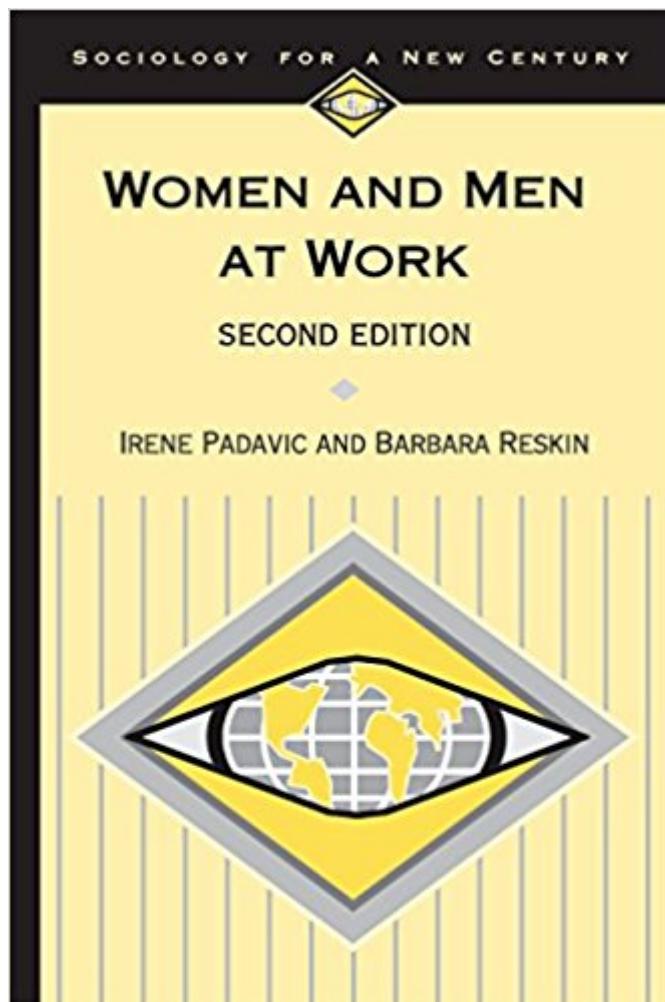


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# Women And Men At Work (Sociology For A New Century)



## **Synopsis**

The Second Edition of this best selling book provides a comprehensive examination of the role that gender plays in work environments. This book differs from others by comparing women's and men's work status, addressing contemporary issues within a historical perspective, incorporating comparative material from other countries, recognizing differences in the experiences of women and men from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Relying on both qualitative and quantitative data, the authors seek to link social scientific ideas about workers' lives, sex inequality, and gender to the real-world workplace. This new edition contains updated statistics, timely cartoons, and presents new scholarship in the field. It also provides a renewed focus on reasons for variability in inequality across workplaces. In sum, the second edition of Women and Men at Work presents a contemporary perspective to the field, with relevant comparative and historical insights that will draw readers in and connect them to the wider concern of making sense of our dramatically changing world.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Irene Padavic is an Associate Professor at Florida State University. Before becoming a professor, she worked in a variety of service-sector jobs: candy seller at a movie theater, waitperson, telephone solicitor, door-to-door promoter of real estate, paralegal, and marketing researcher. Her dissertation project provided experience in the industrial sector, where she worked as a coal-handler in a power plant. Her research has been in the areas of gender and work, race differences in campus peer culture, economic restructuring, and changes in childcare

arrangements. Barbara Reskin is a Professor of Sociology at Harvard University and, when this book went to press, President of the American Sociological Association. As a student, she supported herself in a series of female-dominated clerical jobs in such disparate settings as radio and TV stations, trucking firms, temp agencies, insurance companies, and universities. The fact that most jobs for women were boring, low-paid and deadend encouraged her to get a PhD. Her research examines how workers' sex, race, and ethnicity affect their work opportunities. She is especially interested in strategies that minimize discrimination, the focus of her most recent book, *The Realities of Affirmative Action*.

Women and Men at Work by Padavic and Reskin is from 2002 and covers everything from the history of the sexual division of labor, the current issues, the glass ceilings and glass escalators, and the issues men and women have at home with tasks there. It's a fairly comprehensive overview, and for the most part it lays out the facts without editorializing. To begin with, it clarifies just what is meant by seemingly straightforward words like "work" and "gender". Many people think of work solely as a place a person goes to from 9 to 5. However, "working" at a soup kitchen is an activity that provides value too, even though it's unpaid. The chores done at home are called "housework" for a reason - this is unpaid labor. The core tasks are not any different if a maid is paid to come in and do them. Similarly, many people use "gender" as a fancy way to say "sex". They think of "gender" as simply being a person's status as male or female. Gender is much more complicated than that. A gender role is the way a specific society thinks a person should act and behave based on their sex. A male who travels around the world is going to be male wherever he goes. However, his \*gender role\* will vary wildly depending on what culture he lands in. In some cultures he will be the bottom of the totem pole - far less valued than the important females. In some cultures he will be considered Lord and King over all females. In many cultures his status will be somewhere in between. The book explores just how fluid these gender roles can be. Until the 1900s all babies were simply babies, dressed in white. There was no need to tell them apart; all babies had the same needs. However, in the early 1900s people began to "care" about the sex of a baby so they could treat it differently. Boys were dressed in pink and girls in blue. Then in the 1950s the colors switched - now boys were dressed in blue and girls in pink. Our modern obsession with "pink is for the weaker ones" is a very modern invention. So many things we take for granted in current times are fairly recent changes. Until the 1900s secretaries were almost all men. Women were not considered responsible enough for those tasks. Nowadays, the vast majority of secretaries are female, and a male secretary is thought of as a strange thing. Until the 1800s women were highly represented in

the healing and medical arts. However, once a formal schooling was required for the title, women were excluded as not having brainpower up to the task. It is only in modern times that the medical field is equalizing again. Race plays into these issues as well. While the top job (in terms of percentage) for white men is a salaried manager, the top job for black men and Hispanic men is a truck driver. For white women, the top job is that of secretary. For Hispanic women, they end up being cashiers, while black women are sent into the nursing profession. Padavic and Reskin explore how the glass ceiling happens. In one example, a grocery store has a chain of promotion in place. There is a "fast track" for employees in the produce area to promote. This area is primarily staffed by males. In comparison, the bakery area is mostly women, and the path for promotion out of bakery is far more convoluted. There are not equal opportunities for both areas to grow and succeed. In all, while some of the examples were a little dated, all were interesting and relevant to the topic at hand. A lot of progress has been made in the last hundred years - after all, it was only in 1920 that women were even thought of as smart enough to vote. Still, there is clearly a long way to go, and this book helps make clear the issues we face. I purchased this book with my own funds in order to take a college course on gender.

Item is good and as described.

Lecture book

I used this book while taking a Women and gender studies class as an undergraduate student. I found the text interesting, but fairly dry. It's not a cover-to-cover read, but instead it's one of those texts that you read maybe five-seven of the total chapters - whichever topics interest you most.

Some of the points made irritated me simply because they are not as relateable as they would have been to society in the 1970's. Of course there are many great points, so for a textbook of sorts, it was interesting enough.

While I wouldn't go as far as to say that this is an authoritative text on gender inequality, this text does an excellent job of outlining not only what work and gender are in a Sociological context, but also how gender has been perceived in society. These perceptions, according to the text, affect how women are raised, paid, and in general, what is expected of women. To a lesser extent, there is also an emphasis on trends regarding women in the workplace, both good and bad. This text has

done a good job of remaining neutral of perspectives such as feminism and the critical-conflict paradigm; the only concern is information in this text, leaving the reader to draw their own conclusions or to do further research about how to solve these issues. If you are looking for solutions to gender inequality in the workplace, I would instead encourage one to do further reading on applying non-discrimination policies and pro-diversity initiatives (which not only focus on gender inequality, but race inequality as well).

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