



Gender Discrimination

<http://wrc.msu.edu>

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Gender Matters

Due to the gender roles and gendered oppression in the United States, sexism and gender discrimination still affect people's lives everyday.

What is gender discrimination?

Gender discrimination is the practice of disadvantaging and treating someone of one gender unfavorably. Common instances of gender discrimination can be found in employment, when applicants of a specific gender are given preference over another. Additionally, denying someone an opportunity because they identify, or are perceived, as transgender is also considered gender discrimination.

What is sexism?

Sexism is any thought, attitude, belief, action or institutional practice that demeans and devalues someone based on their sex. Sexism can occur in many different forms, from telling jokes that belittle women to believing that men are incapable of caregiving to maintaining policies that exclude transgender identified individuals. In general, sexism is the belief that one sex is superior to another.

What is patriarchy?

Patriarchy is understood to be systems such as family structures, social groups or societies that privilege men as dominant figures. Many feminist scholars argue that systems of male domination are limiting for women, but that men are also affected by the restrictions of patriarchy and the expectations to be dominant. Patriarchal systems can be found in U.S. media, politics and economics because men hold the majority of powerful positions in all of these sectors. Due to this type of male domination, perspectives within these systems are typically limited to a male centered point of view.

What is the wage gap?

The *wage gap* is the difference between the wages that women earn as compared to men. Often due to gender discrimination and sexism in the workplace, in 2011 women on average made only 77% of what men earned based upon full-time, year-round work. The wage gap is even worse for women of color—African American women were only paid 64 cents, Hispanic women earned 55 cents, and Asian women were paid 78 cents for every dollar paid to a white, non-Hispanic man in the United States (*Source: National Women's Law Center*). The wage gap is often coupled with a concept that is referred to as the "glass ceiling." The glass ceiling is the idea that women are often stuck in lower level employment positions because of the negative attitude and sexism towards women in senior and executive positions. These types of practices keep men in positions of power and limit women from earning higher wages and benefits.

What are the laws regarding gender discrimination?

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex as outlined in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Sex discrimination is unlawful in work conditions, hiring practices, workplace policies and procedures, conditions of employment and in cases of harassment. Recently, in 2012, the EEOC determined that Title VII also protects people who are transgender from sex discrimination in companies with 15 or more employees. However, as of 2013, there are 34 US states that do not have anti-discrimination laws that protect gender identity and expression. (*Source: US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Transgender Law Center*) Gender, gender identity and sex are all protected in Michigan State University's anti-discrimination policy.

What is Title IX?

Title IX is a law that was passed to protect gender equity in any educational program that receives federal funding. Title IX is critical in many areas such as access to higher education for women, equity in vocational courses, access to faculty positions for women and opportunities for girls to pursue math and science fields. Additionally, due to Title IX, standardized tests must be written in ways that are accessible to men and women, athletic programs are required to provide equal support for male and female sports, equal treatment must be given to pregnant and parenting students, prevention and intervention provided in cases of sexual harassment and access to and education about technology. Despite the gains that have been made in gender equality, laws like Title IX are still necessary today. (*Source: www.titleix.info*)

Where can I find more information about these topics?

MSU Women's Resource Center

<http://wrc.msu.edu>

517-353-1635

332 Union Building

MSU Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives

<http://www.inclusion.msu.edu/>

517-353-3922

101 Olds Hall

MSU LGBT Resource Center

<http://lbgtrc.msu.edu/>

517-353-9520

302 Student Services Building

National Women's Law Center

A national organization dedicated to creating laws and policies that benefit women and families.

<http://www.nwlc.org>

National Organization for Women

A national activism organization that works towards gender equality.

<http://www.now.org>

Transgender Law Center

A national organization that supports and advocates for transgender equality.

<http://www.transgenderlawcenter.org>