

Trevor McCaffrey

SOC101 - Reflection 5

Chapter 11 of Macionis (2017) discusses gender stratification and how it shapes our different roles as males and females in society. Social stratification is defined as the system that society uses to rank categories of people in a hierarchy (Macionis 2017), and is something that happens all over the world, affecting many different societies in different ways based on their underlying cultures, beliefs, and inequalities. To this point, the ideologies built up over time in different societies explain the existence of gender stratification.

Gender stratification relates to the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and privilege between men and women. While there are obvious physical differences between men and women determined at birth, many differences in the lives they lead are determined by society; in the words of Macionis (2017): “Women and men still lead different lives in the United States and elsewhere in the world, but in most respects men are still in charge.” This is due to longstanding prejudices in society defining what roles are masculine and what roles are feminine. While these definitions will differ between cultures, the resulting gender stratification persists nonetheless. For example, when asked whether they would rather have a working job outside the house or stay at home to take care of a family, 73% of men said they prefer to work outside the house compared to just 53% for women (Macionis 2017). This dramatic difference is mainly due to the fact that, over time, societies have formed the picture that caring for a family at home is feminine and suited for women, while men are generally supposed to be out working, providing for the family at home.

Chapter 12 of Macionis (2017) discusses connected issues related to race and ethnicity. In some aspects, the disadvantages imposed on women from gender stratification are very similar to the struggles that minorities may face when trying to find an occupation in society. In particular, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021) compiled percentages of different races that occupy different jobs, revealing that most jobs typically labeled as “prestigious” are more often occupied by white people rather than minorities. For “legal occupations” (e.g. lawyers and judges), 85% of workers are white, 8% black, and 10% hispanic. For a job that is generally considered less prestigious, such as security guard, just 57% of positions are occupied by white people, 33% black people, and 18% hispanic. This dramatic disparity reflects the fact that minorities in the United States, on average, have been led to less prestigious careers by society.

Reference:

Macionis, John J. 2017. *Society: The Basics*. Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*, 2021, Division of Information and Marketing Services, Washington, DC.

<https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>