

Work and Leisure

Key issues in this chapter:

- ▶ Work involves activities that are both paid and unpaid. Globally, men and women perform both, but more women than men perform the latter.
- ▶ There are gender differences in both economic activity rates and earnings globally.
- ▶ Labour markets are segregated, and gender plays a role in segregation both horizontally and vertically.
- ▶ A range of theoretical positions exist which attempt to explain differences in paid work and leisure, in relation to gender, ethnicity, age and social class.
- ▶ Generally, women's leisure is more constrained than men's, due to restrictions of time, space and finance and also due to social constraints.
- ▶ Work and leisure are not distinct activities.

At the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- ▶ Discuss the interrelationships between work, both paid and unpaid, and leisure.
- ▶ Debate the relative strengths of the various theoretical positions in relation to work and leisure.
- ▶ Recognise that men's experiences of work and leisure are not homogeneous, nor are women's, but do reveal certain patterns.
- ▶ Describe global patterns in work, both paid and unpaid.

Introduction



Figure 14.1

Source: © Jackie Fleming

Stop and think 14.1

Look at the cartoon in Figure 14.1. What does it tell you about gender differences in career expectations? What is it that makes this cartoon funny?

Why have we put these two topics – work and leisure – together? It is very simple. It is usually assumed that when you are not in work you are enjoying leisure time.

But this all depends on how we define work and an analysis of what happens to create leisure. The first distinction to make is the difference between work and employment. Employment is work for financial reward, but this is not the only kind of work. There is work involved in unpaid labour too, such as caring, household duties and community involvement [Hotlink → Social Policy (Chapter 5); Hotlink → Geography (Chapter 10)]. In addition, work ‘may be embedded in non-work activities, and the identical activity may constitute “work” in some situations but not others’ (Glucksmann, 2000: 18–19). Across the world women, men and children perform unpaid labour, a large amount of which is domestic labour, though this is not equally distributed (see World in Focus 14.1).

Given World in Focus 14.1, it appears that the major responsibility for such work remains with women. This relates directly to leisure in several ways: as it limits women’s access to either paid employment or free time it means that women either lack the time or the finances (and often both) to pursue their own leisure. However, this is an assumption that leisure is a form of activity when it is much more complex than that:

Some occupations, or tasks within an occupation, are perceived – and, sometimes experienced – as more like leisure than work (e.g. artists, actors, writers, tour guides or gardeners). Furthermore,

World in focus 14.1

Household labour and gender

In the following two pieces of information it is shown that housework is an important topic for consideration in regard to work and leisure. They are not direct comparisons but do indicate a general trend in two countries.

Britain

In the early 1970s Ann Oakley interviewed 40 housewives in London. She found that they spent an average of 77 hours each week on

housework. She found that they experienced this work as monotonous, dissatisfying, of low status and that they were isolated.

USA

Romero (1992) argues that although feminists campaigned for men in family units to accept equal responsibility for household chores this has not happened. Although American women do less housework than before (17.5 hours per week in 1995 rather than 30 hours per week in 1965), this appears to be due to a lowering of standards

and/or increase in technology rather than a redistribution of tasks, as women still perform two-thirds of whatever housework gets done (Ehrenreich, 2002: 89). When it comes to the least popular tasks, such as actual physical cleaning, there is less change. Between 1965 and 1995, men increased the time they spent cleaning floors and toilets by 240 per cent – a real figure of 1.7 hours a week – while women only decreased their cleaning time by 7 per cent, a real figure of 6.7 hours a week (Ehrenreich, 2002: 89).

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discussions concerning work may take place during leisure activities (e.g. during a game of golf, or during an evening social event) and leisure sometimes takes place during the working day (e.g. ‘popping out’, surfing the net, playing computer games or doing the crossword).

(Letherby and Reynolds, 2005: 138)

Gendered labour

In this section we will look at both paid and unpaid labour, followed by a discussion of divisions in labour markets, ‘private’ responsibilities’ influence on economic activity opportunities, pay levels and end with a review of various theoretical attempts to explain gender segregation in the labour market. Paid work is considered to be part of the ‘public’ world and separate from the ‘private’ world of family and household, yet feminists and others have challenged this notion of two separate spheres pointing out that gender relations in the labour market are related to gender relations in the ‘private’ sphere, for example it has been argued that women’s greater contribution to domestic tasks is a crucial element in permitting men to compete freely in the labour market (Garmarnikov *et al.*, 1983). Both feminists and writers of critical studies of masculinity (CSM), have pointed out that this division has played a major role in defining femininities and masculinities: in that women have been either excluded from, or disadvantaged in, paid employment; and that men have been restricted by definitions of masculinity related only to the world of work. David Morgan (1991) argues that paid work is a key issue for understanding men as it has been a source of status.

Unpaid work

In a household with adults of different sexes (the majority situation) it is the case that gender relations interact with and shape paid work and leisure opportunities. Unpaid work occurs across the globe and is performed by women, men and children – see A Closer Look 14.2 for an example of how a woman’s work is hidden. This is real work and can be tiring in

ways that other work is not, for example emotionally when caring for a dying elder (Graham, 1988). Paid work too involves emotion, in gendered ways (see A Closer Look 14.1).

A closer look 14.1

Emotion at work

Two books, over 20 years apart show the emotional labour required of certain workers. In her research on flight attendants Arlie Hochschild (1983) notes that they are required not only to always appear calm and polite, i.e. managing their own emotions, but also to deal with the behaviour of passengers, some of whom may be drunk or expressing air rage. She argues that this emotional labour is gendered in that it appears more in female-dominated occupations than in male. Gayle Letherby and Gillian Reynolds (2005), in their study of work and politics on trains show that there are jobs dominated by men that also involve emotional management by the employee of both self and clients.

Unpaid work is also gendered in who does what tasks: Jane Weelock (1990) found in a study of British families that although when unemployed men did take on a greater amount of household labour, there remained a gendering of domestic jobs with some being gender-neutral and some gender-segregated. This is supported by Judy Wajcman’s (1983) study of employed women.

Stop and think 14.2

What jobs do you think are gender-neutral and which are segregated? Reflect on your own engendered domestic experience.

When gender is not an issue, such as in same-sex households, there is less evidence of task divisions, even when both partners are engaged in paid employment. Gillian Dunne’s (1998) examination of lesbian couples found that the responsibilities for domestic tasks were much more flexible than in heterosexual couples.

A closer look 14.2

Labour of love

'Have you many children?' the doctor asked.
 'God has not been good to me. Of fifteen born, only nine live', he answered
 'Does your wife work?'
 'No, she stays at home.'
 'I see. How does she spend her day?'
 'Well, she gets up at four in the morning, fetches water and wood, makes the fires and cooks breakfast. Then she goes to the river and washes clothes. After that she goes to town to get corn ground and buys what we need in the market. Then she cooks the midday meal.'
 'You come home at midday?'
 'No, no, she brings the meal to me in the fields – about three kilometres from home.'
 'And after that?'
 'Well, she takes care of the hens and pigs and of course she looks after the children all day . . . then she prepares the supper so it is ready when I come home.'
 'Does she go to bed after supper?'
 'No, I do. She has things to do around the house until about 9 o'clock.'
 'But of course you say your wife doesn't work?'
 'Of course she doesn't work. I told you, she stays at home.'

Source: International Labour Organisation (1977) cited in Mitter (1985).

Stop and think 14.3

What does the conversation in A Closer Look 14.2 tell you about how the farmer views 'work'? Would you consider what the wife performs each day as 'work'? Why do you think this?

A major area of domestic work involves caring for others, for details see [Hotlink → Social Policy → World in Focus 2 (Chapter 5)]. Across Europe the share of informal care is heavily skewed towards women (Grammenos, July 2003).

Paid labour

In western societies there has been change in the sexual division of labour since the end of the Second World War, and in Britain, since the mid-1970s women's position in the labour market has undergone considerable change. In fact, currently 69 per cent of women and 79 per cent of men of working age are in paid employment, which shows that there has been a decrease in the economic participation gender gap from 14 per cent in 1991 to 10 per cent in 2001 (Labour Force Survey, 2001).

A closer look 14.3

The difference between 'economically active' and 'employed'

Economically active means the whole labour market, that is both those currently in jobs and those who are of working age and who are available for work, although currently unemployed.

Employed means the actual number of persons in paid work, usually referred to as the employment rate.

Some of this can be attributed to developing gender equality but economic issues have also played their part: on the whole there has been a decline in manufacturing jobs and an increase in service jobs; as men tend to dominate the former and women the latter this too has decreased the economic activity gender gap. Despite these changes, feminists argue that women are still disadvantaged compared with men in paid employment. There remain persistent inequalities which are associated with the fact that men and women, as already noted, tend to be concentrated in different areas of work – this is known as a segregated labour market (see World in Focus 14.2). A gender gap in economic activity is not unique to the UK, as Figure 14.2 shows this exists across the globe.

Men and women not only predominately work in different sectors they also work in different ways (see World in Focus 14.2), in that, despite economic shifts and restructuring men still work full time whilst a sizeable minority of women work part time, in fact

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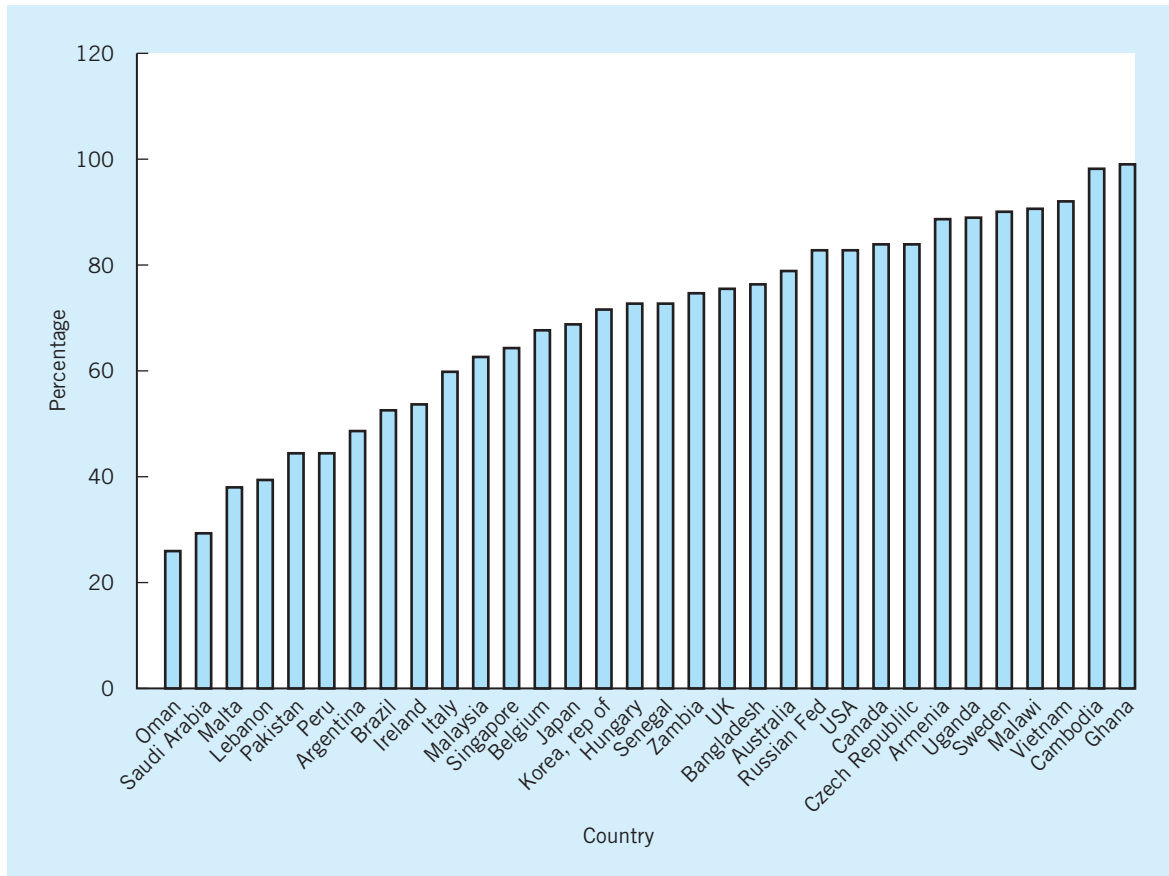


Figure 14.2 Global Gender Differences in Economic Activity

Source: Derived from ILO & UN statistics at Human Development Reports, http://cfapp2.undp.org/statistics/data/rc_report.cfm, by author Aug 2004.

World in focus 14.2

Women's work, men's work

In the UK women are concentrated in a limited range of work. Of all working women:

- 24% secretarial and administrative
- 14% personal services
- 12% sales and customer services

These three sectors account for over half of all women's employment yet make up only 12 per cent of men's employment.

Likewise in the USA, the equivalent categories for working women are:

- 33.2% managerial, professional
- 39.5% technical/sales and administrative support

17.6% service

For men, these sectors combined represented 58.8 per cent of all employments, compared with 90.3 per cent of women's jobs.

[Hotlink → Geography (Chapter 10)].

Source: Cited by UK Twomey 2002. USA Caiazza et al. (2004: 14).

although 43 per cent of employed women in Britain work part time only 8 per cent of men do (Twomey, 2002). Nonetheless some governments have recog-

nised that labour market shifts might make for changes (see World in Focus 14.3). In relation to women's part-time work, see A Closer Look 14.4.

World in focus 14.3

The Dutch 'combination' model

This model was launched in 1995 after a government commission (translated as) Future Scenarios on the Redistribution of Unpaid Work. This model is a balanced combination of paid and unpaid work, the core concept being that both are equally valued. Men and women are able to 'choose a personal mix of paid labour in long part-time (or short full-time) jobs, part-time household production of care and part-time outsourcing of care' (Commissie Toekomstscenarios, 1995, cited in Plantenga, 2002: 54).

Part-time employment is also a core element of the combination model; flexible, non-full-time working hours for both men and women are deemed indispensable to reach gender equality. It is exactly this element which distinguishes the combination model from other ideal types like the Caregiver Parity model or the Universal Breadwinner Model.

(Plantenga, 2002: 55)

[Hotlink → Social Policy (Chapter 5)].

Although aimed at increasing gender equality in the workforce this has had its limits: part-time jobs have now an increased status and are no longer only

available in marginal jobs. However, although women's economic participation rates increased from 34.7 per cent in 1987 to 51 per cent in 1999 this was not due to huge changes in work patterns. In fact, women took up opportunities for part-time work, from 48.5 per cent of the female labour force in 1987 to 60.5 per cent in 1999, yet the rate for men working part-time barely rose from the 1987 figure of 10.3 per cent of the male workforce, being only 11.4 per cent in 1999.

Equality has been increased as women have had some barriers to economic participation removed, but men have barely changed their patterns of work.

A closer look 14.4

Gender, parenting and economic activity

A major explanation for women's increased involvement in part-time work is parenting. Although men are also parents the majority of those whose work pattern is determined by parenthood are women (Marchbank, 2000). Women with young children are more prevalent in part-time work and this diminishes as the age of the youngest child increases. In the UK, of working mothers of children under 5, 67 per cent work part time but this falls to 45 per cent for those whose youngest is over 16 (Twomey, 2002). As only 32 per cent of women without children work part time it is obvious that motherhood is a major factor in women choosing part-time employment. Fatherhood does not appear to be a factor in men deciding to work part time. White women are also more likely than ethnic minority women to work part time, so although ethnic minority women have lower employment rates they are, when in work, more likely to work full time (Hibbett, 2002).

Of course, parenting, especially motherhood, also affects leisure choices – see later.

The segregated labour market

We have already met one form of segregation, *horizontal* segregation: the tendency for men and women to occupy different sections of the labour market. As shown above, even in the twenty-first century women remain concentrated in a narrower range of jobs than men (Twomey, 2002; Caiazza *et al.*, 2004) and also are over-represented in the ranks of part-time workers. *Vertical* segregation exists when men and women work together in an occupation yet occupy different strata within that occupation with men higher up in the better paid posts. Although women have broken into many previously 'male' jobs they are not equal and are not as senior. This is referred to as the 'glass ceiling', when women are entering high status professions but not making it to the top even though they may be as

Stop and think 14.4

Think about a professional job familiar to you. At what grades do men predominate? At what grades do women? Be careful, also consider what percentage of the workforce men and women each constitute. Are either over represented in the lower grades? Which? Are either over represented in the higher grades? Which?

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talented as the men who do – it means that women can see through to where they want to be but are prevented by a ceiling – a glass one (see A Closer Look 14.5).

A closer look 14.5

Masculinised structure of work

It is argued that the very structure of work is a barrier to women's advancement as it is very 'masculinised'. That is it is organised around the notion of a male breadwinner who is free to participate in full-time employment as his other responsibilities are taken care of by a female partner. Even when governments attempt to change this through providing flexibility of working time such notions as male breadwinner are difficult to overcome:

UK flexible work time schemes

27 per cent of women and 18 per cent of men [are] employed in jobs which allow flexibility (*Labour Force Survey*, 2003).

Nordic parenting leave

Countries such as Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Sweden and Norway have had parenting leave rights longer than others, such as the European Union [**Hotlink** → **Social Policy (Chapter 5)**]. Yet a study in 1991 found that parenting leave was used very little by fathers as they were fearful of being thought of as not serious about their job (Kaul, 1991). However, by 2004 nearly all Icelandic fathers used their entitlement to three months off work on 80 per cent of their salary and in Denmark 46,000 men took paternity leave though Danish fathers spent an average of 3.6 weeks off work with their babies, compared with the mothers' average of 42.3 weeks, so it appears that some changes are being made.

Source: BBC, 2005 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/2/hi/europe/4629631.stm>

Gender is not the only segregation in the workforce. Annie Phizacklea and Carol Wolkowitz (1995) have pointed out that labour markets across Europe are not just gendered but racialised. Both men and women from ethnic minorities are less likely than whites to be in work. In the UK, this is most stark in relation to Pakistani and Bangladeshi women: in 2003, 72 per cent

of white women worked whilst only 22 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were recorded as in employment (Hibbett and Meager, 2003). However, once employed both ethnic minority men and women are no less likely than their white counterparts to be working in professional or managerial roles (Hibbett, 2002).

Pay

Across the world a gender pay gap is visible, in some cases it is an extensive gap, such as in Saudi Arabia where it is 79 per cent (i.e. women earn 21 per cent of men's wages) and the smallest gap exists in Sweden, where women earn 83 per cent of men's wages (see Figure 14.3).

In the UK, the gender pay gap is 40 per cent, that is women earned 60 per cent of men's earnings (see Figure 14.3). As more women than men work part time this explains part of this gap. However, even when we consider only those in full-time work a gap remains for, in 2001, women still earned only 81 per cent of men's average gross hourly earnings (an improvement from less than 78 per cent in 1991) (Twomey, 2002). The gender pay gap remains due to the differentiated labour forces, that is the areas in which women work are paid at a lesser rate than those which are male dominated.

Many countries now have legislation to equalize pay, yet differences persist. In the UK the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1970 and came into effect in 1975. It had little effect in its original form as there was evidence that employers deliberately segregated jobs that had previously been mixed to avoid giving women workers the same pay as men; this was due to the stipulation in the law that people had to be paid the same for the same job. An amendment in 1984 introduced the requirement to pay people the same for work of *equal value*. This was meant to allow for comparisons to be made and to bring into protection women working in areas with no men for the first time. Some women brought legal cases to argue their work, for example, school dinner cook is equivalent to a house painter, was of equal value and won, but as each of these only related to the individual occupations in the actual legal case the Act remained limited in scope. Many other women were reluctant to bring forward cases for fear of victimisation. The main reason for the

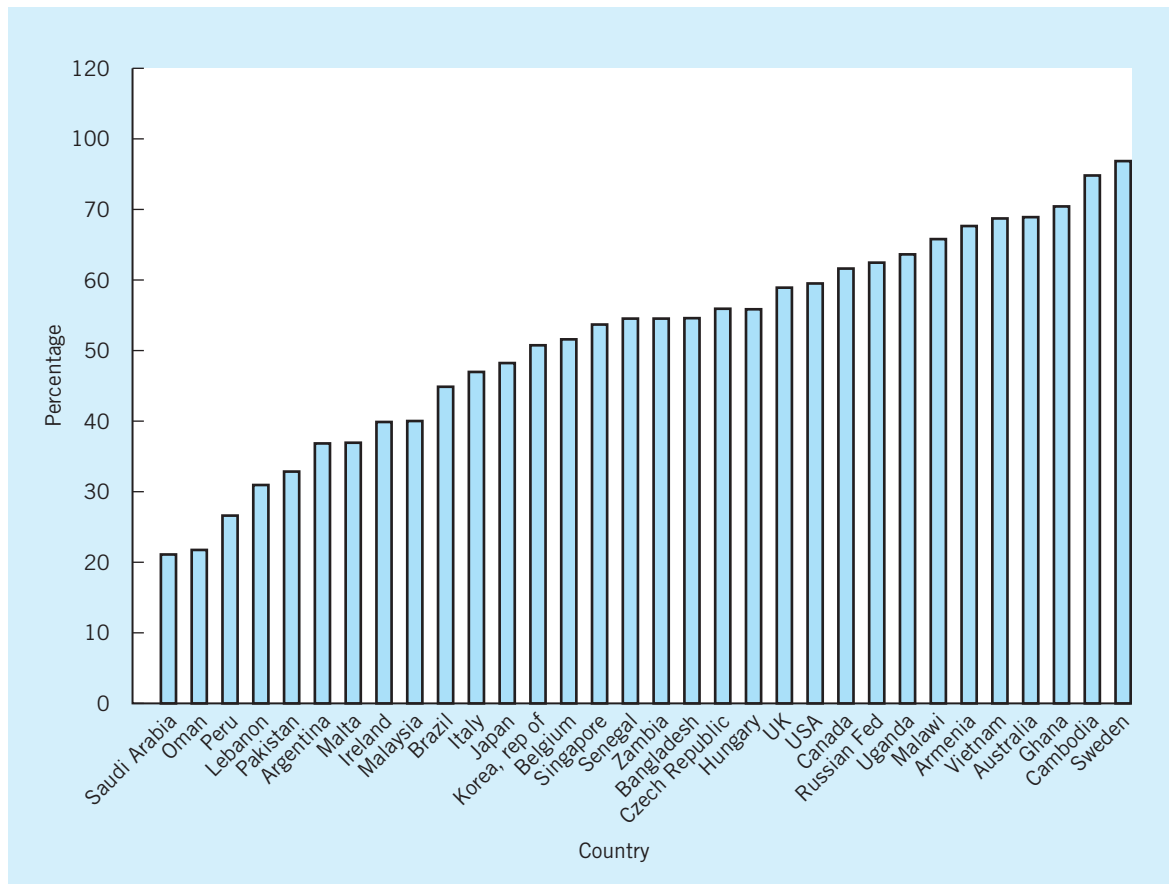


Figure 14.3 Gender Pay Gap Globally

Source: Derived from ILO & UN statistics at Human Development Reports, http://cfapp2.undp.org/statistics/data/rc_report.cfm, by author Aug 2004.

continuing gender pay gap, not just in the UK, is that differential pay is related to the structure of the labour market and such legislation has had little impact on this structure.

Why is the labour market gender segregated?

Many attempts have been made to explain the universal nature of gender segregated labour and gender pay gaps. Here we shall review a few of the main areas, including: economic arguments, in particular Human Capital theory; Marxist Feminist and combination of capitalism and patriarchy.

Human capital

Neoclassical economic theories attribute pay differences to productivity – simply put someone who is valuable to a company will receive a greater reward than another who contributes less to the firm's profits. Human capital theory (Becker, 1993) tries to explain wage differentials based on the education and experience of the individual. It is argued that women earn less than men as they have less human capital; that is they have lower levels of skills and work experience than men. These differences result from freely made decisions of individual women regarding the time they choose to allocate to work rather than domestic responsibilities. This theory also explains horizontal

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segregation and low pay as a result of choice; that is women choose jobs which penalise them least for non-standard work patterns and also provide maximum return for limited skills. There is an inherent assumption in this theory that all women will consider that they will spend less time in the labour force than men and, subsequently, may not invest in acquiring expensive skills.

This theory is weak in a number of ways. Firstly, it ignores sex discrimination for it does not explain why women who have equal human capital to men in terms of abilities and experience face the limitations of the 'glass ceiling' and do not get promoted posts at the same rates as equivalent men. Secondly, it determines 'skill' as something objective rather than subjective. In other words, why is it that being able to drive an HGV (heavy goods vehicle) lorry is viewed as more valuable (and paid more) than a nursery nurse? As Economist Steven Pressman (2002: 31) concludes in his investigation of gender poverty gaps 'the striking result . . . is that educational levels matter very little' and that deficiencies in women's education cannot explain earnings differences effectively.

Marxist feminist theory

Classical Marxist descriptions of the relationships between men selling their labour to capitalists who then exploit the surplus value of that labour by selling the proceeds at a profit did not include consideration of women in the labour market, except to note that capital required the existence of a reserve army of labour to weaken workers' bargaining powers in times of labour shortages. It became clear that women constituted such a reserve which was also able to be tapped in times of political crisis such as war. In both World Wars women were encouraged, and some were conscripted, into occupations which had been male bastions. At the end of the 'emergency' governments employed ideologies of domesticity to return women to the home to make sure that there would be 'jobs for heroes'.

Developments in Marxian thought recognise that women's labour is exploited and that to understand it we need to look at the structure of the labour market and the way that employers/capitalists ensure the segmentation of work to control the workforce by employing already existing social cleavages based on

ethnicity, gender or age. Concepts such as Primary and Secondary Sectors were developed. Primary sector jobs are characterised as skilled, secure, with decent pay and conditions and the possibility of advancement through training and promotion. Conversely, the Secondary sector consists of work deemed unskilled, is insecure, with low wages, poor terms and conditions and which has very few prospects for advancement. We have already looked at the concentration of women and men in certain aspects of the labour force (horizontal segregation) and it is hardly surprising to note that women are in jobs which fit the description of Secondary sector at a higher rate than are men. Marxist feminist thought explains this due to the fact that women are more likely to leave work and are under-represented in the ranks of the trade unions, both of which make it easier for employers to dispense with women workers.

Of course, this explanation does not consider the role that men, as a group, play in the exclusion of women from work and the fact that trade unions themselves have been guilty of sustaining a segmented labour market (Cockburn, 1991). For example the Amalgamated Engineering Union negotiated a post-war settlement with the British government as a requirement for their acceptance of women into factories during the First World War. The result of these negotiations was the Restoration of Pre War Practices Act, 1919 which not only ensured that women were sacked from jobs previously held by men but also from some jobs that had never been the sole terrain of men at the end of the war. Another weakness of this approach is that it does not take into account the fact that there are women in the primary sector and men in the secondary sector, nor is it able to explain the differential experiences amongst women, for example the fact that ethnicity is related also to pay rates (see Figure 14.4).

A fundamental criticism of this approach is that it focuses too simply on the needs of capitalism without considering gender relations.

Putting patriarchy into the picture

Heidi Hartmann (1980) argues that the issues of gender segregation of the labour market and subsequent low pay for women is only explicable if the forces of capitalism are examined alongside those of

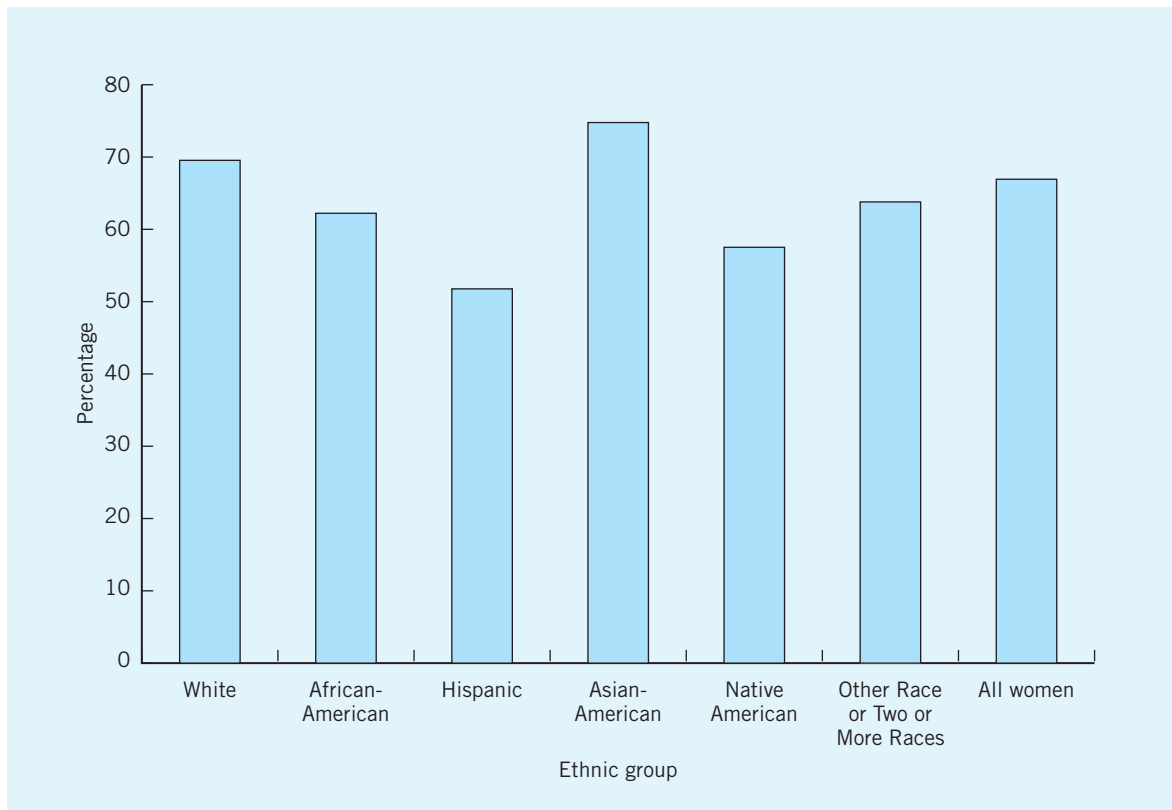


Figure 14.4 Ratio of Women's to White Men's Median Annual Earnings in the United States, by Race and Ethnicity, 1999.

Source: Caiazza *et al.* (2004:7)

Notes: 1. for full time, year round workers, 2. for women 16 plus

patriarchy, a system she labelled patriarchal capitalism. She argues that men have social and economic power as they control women's labour in both the domestic sphere and in the labour market. These two are linked in that, as men secured higher status, better paid jobs, women's presence in the domestic realm was reinforced. Likewise, men were then able to argue that their wages need to be sufficient to support a household, a family wage. Like others Hartmann argues that trade unions organised to exclude women from certain areas of work (however, it should not be forgotten that trade unions have also organised to keep certain groups of men out of certain trades in attempts to reserve jobs for their members and their male relatives). This has benefited both men as individuals, who acquire women in the home providing social reproduction [Hotlink → Gendered Perspectives –

Theoretical Issues (Chapter 1)] and employers who gain from the cheaper labour of women.

This seemingly harmonious relationship between patriarchy and capitalism has been modified. Sylvia Walby (1986) has also written about such a dual-system. She contends that the two are separate systems which interact together but not always smoothly. This is due to her observation that capitalism and patriarchy have conflicting interests when it comes to women's labour. Employers are keen to exploit all labour including women, so the male dominance of the labour force creates certain tensions. The increased entry of women into paid work, on increasingly equal terms in western societies, may be encouraged by capital but has the potential to undermine patriarchy. Walby provides an example of patriarchy's response in the way women were excluded from British factory

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work in the nineteenth century through the passing of a series of Factory Acts. She argues that patriarchy was under threat as increasing numbers of women entered factories, so under the auspices of protecting women's, and children's, health male workers were also able to ensure the dominance of men in these factories.

A critique of this dual-systems approach is that it does not consider gender enough, especially in relation to the way that gender segregation of the labour market reflects gender-specific roles, not just in who does what job but in how that job is expected to be done (Adkins, 1995) [**Hotlink** → **Sex and Sexuality (Chapter 15)**].

Stop and think 14.5

Each of these explanations has some credence. Reflect upon your own knowledge and experience of the world of work, both paid and unpaid, and draw links between that experience and the main aspects of each explanation. Which of them answers your questions about the differential experiences of men and women?

Theorising the link between work and leisure

When social scientists first started to theorise leisure it was seen as the activities undertaken when all other obligations, especially paid work, were attended to. Stanley Parker (1976) categorised leisure in three groups, in relation to how the participant viewed their paid employment:

- ▶ As an extension of work – for those whose main focus in life is job fulfilment, leisure is seen as an extension of work as it provides rest and recuperation to enable the worker to perform more effectively in the workplace.
- ▶ A neutral approach – in this participants view family and social life as central to their person and so leisure not viewed as facilitating better work performance.
- ▶ In opposition – here leisure, rather than family or work is the main focus of the person.

Parker's theory has been criticised for a number of reasons, primarily for a lack of consideration of how factors other than paid employment affect leisure, for example, children's and retired people's leisure follow different patterns than that of working adults. He was also criticised for not considering that certain activities appear across all of his groups – such as the prevalence of watching television as a leisure activity and for not noting the cultural specificity of his work. The main critique however, is that this theory is deterministic and leaves no space for the choice of individuals and therefore is limited in its explanatory abilities.

A couple of years later Ken Roberts (1978) developed an argument that leisure involves freedom of choice of individuals. He acknowledges that paid work does influence leisure, but adds factors such as life cycle and personal preference. He defines leisure differently from Parker taking it to be, not just time outside of paid work, but only time spent on activities (and non-activities) outside of other obligations too. As such, Roberts argues that only activities that are self-determined equate to leisure, therefore gardening can be leisure for one but an obligation for another. Roberts also looked across different kinds of people. He concluded that higher levels of education meant that more leisure time was spent socialising with friends and less in front of the television. He also concluded that women had more leisure time than men.

Conversely, Oriel Sullivan (1996) concluded that men did have a little more leisure time than women but that it was not significant. Her analysis of time diaries kept by 380 heterosexual couples in the UK showed that men spent a little more time than women sleeping, relaxing, socialising and eating and paid work. By contrast women spend more time on housework and childcare, this extra time being virtually equal to the additional time men spend in paid employment. The result being virtually equal leisure time, and this is supported by a cross-Europe study (*Eurostat Pocketbooks*, 2004) which found that women have between 4 and 5 hours free each day, whilst men have greater than 5 hours – a difference, but not a great one. However, this European study did also find that of this free time men participate more in sports and hobbies than women do – see A Closer Look 14.6 for international information.

A closer look 14.6

International examples of restraints on women's leisure

A Nigerian study shows that in farm households women work longer hours than men across all agricultural sectors and subsequently women experience less leisure time than men (Rahji and Falusi, 2005).

For rural women in Australia other restraints such as the culture of the town, the lack of work situations, the limitations of public transport, the gendered nature of driving, the disproportionate emphasis on masculine sporting activity and gendered views of what is appropriate for women to do, all affect the leisure activities available to women, especially those in mid-life (Warner-Smith and Brown, 2002).

So, we have one account which states that men have less leisure (in the UK) than women, and another that found that there were virtually no differences in the time available for leisure between the genders and cross-European support for this latter position – though it has to be noted that perhaps the differences are about time, that is the time that these studies were conducted. None of these definitions though really addresses the true interaction of leisure and work as outlined by Letherby and Reynolds (2005) above. As we will see views such as these have been heavily critiqued by feminists. However, before turning to gender it is necessary to scope out other differences in the experience of leisure, for gender is not the only social variable involved.

Controversy 14.1

Time for leisure?

Despite findings that women and men have almost equal leisure time this was not the result in the Green *et al.* (1990) study of 707 Sheffield women. They found that women, in particular married women, were restricted by time: 97 per cent of the married women they interviewed reported that they did the majority of the housework along with paid work – in other words a double shift.

Differential experiences of leisure

The experience of leisure is not homogeneous, not just due to gender differences but other social differences such as age, ethnicity and employment status amongst others. As we have seen, much of the theorising around gender has focused on the relationship between paid employment and leisure. But what of the unemployed? How different is their experience?

Leisure and unemployment

As we would expect the leisure experiences of the unemployed are different from those in paid work – but not that great. The main points to note are that unemployment does mean more time is available for leisure pursuits but that these tend to be limited to activities such as watching the television: unemployed men spend 2 hours more per day than employed men, whilst unemployed women spend 1½ hours more on activities such as television, listening to the radio, reading and sitting around (Gallie *et al.*, 1994). Despite fewer obligations on time such as paid work, unemployment does not mean a great increase in leisure for restricted finances mean that expensive pursuits, such as cinema, gym clubs, football matches are just not possible (Gallie *et al.*, 1994).

Other factors affecting leisure

Other factors influence the experience of leisure; Les Haywood and colleagues (1995) examine the ways in which the methodologies of leisure studies have shaped responses which can mask these differences. They consider how age, both youth and elderly, affects the ability to participate and the leisure choices made. They also examine how ethnicity, social class, gender and disability all affect leisure choices and can constrain the range of these choices. They conclude that certain choices come from the restrictions of money, space (as in free time) and individual capacities, but also are limited by individual social capital (Bourdieu,

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1985). In a similar vein Peggy Warner-Smith and Peter Brown (2002) consider how gender and geography interact to create certain restrictions. Both social class, and the social capital it comes with, affect leisure choices, even within similar arenas: for example, two different people may choose a short holiday break, one whose social capital may include foreign languages or even just previous experiences of foreign travel, may select a Tuscan villa whilst another, whose social capital is more vested in working-class activities may decide to go to a holiday camp instead. Of course, there are also financial restrictions here, but often both such holidays can be found for similar costs. There is no judgement here as to what might be a 'better' holiday, just to note that different forms of social capital can help explain different choices. Other restrictions also apply; Warner-Smith and Brown note that the mid-aged women of their study in New South Wales, Australia, undertake leisure:

within a framework of constraints which are both explicit, such as time in paid/unpaid work, restricted discretionary income and access to facilities and programs, and implicit, such as cultural expectations of appropriate behaviour for one's age and gender. Physically and metaphorically they inhabit an ageing, conservative social space.

(2002: 53)

Other factors also come into play regarding leisure – see A Closer Look 14.7 for details of age, whilst A Closer Look 14.8 provides some information on health status and ethnicity.

A further influence on choice of leisure are activities which are deemed to be appropriate for an individual to undertake. Haywood and colleagues report that:

Britain has the lowest proportion of women taking part in sport in any country of similar economic status except for Italy. Spatio-temporal restrictions offer a partial explanation, but more crucially is the perception of sports by women themselves.

(1995: 132)

A closer look 14.7

The leisure of the elderly

Many old people are faced with considerable constraints upon their leisure activity. These can be summarized as:

'decreasing economic, social and physical resources
increasing isolation from family and community
increasingly burdensome domestic chores and personal care concerns . . .

much communal leisure activity of older people sustains cultural activity of a by-gone age. Step into these spaces and time seems to have stood still. The elderly rely on community support networks (churches, local societies, village institutes) for out-of-home leisure. In these locations are found residues of self-organised community activity which were dominant in the past, and which stand in sharp contrast to the consumer-orientated technology-based leisure pursuits of contemporary society. Activities such as whist-drives, community singing, poetry reading, talks by local experts . . . Organized by local groups such as Townswomen Guilds, Mothers' Unions, Women's Institutes, Darby and Joan Clubs. Here, people consume the leisure they produce in self-organized collectives.'

(Haywood *et al.*, 1995: 143)

They go on to argue that both women and men choose their sporting activities based on perceptions of gender appropriate behaviour. This may be because, as John Clarke and Chas Critcher (1985) note, sport is one area where 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are 'celebrated'. This is supported and created by the fact that '[i]mages of appropriate activity are inculcated through early child-rearing practices, different movement experiences in physical education, and media portrayals of femininity' (Haywood *et al.*, 1995: 132). It would appear, from an examination of Table 14.1, that such images translate into lesser activity for women than men [**Hotlink** → **Geography (Chapter 10)**].

Table 14.1 Participation in sports in the UK

	1993	1996	2002
At least one activity			
Men	72%	71%	65%
Women	57%	58%	53%
At least one activity, excluding walking			
Men	57%	54%	51%
Women	39%	38%	36%

Source: Derived from General Household Survey (1996: 219) and Fox and Rickards (2004: 7)

A closer look 14.8

Variations in sports and leisure (UK)

Some variations indicated from the 2002 General Household Survey:

Health status – 23 per cent of adults reporting a limiting longstanding illness or disability reported participation in a specialised arts activity (compared with 28 per cent of adults who have no illness or disability); 40 per cent of those with a longstanding illness or disability had participated in at least one activity (including walking) compared with 65 per cent of other adults.

Ethnicity – Pakistani/Bangladeshi, Other Asian Background and Indian people were less likely than expected, after controlling for age, to have participated in at least one of the arts; likewise, Pakistani/Bangladeshi, Indian, Black Caribbean and Black African people were less likely than expected, after controlling for age, to have participated in at least one sports activity, whilst White people were more likely.

Source: Derived from Fox and Rickards (2004: 10, 13–14).

Gender and leisure

We have already looked at a number of issues regarding gender and leisure differences. However, there are arguments that larger differences exist in leisure time than those indicated above.

Defining leisure from a feminist perspective

Many feminists have critiqued the very basis of what is considered leisure. Eileen Green, Sandra Hebron and Diana Woodward (1990) studied 707 women in Sheffield interviewing many and their husbands. They found that the definitions used by male sociologists were not useful in their study, being based on men with full-time jobs. In fact, many of their women had difficulty differentiating leisure from other aspects of their lives and referred to leisure less as an activity and more of a state of mind. That is, these women saw leisure as doing things they enjoyed or pleasing themselves, as such, certain jobs, even obligatory ones, such as ironing were considered by some as enjoyable and therefore leisure.

Like other feminists they argue that there are important differences between men and women's leisure: firstly that women and men tend to do different things and that women have less access to leisure opportunities than men:

The leisure activities which women do most frequently and on which they spend the majority of their free time are those that can be done at home; that can be done in the bits of time left over from doing other things, or that can be easily interrupted if necessary.

(Green *et al.*, 1990: 84)

In addition, they found that it was harder for women to set aside work and embrace leisure due to having greater domestic responsibilities which are open ended, especially childcare. Indeed, some women viewed their part-time jobs (such as bar work) as leisure as they permitted them to escape from domestic chores and social isolation.

Green and colleagues (1990) admit that they were writing a socialist feminist study, and as such they included patriarchy as an essential consideration in their work. There is an emphasis on the constraints on women's leisure in their findings. Given women's lower earnings than men, women have less money than men to spend on leisure. In their study they found that wives were often financially dependent on husbands, which resulted in limitations on the range of activities available. Also, as women as a group have less access to private transport (Haywood *et al.*, 1996:

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132) then the degree of freedom of choice between men and women about their leisure is marked.

Green and colleagues (1990) also found that men's attitudes act as a barrier to women, often including a view that women are supposed to choose their leisure from a range of things related to the home and family, i.e. socially acceptable, for example, family picnics, and so on. These limits derive, they claim, from the features of a capitalist patriarchal society. There exist systems of social control to limit women's access to leisure compared with men. So, apart from time, space and money what might these be?

Social constraints on women's leisure

Jalna Hanmer (1978) has written about how women are socially controlled not just by violence but by the fear of violence [**Hotlink** → **Violence and Resistance (Chapter 16)**; **Hotlink** → **Geography (Chapter 10)**]. This fear can keep women at home, fearful of using public transport or being out after dark. Some husbands and fathers use this as a reason, in a protective manner, resulting in daughters being more limited in their movements than sons, for example. Both the fear within women, and the fear of their male relatives makes it more difficult for women and girls to pursue regular leisure activities than their male counterparts. In their Sheffield study, Green and colleagues (1990) found that husbands who did not wish their wives to go out used tactics from mild disapproval to physical violence to stop them. Restrictions were also based on the nature of the activity. Haywood and colleagues (1995) argue that gender stereotypes affect the leisure choices of women and men but it is more than that: the opinion of important others can

also affect the range of choices. That is, certain activities are seen as more respectable: in the Sheffield study participating in yoga, keep fit and night school were seen by men as more acceptable things for their women (i.e. wives, partners, daughters) to do than to go clubbing or visit a pub. This experience is also differentiated by ethnicity, for women of ethnic minorities fear racial harassment as well as sexual and, in addition, face other cultural limitations to leisure. Green and colleagues (1990) cite a study by the Greater London Council (GLC) showing that Asian men discouraged women from going out, especially at night and that 95 per cent of Asian women surveyed said they would not go out at night alone [**Hotlink** → **Geography (Chapter 10)**]. Afro-Caribbean women were not so culturally restricted but remained limited by factors of gender and ethnicity (fear of attack), lack of childcare and demands of work.

Related to the restrictions above is the very nature of certain leisure venues, many of which are very masculinised spaces and therefore uncomfortable for women. Further, if women do dare enter it is as if they then have no further need of respect. See for example the case of women who sell beer in Korean bars (World in Focus 14.4).

Stop and think 14.6

Think about different leisure spaces. Think about one place where you feel you belong and another that makes you uncomfortable (perhaps even to the point of avoiding it). Now consider yourself to be a different sex, then a different ethnicity. Would you feel the same way about both places?

World in focus 14.4

Women beer vendors in Korea

Women working in a masculinised leisure space can face sexual harassment. Reports from Korea

show that women who work in bars are constantly assumed to be selling more than beer and are frequently approached by the men in the bar for prostitution services. It would appear that simply by transgressing the

gender boundaries of the bar – that is, by being there at all, even when working – women are assumed to be sexually available.

Source: *This Morning*, Radio 4, BBC, 16 June 2005.

So, feminists argue that women's leisure is constrained and controlled by finance, hostility and ideology. Indeed it is recognised that women often monitor their own and other females' behaviour as they accept patriarchal ideology about what is appropriate, for example mothers of young children can be criticised for going out socialising more so than the fathers of these children.

However, just as men's leisure is not homogeneous, neither is women's. Briefly summarised these can be listed as:

- Social class – the higher the class, the more time women have for leisure, wealthier women are involved in more sport and activities than other women.
- Marital status – single, young employed women have most freedom, as they have more money, less domestic responsibilities, and no husbands to pass judgement on them. In fact, in the Sheffield study it was found that getting married reduced sport participation more than having children. After marriage/partnership women's recreation often blurs into family recreation.
- Women are also *agents*, as they make opportunities for leisure, make friends at work or the school gate. Women are more involved than men in voluntary organisations; nonetheless, it has to be remembered that although these are 'safe' and do not challenge gender stereotypes at the same time they can increase independence (Green *et al.*, 1990).

Conclusion

We have looked at a wide range of issues in this chapter: from the structure of work to its implications for leisure. Fundamental however, is to remember that work has been structured in a capitalist society, and in many others, in masculinised manners. As such, men are advantaged over women (as a whole) in such systems. Remember also that although leisure is very much shaped by paid work, time away from paid work and finances (again related to paid work), these are not the only factors influencing the leisure of the pop-

ulation. In addition, for women social control factors also enter the equation.

Further reading

Les Haywood, Francis Kew, Peter Bramham, Jon Spink, John Capenhurst and Ian Henry (eds) (1995), *Understanding Leisure*, Cheltenham, Stanley Thorne Publishers. This is a comprehensive review of the literature, a sensible critique of existing leisure methodology and an accessible discussion of pertinent issues, including differences in people's leisure experiences and opportunities.

Cara Carmichael Aitchison (2003), *Gender and Leisure: Social and Cultural Perspectives*, London, Routledge. Drawing on a wide range of theoretical perspectives, as well as extensive empirical research, this book goes forward to offer a contemporary socio-cultural analysis of gender relations in leisure practice and leisure policy

Critical Social Policy: A Journal of Theory and Practice in Social Welfare, 2002, 22(1) – this special issue of the journal is entitled 'New Divisions for Labour: Alternatives for Caring and Working'. It contains seven articles covering a range of national situations.

Labour Market Trends – a government published journal which describes and discusses issues, patterns and changes in the UK labour market. Available online at www.statistics.gov.uk (follow links to articles)

Websites

Institute for Women's Policy Research – an independent research institute, based in Washington, DC. The IWPR collates vast amounts of data on the economic position of women in the USA, most of which is downloadable from their website: www.iwpr.org

European Industrial Relations Observatory Online – a repository of an amazing number of articles related to labour matters in Europe, at www.eiro.eurofound.ie

United Nations – the UN site has a great deal of information regarding Human Development and International Labour Organisation figures, tables, graphs etc. covering the whole world. Start at www.un.org

Higher Education Academy – This site is a guide to key texts and other sources concerned with leisure practice and its social, economic, political and cultural contexts. It includes a number of advanced and sometimes older texts that may be helpful. The emphasis of the guide is on leisure as it has been historically conceptualised and practised in the UK, however it does include some non-British texts where these contribute to a better understanding of the social and cultural aspects of leisure. Accessible at http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/guides/leisure_society.html

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End of chapter activity

- 1 Go back to the cartoon at the beginning of the chapter. Investigate the gender balance in the two careers of train driving and brain surgery. Reflect on what you have found.
- 2 Go to a local leisure centre. Observe which adults have children with them? Is it men or women, perhaps both? Of the different activities available who is involved in those focused on children rather than themselves?
- 3 Read the list of activities below. Which of these are generally perceived to be appropriate for men, which for women? For both? Why?

Snooker	Rugby	Knitting	Horse Racing
Yoga	Boxing	Surfing	Polo
Badminton	Ballet	Amateur Dramatics	Golf
Motor racing	Orienteering	Swimming	Opera
Cricket	Mountain Climbing	Rowing	Aerobics
Dog walking	Dog Racing	Hunting	Computers

Think about those that you have done/would like to do? Are you prevented from doing any? What's the reason: cost, social class, ethnicity, age, ability, gender, sexuality?

Answer to stop and think 14.2

- ▶ Gender Neutral = washing up, tidying up, vacuuming making beds.
- ▶ Gender Segregated Female = cooking main meal, thorough cleaning, washing and ironing of clothes, anything managerial such as household budget or shopping. Usually the routine.
- ▶ Gender Segregated Male = gardening, cutting grass, repairs, taking out the rubbish. Usually non-routine, at intervals and outside. (Wajcman, 1983; Weelock, 1990).