



# CONTEMPORARY FAMILIES: RACE AND GENDER

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# AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

- African American families have been historically characterized as egalitarian
- African American women have been part of the workforce consistently since the nineteenth century- much earlier than White women
- African American women have been more politically active in their communities when compared to their White and Latina counterparts
  - Slavery leveled the gender playing field, making both Black men and women both equal in their lack of power. This made the participation of women in activism more favorable in Black communities

# AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES, END

- Ida B. Wells-Barnett helped foster Black women's club by building a large campaign against lynching
- Other Black organizations run by both married and single Black women called for access to education, and work:
  - The National Association of Colored Women
  - The First Conference of Negro Women



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# AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIAGE

- The high level of education experienced by most Black women in the 1960s (60%) led to more loving and successful marriages
- The Women's Movement caused white women to catch up when it comes to education
- By the 1970s, an economic recession coupled with outsourcing led many Black men to lose their jobs
- While deindustrialization was happening, the "War on Drugs" began in predominantly Black neighborhoods. Mass arrests of young Black and Latino men led to a "marriage squeeze"
- The War on Drugs was a distraction from unemployment, and was based on fake statistics
- Drug use in America was actually declining
- When crack cocaine was introduced, it was the perfect timing (both Black and White folks used crack, but Black men were profiled)

# AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIAGE, END

- Professional Black women today make more than their husbands
- Contrary to white women, Black women are unable to decrease their workloads in favor of family
- Professional Black women today have higher rates of divorce and marital dissatisfaction
- Black marriages have changed over time, adapting to current social forces

# GENDER AND FAMILY

- Most American households are dual income
- Women are waiting longer to get married and have children when compared to previous generations
  - They want a career
  - They can't afford to get married and have children
- Women still tackle the bulk of household chores and childcare. We often refer to this as “the second shift.”
- Women experience the “motherhood penalty” or “mommy tax” in the workplace
  - Women are less likely to get promoted
  - Women are less likely to receive an increase in pay
  - Women who are mothers are seen as uncommitted and less effective at their jobs

# GENDER AND FAMILY, CONTINUED

- Men are more likely to receive a promotion or raise if they are married with children
- Men are increasing their participation in parenting, with much better outcomes for children
- Men (like women) feel conflict between their responsibilities at work, and at home



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# GENDER AND FAMILY, CONTINUED I

- We still value the breadwinner-homemaker model, despite a reality that does not reflect this dynamic
- Women's work is usually devalued because women tend to be in professions based on care
- When unemployment rates increase for men, there are detrimental psychological effects
- Men still internalize the role of "provider"
- During the latest recession there was an increase in the rate of suicide among middle aged men. Research indicates that this was in part caused by "feeling like a failure"
- Being a provider is a sign of masculinity

# GENDER AND FAMILY, END

- After the recent recession, many men found themselves re-working what it meant to be “a real man.” This included:
  - Figuring out ways to make ends meet
  - Being stay-at-home dads
  - Embracing traditionally feminine activities related to family care

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