves with slaves and concubines. Rather than a single demographic group with common experiences and a shared fate, civilization provided women with cross-cutting (or intersectional) identities that prevented them from developing a sense of group consciousness, a theme we'll see emerge in modern-day systems as well. Yet, if women lack **group consciousness**—or the recognition that their subordinate status results from a shared group trait—they are unlikely to engage in collective action to demand change. Even now, women's levels of group consciousness are typically much lower than other groups of people who are subject to discrimination based on shared traits.[43] Recent feminist scholarship and activism have relied on the concept of **intersectionality**—which was coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) in the 1980s to describe the way different demographic traits combine, overlap, and intersect to create different versions of privilege and oppression—in an attempt to build a more inclusive feminist movement (see Box 1.4).[44]

It is important to note that the class and racial inequalities that divide women were built into patriarchy at the very beginning and are part of the reason why patriarchy has been so difficult to overcome. Sociologist Allan G. Johnson (2014), in *The Gender Knot*, also describes how patriarchy is built on overlapping systems of oppression. He argues patriarchy is not problematic simply because it features men's dominance over women but because it promotes dominance and control over others as the legitimate means to achieve a stable society. In that sense, all forms of privilege draw support from common roots, and undermining any single form of oppression can help to undermine them all.[45] Yet, if reformers fail to link patriarchy to other versions of oppressions, such as those based on race, class, and/or sexuality, they will simply enable some women to succeed at the expense of women who are disadvantaged by other demographic characteristics. This feature of patriarchy has made it difficult for women to advocate for reforms that benefit all women. Intersectionality has also prevented most men from actively attempting to dismantle patriarchy's oppression of women, ironically, even if they have recognized and fought against hierarchies based on class, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Johnson argues men's reluctance stems from the fact that "men have no experience of being oppressed as men, and because all men, regardless of race or class, have access to some degree of men's privilege."[46] In short, patriarchy encourages everyone, men and women alike, to focus on preserving some of the privileges their identity provides. For women, this means preserving status based on aspects of their identity other than sex, while for men it means preserving status based on sex. But if men are not included in the quest to stymie patriarchy, the harm that hierarchy and oppression, along with strictly policed binary gender roles, do to everyone is more easily overlooked. According to Johnson, we are "stuck deep inside an oppressive gender legacy" that also castigates men who do not live up to strict standards of masculinity. The result is that many people experience "a great deal of suffering, injustice, and trouble" because of the so-called "gender knot" that constrains us all.[47]

BOX 1.4: KIMBERLÉ CRENSHAW'S TED TALK ON INTERSECTIONALITY

In 2016, Kimberlé Crenshaw presented at TEDWomen, part of the official TED Conferences—also known as TED talks. During this conference, she highlighted a national and global problem that women of color face when it comes to police violence and protections under the law. Crenshaw argued that, due to a lack of an available framework under the law, women of color were facing a double discrimination, which she beautifully described as "injustice squared."

▶ **Photo 1.3** Kimberlé Crenshaw speaking about police violence against Black women.

Crenshaw explores two main issues. Primarily, she offers an alternative framework that can help us better recognize the unique challenges faced by women of color, in order to broaden our current frame of understanding to evoke political change and equal justice under the law. Secondly, she explores the way in which communities, media, policy makers, politicians, and the law view matters of injustice that are central to change.

Crenshaw shares the case of Emma DeGraffenreid. DeGraffenreid is an African American woman who was seeking employment at a car manufacturing plant. She applied for employment and was denied. DeGraffenreid took this case to court where she argued she was not hired because she was a Black woman. Her case was dismissed because the judge believed that she would have had "preferential treatment" or "two swings at the bat" because she was both African American and a woman. The car manufacturer in question argued that they hired African Americans, though they were men working industrial and maintenance jobs. The manufacturer also argued that they hired women, who tended to work the secretarial or front office jobs and were white. Seeing this combination as unfair and with no framework to see the double discrimination at play, the judge dismissed DeGraffenreid's case.

The case of DeGraffenreid lends itself to the broader issue of combined race and sex discrimination. Crenshaw would offer an answer to this framing problem through the lens of intersectionality. That is, the understanding that two marginalized categories can overlap at the same time within a single entity, often causing multiple levels of social injustice. People can have the dilemma of facing intersections of racism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, xenophobia, and ableism. Furthermore, the realities lived by one person or group are not the same as the realities faced by others. Everyone has a uniquely lived experience and therefore faces injustice at tragically different levels, just as in the case of DeGraffenreid.

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However, by recognizing these compounded injustices through broadening their understanding of the lived experience, lawmakers may be able to reevaluate these particular cases. The current framework of the law is partial and distorting. There is no name for this problem, and, as Crenshaw states, "where there is no name for this problem, you can't see the problem, and when you can't see the problem, you pretty much can't solve it." By labeling this problem one of intersectionality, individuals gain perspective on the matter at hand.

Stories such as DeGraffenreid's are not the only reason we should accept this idea of intersectionality and its place in our society. In a time where African American men are being shot to death by police, the public often does not hear about the vast number of African American women equally subjected to the same use of deadly force by the police. From grandmothers to 7-year-old girls, African American women are dying at just as alarming rates as Black men. The difference is that the public, media, and the law are not talking about these cases. These women are at the crossroad of intersectionality, and they are falling through the cracks.

Another reason why patriarchy is so difficult to overcome, somewhat ironically, is that the advantages that accrued to leaders in settled communities were difficult to sustain. Recorded history has tended to celebrate the dawn of civilization as a great leap forward for humanity, providing the security of a stable food source and settled communities. While elites in early archaic states enjoyed a dramatic—although precarious—improvement in their standard of living, average people most certainly did not. Hunting and gathering provided a more varied and nutritious diet, with far less effort than farming. The small size of hunter-gatherer bands, with no settled fields to cultivate and defend, meant that members could easily relocate if one source of food failed. It also prevented the spread of disease and protected members from new epidemics that swept through settled communities and domestic stock. Hunter-gatherers, who did not spend hours laboring to produce agricultural surplus to support the ruling class or to build infrastructure for the state, enjoyed more leisure time than village and city dwellers—and they had more freedom to use this time as they pleased, with fewer class-based and sex-based restrictions on their behavior. The claim that our ancestors were reluctant to become the ruling class's labor force in settled communities is supported by the 4,000-year gap between domestication of grain and the rise of the earliest states. Rather than embracing farming with enthusiasm, prehistoric people preferred to adopt subsistence strategies that combined hunting and gathering with easily domesticated crops. This tactic allowed them to maintain a hunter-gatherer

lifestyle, supplemented with a more reliable source of food. Indeed, some scholars argue that our ancestors only settled down in response to a series of droughts that made foraging unsustainable.[48] Moreover, even after peasants and slaves were incorporated into the earliest states, they often had to be compelled to stay. The walls built around the earliest city states served a dual purpose; they kept "barbarians" and marauders out, but they also prevented the workforce from fleeing. Elites had a vested interest in compelling laborers to stay, as the most populous states were also the most successful states. In successful states, elites had access to skilled workers and technical expertise that could provide a competitive edge in trade, adequate warriors to defend the state and to plunder nearby regions, and enough peasants and slaves to feed the ever-expanding classes removed from agricultural labor, such as rulers, priests, administrators, and crafts people.

Yet, as a past littered with fallen and conquered societies makes clear, elites' ability to maintain this balance was precarious. This precariousness exacerbated the underpinning logic of patriarchal civilization—the **fear-control cycle,** or men's fear of being dominated by other men. Agriculture taught people how to control the natural environment to build food surpluses, and they quickly learned to extend this control to women and conquered men. But the men patriarchs who stepped into positions of authority in early agricultural settlements quickly realized the biggest threat to their security and status—even worse than environmental disasters from overuse of natural resources and high mortality rates from epidemics—was other men.

Living in settled communities increased the mortality rates for both infants and adults. Settled communities replaced some of this lost labor with increased fertility rates. Women living in settled communities gave birth far more often than women in hunter-gatherer societies, who would typically only have one child every four years. Despite outpacing the mortality rate, live births alone could not meet the labor needs of the rising archaic states—which have been described as "population machines" designed to control new sources of labor, domesticating other people in the same way that animals had been domesticated into herds.[49]

Early states were heavily reliant on agricultural labor, and low numbers were supplemented with what Max Weber described as "**booty capitalism**"—or raiding and conquering nearby settlements.[50] Hence, the root cause of patriarchy's expansion was men's fear of being conquered and dominated by other men. Men learned that control of the natural environment, women, and slaves, provided surplus resources that they needed to compete with each other. Eventually, control became the priority around which entire societies were organized. Yet as men, and by extension patriarchal systems, pursued control as a way to protect themselves, the same response is triggered from others. According to sociologist Allan G. Johnson, "Once this dynamic is set in motion, it forms the basis for an escalating spiral of control and fear. The result is an extended patriarchal history marked not only by the accomplishments that control makes possible, but also by domination, warfare, and oppression, all of which are male-dominated, male identified, male-centered pursuits that revolve around affirming, protecting, and enhancing

men's standing and security in relation to other men."[51] In a more succinct statement, he concludes "this dynamic has provided patriarchy with its driving force for thousands of years."[52]

Patriarchal societies were also organized around assigning specific roles and functions to people based on sex, class, race, religion, and/or caste. For example, men and masculinity became associated with all aspects of control, including rationality, logic, strength, combat, leadership, and decision-making. Meanwhile, women and femininity became associated with the exact opposite traits, including emotion, submissiveness, weakness, and nurturing. Each sex's willingness to embrace roles associated with these traits became seen as essential for sustaining society and avoiding chaos.

Binary gender roles were so embedded as a foundational organizing structure in Western civilizations that they were still embraced during the earliest stages of democratization. During the **Enlightenment**, for example, Western societies perpetuated strict sex-based roles for men and women, even while rejecting other hierarchical structures that oppressed many men, such as monarchies, landed aristocracies, and feudalism. Scholars date the Enlightenment to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, following the so-called Dark Ages of Medieval Europe. Whereas Medieval Europe championed tradition and the top-down authority of the Church and monarchies, the Enlightenment embraced individualism and reason, or, in other words, the ability of every man to seek knowledge, experience liberation, and participate in government. The classical liberalism of the Enlightenment projected an archetype of an honorable man and citizen who relied on reason and avoided emotionalism, had courage to act on his own reason, and was seriously committed to his community.[53] Women during this era were not considered fit to be citizens, as the philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau explained, because they were emotional and too tied to the home and family to be dedicated to their community and state. Perhaps, Rousseau's greatest pronouncement of gender stereotypes was in his book about the education of boys and girls, titled *Emile* or *On Education* (1762). In this book, the young man, Emile, is educated in the social and natural sciences to be a citizen and a leader, while his female counterpart, Sophie, is educated to be his helpmate.[54] She is expected to be emotional, to take care of her home and family, and to present herself in a becoming way. Rousseau also insisted women must be excluded from politics and leadership because their cunning and flirtatious ways could distract men from their noble duties. The Enlightenment, therefore, was exclusionary even as it hastened democratic forms of government. Women, like enslaved men at the time, were considered less than fully human and incapable of reason and thus undeserving of equality and unfit for leadership.

In the midst of the Enlightenment, as the notion of men's popular sovereignty and men's unalienable rights took root, political revolutions with the goal of establishing the first modern democratic states took place in the United States and France. (Box 1.5 explains how political thought failed to extend these unalienable

rights to women.) Establishing democracy through war further cemented binary gender roles. Even though many women played a role in civil unrest and revolution (see Chapter 2), citizenship became associated with formal military service and with men who were willing to fight and die, not only for freedom, but to defend their property—which included their wives and their families—from tyrants. Political leadership was equated with military leadership and masculine traits, and war heroes like George Washington were expected to continue their service to the country by stepping into public office. Burgeoning nationalism, meanwhile, highlighted women's role in childbirth and childrearing, as women were expected to produce and socialize the next generation of patriotic citizens.

BOX 1.5 CAROLE PATEMAN AND THE SEXUAL CONTRACT

American political thought emphasizes that citizens have unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as famously celebrated by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence; however, when Jefferson and his contemporaries referenced "all men" having rights, they generally meant only men. Social contract theorists imagined a society built on an agreement of the governed, namely citizens. John Locke (1632–1704), whose ideas influenced Jefferson, argued government only gains the legitimate right to exercise authority, depriving men of their natural sovereignty, when men voluntarily consent to enter a social contract and agree to be governed in exchange for the ability to better enjoy their life, liberty, and property. While Locke "was willing to elevate women's status,"[55] he remained silent on the question of their participation in the founding of political society. Hence, social contract theorists who worried about men's unalienable rights did not worry about women's much more than the political theorists who preceded them. Without the participation of women, the contract is indeed an agreement among men. This outcome is problematic for democracy because it means patriarchy is built into political theories that inspire Western democracies.

Sir Robert Filmer (1588–1683) wrote *Patriarcha: or the Natural Power of Kings* in 1680. Whereas social contract theorists thought citizens must agree to be governed, which then leads them to build democratic institutions, Filmer believed that kings had the divine right to rule over subjects, a right handed down from the first father and king, Adam, in the Bible. The king was also the patriarch in the sense that he was a father

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and would rule his family, that is, the state and his subjects. Initially, patriarchy not only justified men's rule over women but also the most powerful man's rule over other men and all women. Carole Pateman, feminist theorist and author of *The Sexual Contract* (1988), points out that when social contract theorists critiqued kings' rule over subjects, they failed to critique men's rule over women. Put another way, contract theorists wanted to eliminate the most powerful man's rule over other men and give them rights but did not foresee an end to women's oppression or their attainment of rights. Pateman argues the social contract theorists left in place a so-called sexual contract that allows men to rule over women's bodies. Women do not consent to this rule; patriarchy allows for it, as it has since Adam, the first man, had access to Eve's body. Pateman further argues that the social contract would not be possible without the sexual contract, for there would be no men to challenge the king's rule and form a social contract without men's sexual access to women and women's reproductive role in bearing children. Even though women give birth to the men who become citizens and form social contracts, early democratic movements left them under men's authority without the right to participate.[56]

The *Sexual Contract* is at once a critique of social contract theory and the early history of democracies (see Chapter 2 for more discussion about women's lack of rights in early American history), and also a critique of politics today. Consent to sex is a current topic in American society, and it is particularly relevant on college campuses. Best consent practices now emphasize that both partners in a sexual encounter should affirm their desires. It is not good enough to say "no means no"; rather, sexual partners should verbally or physically indicate that, yes, they agree to sex. Unfortunately, many women are robbed of the ability to make this choice. Statistics from the World Health Organization show that one in three women will experience physical or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a nonpartner.[57] The continued existence of sexual assault proves the longevity of the sexual contract. The sexual contract did not end with the formation of democracy, and as explained in Chapter 4, democracies today do not do enough to stop sexual violence or ameliorate its effects. The United States did not pass the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) until 1994, and even in the year 2018, lawmakers were slow to commit to its reauthorization. The VAWA (see Chapter 4) largely funds social services to support victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.[58] All democracies that purport that women are citizens and have rights must respond to the question, how can women be considered equal citizens under the social contract if the state cannot ensure them a basic unalienable right to "life" that should, by definition, include bodily integrity?

Despite repeated waves of the women's movement, as women have sought the same status and legal rights as men in society, remnants of these prescribed gender roles remain today, and we will see them recur throughout this book. Thus, in the past, and today, a great deal of effort was and is expended to convince people that these sex-based roles are natural, so that men will fulfill the masculine functions society thinks it needs to sustain itself, and women will fulfill feminine ones.

REIFICATION AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Social scientists refer to this process—where people perceive their own society and their own role within it as the only possible way to structure society—as the **social construction of reality**. They claim that the **reification** that occurs as a result of this process helps to explain how so many people throughout recorded history have been willing to accept worldviews that result in their own oppression and also to perpetuate these worldviews by acting out their assigned roles within them. Specifically, reification describes perceiving the roles and institutions that human beings have created (which are actually social constructs) as unchanging features of the natural world (or reality). When people experience the world in reified terms, they lose historical consciousness. They forget the role people played in structuring human activities, which undermines demands for change. Indeed, people who experience the world in reified terms do not believe that it is possible, or sometimes even desirable, to change their own and others' roles in society, any more than they would want to change the color of the sky or believe they could stop the ocean from forming waves. Thus, the two sociologists who first fully explained these ideas, Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger (1967), conclude that, "even while apprehending the world in reified terms, [people] continue to produce it. That is [people are] capable of paradoxically producing a reality that denies [them]."[59]

When a society's entire institutional order is encompassed within a single, symbolic worldview, the entire society makes sense to most people, like a puzzle with no missing pieces. This outcome is most apt to occur when all means of socialization—including **primary socialization** by parents as well as **secondary socialization** by political, civic, religious, and educational institutions—all reinforce the same messages about appropriate roles and behavior. Under these circumstances, most people experience the world in reified terms, and few people challenge the status quo. The handful of people who do challenge the status quo, either with arguments or by simply refusing to conform to expectations, are either perceived as eccentric and mentally unstable or as wicked and evil. They may be largely tolerated but subject to soft versions of suppression, such as ridicule, social sanction, or ostracism.[60] An example of social sanction against women who argue against patriarchy is exemplified in John Adams's befuddled reaction when his wife, Abigail Adams, wrote a letter to him during the American Revolution,

titled *Remember the Ladies*, asking him to consider extending the rights of citizenship to women. He found the request amusing and provided a patronizing reply but clearly did not feel threatened by the request. Alternatively, noncompliance is more likely to be framed as evil or heresy when people are perceived as a genuine threat to social stability. These protestors are more likely to be forcibly corrected by being beaten, institutionalized, arrested, or even assassinated. For example, when women recently took to the streets of Tehran, Iran, with chants of "We are women, we are human, but we don't have any rights," they were met with state forces who beat them with batons.[61]

All social realities are, at the end of the day, human inventions, constructed to serve a particular purpose. As such, all social realities are inherently fragile. Change can occur when people are exposed to alternative ideas that challenge their worldview's underpinning assumptions—and when they are willing to risk the inevitable cognitive dissonance that occurs when they take disruptive ideas seriously. Human beings are social creatures who crave stability and the assurance of knowing their place in the world in relation to other people and how to behave accordingly. Hence, the sharpest justification of cultural norms occurs after people come into contact with other societies, as they reject alternative worldviews that may cause them to question their own. Yet, when these ideas take hold, people can form deviant groups that adopt an alternative worldview, that embrace different roles to guide members' choices and behavior. This inevitably leads them to behave in ways that challenge the status quo. It is important not to overlook the importance of these new legitimizing worldviews, as humans need a common understanding of the world in order to coordinate and construct social lives. Large numbers of people are not apt to reject stable society for chaos, but they may be willing to embrace an alternative way of understanding the world. If **deviant groups** can sustain their alternative worldview, despite soft and violent versions of sanction, their ideas can spread throughout the population like a virus, changing beliefs and transforming the dominant culture. Here, the term *deviant* is not intended to imply that the group is evil or wrong but to convey its status within society. Members of the group *deviate* from widely accepted cultural norms and expected practice.[62]

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the worldview embraced by a small group that rejects mainstream culture will be any less grounded in hierarchy and oppression than patriarchy. It is entirely possible—and perhaps even quite likely after 7,000 years of civilization built on hierarchy and oppression—that the alternative worldview imagined by a deviant group will simply replace one dominant demographic group with another without upending hierarchy and oppression as the building blocks of society. How can we evaluate the new world that these groups envision? How can we make choices among the myriad possibilities for structuring a new and improved society?

Allan G. Johnson (2014), in *The Gender Knot*, suggests addressing all forms of oppression with simple actions. People often think activism requires heroic endeavors to achieve immediate change, and, while social movements and protest

politics have played a role in advancing women's rights, everyday choices can also help to dismantle patriarchy, bit by bit, over time. Some of these simple choices include acknowledging that patriarchy exists, paying attention to its effects on others, and learning to listen attentively when women and other marginalized people describe its effects on their lives. Other choices might include speaking up after noticing that these outcomes are unfair and engaging in collective action to challenge unfair decisions and policies whenever possible. Johnson also recommends openly supporting others who step off the path of least resistance and by refusing to police binary gender roles. Similarly, whenever possible, avoid unthinkingly performing traditional gender roles in personal or professional relationships out of habit or fear of social sanction. Simply choosing not to participate in oppressive practices sets an example and normalizes egalitarian alternatives, making it easier for others to follow a similar path. Johnson notes that it is likely impossible to change the hearts and minds of outright misogynists who insist that women fulfill subordinate gender roles in society, but personal choices subverting these roles now will result in well-trod alternative pathways that provide different options for these same misogynists' children and grandchildren years later.[63]

In addition, scholars argue that familiarity with critical theory, which focuses on achieving the normative ideals of justice and equality, plays an important role in guiding efforts to restructure society.

Critical Theory, Feminist Theory, and Feminist Activism

The term *theory* is typically linked to natural sciences like biology, chemistry, and physics. When a series of related hypotheses are supported by careful empirical observations—or data—they are used to develop a broader explanation—or **theory**—about how the world works. When social scientists began using the same careful research methods to describe and explain human activity and to develop theories of their own, some scholars became concerned that their empirical, descriptive findings would further disguise the social construction of reality, reinforcing perceptions that the status quo is natural and inevitable. These critics feared that empirical social science was "in danger of reifying social phenomenon," and that it "all too frequently ends by confusing its own conceptualization for the laws of the universe."[64] Their solution was to argue for an interdisciplinary approach, integrating philosophy's normative concern with empirical social science research methods.

This interdisciplinary approach is referred to as **critical theory**. When the term Critical Theory is capitalized, it refers to the Frankfurt School—a group of like-minded scholars in 1930s Germany who developed and promoted this approach, along with their students. Specifically, the neo-Marxist scholars associated with the Frankfurt School believed that their work should identify and help to overcome all of the circumstances that limit human freedom. These circumstances, they argued, were the result of **ideologies** (another word for world views) that justified economic and social oppression. They believed social scientists were

responsible not only for identifying these oppressive social constructions (i.e., institutions, practices, beliefs, and norms) but also responsible for recommending strategies to change them. When critical theory is not capitalized, it refers to the numerous philosophical traditions that do not have specific links to a scholar affiliated with the Frankfurt School but that adopt a similar approach—and that developed a way to address a wide array of underpinning reasons why people are oppressed. These include **neo-Marxism**, which emphasizes the consequences of organizing societies around class status; **critical race theory** and **postcolonial criticism,** which address the effects of being non-white and non-Western on individual freedom; **queer theory and transgender theory,** which address the effects of not conforming to heteronormative assumptions about sexual orientation and gender identity on individual freedom; and of most relevance to this particular book, **feminist theory,** which focuses on the effects of biological sex and gender identity on individual freedom.

Types of Feminist Theory

Of course, given the way that cross-cutting identities create a wide variety of women's experiences, there are also many distinct categories of critical feminist theory—so many that students can take semester-long college courses dedicated to learning about these varied approaches. Hence, the summary provided below is only intended to give a broad overview of these often overlapping—but sometimes contradictory—recommendations for how to best eliminate women's subordination across the globe.

Perhaps the most familiar feminist theory is **liberal feminism**, sometimes called mainstream feminism. Liberal feminism, most associated with women's suffrage and women's rights movements in Western democracies like the United States and England, emphasizes equal standing and rights within an existing political and social structure. Liberal feminism's focus is on gaining access to, and fair treatment within, these institutions rather than seeing the institutional structures themselves as a source of oppression. This leads those who embrace this approach to focus on specific legal and social reform. Examples of classic feminist contributions written from the liberal feminist perspective include Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, published in 1792, which argued that women should receive an education commensurate with their class status in society. Another is *The Declaration of Sentiments*, written primarily by Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1848 to proclaim that women had the same inalienable rights that Thomas Jefferson attributed to men in America's *Declaration of Independence*. A more modern example is the text of the proposed U.S. Equal Rights Amendment, which was almost ratified in the late 1970s and would have overturned laws that treat men and women differently. While this approach yielded important gains for women—such as the right to vote and legislation eliminating sex-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the

workplace—it has also been criticized for overlooking the root cause of oppression for all women and for prioritizing the agenda of white upper-class women whose racial and class privilege is linked to sustaining at least some aspects of the status quo.

This criticism must be taken seriously and must inform future waves of feminist activism. Yet, it is also important to realize how difficult it can be for women to make change in patriarchal systems at all if they are deprived of an education, financial independence, and legal rights. The women first able to advocate for these essential resources were often those who could leverage the privilege of their class and race, and, unfortunately, their intersectional experiences made it less likely that they would advocate for more fundamental changes. In addition, imagining a completely different reality than the one that has been constructed over thousands of years is difficult—even for the most visionary feminist. Envisioning a different world is even more unlikely in closed, homogeneous societies, where deviant groups are easily suppressed, contact with different cultures is limited, and socializing agents, such as parents, teachers, civic and political leaders, religious teachings, and so on, reinforce messages about the way the world should work. From this perspective, liberal or mainstream feminism, and the type of reforms it inspires, can provide a foundation upon which future activists can build. It took hundreds of years, with gradually shifting behaviors and beliefs, for the subordination of women to take root and for patriarchy to spread across the globe. Overturning it has required, and will continue to require, similar incremental changes that gradually shift the trajectory of civilization along a more egalitarian path.

In addition to liberal feminism, several versions of feminist theory address experiences of women based on different aspects of their intersectional identities. Traditional Marxist theorists believed that eliminating capitalism and exploitation of lower-class labor would end much of women's oppression. **Neo-Marxist and socialist feminists** often build on the connection between class status and sex to emphasize women's subordinate role within the domestic sphere and not simply the workplace. For example, they point out that patriarchal family units—where women's unpaid domestic labor enables men to be ideal workers focused exclusively on the workplace—is essential for sustaining capitalism. This concern over the effect of capitalism is mirrored by contemporary **transnational or global feminists**, who are concerned about the way globalization and global capitalism negatively affect women from different national, racial, and ethnic identities. Similarly, **ecofeminism** highlights the way societies motivated by a fear-control cycle are willing to exploit both natural resources (thereby damaging the environment) and women's reproductive labor (thus oppressing women) to build surpluses and bolster control. **Religious feminism** seeks to combine feminist discourses with the beliefs of a religious paradigm (see Box 1.6).

BOX 1.6: COMPARATIVE FEATURE

Islam, Sharia, and Feminist Thought

Many Americans and Europeans who fear the influence of Islam in Western societies view *sharia* law very negatively. In the media as well, ***sharia***, translated literally as "a path," comes across as uniform and immutable, thereby making *sharia* understood as a tradition that forces inequalities such as head coverings and underage marriage upon women. This textbox draws on Muslim feminist thought and casts *sharia* differently, as a path leading to a destination, which is restrictive to women in many instances but also diverse, complex, and dynamic. Because of the important role of law in the interpretation of *sharia*, in the following text, we clarify the practice of Muslim jurisprudence and its legal outcomes as they relate to family law (marriage, divorce, child custody, etc.), often also referred to as personal status law (marriage, divorce, and child custody but also including inheritance laws), which also ties into themes discussed in Chapter 7. In doing so, we become acquainted with the interpretation tools that Muslim feminist scholars want to use in order to push *sharia* law in a more empowering direction for women. Many Muslims worldwide support *sharia* law as the official law of the land (Afghanistan (99%), Iraq (91%), Pakistan (84%), Turkey (12%), Kazakhstan (10%), and Azerbaijan (8%). As a result, Muslim feminists believe that reform from within *sharia* law is more likely to empower and liberate women than a liberal tradition forced on Muslims from without.

What factors determine personal status laws in individual Muslim countries? The answer to this question rests on multiple variables: *sharia* law, legal interpretation, local political actors, and colonial influence, among others. Delineating what makes up *sharia* is our first task. *Sharia* is inspired by the Quran as well as the traditions associated with how the prophet Mohammed lived (*sunnah*). The *hadith* captures *sunnah*, as they are the evidence of Muhammad's actions as recorded by his associates. *Sharia* gives instructions on how to live, including hygiene, how to pray, and how to fast. *Sharia* law also covers more complex issues, like crime, economics, and politics, as well as ethical behavior, that is, how to treat others justly and do good.

How complex issues and ethics are understood requires interpretation. Whereas the Quran as a text originally put forth the main tenets of the law, Islam gradually developed more concrete rules over time. The major Sunni schools of jurisprudence were established in the ninth and tenth centuries, but they continue to evolve over time. They are the Hanafi, Mālikī, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools; the former two are considered more progressive than the latter two. Saudi Arabia, considered to be a very conservative country,

uses the Hanbali tradition; whereas Tunisia and Morocco, more progressive countries, follow the Mālikīte school. Several caveats are in order. First, the relative progressive or conservative nature of these schools in terms of women's rights is debatable. For example, Egypt is under Hanafite interpretation, considered to be more progressive, but, as of 2017, Egypt permitted *talaq*, a practice allowing a man to divorce his wife without a court proceeding by simply "saying 'you are divorced' three times."[65] Egyptian women, on the other hand, must seek divorces in court and are only granted them "under certain conditions such as domestic violence or illness."[66] Second, these legal traditions produce various outcomes depending on the interpretations of national and local actors. In this way, the law is diverse and dynamic even within schools.

The dynamic nature of *sharia* is best understood through the Muslim principle of *ijtihad*, namely the idea that a judge can use his own intellect and reasoning to come to new interpretations of issues to fit Quranic principles. This process can occur in Sunni and Shia contexts. According to Ali, *ijtihad* is an "exercise" that can "liberate Muslim thought from outmoded tribal shackles."[67] This exercise is both ancient and contemporary.

In more recent times, Muslim feminists have suggested that women's rights can be pursued as a matter of justice in Islam and new legal interpretations. Practices can change, they argue, as legal experts change *sharia* to meet modern social contexts. Particularly, feminists emphasize that the Quran imparts justice and equality, thus the lack of justice and equality in Muslim countries results from old patriarchal practices that, in their opinion, no longer belong in the faith. Practicing *ijtihad* requires a judge to have extensive legal training and a comprehensive understanding of ethics and justice. As such, the training for and practice of *ijtihad* has not been afforded to many women historically, which, in turn, means that feminist interpretations do not predominate. Moreover, *ijtihad* is not without backlash from fundamentalists who reject reinterpretations of the holy book of Quran. Though proponents of *ijtihad* see it as a way to reestablish a lost history of *sharia* dynamism, opponents see it as surrender to secular ideals, and particularly to the secularism and liberalism of the West.

Yet another interpretive tool in the Muslim tradition is *takhayyur*, which translates as "selection." This tool is used when a judge uses the "principles of one school alone or a range from different schools" to promote a new practice.[68] For example, Indian Muslims follow Hanafite interpretations, but they chose to follow rules from the Mālikī and Hanbali traditions when the Muslim Marriage Act 1939 was enacted and permitted women to seek divorces. According to Ali, "takhayyur has been of enormous significance in developing a number of women friendly codes of family laws in Muslim jurisdictions."[69]

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Morocco

Morocco's reforms of its personal status law over the last 30 years provide examples of how *sharia* law can be dynamic and improve women's lives depending on interpretation. The Morocco case also shows that a country's codified personal status law is a result of multiple variables, including the influence of political actors, protesters, and religious leaders. Morocco's personal status law became codified in 1958 and is referred to as the Moudawana. Previously, under French colonialism, Morocco followed Berber customary law, and it was considered a nationalist feat to develop laws based on *sharia* that embodied the new country's Islamic identity.[70] Ten religious scholars, all men, worked on the law, and it was based on traditional Mālikī jurisprudence. The law was disadvantageous to women in many ways, for example, permitting men to have multiple wives, giving fathers the ability to marry off daughters, and obliging women to obey their husbands. The law was criticized from the start, and women stepped up activism in the early 1990s to seek reform. A women's group collected over a million signatures to petition the king, and he sanctioned a commission to practice *ijtihad* on the Moudawana—which included "twenty male and one female religious scholars and one representative of the Royal Court."[71] The reform to the Moudawana in 1993 was not extensive and represented Mālikī standards, but it did, for example, require a woman to verbally give her consent to marriage.[72] Greater reforms to the Moudawana came in 2004 after a socialist minister, in 1999, proposed changes in line with the United Nations' women's rights standards. Some religious scholars repudiated the reforms, and citizens also protested at this point, some in favor of reform and others against it.[73] Also in 1999, King Mohammed VI followed his father to the throne and sought social and political change, and, to reform the Moudawana, he appointed a commission that included three women. This new commission, once again, practiced *ijtihad*. The Moudawana preamble now insists that reform comes from the heart of Islam itself as it "adheres to Islam's tolerant ends and objectives, namely justice, equality, solidarity, ijtihād and receptiveness to the spirit of our modern era and the requirements of progress and development."[74] Some of the changes made in 2004 include women no longer owe obedience to their husbands, women are allowed to sign contracts at marriage to establish community property, the marriage age of women was raised from 15 to 18 to be the same as that of men, and processes for seeking a divorce were standardized for women and men.[75]

Other feminist theories underscore the connection between sex and racial/ethnic identities. **Postcolonial and multiracial feminism** highlight the overlapping oppression experienced by non-Western and non-white women. They argue that women's experiences with oppression are not universal and that overlooking their lived experiences with racism is not only ethnocentric but

ignores discrimination against women through racial bias. **Black feminism**, which emerged in the 1970s to address the distinct version of oppression experienced by African American women, offers a similar intersectional approach that expanded to include not simply race and sex but all forms of oppression that affect women. Writer Barbara Smith, a prominent activist associated with the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO), defined feminism as "the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women: women of color, working class-women, poor women, disabled women, Jewish women, lesbians, old women—as well as white, economically-privileged, heterosexual women. Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement."[76] This definition's focus on eliminating all justifications for subordination and oppression in society corresponds to feminist scholar bell hooks's (see Box 1.7) argument that feminism must attempt to eradicate all social systems that lead to domination, including not simply patriarchy but also racism, imperialism, and capitalism.[77]

BOX 1.7: BELL HOOKS EXPLAINS HOW FEMINISM HELPS EVERYONE
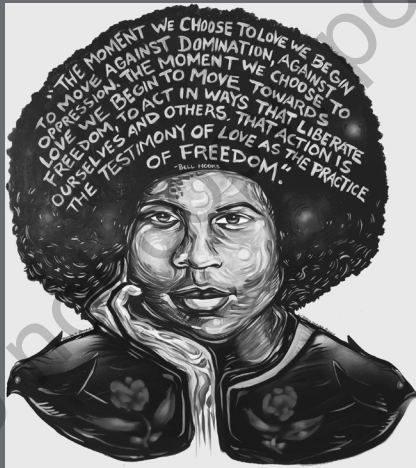
▶ **Photo 1.4** Mural of feminist scholar bell hooks, by Will Kasso Condry, community muralist and educator at Middlebury College in Vermont.

Contrary to some popular arguments, feminists and feminist theorists are not trying to reverse the position of men and women in patriarchal civilizations. They are not trying to displace men so that women can take over, to maintain a hierarchical society where women are privileged rather than subordinate. The fear that feminists want power and authority for themselves, rather than freedom for everyone, underscores how difficult it is to imagine and construct an alternative world. After 7,000 years of hierarchy, it is difficult to imagine a new world characterized by egalitarianism. Yet, many feminist scholars point out that

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men would also be better off in a world characterized by egalitarianism. Without a doubt, men are rewarded with privilege and status for performing masculine roles in patriarchal societies. But performing these roles comes at a cost.

According to feminist scholar bell hooks,[78] "The first act of violence that patriarchy demands of men is not violence toward women. Instead patriarchy demands of all men that they engage in psychic-mutilation, that they kill off the emotional parts of themselves. If an individual is not successful in emotionally crippling himself, he can count on patriarchal men to enact rituals of power that will assault his self-esteem."

To achieve "manhood" in a patriarchal society, sociologist Allan G. Johnson (2014) argues that boys must first sacrifice a portion of their humanity. They are praised (typically by other men) for devaluing and suppressing any emotion or reaction associated with women, and they are ridiculed when they do not. The result "precludes them from knowing true intimacy with other people, estranges them from their own feelings and the bodies through which feelings are felt, and denies them powerful inner resources for coping with stress, fear, and loss."[79] Expecting men to be in control at all times not only undermines their ability to feel empathy for those they are controlling, it encourages them to use violence, both to establish control and to avoid being controlled by others. Yet, the fear-control cycle established by using violence, or the threat of violence, to achieve control inevitably leads back to fear. Hence, "men's frequent complaints about their lives often reflect the patriarchal paradox that organizing yourself around control, power, and privilege usually makes you feel worse rather than better."[80]

Additional feminist approaches tend to emphasize what women have in common, rather than intersectional identities that result in different experiences. One of these approaches, **cultural feminism**, is more apt than liberal feminism to acknowledge essential differences between men and women but argues that female attributes have been undervalued and suppressed under patriarchy—and that the subordination of empathy, nurturing, and caring are at the core of oppression. Rather than working to change the status quo by seeking access to men-dominated institutions of government and power, however, cultural feminists often encourage the formation of separate, women-only spaces where women's culture—one that promotes an alternative world view— is more apt to flourish. Keep in mind that this approach, which emphasizes changing society through lifestyle choices over political reforms, was only possible after women first gained legal rights and economic independence through political activism.

Radical feminism is similarly focused on the root cause of all women's oppression, which it also identifies as patriarchal gendered relationships and the institutions that grew up around them. Indeed, the term *radical* is related to the Latin adjective *radicalis*, which simply meant "of or relating to a root," as well as the noun *radix*, which meant "root." Unlike cultural feminism, radical feminism argues that the patriarchal institutional structures that evolved to subordinate women and remove them from the public sphere must be eliminated—along with all other hierarchical institutional structures that oppress people based on their race, ethnicity, class, and ability—before feminists can achieve significant reform. They argue that all hierarchical institutional structures must be uprooted and replaced to dramatically improve all women's status in a more egalitarian society (see Box 1.8).

BOX 1.8: RADICAL FEMINISTS AND GENDER CONSTRUCTIVISM

The term *radical feminist* has recently been used in a different way by both feminist scholars and activists who developed the term **TERF**—which stands for trans-exclusionary radical feminist (see Chapter 2). Some now use the term *radical* in a more conventional way, to imply that feminists who embrace the social construction of gender but reject the social construction of sex—leading them to also reject transgender women's status as women—embrace an extreme and unacceptable version of feminism. Some **gender constructionists**, or feminists who question the social construction of sex, aggressively reject trans women and seek to exclude them from participation in the all-women spaces advocated by cultural feminists. This practice is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Conflict between **gender critical scholars**, who focus on the social construction of gender rather than the social construction of sex, and those who fully embrace the social construction of both sex and gender continues to play out in both academic and nonacademic settings. A British philosopher at the University of Sussex, Kathleen Stock, for example, recently published a statement expressing concern that potential differences of interest between cisgender (or "cis") and transgender (or "trans") women are not being addressed in the discipline's work, because those who embrace a gender critical approach are worried that they will be labeled TERFS and ostracized. On the other hand, her concerns have been

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criticized for not delving deeply enough into existing work in trans theory, as well as for being willing to consider an approach that invalidates people's identity and lived experience. Prominent trans-scholar Rachel Williams, for example, noted that scholarship questioning trans women's status as women should be considered as problematic as if a queer theorist questioned whether homosexuality is immoral.[81]

This concern flared up recently when a group of scholars complained that the author of an article in the journal *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* used the term *TERF* as an ad hominem attack against all gender construction-ists and gender critical scholars rather than in general discussion. The author refused to apologize for her use of the term, noting that those who reject trans women's status as women to deny them access to women-only spaces, services, and protection deserve to be labeled as bigots.[82] The problem some now have with the term *TERF* is that it has now been used in more aggressive ways outside of academia—to malign those who question whether sex is entirely socially con-structed, including lesbians who maintain that same-sex attraction is not equiva-lent to transphobia, as well as women who believe that much of the oppression of women is sex-based and who do not want to erase discussions of cis women's bodies and biological functions from feminist activism.[83] These tensions played out in the aftermath of the Women's March, an issue we discuss in depth in Chapters 2 and 9. One feminist scholar responded to these concerns, arguing that the next stage of the women's movement should focus on an issue that unites all women, such as the assumption that people who present feminine gender identi-ties are often assumed to be incompetent.[84]

Gender critical feminists, on the other hand, express concern that this focus will displace activism grounded in anatomy and biological functions, which has been at the core of many women's activism in the past. Throughout most of recorded history, women often had no bodily autonomy or right to refuse sex and no access to reliable contraception, which meant they had no control over how many times they became pregnant and gave birth. Limited access to consent and contraception are still issues for many women, even more so in developing coun-tries than in the United States. Similarly, while women in the United States are mobilizing around the high cost of feminine hygiene products—sometimes called the tampon tax—menstruation has far more damaging consequences in develop-ing countries. In places where women lack access to feminine hygiene products, girls often drop out of school after their periods start.[85] In other places, menstru-ating women are still considered unclean and are not allowed to sleep inside their

families' homes. This practice is still common in rural Nepal, for example, where a young, menstruating woman recently died of smoke inhalation after warming her outdoor hut with a fire.[86] According to the United Nations, approximately 303,000 women die in childbirth each year, many from complications that could be avoided with access to adequate medical care.[87]

Some gender critical feminists, even those who want to be inclusive allies to trans women, worry that avoiding conversations about the connection between sex and biological functions will mean these types of issues will no longer receive adequate attention. Others acknowledge the traumatic effects of living with **gender dysphoria**, or the distress individuals experience when there is a mismatch between the sex assigned at their birth and their gender identity, but emphasize that trans women and cis women have different lived experiences that both deserve empathy and attention. Cis women have not struggled with gender dysphoria and have not risked being ostracized or violently attacked for presenting themselves as women. But they have experienced a lifetime of day-in-and-day-out gender socialization that reinforces intrinsic gender identity and penalizes them for failing to behave in appropriately feminine ways. Gender critical feminists worry that the language around the social construction of sex undermines this aspect of the social construction of gender. They are dismayed by prominent trans women's claims—such as Caitlyn Jenner's and Chelsea Manning's—that they have women's brains trapped in men's bodies. Yet, for centuries, feminists grounded their claim to equal treatment in the argument that behavioral differences result largely from socialization and institutionalized sexism and that there is no such thing as a "man's" brain or a "woman's" brain. Gender critical scholars embrace the social construction of gender. Unlike cultural feminists, they reject **gender essentialism**, or the belief that men and women have inherently different (i.e., "natural") interests, traits, and abilities. They worry that descriptions of men's and women's brains reinforces the binary gender roles and stereotyped assumptions about men and women that should be dismantled. Unlike the most hostile gender constructionists, many of these feminists believe in fighting violence and discrimination against trans people, even if they question whether all aspects of biological sex are mutable.

The concept of intersectionality serves as a tool for bridging these differences. Transgender and cisgender women have different lived experiences, which may lead them to prioritize fighting different types of discrimination and marginalization. **Intersectional feminism**, which focuses on building understanding, empathy, and allies across such differences, allows scholars and activists to focus on eliminating all forms of oppression rather than elevating one over the other.

Radical feminism more directly addresses the dilemma of critical theories grounded in acceptance of the claim that reality is, to a large extent, socially constructed and reified through institutional structures. The dilemma is that challenging gender norms in everyday lives does not necessarily immediately alter the social structure. Yet, gaining access to the social structure, in order to promote reforms that promote equality, typically requires some level of conformity with prescribed gender roles to achieve influence. Individual actions and institutional structures reinforce each other in ways that make achieving radical change in one fell swoop quite difficult. Indeed, a common criticism of ground-breaking women who do manage to achieve influential positions within prominent institutions—whether these are business, government, educational, or religious organizations—is that they are reluctant to sacrifice their hard-fought status by advocating for substantial feminist reforms, especially when the response to their efforts is likely to be social sanction and loss of their own status instead of change. Reform is more apt to take place when women hold a threshold of positions in a given institution, rather than a single, prominent position. Hence, aside from more dramatic shifts accomplished through social movements, advances for women often come slowly. That said, we recognize that the worldviews underpinning the social construction of reality can change. They may not only change in ways that advance equality but also in ways that erode equality between men and women—as recent backlashes that attempt to reinvigorate binary gender roles and strict division of labor make clear. This knowledge motivates feminist scholars and activists to remain vigilant.

The point of this overview is not to encourage readers to pick which versions of feminist theory are "right" and which are "wrong." What is important is to realize that while different traditions within feminist theory disagree about how to promote equality and how to eliminate oppression, they do agree on the common goal of creating a more egalitarian world. At the close of this chapter, we hope that you now recognize the intentional play on words embedded in the title of this book, which poses the question *Why Don't Women Rule the World?* The history of patriarchy provides in-depth understanding of why women have been denied positions of authority as "rulers" in most civilizations around the world. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that feminists do not simply want women to displace men as rulers in the hierarchical governing structures that spread across the globe 7,000 years ago. Rather, feminists aspire to replace hierarchy with egalitarianism and reject the notion that anyone—man or woman, binary or nonbinary—should have the authority to rule over others.

CONCLUSION

The remaining chapters in the book relay many empirical findings describing women's political attitudes and political behavior—often revealing the way they differ from each other across racial, ethnic, class, and religious lines but also the way they differ from men. When reviewing this data—especially when stark

patterns between the sexes emerge—it is tempting to resort to gender essentialism as an explanation. The subordination of women takes place in regions and nations across the globe that otherwise may seem quite different from one another. A knee-jerk reaction could be to simply infer that women really are different and the opposite of men, that they just simply prefer to direct their attention to the domestic sphere, and that they are either uninterested in politics or unprepared to wield political power. Yet, reaching this simplistic conclusion means the reader has failed to heed the social constructionists' warning—that empirical data should not be unquestioningly used to endorse world views that evolved to justify inequality and oppression. Familiarity with the intertwined origins of patriarchy and agriculture in the Neolithic era, combined with an overview of feminist theory, is intended to encourage readers to seek alternative explanations for women's status in society than the ones offered by the dominant culture. Rather than using social science data to infer that the status quo is somehow natural and inevitable, poke and prod at the data from various feminist perspectives to see what it reveals about women's status in civilizations across the globe. Follow the lead of historian Judith Bennett (2006), who argues that evidence of women's ongoing subordination—or what she describes as the **patriarchal equilibrium** that emerges when the means of oppressions shift to sustain women's second-class status in societies over long periods of time—speaks more to patriarchy's resilience and ability to adapt to changing circumstances than it does to the natural order of society.[88] The authors of this book agree with critical theorists, firmly believing that social science research should be used to promote freedom from oppression rather than to bolster ideologies that justify enslaving people, and we hope this introductory chapter has encouraged our readers to embrace this agenda along with us.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

Each chapter explores concepts not only from a U.S. perspective but also from a comparative perspective. This comparative feature should increase readers' awareness of their own intersectional identities (across nationalities, ethnicities, class, and cultures) as well as the common and varying effects of patriarchy on women worldwide. Each chapter also has a policy feature, focusing on one or two policy areas. These policy areas are highlighted throughout the chapter, including in the comparative element. Attention to public policy matters a great deal, as even subtle changes in the law can gradually shift patterns of behavior enough to yield major social and cultural transformations years later. Legal scholar Catharine A. MacKinnon (2017) describes this effect as **butterfly politics**, arguing that just as the flutter of a butterfly wing can trigger change in chaos theory, even minor shifts in law and public policy can trigger a chain of events that lead to a completely different world over time.[89] Finally, each chapter concludes with review questions, designed to highlight key concepts and information relayed

throughout the chapter, along with ambition activities, with prompts purposefully intended to bolster political interest, efficacy, and ambition. The inclusion of these activities is a direct response to recent research by Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox (2014) revealing that the gap between men and women in political ambition in the United States first emerges among college students and calling on higher education to be far more proactive in bolstering young women's political interest and ambition.[90]

Chapter 2 continues to explore the historical status of women as antecedents to today's understandings of feminisms and women's place in politics. This chapter addresses patriarchy, along with prominent feminist critiques of its effects. We discuss First, Second, and Third Wave feminism in this chapter.

Chapter 3 shifts our focus to contemporary public opinion. We explore theories of opinion formation as well as how our understanding of gender and sex influences policy opinion and gaps between men and women in opinion and political interest. Comparatively, we explore reproductive rights around the world, and for the policy features, we examine reproductive rights as well as sex differences in opinions about terrorism/counterterrorism policy.

Chapter 4 examines political ambition and candidate emergence, asking if there is a gap in men's and women's willingness to run for political office. The chapter unpacks why a gap in political ambition first emerges among college-aged women and men in the United States, as well as why women are still reluctant to become candidates despite gaining access to educational and professional opportunities that were only available to men prior to the activism of the second wave. The chapter's comparative feature details women's levels of political ambition around the globe, while the policy feature explores efforts to reduce violence against women in general and against women politicians in particular. The chapter further explores how ongoing socialization into traditional gender roles along with institutional features and public policy interact in ways that affect women's levels of political ambition.

Chapter 5 explores women's experiences as candidates. It notes that when women run, they are just as likely to win as men in similar electoral contexts, and partisan polarization means that voters are more reliant on party cues than sex and gender cues when casting their ballots. Yet, the chapter also explores how women experience campaigning differently and must still overcome obstacles, ranging from difficulty fund-raising and gaining their respective parties' support to sexism and misogyny on the campaign trail. Implications of the sheer number of women who ran in 2018, as well as their willingness to break away from campaign styles that encouraged women to downplay sex differences and imitate men, are also addressed.

Chapter 6 looks at the representation of women in legislatures. We examine theories for why women should be represented, and we define the different types of representation that legislators can offer women citizens. We also present data about the number of women in legislatures in the United States and around

the world. In making a comparison to countries other than the United States, we develop a conversation about why certain electoral systems and rules more successfully advance women's representation. The policy features in this chapter address the role of legislatures in debates about abortion and human trafficking. One comparative feature expands our discussion of electoral rules, and the other presents data about the representation of women in local governments.

Chapter 7 is an examination of executive institutions and the women represented in them. This chapter first discusses the masculine expectations of executive leadership and how the public and media judge women negatively for lacking masculine attributes and for acting in ways that display emotions associated with femininity. An analysis of representation looks at women as presidents, prime ministers, cabinet secretaries, governors, mayors, and as bureaucrats in women's policy agencies. This analysis focuses on the United States and also draws on examples from the rest of the world. The policy issues in this chapter are poverty and foreign policy, and the comparative features discuss Latin American women presidents and women's policy agencies in Spain and France.

Chapter 8 analyzes the judiciary as it relates to women's representation and influence. We document the presence of women in the legal profession and in judicial institutions, and we discuss the perspective of feminist jurisprudence. We ask how women judges influence rulings, and our policy features look at employment discrimination and policies influenced by intersectional oppression. The comparative features in this chapter present information on different kinds of legal systems found worldwide and specifically the common law and civil law systems. We also debate the influence and importance of women on international courts in a comparative feature.

Chapter 9 examines interest groups (social movements), with a focus on women's movements. We focus on definitional aspects of women's movements and feminist movements and examine how groups act and why they act differently under different institutional settings. Comparatively, we explore the difference between groups in the United States and in Germany and also action under authoritarian societies like Saudi Arabia. We also examine the use of the maternal discourse in the politics of women's movements to understand why groups would choose to engage a maternal framing and explore such framing among Black Lives Matter and peace groups.

Chapter 10 reflects on findings across the array of subjects covered in these preceding chapters, allowing readers to assess for themselves the balance between patriarchy's ongoing legacy and women's progress toward equality, both in the United States and across the globe. In addition, it outlines specific steps that readers can take to promote a more equal world, which include acknowledging that various versions of patriarchy still exist, listening to women's concerns even when they sound angry, using post-2016 activism as an opportunity to practice listening, monitoring backlash and progress to update priorities, and taking action to advance this agenda.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Consider the link between patriarchy and the spread of labor-intensive agriculture across the globe. Was the spread of patriarchy, described by Friedrich Engels as "the historic defeat of the female sex," inevitable? How do the handful of matristic societies that still exist manage to survive? Does their success provide any insights into how to dismantle contemporary patriarchies?

2. Explain the fear-control cycle that Allan G. Johnson and others argue is the root cause of patriarchy. Do you think that the fear-control cycle still affects the everyday lives of men in the United States and in other countries? Do you think it affects decisions of nation-states and international relations? How much does the fear-control cycle still affect the world we live in today?

3. Some people argue that women in the United States and other well-established democracies now have more behavioral latitude than men. After several waves of the women's movement, they have more freedom to make choices about the way that they dress, the type of careers they pursue, and the way they express themselves than do most men. Should men engage in similar activism, to break down assumptions about acceptable male behavior and masculinity? Given that masculinity has historically needed femininity as a foil, would this type of activism also benefit women? Sociologist Allan G. Johnson argues that men have not been more proactive in dismantling restrictive gender roles and stereotypes because even though patriarchy exacts a painful cost from them, it also rewards them with status and privilege. Do you agree that this is why men have not been more active in dismantling patriarchy? Why, or why not?

4. Now that you have learned about the social construction of reality, can you identify aspects of your own life that you have experienced as "reified" or believed were "real" and "inevitable," when they are truly socially constructed? Does this recognition give you insights about the ability to make changes in the way we collectively construct our world?

5. How are feminist transformations of *sharia* law taking place in Muslim countries similar to women's efforts to overcome patriarchal legacies in Western culture? How are they different?

6. This chapter reviews a wide array of feminist theories and approaches, ranging from liberal feminism to radical feminism. Which theory or theories do you think currently provide the most insight into the obstacles that must be overcome to achieve a more egalitarian world? Explain your choices.

AMBITION ACTIVITIES

Dismantling Systems of Oppression by Building Alliances and Taking Action:
Overcoming patriarchy requires active intervention in our social and political systems.
Yet, feminist activism is hard to cultivate, in part because intersectionality discourages women from identifying with one another and in part because all men—even if they are discriminated against because they are also gay, disabled, poor, or belong to a minority racial/ethnic group—benefit from men's privilege under the status quo. How can people build alliances and work together to address many systems of oppression? Recall Allan G. Johnson (2014), the author of *The Gender Knot*, encourages students to take action in small, humble, and do-able ways ranging from acknowledging that patriarchy exists and taking the complaints of marginalized people seriously, to actively supporting people who violate prescribed gender roles in their private and professional lives, up through engaging in collective action or running for public office in order to challenge oppressive practices or policies.

Given these ideas for action,

1. ***Think to yourself***: Who are you in terms of gender identity (female, nonbinary, gender fluid, or male?), and how do your identities and experiences relate to gender and sex-based discrimination and feminism? Do you have a cross-cutting trait, such as being transgender, of color, from the working class, or disabled? What systems of oppression affect you most acutely, and which ones are you most likely to work actively against? Which type of activism, to overcome a specific type of oppression, is not as close to your heart, and why? How do the oppressions you experience overlap with or overlook the oppressions of others?

2. ***By yourself or with a group, list actions:*** Make a list of all the things you actually could imagine doing to reduce the influence of a given system of oppression. Consider how these actions help to overcome patriarchy, the subordination of women, and other kinds of oppression. Rank these actions from the most risky to the least. Start with the least risky and set reasonable goals for the next few months. As long as you are doing something, it counts!

3. ***Discuss how your list of actions addresses intersectionality and multiple systems of oppression***: Which types of privilege/oppression did you decide to tackle first, and why? To what extent does your list of actions appeal to many people, making them willing to participate in feminist activism? In what ways does your list of actions cultivate allies across intersections of oppression that typically divide people into separate groups?

4. ***Keep track of your list***: Throughout the semester, add or subtract activities from the list as your ideas about feminist activism evolve.

Recognizing and "Preventing" Sexual Assault: In 2018 a table went viral on social media that depicted the disparity between how women and men think about sexual assault and its prevention. Crediting earlier feminist work for giving him the inspiration, Dr. Jackson Katz, co-founder of Mentors in Violence Prevention, asks attendees at his lectures to report what they do daily to prevent sexual assault. He presents women's and men's daily strategies to prevent assault in a table, which is widely available online by searching for the following terms: Jackson Katz viral sexual assault prevention table. One column of the table presents answers from men and the other answers from women. The column listing men's responses includes just one simple answer: "Nothing. I don't think about it."[91] The column with women's responses lists, among many others: "Don't go jogging at night;" "Park in well-lit areas;" "Lock my car doors as soon as I get in the car;" "Watch what I wear;" and "Make sure I see my drink being poured."[92] The disparity between the two columns reveals the fear of assault that women live with daily, and the many more things they do to "prevent" assault.

In posts on Facebook and Twitter, Katz's exercise is often accompanied by the following quotation that captures the sentiment of women who always face the possibility of assault: "That, my friends, is what it's like to be thought of as prey."[93] Katz's viral table, therefore, illustrates how the sexual contract described by Carole Pateman continues to influence people's lives. That is, Pateman too draws attention to the fact that women are subjected to unwanted sexual attention and abuse, and that they face this threat on a regular basis. According to the US Center for Disease Control's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, as well as the 2015 US Transgender Survey, those who identify within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum experience higher levels of sexual assault than cisgender heterosexuals. Elevated rates of assault occur because LGBTQIA+ people are more apt to experience poverty and marginalization, and to be stereotyped as hypersexual, all of which place them at risk. They are also more apt to be targets of hate crimes, which often include an element of sexual assault.[94,95]

Go online and find Katz's viral table and then discuss its contents. Are the "prevention" strategies he lists shocking to you or are they familiar, and in what ways? If you are LGBTQIA+, do you use tactics similar to those used by cisgender and heterosexual women? Choose two strategies women tend to use and discuss the last time you used them. When and from whom did you learn to practice these strategies? What will it take, in your opinion, for all people to be able to live safely without using these strategies? Who is responsible for making necessary changes and why? Use this discussion to think about the types of activities you would be willing to add to the list you began developing in the previous activity.

Recognizing and Dismantling Unfair Practices in the Workplace: In workshops about sex discrimination in the workplace, Allan G. Johnson (2014) asks participants to brainstorm four lists, first identifying the advantages and then identifying the disadvantages that men and women experience at work. Either alone or in groups, replicate this exercise. In addition to Johnson's initial four lists, consider the way

intersectional identities and being LGBTQIA+ might affect these advantages and disadvantages. Discuss the items on your lists, looking for similarities and differences. What, if anything, should be done to ensure that all people have similar experiences at work? Whose responsibility is it to advocate for those changes? Use this exercise as an opportunity to practice the simple acts that Johnson recommends. Listen attentively and take the concerns of women and marginalized people seriously. Consider ways to support people who violate traditional gender role expectations in the workplace, as well as whether such activities create an alternative pathway that others will be able to follow. Consider whether collective action would help achieve changes in policies and practices that affect people at work. Use this exercise to think about adding items to the list of activities you began keeping in the first Ambition Activity.

KEY WORDS

Binary gender categories 2

Black feminism 29

Booty capitalism 17

Butterfly politics 35

Cisgender women 1

Complementarian 6

Critical race theory 24

Critical theory 23

Cultural feminism 30

Deviant groups 22

Ecofeminism 25

Enlightenment 18

Exchange of Women 8

Fear-control cycle 17

Feminist theory 24

Gender constructionists 31

Gender critical scholars 31

Gender dysphoria 33

Gender essentialism 33

Gender gap 1

Group consciousness 13

Ideologies 23

Intersectional feminism 33

Intersectionality 13

Liberal feminism 24

Matricentries 4

Matristic societies 4

Neolithic Age 7

Neo-Marxism 24

Neo-Marxist and socialist feminists 25

Patriarchal equilibrium 35

Patriarchies 2

Postcolonial and multiracial
    feminism 28

Postcolonial criticism 24

Prehistory 7

Primary socialization 21

Queer theory and transgender
    theory 24

Radical feminism 31

Reification 21

Religious feminism 25

Secondary socialization 21

Sharia 26

Social construction of reality 21

Subordination 7

Talaq 27

TERF 31

Theory 23

Transnational or global feminists 25

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