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WHY WOMEN EARN LESS THAN MEN:
STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

by

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INTRODUCTION

It is not just the traditional female role which has disadvantages . . . In school it is the boys who have the greatest adaption problems . . . Sociologists consider that one should not speak of "the problem of women's role in society" but of "the sex-role problem", in order to emphasize that the problem also concerns the traditional male role . . .

Olaf Palme
Prime Minister of Sweden
(Palme, 1970:241)

As Palme notes, there is not a "problem of women's role in society" but a sex-role problem because the roles of men and women are interdependent. Because we live in a market economy, where goods are often valued on the basis of their exchange value, I have chosen to examine the sexual wage differential and the division of labor because it is the most striking, overt example of the sex-role problem in our society.

In the first chapter, "The Sexual Wage Differential and the Division of Labor," defines what is meant by the sexual wage differential and examine the evidence to determine its pervasiveness. I will then discuss the major explanations proposed to explain the sexual wage differential by economists, sociologists, psychoanalysts, and employers. After summarizing and critiquing these explanations, I will discuss the costs and benefits of maintaining the current sex-roles and attendant sexual wage differential.

The second chapter on sex roles in transition toward equality, begins by determining what equality would look like and examining attempts toward it made in other countries. This is followed by an examination of the

various strategies that can be useful in working toward equality: education, several options in caring for children, re-examining the nature of work, modifications in income and tax structures.

The last chapter, "Societal Choices," provides a conceptual plan to integrate all of the choices society can make, maintaining the sex-roles or moving toward equality. I close with a summary, and conclusions and recommendations.

This paper is designed to acquaint the reader with some of the aspects of the sex-role problem and propose some solutions. It is not designed to provide an in-depth analysis of all the issues involved but rather to serve as an overview, to direct the reader to further research and action.

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CHAPTER I
THE SEXUAL WAGE DIFFERENTIAL AND
THE DIVISION OF LABOR

Definition and Evidence

For some time now, in the United States and throughout the world, there has been a growing concern: women's status in the labor market. Women consistently earn less than their male co-workers. Cook (1975:22-27) tells us that as of 1972, the average earnings of employed females in the United States was about 43.2 to 53% of the average earnings of employed males. In Israel, average women's earnings as a percentage of average men's earnings was estimated at 59% or lower. In Austria, the percentage was 61.3%, in Russia 65%, and in Sweden 66 to 87.2%.

In addition, women generally hold jobs that have a much lower chance for advancement and promotions, have higher turnover rates, and usually have at least one major interruption (often to raise a family) during their careers. Men, on the other hand, generally hold highly paid jobs with good chance for advancement, promotion, and tenure, low turnover rates, and few interruptions in their careers.

Many argue that the equal pay for equal work doctrine should take care of these inequities. Perhaps it should, but it has not. Even when a female and a male do identical or comparable work, employers only need to define the job done by a woman as slightly different from that done by the male to escape the consequences of this doctrine (Cook, 1975:25). Further, the U.S. Department of Labor tells us that the "earnings gap" may be more a reflection of different work of men and women (as described above), than unequal pay for equal work (Stimpson, 1970:333-5).

TABLE 1
 EARNINGS OF FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND WORKERS BY SEX,
 1968, 1972 (Workers 14 Years or Older)

| Earnings | 1972 | | 1968 | |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| Number with earnings (in 1000s) | 16,675 | 38,184 | NA | NA |
| Total (percent) | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than \$3,000 | 9.4 | 4.6 | 20.0 | 7.5 |
| \$3,000 to \$4,999 | 26.2 | 6.6 | 40.0 | 12.6 |
| \$5,000 to \$6,999 | 29.2 | 12.6 | 26.0 | 21.3 |
| \$7,000 to \$9,999 | 23.9 | 24.9 | 10.9 | 30.9 |
| \$10,000 to \$14,999 | 9.7 | 31.2 | 2.5 | 19.5 |
| \$15,000 and over | 1.7 | 20.0 | 0.4 | 8.2 |

NA not available

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports. Series P-60; No. 66, 90; 1969, 1973. Found in Stimpson, 1970: 344 and Sexton, 1977: 3.

TABLE 2
 MEDIAN INCOME OF FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND
 WORKERS BY SEX AND YEARS OF SCHOOL
 COMPLETED, 1972 (Workers 25
 Years or Older)

| Years of school completed | Median income | | Women's median as percent of men's |
|------------------------------|---------------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| | Women | Men | |
| Elementary School: | | | |
| Less than 8 yrs. | \$ 4,221 | \$ 7,042 | 59.9 |
| 8 years | 4,784 | 8,636 | 55.4 |
| High School: | | | |
| 1 to 3 years | 5,253 | 9,462 | 55.5 |
| 4 years | 6,166 | 11,073 | 55.7 |
| College: | | | |
| 1 to 3 years | 7,020 | 12,428 | 56.5 |
| 4 years | 8,736 | 14,879 | 58.7 |
| 5 years or more | 11,036 | 16,877 | 65.4 |

SOURCE: Prepared by the Women's Bureau from data published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports. Series P-60, No. 90, 1973. Found in Sexton, 1977:3.

TABLE 3
 MEDIAN WAGE OR SALARY INCOME OF FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND
 WORKERS BY SEX AND NONFARM OCCUPATIONAL GROUP,
 1972 (Workers 14 Years or Older)

| Occupational group | Median wage or salary income | | Women's median income as percent of men's |
|--|------------------------------|----------|---|
| | Women | Men | |
| Professional and technical workers | \$ 8,796 | \$13,029 | 67.5 |
| Managers and administrators (except farm) | 7,306 | 13,741 | 53.2 |
| Salesworkers | 4,575 | 11,356 | 40.3 |
| Clerical Workers | 6,039 | 9,656 | 62.5 |
| Craftsmen and kindred workers | 5,731 | 10,429 | 55.0 |
| Operatives (including transport) | 5,021 | 8,702 | 57.7 |
| Service workers (except private household) | 4,606 | 7,762 | 59.3 |
| Private household workers | 2,365 | * | ---- |
| Nonfarm laborers | 4,755 | 7,535 | 63.1 |

* fewer than 75,000 men

SOURCE: Prepared by the Women's Bureau from data published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports. Series P-60, No. 90, 1973. Found in Sexton, 1977:3.

In Table 1, we see that women are earning far less than men for both 1972 and 1968. In 1968, 60% of all full-time women workers earned less than \$5,000; only 30.1% of the men earned less than \$5,000. In 1972, the majority of male full-time, year round workers (51.2%) earned \$10,000 or more, compared to only 11.4% of the females. Could these large differences in earnings be attributed to different levels of education?

Table 2 shows that these differences in earnings go beyond the years of formal education obtained. With the same number of years of formal education, women still earn 55-65% of the income enjoyed by their male counterparts. Can these differences in earnings be attributed to men and women being found in different occupational groups?

Table 3 does not support this explanation. Within the same broad occupational group, women still earn 40.3-67.5% of what their male counterparts do. (These broad census categories, however, include many individual occupations.)

Kahne explains that women are compartmentalized in occupations (Kahne, 1975:1247). Most women are concentrated in occupations which have a very high proportion of female to male workers; in other words, women often work in occupations where they constitute more than 60% of the workers. Half of all women workers were found in only 17 occupations in 1970, while the same proportion (50%) of men workers were found in 63 occupations (Kahne, 1975:1247). This illustrates the fact that women are concentrated in a few occupations.

Besides being compartmentalized in occupations, women are often treated differently than their male counterparts, beginning with the day they are hired. In a study of three urban, midwestern manufacturing firms by Cassell and Doctors, and a similar study by Malkiel and Malkiel, it was

found that females with the same qualifications as male applicants were assigned different jobs and job titles, often from the day they are hired (Sexton, 1977:11). For example, women college graduates were often assigned clerical or secretarial positions (with few opportunities for upgrading and promotions), while men college graduates were usually assigned management or management trainee positions (with numerous opportunities for upgrading and promotions). Even when men and women were hired for and performed the same job, the studies found that employers were much less likely to promote the women workers (preferring to give them a 'paternal' Christmas or other bonus or present for good work.) When asked why women were not promoted, employers maintained that the women would not want to be taken from their work groups and friends; none of the same concerns were considered in deciding whether to promote men workers.

What is happening here and why?

Explanations

Economists, sociologists, psychoanalysts, and employers all offer different explanations and justifications for the sexual wage differential. While the first three of these groups propose their reasons in the form of theories, employers rely upon justifications that have been historically successful in the courtroom to justify the different treatment of men and women workers.

Economic theory

The most popular theories among economists are from neoclassical and institutional labor economics (Blau and Jusenius, 1977:194-207). The neoclassical approaches include: the overcrowding hypothesis, the human capital model, the monopsony model, and theories of "tastes for discrimin-

ation." Institutional labor approaches are based on the theory of an internal labor market.

Neoclassical

The overcrowding hypothesis assumes that all workers are competitive substitutes for one another. Further, it assumes that each individual acts in his or her best interests to maximize benefits and satisfy tastes. Men and women are assumed to have different "tastes" which influence their decisions. Where these "tastes" come from and what factors affect them are not explained in this model. Women have "tastes" for limited types of work (where they can have interpersonal contact and fulfill a nurturing role), and choose to work in a limited number of jobs due to these tastes. Because most women choose these jobs, these occupations become overcrowded; the employer (always working to maximize his profits) pays the lowest wages possible. Since there are more willing workers than positions, the employer can pay the workers a lower wage than would be acceptable if the need for workers exceeded or equaled the supply available (Simeral, 1979).

The human capital model also assumes that each individual is working to maximize benefits. Each individual has a supply of human capital to begin with. Individuals can invest in their share of human capital through education and/or job-related training. The human capital of a woman does not increase in value as much as that of her male counterpart from investments (training and/or education). Further, her human capital increases at a much slower rate than a man's, and decreases rapidly when she drops out of the labor market for any period of time (to raise children, etc.). Since men have a higher return from investments in human capital, this

perspective assumes that they should receive the education and training they need. Further, it argues that they should be paid more because they are worth more (Simeral, 1979).

In the monopsony model, it is not assumed that there is perfect competition, where each worker is paid the amount he or she contributes to the firm. As explained by Blau and Jusenius (1977:199), ". . . a worker who faces a monopsonist receives a wage which is less than the value of his or her marginal product . . . the less elastic the supply curve of labor, the lower will be the wage . . ." In other words, the more people willing to work, the lower the wages they will be offered. Because studies have shown, and more importantly employers believe, that the supply of women workers is relatively inelastic--that is, unresponsive to changes in wages--employers have greater monopsony power over women (Blau and Jusenius, 1977: 100-200).

Now for the rather tenuous theories, those which stress a "taste for discrimination." These theories are sometimes used to support neoclassical theories (especially human capital and monopsony models); at other times, these theories are used alone to explain the sexual wage differential. Kahne mentions Gordon & Morton's ". . . emphasis on market imperfections as well as discriminatory 'tastes' of fellow employees to explain sex differentials in earnings (Kahne, 1975:1257)." Bergman continues in this vein, telling us that men have a taste not to work with women (Kahne, 1975:1275). Still others argue that firms incur disutility from hiring women workers. They claim that the cost (to the employer) of hiring women workers is equal to the wages they will take home plus the disutility their presence causes plus the extra wages that must be paid to the male workers (to compensate for

having to work with women). Thus, according to this model, the differential between men's and women's wages is the additional costs to the employer of hiring women workers (Simeral, 1979).

Institutional Labor

The internal labor market model divides the job structure of firms into two categories of occupations. One deals with those jobs which are generally filled through recruitment of new workers, the other deals with those filled through promoting and upgrading workers within the firm. Within the latter category, job ladders may be short or non-existent. Entry into these occupations is generally restricted to a few, low-level entry positions. Women and minorities tend to enter jobs which have short or non-existent career ladders; men tend to enter jobs with more opportunities for advancement where job ladders are longer and more clearly defined (Blau and Jusenius, 1977:201).

In this model, market forces such as expansions and recessions operate primarily on entry level positions. Instead of the direct operation of market forces on the other positions, ". . . an internal labor market develops . . ." (Blau and Jusenius, 1977:202). This internal labor market determines the wage rates and allocates the labor within the firm (Blau and Jusenius, 1977:202). ". . . group or categorical treatment of individuals is the norm . . ." within this market (Blau and Jusenius, 1977:202). Because it is an overt characteristic, sex is ". . . an obvious basis for differentiation . . ." and sex segregation is not a surprising outcome; sex segregation is the primary basis employers have for distinguishing between men and women, including different pay scales (Blau and Jusenius, 1977:202). Because men and women enter occupations at different points and along different "career lines" their occupational futures also differ. For example, while women college graduates are likely to be hired as secretaries (with short or non-

existent job ladders) and men as junior executives or management trainees (with long, well-defined job ladders).

This model has been applied to several areas, of particular relevance to this discussion of the sex differential of wages. These areas are: statistical discrimination, occupational assignment versus occupational choice, and exogeneity of worker quality.

Statistical discrimination refers to the categorical treatment of individuals; what is true of a group, statistically, is generalized and applied to every member within the group. As it is often applied to women, employers characterize all women workers as "unstable" and discriminate against each women worker accordingly. To justify this discrimination, employers turn to statistics which show that women as a group do have a slightly higher rate of dropping out of the labor force (Blau and Jusenius, 1977:203-4; Simeral, 1979).

Occupational assignment versus occupational choice refers to the disparity between the job choices one is offered and the jobs one is really interested in. For instance, women have fewer real choices than is popularly assumed; jobs more often reflect the options women are assigned to rather than "taste" or real choices (Blau and Jusenius, 1977:204). This may have some effect upon assumptions made by neoclassical economics regarding "taste".

Exogeneity of worker quality is the dynamic interchange between workers (including productivity, morale, etc.), wage rate, and work environment. All of these factors are interrelated and vary when one or more of them are changed. This interrelationship raises some questions as to the validity of human capital theory, which assumes that everyone is given a share of human capital which only varies with investment -- through education -- and dropping out of the labor force. In other words, it is difficult to tell whether

women have higher rates of dropping out of the labor market because they have lower wage rates, a harsher work environment, or other factors. Further, it is difficult to predict what would happen if any of these factors were changed.

Critique

Criticisms of these models vary. Most researchers agree with Blau and Jusenius that the neoclassical approach has generated many reasonable explanations for the male-female pay differential BUT these models do not explain why sex segregation is the necessary outcome (Blau and Jusenius, 1977:200-1). With regard to the internal labor market approach, they claim it doesn't explain the further sex segregation found in both internal labor market categories. Nor does it explain the differentiation within predominantly female jobs (Blau and Jusenius, 1977:205-7). I might add that none of these theories discuss where the "taste for discrimination" or distaste for working with women comes from; these tastes are always exogenous to the model. The next set of theories deals with this problem.

Sociological theory

There are three main bodies of sociological theory which can explain the sexual wage differential: functional theory, exchange theory, and conflict theory.

Functional Theory

In functional theory, patterns are analyzed in terms of their functions and dysfunctions for the system (in this case, society). Although conflict exists, societies seek equilibrium. Morris (1978:164-5) outlines one way that functionalism might be applied to the wage differential. She reasons

that women are more easily persuaded to leave the labor force to marry and raise families if they are discouraged from obtaining rewarding careers. Since the family is assumed to serve as the backbone of society, she continues, it is functional for society for women to remain uncommitted to careers. In other words, women are in less satisfying jobs, because it is functional in inducing them to drop out of the labor market to raise a family.

An interesting twist to this theory is proposed by George Gilder in his book Sexual Suicide. According to Morris (1978:165-6), he says we must maintain the present inequalities of the sexes unless we want to develop a society of uncivilized males. He contends that ". . . men are essentially unnecessary. Their only real function is sexual intercourse (Morris, 1978: 165). He says that if we move toward "large-scale artificial insemination" even this role is taken from them and ". . . they are virtually useless. . . ." (Morris, 1978:165-6). He further asserts that men are inherently inferior and society could continue without them because it is the women who bear and nurse young. To counteract this dispensible role, society has developed the institution of marriage, which gives men some "culturally contrived" responsibilities. These responsibilities and prestige derived from them are used to induce men to play the game by civilized rules. Without them,

. . .men, in their search for ways to affirm their masculinity, will revert to brutality, perversion, and crime. The present situation for inequality is functional for the maintenance of civilized society and . . . must not be undermined (Morris, 1978:166).

Coser and Rokoff have a more complex explanation of how functional theory applies to women in the economy (Coser and Rokoff, 1974:490-511).

They note that because of the normative prescription that women "give priority to their family" there is a conflict if they become "professional women" (where they are expected to be committed to their work "just like men") (Coser and Rokoff, 1974:490). The family and work are seen as two separate, often conflicting systems. Commitment to one system implies slightly less commitment to the other. For men, this conflict has traditionally been resolved by allowing responsibilities of work intrude upon those of the family. Historically for women, the reverse has been the case; familial demands intrude upon those of work. This has helped to "prevent disruption within the family" (Coser and Rokoff, 1974:494), and has been used as a "reason" for considering women's jobs to be "replaceable", a justification for paying women less.

Coser and Rokoff call attention to the double standard in the way men and women are viewed in terms of career replaceability and commitment. In general, women hold jobs where they have very little control over the hours or conditions of work (teaching, nursing, clerical, sales, etc.) Their hours afford them very little flexibility; they are expected to work eight hours a day, five days a week. Still, because women generally hold these low status positions, and family responsibilities may intrude upon their work, mechanisms are designed to make these jobs easily replaceable (substitute teachers; "floating" nurses; agencies such as KELLY GIRL offering temporary clerical help; and temporary, part-time salesclerks who are "on call").

Higher status positions (doctors, lawyers, professors, etc.) have much more control over the hours and conditions of work and can have more flexibility. Their work often requires at least a few absences from their place of work (for conventions, consultations, sabbaticals, guest lectures

in other cities, states, and countries). Their employers gladly allow and encourage these professionals to take these absences to help out others of their profession and bring prestige to the employers. Such professionals are not viewed as easily replaceable because their work is linked only to them as Coser and Rokoff summarize the situation,

Disruptions caused by women are not considered legitimate because they are seen as being due to a failure to meet occupational role expectations. In contrast, disruptions caused by men in high-status positions are legitimate because they are seen as being due to fulfillment of occupational role expectations. (Coser and Rokoff, 1974: 508).

Coser and Rokoff further conclude that having men and women jointly responsible for caring for family members, meeting physical, emotional, monetary, and other needs, need not threaten solidarity within the family but serve to make the family more cohesive (Coser and Rokoff, 1974:511). While they feel "incremental, short-run changes" are beneficial, they maintain that a reevaluation is called for. Should women be culturally mandated to make family and children a career? Should men be the providers of financial means and social status? The authors think not (Coser and Rokoff, 1974:511).

Exchange Theory

The major assumption of exchange theory is:

$$\text{PROFIT} = \text{REWARD} - \text{COST}$$

Working class women prefer not to work because in general, the work they are able to obtain is very limited, requiring a lot of physical exertion; employment holds no opportunities for "self-fulfillment" and personal satisfaction. The ". . . 'cost' of staying home to care for the family is a small one compared to the 'reward' [not having to work]" (Morris, 1978:166-8).

For middle-class women, studies show that rewards are found in the security a man can offer (Morris, 1978:167). They enjoy having the option of "leaning on a man financially" and not having to work (Morris, 1978:167). In determining whether to pursue a career, they compare the costs (including loss of security) to the rewards (increased independence). In weighing them:

. . . as long as women perceive costs as greater than rewards, the situation will remain relatively unchanged. If they see the costs as too high . . . perhaps . . . they will exert pressure for change . . . (Morris, 1978:166-8).

What values are attached to reward, cost, and profit is not clearly explained, nor is there a method of determining any of these.

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory asserts that constant conflict is the natural state of society. Further, in analyzing society, one must determine who has what kind of power. Collins (basing his thoughts on Freud and Weber) suggests that society is stratified by sex with women as subordinates because of differences in physical strength; the fact that men can force themselves on women is crucial in shaping women's role. Through marriage (the institution of sexual property) men own women. Some Marxist argue that the basic conflict in society is not between men and women but between economic classes. By pitting men against women, the owners of the means of production (rulers) can prevent men and women from realizing that they, as workers, are being exploited by the system. The employer wins, everyone else loses. The employer is also the only winner when women are encouraged to work for little or no pay (volunteerism), when women believe that men are supposed to be the breadwinners (Morris, 1978:169).

Summary and Critique

Each of these sociological theories (functional theory, exchange theory, and conflict theory) raises interesting issues, each has also drawn some criticisms. While Morris and Gilder use functional theory to explain and justify the existence of the sexual wage differential, Coser and Rokoff suggest that though it explains the differences in men's and women's careers, changes can and should be made. In short, Coser and Rokoff use functional theory to reach a conclusion which differs from that of Morris and Gilder. Though Gilder builds a good case for the contrived status of men, he does not explain why the current inequities must remain as extreme as they are in our society or why they must remain fixed as they exist at this moment. Presumably, society could move gently toward equality and freeze at some other point, still short of full equality.

Though exchange theory develops a plausible explanation (which can be used in predictions, depending upon the weights attached to each side of the equation), it leaves much to be explained. It does not explain why women value security over independence, the pressures exerted on women, or how boys are socialized differently from girls. Conflict theory tells us there is conflict, one group saying the conflict is between men and women and another that it is between classes. In the former, we know there is conflict but there is much disagreement as to the source of male dominance and how it might be changed. In the latter, it is questionable as to whether it is only the employer who wins.

Psychoanalytic Theory

To explain the "non-rational aspects of human behavior" and focus on sex differences and "dominance relationships between men and women", we

turn to psychoanalytic theory (Stockard and Johnson, 1979:1-2).

In psychoanalytic theory, gynocentric accounts of early development focus on two areas: ". . . the unconscious fear and envy children of both sexes have toward the mother . . ." and the difficulties boys have in ". . . establishing a secure sense of masculine gender identity . . ." (Stockard and Johnson, 1979:3). Horney, Mead, and other social scientists have argued that men's devaluation of women is a result of their envy of motherhood or "womb envy" (Stockard and Johnson, 1979:7). Stockard and Johnson go on to argue that boys have difficulty in deciding exactly what it means to be a man, and similarly what "masculinity" is. This is largely due to the division of labor in society which makes caring for children part of women's work, leaving children few, if any, adult males to serve as role models. Because of this, boys define masculinity as everything that is not feminine (including caring, warmth, and nurturance). This leads to a devaluation of all things which are feminine because they symbolize the period during which they were totally dependent upon women -- infancy and young childhood -- as belonging to a feminine world. This in turn eventually leads to a psychological motive in males to dominate women (Stockard and Johnson, 1979:10-28).

In families where the father or other adult male figure is present when the boy is growing up, the child tends to have a less stereotyped view of what it means to be masculine. (This will be elaborated on in the next section: costs and benefits of maintaining the sexual wage differential). Unfortunately, this theory is largely untestable without major innovations in our present society including greater participation of adult males in childrearing. It does, however, try to explain a source of the non-rational motives of employers and workers for maintaining the sexual wage differential and preserving male dominance.

Explanations Offered by Employers

As mentioned earlier, the explanations offered by employers are not theories, but are justifications given by employers and upheld by the courts for differential treatment of men and women workers. This differential treatment includes differences in physical requirements for certain jobs and differential hiring, promotion, tenure, and pay schedules.

Among the most frequently cited physical differences between men and women are muscular strength and "impediments of pregnancy and childbirth" (Gubbels, 1977:323-6). Asherman (1978:7), tells us that the "protection of the unborn child [fetus]" is a legally acceptable excuse offered by employers who manufacture dangerous chemicals, even though many of these chemicals have been linked to diseases in adult workers and their families (Asherman, 1978:7). Women workers who are of childbearing age and are not sterile and who work with dangerous chemicals have been given two choices. They may switch to less dangerous jobs (with lower pay) or submit to sterilization. The firms refuse to incur the costs of designing and implementing a method of production of these chemicals which would be less dangerous to all workers. As for muscular strength, this excuse is no longer very popular because few jobs require more muscular strength than that possessed by an average, healthy female.

Technical barriers, that is equipment (especially safety equipment used in industry), are also cited by employers. Much of the equipment currently in use has been designed to fit those who are the primary users of the equipment. Since men and women have historically held different jobs when they worked in the same industry, or more commonly worked in different industries, the equipment has been designed accordingly. Because most workers in the automobile industry are men, the safety goggles, gloves, and other equipment have been designed to fit them (and do not fit women very

well). Similarly, since most of the workers in the apparel industry are women, the machines and safety devices have been designed for them. Developing equipment for workers who (when classified by sex), comprise less than 40% of the workers in their industry will take time and money. In the meantime, employers have the option of either hiring these workers (with the understanding that they will have ill-fitting, safety devices and machines which are designed for use by the other sex) or refusing to hire them because of these technical barriers (Gubbels, 1977:322-6).

Employers derive another justification for discriminating against women by examining statistics. Since women are slightly more likely than men to drop out of the labor market (primarily to bear and raise children), employers use this statistic to characterize all women as "unstable workers," and discriminate against them accordingly (Simeral, 1979).

"Protective legislation" offers employers yet another rationale for discriminating against women. It legally sanctions (requires), employers to keep women and children out of certain more dangerous, (often better paid) jobs with more overtime. Since usually only women and children are covered by these laws, these laws are in effect discriminatory; they keep certain jobs reserved for men.

Then there is the commonly held assumption that women are working for "spending money" (though statistics do not support this assumption). Further, employers often assume that married women will give their husbands' positions priority over theirs, for instance when there is a conflict of interest or one partner in the marriage is given an opportunity for career advancement if he or she is willing to relocate. Following this line of reasoning, employers maintain that they prefer to give men more responsible positions because men are both the primary source of income for the family

and are "more committed" to their careers than women (Gubbels, 1977:322-6).

The arguments offered by employers seem to be rather flimsy excuses and justifications for giving women lower-paid and lower status positions. Few jobs today require more muscular strength than that of an average, healthy woman. Several chemicals recognized by employers and the courts as dangerous for fetuses have been shown to cause cancer in adult men and women workers, yet only fertile women are banned from working with them (Asherman, 1978:7). Granted, it is costly in terms of time and dollars but, equipment could be developed for both men and women in all industries. Further, the employment history of the individual applicant could be considered rather than the blanket categorization of all women as unstable workers, in determining the probability that a given applicant will remain with the employer. Protective legislation, if it is indeed protective, could be extended to everyone rather than serve to "protect" and exclude women and young people.

Summary and Critique

Economic theories do not explain how sex segregation came about in the first place. Certainly, sex segregation and paying men and women different wages is one outcome of the employers' need for cheap labor but not necessarily the only outcome. These theories do not talk about how or why there is a "taste for discrimination" against women workers.

Sociological theories (functional theory, exchange theory, and conflict theory), may be used to fill this gap. Morris and Gilder use functional theory to make a case which explains and justifies the existing sexual wage differential. Gilder, however, goes a step further and maintains that we must keep the current wage and other sexual inequities in our society unless we are willing to accept the collapse of civilized society as we know it. He asserts that men will suffer a traumatic identity crisis and turn to destructive means to assert their masculinity. He does not, however, explain

why we must freeze the current societal sexual inequities now. Coser and Rokoff, also using functional theory as their theoretical perspective, argue that societal changes can and should be made for the benefit of all. They argue that society will benefit from both incremental policy changes as well as more radical changes in societal values and attitudes which free both men and women to share in providing for their families' financial, physical, emotional, and other needs.

Exchange theory seems incomplete. Though it does provide an equation which can be used to predict and understand why women choose to work or remain in the home, it does not explain why women have different values from men. It does not discuss the socialization process which exerts different forces on boys and girls. Neither does it explain why the "rewards" for women are different.

Conflict theory is largely untestable in our society. Some of its conclusions as to who wins when there is a sexual wage differential are questionable. While we could argue that only the employer wins, as Morris does, we could also argue that men also win by being able to earn more due to less competition in the labor force, we could argue (as we will in the next section on costs and benefits) that no one wins in the long run.

Psychoanalytic theory is interesting in that it deals with the non-rational, non-economical aspect of the sexual wage differential. (Indeed, it is the only theory that attempts to deal with this aspect of the sexual wage differential). Unfortunately, this theory is also largely untestable unless major changes occur within our society. For support of this theory, we can examine the evidence obtained by other countries, where men and women are more equally responsible for rearing children.

Arguments offered by employers seem to be excuses and justifications

for delegating women to the lower-paid, lower status positions. Yet, because the courts have upheld these excuses, they have persisted. The courts are being challenged, and are consequently taking another look at the rationale they have been accepting as just and reasonable. Employers should also begin to re-evaluate their policies.

Thus, while all of these theories (economic, sociological, and psychoanalytic) provide explanations as to why the earnings gap has persisted, they differ as to what can and should be done about it. Neo-classical models do not propose any solutions; indeed they do not necessarily see the sexual wage differential as a problem. Institutional labor economics seems to suggest that educating the workers as to the real problem (the categorical treatment of employees by employers) may raise their consciousness and solve the problem. Though I doubt it will be that simple, it does suggest that changes may be in order. Sociological theory also suggests that changes may be in order to affect the wage differential (although Gilder argues that reducing these sexual inequities may destroy civilized society as we know it). Psychoanalytic theory implies that if men had a more secure gender identity, they would not need to devalue and dominate women.

Costs and Benefits

In measuring the costs and benefits of maintaining the sexual wage differential we run into several problems. Perhaps one of the major difficulties lies in the items being measured and compared: it is difficult to place a monetary value on equality, fulfillment, and freedom of choice. Values and priorities come into play here and for lack of any others, we must rely heavily upon mine.

Another difficulty lies in the many factors that must be considered. These include both the economy and society. When considering society, we must keep in mind the diverse nature of its most basic unit: the family. Single parent and husband-wife households must be examined.

In considering costs and benefits of maintaining the sexual wage differential, sometimes the costs are imposed on one group and the benefits reaped by another. For example, paying women less than men benefits employers and men in the short run because employers will have a large supply of cheap labor and men will command higher wages, due to the reduced competition (Simeral, 1979). Paying women less than men has other effects, some of which are costs and others of which are benefits. It is difficult to sort through all of the costs and benefits and it is even more difficult to speak of a "net" cost or "net" benefit.

The last difficulty is related to the first. Sometimes a group both incurs costs and reaps benefits from the same action or policy. For example, when men work in the office for forty or more hours every week, the family benefits from the income but also loses that much time that these men could have spent with the family.

This section on costs and benefits of maintaining the sexual wage differential will be divided into three sections. In the first, we will examine how the wage gap affects the economy. In the second, on society, we will summarize our findings and draw some conclusions.

The Economy

Women have been compared to members of minority groups, in that both have long histories of being used as a cheap, readily available reserve army of labor (Hacker, 1951:402-16). Women and members of minority groups would work when there was a shortage of labor due to expansions and growth in the

economy and be the first to leave when jobs were scarce due to a recession or depression. (For more information on this, see Kahne, 1975; Sexton, 1977; Simeral, 1979; and Simeral, 1978. Simeral (1978) suggests that women may no longer be serving as a reserve army of labor). Having this cheap, readily available pool of surplus labor is beneficial in minimizing the effects of fluctuations in the business cycle, and in that respect, functional for society. For the impoverished women workers who are hired and fired according to fluctuations in the business cycle (that is boom periods, recessions, and depressions), it is quite costly, in terms of monetary and psychic costs.

Bernard tells us that, "The role of mother as we define it is almost unique . . . a product of affluence" (Bernard, 1975:220). Historically, women have always been too badly needed in the field, garden, or work force to be specialized ". . . for the care of a small brood of children for almost a lifetime" (Bernard, 1975:220). The economy cannot afford to continue to underutilize its women in the labor force. It is clearly not in the interests of profit maximization for firms to hire only men for the top positions when they could hire an equally or more qualified woman for the same or less pay than a man.

Who is paying for this discrimination? I suggest that the costs of discrimination are being borne by: women, society, and consumers. Women suffer from discrimination because they are not hired and promoted in the same manner as their male counterparts. The costs are also borne by society because sex-typing in jobs means that rather than allowing the best applicant to be considered for the job and offering it to him or her, the employer offers the job to the best applicant of the desired sex. Thus, society loses the best overall applicant. Of course, consumers also

bear costs, especially in reduced efficiency and productivity-- because the best applicant is not necessarily offered the job. These costs are directly or indirectly passed on to the consumers and they subsidize discrimination.

Society

Sociologists (including Talcott Parsons, Kenneth Boulding, Smith-Rosenberg, Ferdinand Tonnies) have long recognized two separate worlds. One is the market (economy) world, where costs and benefits are carefully weighed, and the other is the affective world, where giving is determined according to ability and receiving according to need (Bernard, 1975:265-9). Bernard holds that because most women are reared in the latter, they are at a special disadvantage in the economy. The business world has reluctantly borrowed some of the principles of the latter world, in order to "humanize" the work situation (Bernard, 1975:265-9). With this overview, let us look at families, parents, and children.

Before we begin to talk about families, we should determine what families look like today. In Table 4, we see that families have changed considerably from the "typical" wage-earning father, homemaking mother, and brood of little ones (only 15.9% of all households). Further, we note that female-headed, single-parent households constitute a significant percentage (6.2) of all households.

Single-parent households have special problems. The one which looms largest is that the parent must either assume both the provider and child-rearing roles or have another agency or person relieve him or her of one or the other. An insidious effect of the sexual wage differential is that ". . . in the absence of a provider male . . . female-headed families . . . tend to be poor" (Cook, 1975:231). Most women work because they

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTION OF AMERICAN FAMILIES, 1977

| Percentage | Description of household |
|------------|--|
| 15.9 | father sole wage earner, mother full-time homemaker, at least one child under 18 years of age living at home |
| 18.5 | both father and mother are wage earners, at least one child under 18 years of age living at home |
| 30.5 | married couple with no children or no children at home |
| 6.2 | female-headed household, single parent with at least one child under 18 years of age living at home |
| 0.6 | single parent father with at least one child under 18 years of age living at home |
| 20.6 | single person households |
| 2.5 | unrelated people living together |
| 15.3 | households which include relatives other than spouses or children |

SOURCE: U. S. Statistical Abstract, 1977 (37:1978:43).

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need the money (Stimpson, 1970:332-3), but even then, they tend to be poor. Sexton reports, "The income of families headed by men is over two times that of families headed by women" (Sexton, 1977:24).

From tables 5 and 6, we see that while only about 1 in 10 families is headed by a woman, these families represent a disproportionately large percentage of poor families (about 30%). Further, we see from table 7 that female-headed households are growing at about twice the rate of all families. This means that the problems of female-headed households will be faced by ever larger segments of the population.

Because clearly female-headed households bear many costs of sex differential in wages, it is important to consider suggestions which have been offered to alleviate problems of these households. Solutions include: divorce insurance, national child support policy, state assistance, and encouraging women to be self-supporting. Divorce insurance is currently being considered by the New York State Legislature (Moore and Sawhill, 1978:220). National child support policy is a fund that all parents absent from their families would contribute to and all eligible children could draw from, with no stigma attached (Moore and Sawhill, 1978:220). State assistance would be available for widows and their children as a matter of course (similar to welfare or social security without degradation)(Bernard, 1975:231-3). Encouraging women to be self-supporting would perhaps involve the most change. It would necessitate eliminating sex discrimination, providing equal pay for equal work, ending sex-typing of jobs, and providing equal access to education and training (Bernard, 1975:231-2, quoting Ross, 1973:13). These and other measures will be discussed at length in the next chapter, under the section on strategies.

TABLE 5
FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS AND POVERTY, 1968

| Description of household | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Families headed by women as a percentage of all families | 11 |
| Poor families headed by women as a percentage of all poor families | 30 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau in Stimpson, 1968: 343.

TABLE 6
FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS AND POVERTY, 1970

| Description of household | Number (in millions) |
|---|----------------------|
| Families headed by a woman | 5.6 |
| Families headed by a women, living in poverty | 0.2 (approx.) |

SOURCE: Sexton, 1977:24.

TABLE 7
INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS AND FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS
DURING THE 1960s

| Description of household | Increase in number (as a percentage) |
|--------------------------|---|
| All families | 14 |
| Female-headed households | 24 |

SOURCE: Sexton, 1977:24.

Our attention now turns to the 64.9% of households which have both husband and wife. Because of the split between the competitive, aggressive occupational role and the warm, cooperative, affective familial role, there is a constant conflict which may lead to compartmentalization of roles (Bernard, 1975:226 quoting Keniston, 1965:485-6,487). This compartmentalization means that men express their feelings and warmth in the family and fulfill needs for achievement by competing at work. Dizard tells us:

The primary source of increasing husband-wife role differentiation . . . is to be found in the occupational demands made upon the husband and his reaction to these demands with increasing success in occupational endeavors as measured by the degree to which the husband's income increased, we found increasing role differentiation and loss of gratification in the marriage (Bernard, 1975:223 quoting Dizard, 1968:76).

Moore and Sawhill and Blood and Wolfe note that all women, especially working class women, gain power in the marital relationship when they become paid members of the labor force (Gillespie, 1975:85-6, 76 and Moore and Sawhill, 1978:206-7). The longer they work, the more power they are able to obtain. This observation helps to explain why blue-collar wives have more power in their marriages than their white-collar cousins-- their rate and length of participation in the work force is much higher (Gillespie, 1975:76).

When women work, there is still little change in the distribution of household tasks; with limited assistance from the husband, children, and sometimes hired help, family responsibilities still fall in the woman's domain (Hacker, 1972:154 and Moore and Sawhill, 1978:209-10).

Several studies show an inverse relationship between women's high education (with high earnings and strong commitment to the labor force) and low rates of marriage and high rates of divorce (Moore and Sawhill, 1978:209-10).

Morris adds that, likelihood of divorce is greatest when wives have access to independent source of income while married (Morris, 1978:204-5). Two explanations are proposed, both of which may be true. The first suggests that the costs of divorce are lowest for wives capable of self-support (Morris, 1978:204-5). The second suggests that failure to conform to societal norms about what constitutes "appropriate sex-role behavior" is tension-producing to one or both partners in a marriage (Morris, 1978:204-5).

Holmstrom adds that while two-career families deviate greatly from middle-class norms, they are still far from achieving equality between the sexes, as evidenced in the double standard of accounting.

The sexual wage differential legitimates the traditional division of labor. Because men earn so much more in the labor market than their female counterparts, their time is seen as more valuable in the labor force. A double standard of accounting is often used to further justify their participation in the labor force while their wives are charged with the care of the children and running the household. Under this double standard, rather than perceiving costs on the "reality level" as directly linked to having both husband and wife in the labor market, they are perceived as tied to the wife's working and subtracted from her salary in determining how much the family benefits from her career (Holmstrom, 1972:99-100). Child care, hiring household help, clothes for the wife, a second car, etc. are seen as tied to her career and subtracted from her income. Since it is expected that a husband works, these same costs are not subtracted from his income. Therein lies the double-standard. It is argued that since there are all of these costs tied to a wife's career, and since women don't (as a rule) earn as much as men in the labor market anyway, they and the family are better off when mothers remain in the home, caring for the children

and the household.

Yet, numerous studies have shown that it is not healthy for mothers, fathers, or children for mothers to be charged with the full responsibility of caring for children (see Bernard, 1975:217-8; Johnson, 1977:54; Palme, 1970:220, 241; Sandberg, 1975:71). Everyone benefits from the participation of the father in child care. Unfortunately, little is being done in the United States to make it possible for both parents to share in caring for their children.

Summary and Conclusions

In the preceding section, we have examined the costs and benefits of maintaining the sexual wage differential. We found that the economy benefits from using women as a cheap reserve army of labor which can be pushed into the labor market in times of rapid growth and expansion (when there is a shortage of trained labor) and laid off when the economy contracts (and there is a surplus of skilled labor). Women suffer in this insecure, unstable position in the labor market. Men also benefit (in the short run), by being able to command higher wages in the labor market, due to reduced competition. Employers benefit (in the short run) because they are able to use this reserve army of labor as they choose. In the longer run, employers lose because, due to sex-typing of jobs, they often hire the most qualified applicant of the desired sex for the job rather than the most qualified applicant. They pass this cost on to the consumers, who in turn end up subsidizing this discrimination. Of course, women still lose in the long run, in terms of careers and wages.

In terms of the total society, everyone loses when there is a sexual wage differential. The sexual wage differential has been accompanied by, or led to, an increasing sexual division of labor. This division of labor

has cast most women in the role of "mother" and charged them with the care of children and the household. Similarly, it has cast most men in the role of "breadwinner" and "provider." Numerous studies have shown that this division is not healthy for the family, emotionally or financially. Each member within the family pays costs in maintaining the current structure. While the wife and mother gains "security" (if it can be called that) in knowing, or assuming, that she will be supported financially in return for caring for the children, she must sacrifice her independence for the stability of the family.

For the husband and father, his career and income are all important. Not only is it the means for supporting his family, it is also his primary means of asserting his masculinity and success in the society and within his family. Because his world of work often infringes upon his responsibilities in the family (and he is forgiven because it is in order to be a "better provider" for his family) he plays little (if any) part in raising his children. Limited participation in childrearing is a cost most men bear in order to provide income for the family.

Last, we must consider children. Having one parent (usually the mother) bear the primary responsibility for their care is not healthy for them or for either parent. Numerous studies have validated the claim that children miss out by not having an adult male (in addition to adult female(s)) to serve as a role model. Further, studies have shown that women are not as effective and do not enjoy assuming the sole or primary responsibility for child care. Men also lose out when they do not participate in child care. Of course, the family also loses out financially, living on one income rather than two, with the current division of labor.

Summary and Conclusions

With the exception of Gilder, who states that civilized society as we know it will disappear unless we satisfy ourselves with the current socially contrived sexual inequities, theorists agree that the costs of maintaining the sexual wage differential are small compared to the benefits that can be reaped. We move now to what might take place instead: roles in transition toward equality.

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CHAPTER II
ROLES IN TRANSITION TOWARD EQUALITY

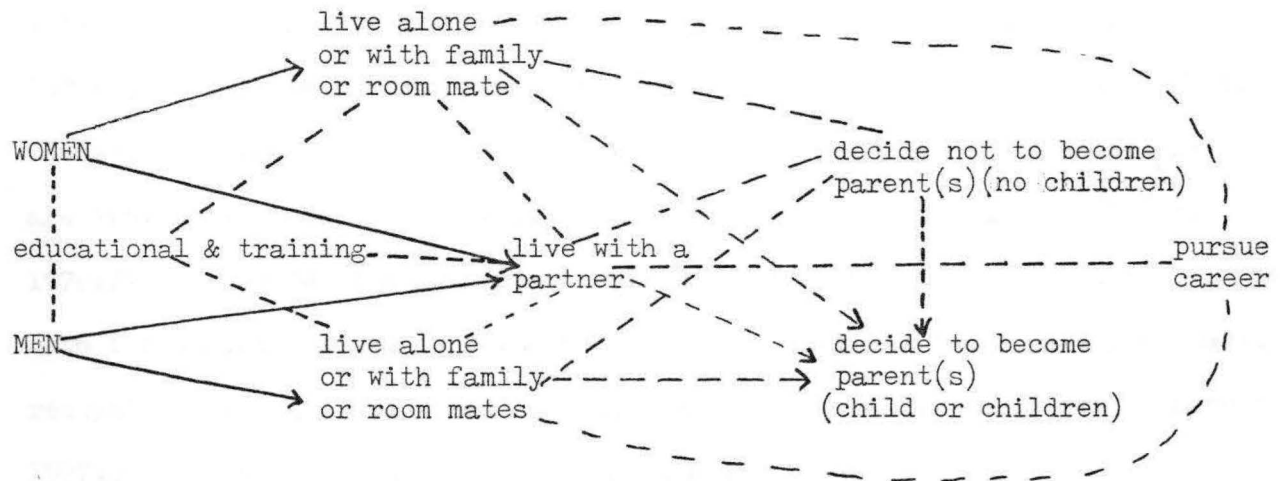
Now that we have an understanding of the sex role problem, including how it is manifested, some explanations about where it came from and why it persists, and how it affects society and the economy, let us turn our attention to an alternative: equality.

Definition and Evidence

Because the roles of men and women are interrelated, a change in one necessitates a change in the other. To achieve equality is not merely to have everyone in the society acquire approximately equal parts of "masculinity" and "femininity" (Johnson, 1977:52). To achieve equality is to define the world in human terms, rather than sex-typed terms (Palme, 1970:240); it means that both men and women have the same opportunities and choices in life (not separate but equal, the same)(Liljestrom, 1975:16). A diagram of this equality would look like figure 1.

This diagram illustrates the options available to each person. For example, a man might choose to live alone for a year and concentrate on advancing his education. A year later, he might decide to live with a partner and pursue a career. The next year, he might decide to become a parent and drop out of the labor force to continue his education. His partner, and all other men and women, have these same options. The symmetry of this diagram, both in the wording of the options and in the options themselves shows what this scheme of equality would look like. Roles would be chosen, rather than assigned, and these choices would be reversible and not mutually exclusive.

Figure 1. Equal opportunities and life choices for men and women.



Arrows indicate direction, when process has only one direction.
 —solid line indicates choices that must be made once only
 ----dotted line indicates choices that may be made at any time

It is difficult to talk about equality without first examining what steps have been taken already to achieve it.

Patricia Sexton, in her paper on Women and Work, provides a useful overview of steps currently being taken by the United States to help women in employment. While the programs she mentions are encouraging, they lag behind our European neighbors (Sexton, 1977:33-66).

Sweden is the country which stands alone in its experimental programs designed to bridge the gap between the roles of men and women. In this small, thriving country, there is ". . . a deeply rooted egalitarianism that is difficult for Americans to appreciate" (Barrett, 1977:394).

Equality of the sexes and the right everyone has to work are major political issues, and have been since they were stated in Sweden's report to the

United Nations in 1968 (Palme, 1970:237-46; Rollen, 1978; Sandberg, 1975). This egalitarianism is reflected in Sweden's policy of international neutrality and the commitment of the trade unions to wage contracts which reduce the inequities between highly paid and less highly paid workers. In 1970, women in Sweden received approximately 80% of the wages of men (Barrett, 1977:394); this is up from 70% of the same in 1960 (Palme, 1970:244). Their educational system educates both boys and girls in the same subjects; they are instructed together in every subject except physical training (Palme, 1970:245). The Swedish government offers parents paid parental leave to care for infants (Fong, 1979). Changes in the laws and taxes have been made, recognizing all men and women as equals and economically independent (Barrett, 1977:395). In 1977, the Committee on Equality began drafting a law which prohibits sex discrimination (Beckerus, 1977:1-8).

While Sweden has made many gains, women who are full-time, year round workers are still (as of 1970) earning about 20% less than their male counterparts. It is still unusual to find women in authority over men (especially when they are the same age and have the same amount of education) (Barrett, 1977:396). Women are still grossly underrepresented in policy-making positions: trade unions, Parliament, managerial positions (Barrett, 1977:396). European traditionalism appears to be hindering the move toward equality; women are still shouldering major responsibility for home and child care (Barrett, 1977:396-9).

If the United States is to follow Sweden's example and move toward equality of the sexes, what strategies must be considered?

Strategies

When we consider strategies which will move us toward equality, we must remember that two types of changes must occur simultaneously: long

term changes and short term changes. The long term changes refer to societal attitudes and values, educating people to do more than give lip service to equality, encouraging equal participation of both men and women in the family and the economy.

In terms of short term changes, as men and women find themselves in different situations, the strategies that attempt to prevent and correct the societal inequities must be varied. They must include many areas and occur simultaneously if they are to have lasting effects. These areas include: education, care of children, the nature of work, income, and taxes. We will first examine education, including formal education and job related training. Then we will turn our attention to the care of children; parental leaves, shorter working hours, and child care options will be discussed. Changes in the nature of work include a re-examination of working hours, the "clockwork" of careers, the need for employees to relocate, and unionization. Lastly, in our examination of income and taxes, we will discuss income tax reform and pay differentials.

Education

Freeman argues that academic environments which neither encourage nor discourage men or women actually serve to discriminate against women because of their differing external environments (which, by treating everyone equally, are not taken into consideration)(Freeman, 1975:198). Women often do not receive the same encouragement to pursue their education and careers as men (Freeman, 1975:194-208). Even when they do have the same amount of formal education, as Table 2 showed us, they do not receive the same or comparable income. This shows us that there other forces at work that need to be addressed.

One such force is sex bias and stereotyping. It has been suggested

that education at all levels (grade school, university, special courses and workshops in management training) should include training on recognizing and avoiding pitfalls in sex bias and stereotyping (Safillios-Rothschild, 1978:427-429,420).

Informal education, through employment services, and job-related training are useful. For the two-career families, the employment service would be invaluable in helping the husband or wife find a job when he or she must relocate to advance the career of a spouse. The employment services can also teach entrants and re-entrants to the job market how to search for jobs, where to go for additional training, how to analyze employment contracts, the costs and benefits of joining a union, and what to do about discrimination (Sullerot, 1975:105; Sexton, 1977:12).

Because, even with these services, older women, often mothers of children, are entering or re-entering the labor market when most training opportunities are filled by younger people (Cook, 1975:16), Sweden has developed a labor market training program (Rollen, 1978). It is the alternative to the university. It is available to everyone over twenty years old who is unemployed or runs the risk of becoming unemployed. This program is designed to support those who are unemployed and in a position to improve their situation through training and to generate a supply of trained labor to reduce fluctuations in the business cycle. This program generally prepares participants for an occupation and pays each participant a taxable training grant (roughly equal to the regular wages for an unskilled blue-collar worker).

Particularly noteworthy is the equality grant. This Swedish program pays employers eight to 14 kronor (about \$2-3.50) per hour, who train and hire men and women in jobs that are "untraditional" for their sex. (Untraditional refers to a sex bias of more than 40/60 percent.) So far, only about 250

persons a year take advantage of this program. Rollen, Sweden's Head of Division for National Labor Market Board, feels that more will use it when some of the current restrictions are lifted and the amount of remuneration offered employers is standardized at 15 kronor (about \$3.75) per hour of training for the six month training period (Rollen, 1978:15).

Thus, we note that there are many ways in which education can play a role in this move toward equality. Both the formal educational system and the less formal employment service and job-related training are components in this role.

Care for Children

It has long been assumed that the mother "naturally" be charged with the major (often sole) responsibility for children, even when both parents work (Holmstrom, 1972:99-100). When they both work, it is the mother who is ultimately responsible for child care arrangements, and the cost of child care is deducted from her salary (considered a cost of her work rather than a cost related to having both partners work)(Holmstrom, 1972:99-100).

In our earlier section on the costs and benefits to society of maintaining the traditional sex roles, evidence suggests that it is not healthy for either the mother, the child(ren), or the father for the mother alone to be charged with child care (Johnson, 1977:54). Further, studies show that everyone gains when fathers increase their participation in child rearing (Bernard, 1975:217-8; Johnson, 1977:54; Palme, 1970:220,241; Sandberg, 1975:71).

Options

There are several options to choose from: reducing hours of work for parents of infants, paid parental leave, "generalized drawing rights" and

national health insurance, and child care. Sweden is currently changing its focus from "should mothers of infants work?" to "should parents of infants work?" Several suggestions have emerged, to make it easier to combine the roles of parent and wage-earner. The first recommends that both parents work part-time and take turns caring for the child(ren)(Palme, 1970:242). The second suggests that the workday be shortened from eight to six hours a day for all parents of young children, so that it will be easier for parents to mesh schedules and assure adequate child care (between the two of them or when both are at work because child care is needed for fewer hours). The last option is paid paternal leave. This option allows either parent or both to care for infants or sick children at home while receiving up to 90% of the income which is being foregone (Legerstrom, 1976:20-5; Fong, 1979). Since the first two options--modifying the workday of parents--are self-explanatory, let us examine the third more closely.

Parental Leave

Under Sweden's current system, either parent can receive a full day's allowance or both can receive partial benefits totaling a full day's allowance for up to 210 working days (Legerstrom, 1976:24-25; Fong, 1979:1). Either parent can receive a sickness allowance if one must stay home from work to care for a sick child under 10 years of age (Legerstrom, 1976:25; Fong, 1979:1). Unfortunately, the paid parental leave system hasn't altered the traditional sex roles very much. Morgenthaler reports that though the system has grown in popularity (increasing from 2% of all eligible fathers taking leaves when the system was introduced in 1974 to 10-12%, with the length of the average leave taken by them increased from 28 days to 42 working days in the same time period), women are still most often the caretakers of the

children (Morgenthaler, 1979:1). He cites several reasons: employers are reluctant to grant leaves to men, attitudes are changing very slowly, and the men find caring for children draining. Employers are reluctant to grant leaves and employees are reluctant to take advantage of them, even in shortening their hours, because many men hold specialized managerial positions. When these men are on leave, no one else knows how to do the work and it just piles up (Morgenthaler, 1979:1,22). Many of the men complain that they receive little support for taking advantage of parental leave, from friends, co-workers, and family. This is unfortunate, but not surprising, since social change has always been a slow process (Morgenthaler, 1979:22). Lastly, it is not surprising that the men find caring for children draining; women (who have been socialized for this role from birth) have complained of this for centuries.

Generalized Drawing Rights and National Health Insurance

Now that we have an understanding of parental leaves, let us focus our attention on another proposal: generalized drawing rights and national health insurance. Generalized drawing rights have been proposed as an alternative to welfare and social security. The major difference is that with the former, "unpaid mutual aid is a matter of course," without stigma or strings attached (Bernard, 1975:273-6). Also proposed, either as part of these generalized drawing rights or separately, as part of a national health insurance program, are benefits for which women (by their biology) are entitled to. These include coverage of medical expenses associated with childbirth, rape, unexpected pregnancies, abortion, physical violence in the home, and expenses associated with child care (Bernard, 1975:273-6; Cook, 1975:53). While some of the items are disputed, it should be noted that the only major industrial nation in the world without a national health

insurance plan covering medical costs of childbirth is the United States (Cook, 1975:53). Additionally, Cook suggests the drafting and adoption of the Maternal Bill of Rights, similar to the G.I. Bill of Rights (Cook, 1975:67). I would like to revise her idea and call it the Parental Bill of Rights. This bill would recognize that the interruption of work to raise a family is a service to this country (which women have traditionally taken); this interruption is merely a break between employment and employment which cannot be taken without the loss of some skills for which training will be provided under this bill (Cook, 1975:67). Clearly, we have some catching up to do with respect to the rights and insurance coverage of parents, especially mothers.

The most obvious alternative/supplement to parental leave, reduced hours, and generalized drawing rights, of course, is child care. There is a complex problem facing many parents seeking child care: if they are fortunate enough to find child care, often it is not affordable and/or not adequate.

Child Care Facilities

The shortage of child care facilities is an international problem. Cook reports that Moscow may be the only city in the world in which child care facilities meet the needs of the population (Cook, 1975:30). In the United States alone, it is estimated that six million children under six years of age required some child care in 1972; yet only one million were cared for in day-care centers or licensed homes (Moore and Sawhill, 1978:211). Most mothers will tell you that the cost of child care and work-related expenses consume approximately half of their paychecks (Baxandall, 1975:30).

What is adequate child care? It should meet the needs of both parents and the children. As long as the nature of work in our economy requires some employees to work at night, child care should be available for the

children of these employees. In other words, it must be available 24 hours a day, as long as there are both night shifts and day shifts in the labor market. Supplying only day care will not be enough.

What child care environment will best meet the needs of the children? Our earlier section on the costs and benefits of maintaining the current sex-roles, suggests that children benefit under the care of both sexes. It is in this environment that Palme suggests that children who get less cultural stimulation at home can compensate for it in a "universal school" (Palme, 1970:245). Numerous studies have shown the benefits children derive from working and playing with other children, both their age and older, as well as the benefits of having numerous role models to choose from (Johnson, 1977).

Let us backtrack now and re-examine the issues. Who should pay for child care? If we agree with Sweden that the right to work and the equality of the sexes are national concerns, we should also be clamoring for publicly supported child care. What are the arguments that have been used against government subsidization of child care? The most often cited argument is cost: it costs too much to provide adequate child care. To that, we must ask, couldn't the savings from reduced welfare costs (because the work disincentive of prohibitive child care costs will be removed) be applied to this subsidization? Are we willing to continue paying the social costs of people trapped in poverty because they can't hire someone to care for their children while they work? Are we willing to pay the costs of children roaming the streets with no place to work because their parents are out working? These are only two of the major costs we are concerned with. As the country which professes ". . . liberty and justice for all," should child care be considered for all and a public good--like free public education, free preschool and free pre-preschool?

Of course, there is always the argument that child care will weaken the family. According to a study of the effects of group child care in the Soviet Union, done by Bronfenbrenner, children raised in group child care were better socialized and there was greater companionship between parents and children than other children (Baxandall, 1975:95). He also found that Soviet parents spend even more time with their children than American parents (Baxandall, 1975:95). Lambert supports these findings in a study of six cultures around the world (Bernard, 1975:219). He found that the more help mothers had with child care, the more nurturant they tended to be (Bernard, 1975:219).

Anti-natalists fear that public or low cost child care might encourage parents to have more children and increase population pressures. Russia, which has child care supplied as a right, has not reported an increase in birth rates since child care was made a public good. In fact, evidence suggests a positive correlation between high income and low fertility rates, meaning that birth rate lowers as income rises. (Simeral, 1979; citing T.W. Schultz, "Fertility and Economic Values," University of Chicago).

If we are to have child care, who should carry it out? According to James E. Levine's book, Day Care And The Public Schools, Profiles Of Five Communities, the schools should become ". . . prime sponsors of any federally funded universal child care program . . . if quality care is to be assured." (Rauth, 1979:14-15 citing Levine). The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) maintains that ". . . much could be saved in later years by focusing on the social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of children at the preschool level." (Rauth, 1979:15). Since the public school system is operating in every state, and has built into it minimal standards for quality control, it seems logical to assign the system this additional task: carrying out and maintaining quality control of day care.

The Nature Of Work

Many aspects of the nature of work, as it is known in our society, are currently being reanalyzed. These aspects include: the hours of work, the "clockwork" of careers, the need for employees to relocate, and the effects of unionization on these and other aspects of work.

Let us begin with the most basic: hours of work. Most jobs have set schedules and give the worker no choice as to what the hours of work are. Many flexible-hour schedules have been proposed, all offering the worker some control over his or her work schedule. Flexitime (introduced in Munich in 1967) is one of the most popular internationally (Owen, 1977:153). In a typical flexitime system, the employer sets the times during which all employees must be present (e.g. 10-noon and 2-4 p.m., Monday-Friday)(Owen, 1977:153). He also sets the times within which all hours must be worked (e.g. 6 a.m.-6 p.m.), and imposes regulations on the maximum number of hours that may be worked in a day, the average number of hours per week, etc. (Owen, 1977:153). This system is especially helpful to parents because they can arrange their schedules to complement the available child care (run errands to doctor, etc.), thereby allowing more parents the option of working full-time. Employers report that the amount of overtime and number of part-day excuses decreased under this system; employee morale and productivity increased (Owen, 1977:154). The government likes it because it helps to ease "rush hour" traffic and allows industry to bring more full-time workers (especially women) into the labor force (Owen, 1977:153).

Where this system is unavailable, many women prefer part-time work to no income at all (especially where child care is a problem)(Cook, 1975:39). Recognizing this, Sweden has given part-time workers the same fringe benefits, rights to raises, promotions, and tenure as full-time workers (Safilios-Rothschild, 1978:420-1). In the United States, the part-time workers,

many of them women, are afforded few if any rights and benefits.

Another suggestion is offered by Safilios-Rothschild. She recommends new policies which allow people flexible schedules and/or time off from work:

Men and women might be allowed to trade a year or two of partially paid leave in the thirties or forties for a longer full-time commitment in their fifties or sixties . . . (Safilios-Rothschild, 1978:422).

This is a novel idea. In this way, men and women wouldn't be penalized for stopping out of the labor force for a year or two (say to begin to raise a family); commitments to careers would not need to be full-time and continuous.

Talcott Parsons directs our attention to job "transfers." This practice of forcing families to relocate has helped create the nuclear family that is isolated from most relatives and is so common today (Holmstrom, 1972:30). Companies need to reevaluate these job transfers to determine whether they are really necessary. If they are, companies which require these moves should find jobs for both the husband and wife (Safilios-Rothschild, 1978: 424).

Trade unions have been able to question the nature and some of the conditions of work (Logue, 1978:32, 1976). Unfortunately, there is sex discrimination in the trade unions themselves (Falk, 1975). Unions claim that women are hard to organize because they have high turnover rates, tend to identify with the management rather than with their fellow workers (due to the paternalism in the labor force) and are often employed by relatively small firms (Falk, 1975; Fong, 1979; Simeral, 1979). Of equal importance, women are underrepresented in positions of power in unions, and consequently,

the major concerns (child care and equal pay) are often ignored (Cook, 1975: 64). If they were unionized, with adequate representation, women's concerns could be aired and they could have more control over their jobs.

Income And Taxes

Moore and Sawhill (1978:220) explain that as women increase their participation in the world of work, we must re-examine our laws and public policies which are based on the assumption that most women are financially dependent homemakers. These include policies related to income, income taxes, social security, welfare, divorce, alimony, and child support. Some of these are currently under scrutiny; others bear a closer look.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has recommended two vehicles for dealing with the enormous wage differences we find in our economy: unions and law. First, with respect to unions, they could force management to reassess the enormous disparities between wages through collective bargaining. Over the years, unions and management could agree that the lowest wage earners, who are primarily women, should receive a greater rate of increase than their co-workers at the top end of the wage scale. Second, through the intervention of the state, changes in the law could force employers to close the gap between men's and women's wages and/or revise the income tax system to do the same. The first approach has met with considerable success in Sweden and Norway. The latter has also been successful in Sweden. In both countries, the wage differential has narrowed from approximately 65% to 80% in five years (Cook, 1975:26).

Sweden is also experimenting with tax reforms. Each adult is treated as a financially independent individual, regardless of whether she or he lives alone or in any other setting (Palme, 1970:243). There is now only one tax table for all Swedish citizens, married and single, and all persons

must file a separate income tax return (eliminating preferential joint taxation of married persons)(Barrett, 1977:395). These measures have been adopted to encourage economic independence in women (Barrett, 1977:395; Palme, 1970:243).

Additionally, income tax systems in Sweden has been revised to move the tax burden from those with low incomes to those with high incomes, further reducing the wage differential (Palme, 1970:243). This system has reduced the benefits employees derive from increases in wages and has turned their attention (and consequently the attention of management) to the conditions and nature of their work (Morgenthaler, 1979:22).

Many countries are following Sweden's example and shifting their focus from equal pay for equal work to equal pay for work of equal value. Previously, employers have gotten around the equal pay for equal work of men and women workers by defining work done by women as different from that done by male co-workers. While it is difficult to determine exactly what should be defined as work "of equal value", at least efforts are being made to prevent arbitrary decisions on the part of employers decisions that define work done by women workers as different (and less valuable) than that done by their male co-workers. It will be interesting to see what effects this policy will have on wages.

The criteria used in evaluating employees' performance are also being re-examined for sex biases. Studies have shown that work done primarily by women (for example waitress jobs which require speed and accuracy) are evaluated as less valuable and therefore pay less than work that is done primarily by men (for example maitre d'), even though both may require similar skills (Simeral, 1979). There is also the tendency for job evaluations to stress and give added weight to areas in which men are most often found

(for example, working with machines, working independently, and supervising others) while giving little attention to areas in which women are most often found (for example, personal contact with the public, working under supervision, working well with others).

These reforms in income, taxes, shifting from equal pay for equal work to equal pay for equal value, and re-examining job evaluation criteria, are helping to narrow the income gap between men and women.

Summary and Conclusions

We have discussed roles in transition toward equality and some of the changes that would help us achieve this goal. Each is only a small step toward equality, but a step nonetheless that will help to bring about more social change and greater acceptance of this idealistic notion of equality.

Education will provide us with a base on which we can build. We can provide equal education for all people regardless of age and sex, both in and outside of the classroom. Part of this education would be training in identifying and working to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping, working toward all people being judged solely on the basis of their abilities. If education makes any difference in the income one earns (and studies show that though men benefit more from increased years of education, women also increase their salary with increased years of formal education, see table 2), increased education should help to increase women's earnings somewhat. Education and training for people of all ages will be especially useful for women that have stopped out of the labor force to raise a family and are returning to the labor force at a time when many training opportunities are ordinarily closed to them.

The other part of this education would be from the employer's side, through measures similar to Sweden's equality grants. It is the employers

who ultimately decide which workers they want for what training. Inducements, be they monetary grants to employers, tax breaks, or others, can be very useful in persuading firms to hire women (and men) into jobs where their sex represents 40% or less of the workers.

Changes in options for caring for children are very important to women's position in the labor market. Historically, women have dropped or stopped out of the labor market to raise a family; and if they worked while raising a family, the family responsibilities still came first. This has given them a disadvantaged position in the labor market. Similarly, societal demands that men work forty or more hours per week and provide the primary (if not sole) source of income for their families, has kept many fathers from playing an active role in raising their children. As mentioned in an earlier section on costs of maintaining the sexual wage differential, everyone loses from the current system in the long run. The alternatives proposed would provide some relief. Paid parental leave would enable either parent or both to remain at home, caring for children without too great a financial sacrifice. If successful, this proposal would help to reduce the sexual wage differential. Not only would women of childbearing age have to be considered potential bad risks (because they might drop out of the labor force temporarily to raise their children) but all men would have to be considered the same (since men are physically able to father children from the time they reach puberty onward). If the system worked, either parent or both would be equally likely to take a leave from work to raise or help raise children. Currently, employers are pointing to the fact that women are slightly more likely to drop out of the labor force than men, using this as a basis for characterizing all women workers as "unstable" and discriminating against them. Successful, nation-wide implementation of this paid parental leave program

should eliminate this excuse.

Generalized drawing rights and national health insurance have separate components. Generalized drawing rights (a system similar to welfare, without stigma) would help to minimize the effects of the sexual wage differential. It would do this because currently (as noted in table 4) a large percentage of single parent families are headed by women. These women and their families (especially when recalling that female-headed households account for over 30% of all poor families in the United States) would benefit from this program and would not have to suffer the psychic costs of having a stigma attached to them because they are poor (often due to circumstances beyond their control). National health insurance, would help to make the costs of pregnancy and childbirth less of a cost that must be absorbed by women and more one that is shared by the nation. This should help to reduce the effects of the current sexual wage differential.

Child care facilities would free women (who are the primary caretakers of children) to pursue their own interests and careers. It should also increase their stability in the labor market, because if guaranteed adequate care for their children, they would be able to choose whether or not they prefer to remain in the labor market or stop out while raising their families. Their increased stability would give employers no justification for labeling them as "unstable workers" and discriminating against them accordingly.

The nature of work, including the scheduling of hours, the "clockwork" of careers, and the need for employees to relocate, needs to be revised if we are to move toward equality. Working at the hours chosen by the employee will be helpful to parents (especially mothers, who often are charged with carrying out family responsibilities). This will mean that they can run

errands on their own time, without having to call in sick in order to take a child to the dentist on a weekday. The single-direction, continuous clock-work of careers needs to be re-examined. Currently, workers are heavily penalized, and often forego their chances of obtaining top leadership positions, if they stop out of the work force for an extended period of time, for example, to raise a family. Consequently, women in general have been heavily penalized. Safilios-Rothschild suggests that careers need not be this rigid. Another structure we must question is job "transfers" which cause families to relocate. Are they really necessary? If so, companies which require these moves should be required by law to find suitable jobs for both the husband and wife.

Because women are among the lowest paid workers, bridging the gap between the best paid and worst paid workers in our society would be of great benefit to them. Whether it is done through union negotiations, income tax reform, or other methods is not as important as making sure these enormous differences in income are reduced.

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CHAPTER III
SOCIETAL CHOICES

Conceptual Plan

Now that we have discussed both the sexual wage differential and roles in transition toward equality, let us put all of the information we have gathered into a conceptual framework. There are two types of forces which maintain or change a system: institutional and individual. Institutional or structural forces are those systems developed and maintained by the institutions which justify, rationalize and perpetuate a given ideology. Institutional forces maintaining the current sex roles include: developing and maintaining theories which explain the sex differential of wages as necessary for society; supporting protective legislation which bars women from some jobs; maintaining technological barriers which prevent men and women being hired for the same jobs; and defining men and women and the work they do as different and subsequently hiring, paying, and promoting them differently. Institutional forces working toward equality include: working to successfully implement policies designed to promote equality; constant monitoring of institutions to detect and reduce inequities, and mobilizing all available resources to work toward equality.

Individual or personal forces are those practices of individuals or groups which justify, rationalize, and perpetuate a given ideology. Individual forces maintaining the current sex roles include: perpetuating sex roles and stereotypes in practice or teaching; discouraging or not supporting those who are in occupations and positions where they (by sex) comprise 40% or less of those in the field or position; lobbying and working to

insure the maintenance of sex roles; and working to make equal opportunity and affirmative actions fail. Individual forces working toward equality include: protesting inequities on individual and institutional levels; monitoring one's self and institutions to detect and reduce inequities; supporting legislation for equal pay for work of equal value, and measures reducing the income gap and working toward the successful implementation of policies designed to encourage equality.

It is important to remember that not taking any action will support the current sex roles; changes require calculated, deliberate action.

Summary and Conclusions

We have long heard cries of inequality and the problems posed by the rigid, traditional sex roles in our society. They are illustrated in many ways, but because the society we live in is a market society, the most dramatic example is in the economy: the sexual wage differential. In this paper, we have examined the sexual wage differential and the explanations for it offered by economists, sociologists, psychologists, and employers. We have glanced at the ways in which the economy and society are affected by the wage differential and the current sex roles. From there, we explored another possibility: equality and some of its attendant changes. We found that fundamental reforms must occur before we are indeed a society which offers ". . . liberty and justice for all . . ."; the society we hope to become. We have also developed a framework from which we can characterize all societal choices as either maintaining the current sex roles or moving toward equality.

THE TIME TO BEGIN IS NOW!

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