CONSEQUENCES OF AND SOLUTIONS FOR INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION

LEARNING GOALS

After reading this chapter, you will be able to understand:

- Definitions of inequality and discrimination
- The organizational barriers to leadership as reflected in the Four Domains Framework, including constraints, hostility, and salary inequity
- Intersectionality and how the interconnections among multiple identities (e.g., race, gender) apply to an individual
- A framework for promoting gender equity

INTRODUCTION

According to a 2018 Gallup poll, more than 70% of voters said “the treatment of women in U.S. society” is an important issue (Newport, 2018). This topic comes ahead of climate change and the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election. Of all the pressing matters about which citizens could be concerned, the treatment of women being top of mind provides a glimpse into why this chapter is relevant. You may be curious as to why this topic is prevalent among voters and some of the reasons will be outlined in this chapter.

Inequality and discrimination occur every day, in every sector, and in a whole host of societal groups, including corporations, nonprofits, religious institutions, clubs/organizations, and even in families. The organizational domain of the Four Domain Framework encompasses inequality and discrimination, which form major barriers for women in leadership. In this chapter, we will focus first on defining the terms *inequality* and *discrimination*, as well as explain how they come into play in a variety of settings. From lower pay for equal work, to bias against mothers, to women demeaning other women for scant available leadership jobs, examples will be given to demonstrate how they impact women’s careers and leadership advancement.

Explicit and implicit associations will be explained and readers will be encouraged to explore their own biases. Despite laws explicitly prohibiting such behaviors, as well
as initiatives that are aimed at preventing these activities, inequality and discrimination are alive and well in the 21st century. Not only does discrimination rob a person of their creativity, but in very real terms, it deprives a woman of their income and lifelong earning potential, let alone their personal well-being and self-efficacy. Finally, we will share a framework to celebrate and promote gender equity.

DEFINING INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination based on gender is not nearly as blatant as it once was; it now manifests in more hidden ways than before (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2003). Barriers, seen and unseen, disadvantage women who want to be leaders and preclude them from adding benefits to the organizations in which they work and also from reaching their full potential. You may be wondering what these barriers look like in the 21st century. After all, it has been 100 years since many women won the right to vote and the Civil Rights Act passed in 1964. One might assume (incorrectly) that we are far beyond such impediments. First, let’s define the terms.

Equality and equity are words that sound quite similar, but in this book, we look at them somewhat differently. We define equality as the treatment of people in equal ways. It could be the case that some people were disadvantaged and did not get a fair start in the world. The idea is that everyone should be treated the same way. This is contrasted with equity, which is predicated on the notion that people should be treated fairly, but perhaps not equally. Equity assumes that people do not have a level playing field, and to create justice in the world, some people deserve a little bit more, depending on the situation. Practices are fair, but maybe not equal.

“Gender equality is achieved when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of whether they are a woman or a man” (Healey, 2014, p. i). Therefore, gender inequality occurs when women are held back or unable to attain the same benefits as men in organizations, institutions, etc., even when they are equally qualified. There are various reasons that gender inequality may arise, some of which are due to cultural norms or specific workplace systems and structures that are in place that favor men (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). As discussed in Chapter 6, these subtle, invisible barriers are known as second-generation gender bias, as opposed to the more blatant forms of sex discrimination that women experienced earlier and mostly have been deemed illegal. Second-generation gender bias is embedded and often goes unnamed or unrecognized by both women and men in present-day organizations.

When considering the word discrimination, it is “a subtle pattern of systemic disadvantage, which blocks all but a few women from career advancement” (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2003, p. 231). It often produces negative outcomes for women when considering authority, wages, and occupational opportunities (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). For example, women often have more responsibilities for childcare, eldercare, and chores
in the home than men have (Treas & Drobnic, 2010). If a woman's job necessitates that she always be available to her employer whether through after-hours meetings or weekend commitments, there are many who have challenges meeting this expectation. In this system or structure that is espoused by the employer, women may be seen as less invested in their careers if they state they need time to take care of home, life, and family matters. It is not an intentional barrier that the organization has put into place but rather a holdover practice that makes it more difficult for women or men to succeed when they have family responsibilities.

According to Meyerson and Fletcher (2003), a barrier such as the previous example stems from an earlier time when mostly men were the ones employed outside the home and had stay-at-home wives to care for domestic tasks. Although a heterosexual example was used, same-sex couples also struggle with balancing home and work responsibilities. Though times have changed and we see both women and men in the workforce, the societal norms in many businesses and organizations still reflect a male-based culture that illustrates work patterns from an earlier period in our country. Neither men nor women are to blame for these norms, but organizations often try to “fix” women to help them blend in or acculturate to the male-normed workplace cultures.

Barriers based on women's ethnicity or race are still prevalent in the 21st century. Research on specific ethnic groups provides insight into the barriers that are faced by each. For example, Giscombe and Mattis (2003) report that women of color face double marginalization due to their “gender and minority group status” (p. 8). African American women face a lack of acceptance of their leadership, experience negative stereotyping, and are often excluded from organizational networks. Philomena Essed (1991) defined the term gendered racism as “racial oppression of Black women as structured by racist and ethnicist perceptions of gender roles” (p. 31). The term double jeopardy has also been used to describe this twofold penalty Black women face (Beale, 1970). Regarding Hispanic and Asian women, they are often included in informal networks, but they are stereotyped. Hispanic women are seen as unintelligent and too emotional for managerial positions. Although Asian women are seen as intelligent, they are stereotyped as too passive and reserved for management (Giscombe & Mattis, 2003).

It is clear that women are not one, large monolithic group and in addition to the aforementioned discrimination based on race, those in marginalized groups based on sexual orientation, disability, or gender also face harsh treatment. Race, gender, class—all of these elements may join together into interlocking oppressions, or macro-level connections, to disadvantage people (Collins et al., 1995). According to Collins et al. (1995), these connections link together to create the structures that enable social positions in society. As noted in Chapter 2, the term intersectionality has captured the ways various oppressions may come together, especially in micro levels of individuals and groups (Crenshaw, 1989). This concept of multiple oppressive elements coming together will be highlighted throughout this chapter.
LEADER PROFILE 7.1
JUDITH HEUMANN

Battles were waged and some have been won, not with guns and ammunition, but with the voices and determination of those who use wheelchairs, crutches, and other devices to make their way in the world. Judith (Judy) Heumann, an advocate for people with disabilities, was a leader in the effort to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Heumann & Joiner, 2020). She has worked her entire life as an activist for civil liberties and disability rights in numerous sectors, including governmental, nonprofit, and nongovernmental organizations (Heumann, 2018).

Born in 1947 in Brooklyn, New York, Heumann contracted polio in 1949, which caused her to become a quadriplegic and use a wheelchair since she was a child (Heumann & Joiner, 2020). At first, she was refused admittance to public schools because she was considered a hazard if there were a fire. After receiving her undergraduate degree, she was initially denied a teaching license and after a lawsuit, she became the first person using a wheelchair to teach in New York City (NYC) (Disability Action Center, n.d.).

Heumann graduated from Long Island University in 1969 and from the University of California at Berkeley in 1975. One of Heumann’s first leadership positions was as deputy director at the center for Independent Living (CIL). One of her key early initiatives was leading the fight for the signing of Section 504 regulations of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibited discrimination by any organization receiving federal funds. After sit-ins in San Francisco, California, and Washington, DC, in which Heumann not only participated but also helped organize, the measure was signed by Health, Education, and Welfare secretary Joseph Califano in 1977 (Heumann & Joiner, 2020). She continued to work with colleagues from CIL in cofounding the World Institute on Disability where she worked until 1993.

Heumann served as assistant secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the Department of Education in the Clinton administration from 1993 to 2001. She traveled internationally to promote civil rights and became a recognized leader in the disability rights community. She worked for the World Bank as an advisor on disability and development. Later, President Obama appointed her to a post in the U.S. Department of State as the first special advisor for international disability rights, a position she held from 2010 to 2017.

Judith Heumann was born in an era when people with disabilities did not have laws to rely on, nor many of the advantages we take for granted today. From accessible sidewalks, transportation, and buildings, to education and employment opportunities, people with disabilities faced a systemic pattern of bias and were treated as second-class citizens. The discrimination Heumann experienced went beyond gender to include her physical disability—another example of intersectionality and interlocking oppressions.

Thanks to the work and leadership of Heumann, many people can achieve their goals and live with dignity today. For her commitment and dedication, she has received numerous awards and multiple honorary degrees from colleges across the country (Disability Action Center, n.d.). Most recently, Heumann worked as a senior advisor at the Ford Foundation where she advocated for people with disabilities and their inclusion in the media (Heumann, 2018). She is married to Jorge Pineda and lives in Washington, DC (Heumann & Joiner, 2020).
NAMING THE BARRIERS TO LEADERSHIP

According to research by Catalyst (2017), the majority of women and men believe that gender equality is needed but unfortunately, the majority of people believe we have already achieved it. If gender inequity is so prevalent, then why do most people think that it is not an issue? Again, Catalyst (2017) identified three reasons: (a) Most of us want to believe the world is fair; (b) Gender barriers are subtle; and (c) It may be uncomfortable for people to talk about issues of inequality. From prior chapters, you already know that the world does not treat women and men fairly, especially when it comes to leadership. We will now discuss the barriers and the ways in which they appear invisible.

With the myriad barriers that women face to become leaders, especially in the workplace, being able to see and name them becomes extremely valuable. To help make the invisible gender barriers visible, Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) developed a system

![Gender-Based Leadership Barriers by Level of Society](image)

**FIGURE 7.1** Gender-Based Leadership Barriers by Level of Society

**Macro**
- Control of Women’s Voices
- Cultural Constraints of Woman’s Own Choices
- Gender Stereotypes
- Gender Unconsciousness
- Leadership Perceptions
- Scrutiny

**Meso**
- Devaluing of Communal Practice
- Discrimination
- Exclusion From Informal Networks
- Glass Cliff
- Lack of Mentoring
- Lack of Sponsorship
- Lack of Support
- Male Gatekeeping
- Male Organizational Culture
- Organizational Ambivalence
- Queen Bee Effect
- Salary Inequality
- Tokenism
- Two-Person Career Structure
- Unequal Standards
- Workplace Harassment

**Micro**
- Communication Style Constraints
- Conscious Unconsciousness
- Personalizing
- Psychological Glass Ceiling
- Work-Life Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Macro Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Constraints of Women’s Own Choices</td>
<td>Societal gender norms dictate the roles women will hold in society</td>
<td>Women will consider professions that align with nurturing or caring: teaching, nursing, or human resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Unconsciousness</td>
<td>Conscious or unconscious refusal to accept that gender plays a role in how women are treated in the workplace or society</td>
<td>When women are not successful, critics say women did not work hard enough—they do not believe in systems or structures that hold women back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny</td>
<td>Everyone will watch to see how a woman leader will behave in certain situations. It goes beyond sincere interest to include intense criticism</td>
<td>Colleagues of a woman leader intensely watch and critique them more so than they would a man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meso Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devaluing of Communal Practice</td>
<td>Expectation of masculine forms of leadership that does not give credence or support to communal activities</td>
<td>A subordinate tells a woman supervisor that she is not strong enough in her style of leadership because she asks others for their input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion from Informal Networks</td>
<td>When social events occur, especially outside of work, women are excluded</td>
<td>Women are not invited to the Saturday golf game where work discussions may take place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Organizational Culture</td>
<td>The norms of the organization favor masculine ways of doing things</td>
<td>Play “punching” a colleague on the arm or making lewd jokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Micro Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscious Unconsciousness</td>
<td>Choosing not to notice how gender has an effect in the workplace</td>
<td>A woman downplays that her gender worked against her even though she has gotten promoted. She does not admit that it was more difficult than it should have been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to explain 27 leadership barriers and the level of society in which they are most often found (See Figure 7.1). Although we will not discuss every barrier they have outlined, there are a few to which we want to call your attention in each of the three sections: macro, meso, and micro (See Table 7.1). Also keep in mind that some of these barriers are addressed in other parts of this textbook, such as gender stereotypes (Chapter 6) and work–life conflict (Chapter 8).

From this initial model, the underlying elements of the 27 barriers were reduced down to a six-factor model. The six-factor model includes (a) male privilege, (b) disproportionate constraints, (c) insufficient support, (d) devaluation, (e) hostility, and (f) acquiescence (Diehl, Stephenson, Dzubinski, & Wang, 2020). Although understanding all 27 are helpful, six main factors help to categorize the construct of gender bias into a more easily digestible number to look for and identify.

Now that you are aware of the seemingly invisible barriers at various levels in society, you can prepare yourself and your organizations to work against them. Knowledge is power and the first step is acknowledging that differences exist. Although it may seem overwhelming at times, being able to name these factors will allow us to work to find alternatives. Recommendations for possible solutions will be provided in Section III.

**PERSPECTIVES ON BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES**

A variety of obstacles prevent women from pursuing and/or succeeding in leadership. Though we cannot discuss all of them, it is helpful to understand some of them. Despite research that states women are just as capable as men in leadership, there are more roadblocks for women than for men. Factors within the organizational domain of the Four Domains Framework point to obstacles that women face, which may include constraints, hostility, and salary inequity as barriers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Glass Ceiling</td>
<td>Not valuing one's own abilities in leadership</td>
<td>When a woman tries to convince others that she's just not that good at being a leader and probably should not be promoted to a higher position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work–Life Conflict</td>
<td>Trying to strike a balance between being good at work and being a good family member and not believing one is doing a good job at either</td>
<td>A woman who routinely apologizes to her partner for working late during the week and on weekends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Copyright ©2021 by SAGE Publications, Inc. This work may not be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means without express written permission of the publisher.
LEADER PROFILE 7.2
MARSHA P. JOHNSON

A transgender woman activist who fought for the rights of the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning) community in New York City, Marsha P. Johnson is remembered for her generosity (Mayora, 2008) and kindness to transitioning people (Duberman, 1993). Her middle initial “P” stood for “Pay it no mind” (p. 188) as she liked to say when being asked questions she did not want to answer. Relentless about helping others like her, she assisted them in finding food, applying makeup as they learned to dress in drag, getting them jobs, and trying to prevent their arrests. Perhaps most famously, she is remembered for her role in initiating gay and trans liberation.

Born in 1944 in New Jersey, she started wearing women’s clothes (drag) when she was five years old (Mayora, 2008). She moved to NYC in her late teenage years and found respite with other members of the LGBTQ community. As illustrated in the Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) model depicted in Figure 7.1, Johnson experienced macro- and meso-level barriers. She faced stereotypes at the macro level and discrimination and lack of support at the meso level. Faced with these barriers, she sought to create a community where she would be accepted and wanted to share it with others. Because she was so passionate about having a place that allowed a group of transgender people to meet, some say she initiated the Stonewall Riots (Born, n.d.).

In June 1969, the Stonewall Inn in New York City was raided by police. The Inn was long known as a Mafia-owned dance club and a hangout for primarily the young and male: drag queens and gay men, among others (Carter, 2004). The raid itself was not unusual, as attacks on establishments visited by the LGBTQ community were common in the 1960s. At that time, New York statute required that women and men wear clothing that was appropriate for their gender (Duberman, 1993). This law was clearly discriminatory and New York City residents, especially those who identified as LGBTQ, wanted to change it. What was unique about Stonewall is that the patrons fought back the police and the riot lasted on and off for six days and began the gay and transgender rights movement in the United States. Although there were other, earlier initiatives for gay liberation, the Stonewall riots were pivotal. This movement demanded fair treatment and protection of people based on their sexual identities. Marsha P. Johnson is said to have been on the front lines of the fight with her yelling and throwing rocks (Born, n.d.).

After Stonewall, her generosity was well evidenced by the creation of STAR House by Johnson and Sylvia Rivera in 1970. Through STAR House, she organized homeless youth, especially underage street queens, who were gay or transsexual, and gave them a safe place to live (Duberman, 1993; Feinberg, 2006). Having lived on the streets of New York herself, Johnson knew the many challenges she faced and the importance of finding shelter. At first, they used a tractor trailer; then they found a building on East Second Street and inhabited it for several years.

Marsha P. Johnson is remembered for her advocacy of drag queens and those whose sexual identities did not align with norms at the time. Transgender women continue to be marginalized in society, though her efforts made acceptance
Disadvantages begin early for women in the workforce who may want to be leaders. As discussed previously, women earn more baccalaureate degrees than men and have been doing so for at least three decades. However, women face constraints such as recruitment bias that results in them being hired less frequently into entry-level jobs or managerial jobs. Additionally, they are also promoted far less often than men into managerial positions.

Recruitment Bias

The barriers to workplace leadership positions begin early for women—even during the recruitment period. Women and girls generally outperform men and boys at every level of education and the better performance of women and girls in academe is not a new phenomenon (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2013). But how does academic performance translate into the labor force? Do high grades in college help women when they are in the job market? Surprisingly, and unfortunately, high-achieving women are negatively impacted when they list exceptional grade point averages on their résumés. Despite earning higher grades than men in college, women are recruited less often for jobs. Quadlin (2018) reports that there is a striking difference in the benefits of high-academic achievement between women and men.

(E)mployers penalize women—but not men—for signaling strong academic performance on their résumés. Achievement bears little relation to men’s employment outcomes, but women experience an inverted U-shaped effect of achievement, such that women with the highest grades are disproportionately penalized. The callback rate for high-achieving men, as a result, is nearly double that of high-achieving women. (Quadlin, 2018, p. 352)

Though the results are somewhat different depending on the field of study, the overall impact of this finding is disturbing and counter to what many Americans believe about the United States being a meritocracy. Issues of the double-bind, whether women are perceived as likable or competent, affect whether or not they are called back after an interview. Quadlin reports that men, when they are seen as more competent
and committed, are called back, though women are called back when they are seen as likable, an attribute that has no effect for men.

Not only is this negative effect seen with gender, but also with socioeconomic status. In a study conducted by Rivera and Tilcsik (2016), they found that women from higher-class backgrounds were penalized in the legal labor market. Where men were prioritized as being a good fit for being perceived as having a high-class background, this attribute worked against women with the same perceived pedigree. In this case, women were assumed to be less committed to an elite and intense career. This is another example of how intersectionality plays a part in the study of women and leadership. Women often hold various identities that work against them, even though they may not realize it.

Once employed, women receive less support from their managers than do their male colleagues (Women in the Workplace, 2019). Whether it is navigating company politics or getting the resources needed to be successful, women receive less guidance. In addition, women socialize with their managers less frequently than men and these interactions are one indicator of workplace happiness and longevity with a company. Managers are also less likely to showcase their women employees’ work than they are to feature a man’s work.

Despite the challenges presented, we encourage women (and men) to continue excelling in their academic and professional careers. Even though you may feel there is unfair treatment, not everyone will disadvantage women and the tides are slowly changing. Recognizing the interlocking oppressions will enable you to become a more equitable follower and leader.

**Promotion Barriers**

Organizations use promotions as a way to recognize employees’ skills and to encourage performance. Employees typically see promotions as mechanisms for increased pay, job security, power, and improved working conditions (Kramer & Lambert, 2001). Promotion signals success. However, paths to promotion are not equally given to both women and men. Organizations are not gender-neutral and are built to advantage men and to support a masculine culture (Acker, 1990; Kanter, 1977). Women’s opportunities for promotion are limited when gender bias and discrimination are prevalent. Many performance assessments are subjective and thus can lead to bias, hampering the opportunities for women and minorities to advance (Kramer & Lambert, 2001). Bohnet, van Geen, and Bazerman (2016) found that as soon as a person’s sex is known, an evaluator will automatically activate gender bias, which leads to unintentional implicit assumptions. Implicit bias does not enable one to rationally evaluate an employee.

According to the 2018 Women in the Workplace study by McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org, only 79 women get to manager positions for every 100 men who are promoted. This statistic is even worse for women of color where only 60 are promoted to manager for every 100 men. Due to the meager number of Black women in
management, they are routinely paid less than white women and claim less job satisfaction (Bell & Nkomo, 2003). Black women have less decision-making authority in their roles and do not get to use their skills and abilities to their maximum capacity. Lastly, Bell and Nkomo (2003) report that Black women managers felt they had to outperform all of their white colleagues to find success. Again, intersecting identities cause frequent challenges for women in leadership.

**Hostility**

Women leaders face various forms of discrimination that can be hostile. These can take the form of workplace harassment such as microaggression or sexual harassment, which attempt to protect the privilege and authority of the dominant social group (Berdahl, 2007). Alternatively, hostility can also come from women blocking other women from opportunities in the form of queen bee syndrome, thus reinforcing the gender hierarchy. Although none of these is in itself something that would sink a woman’s career, these everyday discrimination issues add another layer of problems with which women need to contend. Being a leader is difficult, but having to navigate hostility at the same time makes it even more challenging.

**Microaggressions**

Subtle or overt forms of racism or sexism, known as microaggressions, could be as simple as an inappropriate joke or a small insult. These are “everyday verbal, non-verbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership” (Sue, 2010, para. 2). Microaggressions are often directed toward a person’s gender or race but can also be targeted toward marginalized social groups. These micro messages may appear hidden yet focus on invalidating or demeaning group identity by emphasizing that one does not belong to or is inferior to the dominant group.

Many women, especially women of color, people with disabilities, and lesbian women, face microaggressions frequently; 64% of women say they face these disrespectful and demeaning overtures in the workplace (Women in the Workplace, 2019). Bell and Nkomo (2003) found that Black women managers were so frequently marginalized or humiliated that they termed the occurrences “daily doses of racism” (p. 345). From racist jokes to saying that inappropriate words were mistakes, the everyday experiences felt almost mundane. Examples of microaggressions may include needing to provide more evidence of one’s competence, being talked over by men in the room, or being thought of as lower status/rank in the organizational hierarchy, due to being a woman, or woman of color. The higher up in the organization a woman of color goes, fewer people look like her. In this case, a woman of color may be expected to be an expert on all things related to being “Black.” In a very basic case, a woman leader may be asked to get the coffee for a meeting, assuming she is support staff.
Sexual Harassment

A specific area of inequality and discrimination that is linked to workplace hostility is sexual harassment. From a sexual innuendo to an inappropriate touch, women—more often than men—deal with unwanted advances. According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (n.d.), sexual harassment is defined as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual’s employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. (para. 2)

Not all women will experience sexual harassment, but many do despite organizations having clear, overt policies against it. Dobbin and Kalev (2020) state that 40% of women report being sexually harassed at work. Additionally, 16% of men report being sexually harassed and these numbers have not changed in more than 30 years. With the #MeToo movement and TIME’S UP organization becoming such unifying voices in the last few years, a spotlight is now focused on an often-times unspoken reality for many women—that of sexual harassment and violence. Even though sexual harassment is illegal by virtue of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it is still pervasive (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2020). Research reveals that not only in the workforce but also on college campuses, sexual harassment is prevalent. AAUW (2017) disclosed that about 20% of undergraduate women report being a victim of sexual assault—either attempted or completed.

No matter how many workshops are attended by women who wish to become leaders, no matter how much education and experience they may have, if a woman is sexually harassed, threatened, or physically harmed, their chances of becoming a leader are significantly reduced. Sexual harassment is not only bad for women, but it is also bad for business. Women who are sexually harassed in the workplace are more likely to show weakened job performance, can be impeded from advancement, and may earn less money over time (Klein & Martin, 2019; National Partnership for Women and Families, 2020). Women often change jobs if they are experiencing harassment, especially women of color. They will take pay cuts and harm their careers to escape because they are frequently not believed when they report harassment.

So how do we fix this problem? In organizations, we need to change the culture so that everyone is involved in preventing sexual assault; establish training programs to encourage all people to be a victim’s ally and give them the tools to solve problems; have progressive policies that establish responses that are appropriate to the behavior that is problematic; incorporate bystander intervention training; consider hiring an ombudsman (ombuds) with whom both employees and employers can discuss problem situations; and end forced arbitration in workplaces for people who report (Boesch, Dobbin & Kalev, 2020; Fyre & Holmes, 2019). Those companies that did
have mandatory “forbidden behavior” training experienced unintended consequences and did not produce needed results in the past 30 years. In fact, according to a report by *Harvard Business Review*, men who were inclined to harass women were more likely to be accepting of that behavior after attending mandatory training (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020).

Newer methods, introduced by Sharyn Potter and colleagues at the University of New Hampshire, include bystander interventions and train-the-trainer models (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020). In these training sessions, all people are considered allies who are responsible for solving the harassment problem. This is in contrast to trainees being considered perpetrators. You can make a difference personally by disrupting the narratives that are so frequently shared in personal communications among friends and colleagues. Tell people it is not funny when you hear inappropriate jokes, catcalls, or “locker room talk.”

**Queen Bee Syndrome**

Barriers to women’s leadership do not only come from hostility used to protect men’s authority and privilege, but they can also come from women blocking opportunities for other women. When a senior woman who currently holds a position in a male-dominated organization distances herself from junior women, this is known as the queen bee syndrome (Derks, van Laar, Ellemers, & de Groot, 2011b). These women emphasize how they are different from other women and they encourage the status quo, in other words, the patriarchy. A study by Ellemers, Van Den Heuvel, De Gilder, Maass, and Bonvini (2004) showed that women in power may actively put down junior women and work against them.

Originally coined by Staines, Tavris, and Jayaratne in their 1974 article “The Queen Bee Syndrome,” the term has more recently been used by media outlets to describe women managers who behave poorly toward junior women as described in Chapter 3. Since these women have “made it” in a difficult environment, they believe that other women should face the same challenges and hardships if they wish to advance. They do not attribute any of the hurdles in their career to ingrained systems and structures that favor men. Rather, they accept the norms in society and disregard the existence of any type of workplace oppression. One example of this type of transgression would be a junior woman who wants to move up but is disallowed from creating new programs or initiatives that might give them credit and the possibility for promotion. The woman supervisor would question the ability or commitment of the junior woman and therefore prevent advancement.

The common perception of queen bees is that they reinforce a negative stereotype that women actively work against other women. In a figurative sense, queen bees will sting another woman if their power is threatened (Mavin, 2008). Some argue that women are their own worst enemies and that gender equity is slowed due to a common misperception that they hold one another down. Although we do not deny that there
More than $3 million in punitive damages was awarded to Lilly Ledbetter for gender pay discrimination by the Alabama Federal Courts in January 2003. This decision was appealed by the defendant, Goodyear, and overturned by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Georgia in fall 2005. The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court in November 2006, was deliberated, and Ledbetter was denied the settlement in May 2007. After the ruling by the high court, Ledbetter stated, “Pay equity wasn’t my personal problem; it wasn’t a southern problem or even a national issue. Pay inequity was an international epidemic that needed to be remedied” (Ledbetter, 2012, p. 215).

Beginning her management position at the Alabama manufacturing plant in 1979, at age 41, she endured the harsh treatment that many women suffered when integrating into the male-dominated workforce. She was propositioned, intimidated, sexually harassed, threatened, and also paid less than her male counterparts for her work at Goodyear. After reporting the discriminatory behavior to her supervisors and filing an EEOC complaint, Ledbetter was labeled a troublemaker and given jobs with less responsibility. Though being recognized for her meritorious work with a promotion and an award, she was branded a poor performer and was ostracized by many male employees.

In 1998, Ledbetter was given an anonymous note with her salary and the salaries of three other male managers at her plant who worked in the same roles on different shifts. She was being paid up to 40% less than her male colleagues. Ledbetter filed another claim with the EEOC, the federal agency that enforces civil rights laws against discrimination. Ledbetter sued Goodyear for violating the Equal Pay Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which encompasses sex discrimination on various levels of disparate treatment, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. In short, she claimed that because she was a woman, she had been paid less, had been transferred to jobs with less responsibility, had been given an unwarranted poor evaluation, had been excluded from meetings, and later had been replaced by a younger man who was paid twice as much.

Embarking on her journey to justice through the court system by filing a lawsuit in 1999, and having a trial in 2003, she initially won her case in Alabama. The jury ruled that she was not given equal pay for equal work. The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the verdict by arguing that Ledbetter did not file her lawsuit in time. The prior statute gave workers 180 days from the time of the discriminatory act to file a claim. However, rather than using the paycheck accrual rule, which enabled an employee to claim every subsequent paycheck after the initial one that was discriminatory on which to base a case, the Appeals Court said she was too late in making her accusations. The court ruled, she should have filed her case in the early 1980s within 180 days after she was first paid less. This is a difficult standard to follow because victims of pay inequity do not know early on if they are paid less than their colleagues. Many organizations discourage employees...
are women who are unsupportive of other women and are horrible bosses, this explanation is limited and unhelpful for someone looking for the whole story. Mavin (2008) claims the term itself *queen bee* is sexist as it “blames the women” rather than considers the systems in gendered organizations that ignore the embedded and routine forms of discrimination. “(T)he Queen Bee concept, as a negative construction, succeeds in providing further ammunition as to why women are ‘unnatural’ in senior management and why the gendered status quo should prevail” (Mavin, 2008, p. S82).

Derks, Ellemers, van Laar, and de Groot (2011a) posit that the queen bee syndrome is predicated on gender discrimination. Specifically, women comply with existing gender stereotypes as a result of their experience with regular gender prejudice and discrimination. Consequently, women who act as queen bees may do so because of the system of gender oppression that they have faced in becoming leaders themselves. Though we can point to instances of the “woman against woman” narrative, a deeper understanding of *why* this maltreatment occurs gives us an opportunity to change it. Creating more gender equitable systems and structures in the workplace may alleviate the impetus for some women to act as a queen bee. More about equitable systems and structures is discussed in Chapter 12.

**Salary Inequity: The Gender Wage Gap**

Another form of inequity can be seen by the *gender wage gap*, which refers to the difference between a woman’s wage and a man’s wage in the U.S. labor force, adjusting for a variety of factors that include education, experience, and full- or part-time employment status. “Whether the gender wage gap is measured based on annual, weekly, or hourly earnings, within or across occupations, women’s median earnings are lower than men’s” (Costello & Hegewisch, 2016, p. 1). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
(2018) finds that women earn 82 cents for each dollar a man earns. Even though the gender gap in pay is decreasing, the gap as it relates to parenthood has been increasing. Parenthood has an effect on wages that exacerbates inequalities in earnings among low- and high-income families (Budig, 2014). In addition, Friedman and Rizzolo (2020) note that people with disabilities are routinely paid lower wages—women even less than men—and this continues to be a persistent problem.

The gender wage gap is even more pronounced by ethnic groups as women of color, specifically African American and Latina women, earn less than white and Asian women (AAUW, 2018). The largest pay gap is evidenced by Latina women who were paid 53 cents to every dollar a white man received, followed by American Indian and Alaskan Natives at 58 cents and African American women at 61 cents. The racial pay gap for women of color starts from the very beginning of their career, which places them behind from the get-go. This is yet another example of how intersectionality is at work. The combination of being a woman and a person of color results in a lower rate of pay.

Figure 7.2 shows that the gap between the wages of women and men had been closing in the 1980s and 1990s, thus wages were getting closer to equal. However, in the 21st century, the gap has remained mostly constant. Many have contemplated why progress has stalled and have been researching possible causes. There are concrete reasons progress was made early on due in large part to men’s wages stagnating and women’s wages beginning at very low rates and continuing to grow (Costello & Hegewisch, 2016).

![Figure 7.2: Women’s Earnings as a Percentage of Men’s, for Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers, 1979–2017 Annual Averages](image)

Regardless of the sector in which employees work, men earn higher incomes than women. When accounting for male-dominated professions, integrated professions, and even when looking at female-dominated professions, such as education and nursing, women are paid less than men (AAUW, 2018; Costello & Hegewisch, 2016; Gould, Schieder, & Geier, 2016). The same gap is present when looking at educational attainment levels. Although it is true that highly educated women and men earn more income, the pay gap still exists.

**Motherhood Penalty and Fatherhood Premium**

Women who work outside the home and also have children face systematic disadvantages in their careers as compared to men who work and are also fathers (Bright Horizons Modern Family Index, 2019). This is known as the motherhood penalty, which assumes that women should be the primary caregivers for children and stay at home to raise children. Mothers who work outside the home are perceived as less competent or less committed in their paid positions than other employees and as a result they are penalized, which is most evident by inequity in salary and opportunities for advancement.

An employed woman who is also a mother will have lower hourly wages and may suffer up to $18,000 in lost wages each year (National Women’s Law Center, 2019). Budig (2014) found that mothers face a wage penalty of 4% for each child they have—meaning they will earn 4% less each time they give birth. The punishment is much worse for lower-income earners than for higher wage earners. In fact, low-income mothers face a 6% penalty per child and those mothers who earn the highest 10% of incomes do not face the wage penalty at all. The family gap in pay, or the motherhood penalty and the fatherhood premium, in a financial sense, means that “(m)others earn less than observationally similar childless women... and fathers earn more than observationally similar childless men” (Weeden, Cha, & Bucca, 2016, p. 72).

The reasons mothers are paid lower wages may be multifaceted according to Budig (2014). First, mothers may need to interrupt their careers to dedicate time to their children, thus giving them less experience and therefore less income. Second, women may take lower-income jobs that provide more flexibility so they are able to care for children. Third, some women may become distracted at work due to the exhaustion caused by them tending to the needs of their children. Fourth, some women may be discriminated against and paid less due to the presumption of less committed performance. Lastly, women who are less likely to earn high wages may be more likely to have children. Unfortunately, the impediments are not just financial.

According to Correll, Benard, and Paik (2007), many people believe that mothers are less competent and less committed to their jobs. The Bright Horizons Modern Family Index (2019) study found that “41 percent of employed Americans perceive mothers to be less devoted to their work” (p. 6). Therefore, mothers are being passed over for career opportunities. Most employed Americans believe that mothers in the
workplace possess leadership skills such as “being supportive and motivating to communicative and approachable” (p. 2). This study goes on to state that 84% of respondents believe that having mothers in leadership roles will make an organization more successful. If they are discriminated against, the value they bring will not be realized by many organizations.

Fathers, conversely, do not face a penalty for being employed or pursuing a leadership position. It is also reported that fathers do not miss out on professional opportunities nor do they lose perceived workplace competence (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004). There is a double standard because most Americans believe fathers should be in the workforce. The Bright Horizons Modern Family Index (2019) also reveals that respondents believe that fathers are more dedicated to their careers.

Men also do not face a wage penalty for being fathers (England, Bearak, Budig, & Hodges, 2016). Ironically, according to Weeden et al. (2016), fathers experience a fatherhood premium and earn more money than comparable childless men. Research by Budig (2014) finds that “(a)mong full-time workers, marriage and children (under age 18) are associated with higher earnings among men, but lower earnings among women” (p. 7). Men’s earnings actually increase by 6% after they become fathers as compared to a wage reduction for women.

Although the increase in wages benefits all men, it advantages professional workers and highly educated men, as well as white and Latino men, more so than other demographics. Budig (2014) finds that this increase further advantages higher-income earners more than lower-wage earners. Fatherhood also benefits men the more children they have when it comes to childcare responsibilities in the home. When fathers have more children in the home, the time they spend on childcare decreases. However, the greater number of children women have, the more time they spend on childcare. Budig (2014) posits that this is due to greater differences in the amount of paid versus unpaid work being done by either a woman or a man.

**Overwork and the Gender Wage Gap**

In the past 50 years, women and men have increasingly been working longer hours. Cha (2010) reports that “Among all workers in 2000, 26.5% of men worked 50 hours or more per week, compared with 11.3% of women” (p. 303). Overwork is defined as working more than 50 hours per week. According to Schor (1993), American workers increased their annual employment by 163 hours from 1970 to 1990, an era preceding daily use of the internet. Data from the current century tell us that leisure time has decreased substantially among the highly educated compared with low-educated adults (Sevilla, Gimenez-Nadal, & Gershuny, 2012). In this era of more hours working and fewer hours for leisure, the gender wage gap is widening. Looking at the trends in the wage gap from the 1980s and 1990s, there has been a dramatic increase in the frequency of overwork and thus a negative impact on the gender wage gap (Cha & Weeden, 2014).
The number of hours of overwork has a negative effect on women, especially those where women and men work in managerial jobs including law and finance, for example. Even when both partners are highly educated, women are disadvantaged due to the systems that our culture and organizations espouse. Women are still assumed to be homemakers and men the breadwinners, even when both are employed. Therefore, women are still doing more household labor (cooking, cleaning, shopping, etc.) than men. When organizations set expectations that workers labor for more than 50 hours per week, heavier responsibilities fall to women to care for the household. This cycle of men working longer hours in organizations and women spending more time on homemaking creates a situation where, especially if the couple has children, women are disadvantaged by reinforcing traditional gender norms.

In some cases, in a heterosexual relationship women step back from full-time employment to enable men to work more hours and enjoy a dramatic wage premium. As we know that men earn more than women, as a couple evaluates their financial situation, it may make more sense for the husband to continue working more and for the wife to work less, and care for children—if they have them, than the reverse arrangement. Thus, the cycle is exacerbated—men work more and earn more and women work less and earn less—while women continue to engage in more unpaid work at home. This is not the case of women opting out of work because they have children. But rather, it is the case that men who overwork will bring in more money to the family than if women and men worked an equal number of hours. And women are less able to work long hours due to their increased responsibilities at home. This system is hurting women and men. Overwork is reinforcing the old, gendered arrangements of separate work spheres and home spheres while also widening the gender wage gap (Cha, 2010). It is stalling gender equality.

**PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY**

Just as important to knowing barriers to leadership, it is imperative to also understand the ways in which we can improve equality in organizations. Although it is not easy to change organizational culture or structures, and there are many theories about how to do it, we wanted to present at least one framework regarding these ideas. Kolb, Fletcher, Meyerson, Merrill-Sands, and Ely (1998) highlight four frames to understanding gender equity and promoting change in organizations. Each one on its own may provide some insight, but taken together, a better understanding is created. Of particular note for each frame is the way gender is understood, that is through biology (female or male) or through social construction (feminine or masculine). The frames, described in Table 7.2, include (a) fixing the women, (b) celebrating differences, (c) creating equal opportunity, and (d) revising work culture.

Leadership development programs must go beyond the frame of fixing the women to also celebrating differences. However, using the Four Domain Framework, the first
two frames place focus on the individual and interpersonal domains and do not adequately address organizational or societal barriers. Creating equal opportunities and revising the work culture frames are steps to make a systemic and structural change toward reducing inequality and discrimination.

**SUMMARY**

Women have been outwardly discriminated against in the past, though more recently, discrimination is more subtle. This more invisible form of bias is referred to as second-generation gender bias. Women can no longer be fired from their jobs because they are pregnant, for example, but their place of employment may not provide any opportunity for a flexible schedule and, therefore, limit the chances of taking care of children and being employed at the same time. Second-generation gender bias works against women through invisible structures and systems in the workplace. Organizational culture that is male normed, and based on men having a stay-at-home spouse, disadvantages women by not providing needed flexibility.
Bias occurs, whether explicitly or implicitly, when our thoughts tell us that women are just not right for a job. It could be the way we were raised, or that we are unaccustomed to seeing a woman in a masculine-type job, such as in coal mining or the U.S. presidency. When we let our personal feelings overrule fair hiring or promotion practices, negative biases against women may occur and opportunities for advancement are diminished. The gender wage gap is indicative of existing bias and discrimination that are present today. Even when accounting for education and experience, women are paid less than their men counterparts.

Lastly, all biases and discrimination against women are not the same. Women of color, women with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ community face many more obstacles and a greater pay gap. Intersectionality, the ways various oppressions may come together including race, class, disability, and gender, impact a person’s identity and increases the degree of bias they will face. Taken together, these various forms of bias and discrimination make up many of the factors in the organizational domain that hinder women from leadership. Promoting equity will take a myriad of solutions including conscious efforts to strengthen diversity and inclusion.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Is there gender equity in the majority of organizations? Why or why not?
2. Give an example of an organizational barrier to leadership for women and why it may exist.
3. Why do you think men receive a fatherhood premium after having children and women receive a motherhood penalty?
4. What are the ways to promote gender equity or reduce barriers to leadership for women?
5. How do we know that women are paid, on average, $.80 for each $1.00 men are paid?

**LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE: BRIDGING THE PAY GAP**

Consider going to a local coffee shop in your community and making this request. On April 2, ask that men pay on average $1.00 and women pay only 80 cents for a cup of regular coffee. April 2 is considered “equal payday” or the day in the year in which women catch up and earn what men did by December 31 the previous year. This illustration demonstrates that women earn 80% of what men earn for doing the same job. On April 2, women could get one, small advantage.
Journal Reflection

Review and reflect upon the experience of making this request. What was the reaction? How did people feel about this?

KEY TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discrimination 134</th>
<th>Gender wage gap 147</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equality 134</td>
<td>Microaggression 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity 134</td>
<td>Motherhood penalty 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatherhood premium 149</td>
<td>Overwork 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequality 134</td>
<td>Queen bee syndrome 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality 134</td>
<td>Second-generation gender bias 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersectionality 135</td>
<td>Sexual harassment 144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>