INTRODUCTION

The feminist movement of the 1960s has had a striking influence on female anthropologists in this country. Apart from their personal interest in women’s status, the movement itself has cast them in the key intellectual role of defining women’s place in a revised theory of the evolution of human society. Beginning in the early 1970s and rising to a current crescendo of books and articles, anthropologists representing all theoretical persuasions, most of them American and most of them women, have produced an entire new literature on the status of women cross-culturally. This literature has proliferated so rapidly that apparently competing views, and in some cases compatible and mutually supporting ones, have gone unacknowledged; publication dates of some works are virtually simultaneous. The result is a bewildering number of disconnected hypotheses about the status of women.

A first, and obvious, purpose of this review is to catalog the various explanations which have been proposed to account for observed similarities and differences in women’s status from society to society. The second aim of this review will be an attempted evaluation of the logic of different hypotheses, evidence bearing on them, the points at which they are mutually reinforcing or conflicting, and any common themes which underly them.

One theme common to a number of theoretical treatments to be reviewed deserves comment. While the opportunity to bring personal commitment and professional interest to bear on a single problem has been uniquely rewarding and inspirational, the feminist stimulus for current investigations of women’s status has had an important hidden consequence. The political issue, of course, revolves around the conditions which perpetuate the low status of women today, both in Western and in underdeveloped countries. This concern shows plainly in the concluding recommendations many writers feel called upon to make, for bettering the present-day condition of women in our own society (e.g. 25, 29, 37, 48, 64, 70). In addition, much
anthropological discussion of women’s status has borrowed this political conceptualization of the problem as a basis for analysis. Though writers may begin by carefully defining what they take to mean “women’s status,” in terms of female political participation, economic control, personal autonomy, interpersonal equality, legal adulthood, ideological position, or other specific indices, for the purpose of testing a particular hypothesis, they often lapse into much looser usage in nearing their conclusions, and speak broadly of “women’s low status,” “female subjugation,” “female oppression,” or “male dominance.” The appeal of such a construct is understandable. For if women’s status can be treated as a unitary construct, and diverse measures of this status as so many related and covarying symptoms, then it is logical to seek a “key” to lower status across societies. If such a “key” explanation can be found, it follows that eradication or modification of this or that particular economic, social, or ideological evil thought to explain women’s low status, will bring about their ultimate equality. The unicausal explanations which result from such attempts to diagnose and prescribe for women’s low position in society thus bear a resemblance to other, more familiar theories which have attributed this universally inferior status to some one or another biologically determined sex difference, although, of course, explanations of this latter type treat women’s resultant position as immutable rather than alterable.

A clear example of this type of reasoning is provided by Rosaldo (68, pp. 19–21), who strings together a series of superficially similar ethnographic examples to demonstrate that “an asymmetry in the cultural evaluations of male and female, in the importance assigned to women and men, appears to be universal.” Rosaldo notes that in societies in New Guinea, the Philippines, and Australia, the food grown or hunted by men is a prestige food in contrast to that produced by women; that among the Arapesh a wife is regarded as a “daughter” to her husband and required to act like an ignorant child during the male flute ceremony; that Yoruba women (in spite of their considerable economic importance in trade) must kneel to serve men; that Iroquois women (in spite of their widely remarked political control) could not occupy chiefly office; that among the Merina of Madagascar women are considered not to know the subtleties of polite language; that Jewish _shetel_ women of Eastern Europe (in spite of their economic control over the household) were required to defer to their husbands and that scholarly men represented the highest cultural ideal in these Jewish communities. Rosaldo (68, p. 22) then asks, “Why is sexual asymmetry a universal fact of human societies?” The rest of her piece is an attempt to explain this universal fact in terms of a division between the public and the domestic spheres of life present to some degree in all societies, and she ends by proposing that men must be brought into the domestic sphere.

Writers surveying the existing ethnographic evidence thus tend to bring to notice, and accentuate, instances of exceptionally low (and much rarer instances of exceptionally high) female status. As does Rosaldo, a writer can readily assemble a wide variety of instances in which women in a number of societies are disadvantaged in comparison to men, to convey an impression of consistently low female status; at the same time, the ways in which women in these same societies have equal or even higher status than men are easily ignored, or even, as in the cases of Yoruba,
Iroquois, and Jewish *shtetl* women described by Rosaldo, employed to stress the discrepancy between their political or economic importance and what is pictured as their overall lot. This review will suggest that it may be more accurate, and more helpful to future research, to treat women’s status as a composite of many different variables, often causally independent one from another. Thus in any given society, this status may be very “low” in some domains of behavior, approach equality in others, achieve equality with men’s status in others, and even, in some domains, surpass the status of men. The possibility that women’s status may be a complex outcome of two or more independent variables has not gone entirely unnoted by other writers (e.g. 5, 32, 43, 62, 72, 75, 81); but none has developed the implications of this approach for cross-cultural research. If the various hypotheses which have been proposed as “keys” to women’s universally low status are entertained, not as competing explanations, but as explanations which separately account for different aspects of women’s position in society, then future research should be directed to the specific conditions which influence women’s political participation, or their control over economic matters, or their personal autonomy, or the degree of deference they owe to men, or the level of prestige attached to their persons or their occupations, or ethnotheories about them, or stylistic differences which characterize their language and behavior—and away from the search for conditions purported to influence women’s status overall. This is certainly not to claim that different aspects of women’s status are never interrelated (e.g. 72), but such interdependencies must be specified, not assumed.

A trend away from “key” theorizing and toward the definition and investigation of more particular aspects of women’s position seems already detectable in the latest literature on the subject, although it is early to tell. This new, narrower focus seems motivated less by an explicit rejection of current theory, as by the infusion of new ethnographic data, in a quantity and detail to encourage refined examination of particular domains of women’s lives and activities and appreciation of the complexity and multiplicity of women’s roles across these domains. If this trend persists, then the “key” theories which have initiated the anthropological study of women’s status, and with which this review is largely concerned, will simply lapse or be incorporated into explanations of more restricted scope.

Another, more direct challenge to “key” theories about women’s status is posed by the mushrooming number of claims to bias in the ethnographic literature. Such bias is attributed to the combined distortions of male-oriented ethnographers and their male informants. For example, while men may paint a picture of the women in their society as unclean or uncouth, feeble-minded or uncontrollable, women may have an equally uncomplimentary picture to paint of their men (6, 55, 80). The evidence is lacking because ethnographers (both male and female) do not talk to women (62, 67), and women may be unwilling or unable to generalize to ethnographers (1, 81). Additionally, men may have an unequal opportunity for impression management because they deal with outsiders and monopolize the contact language (55).

Enthnographers, it is also charged by the new critics, have been overly ready to perceive an asymmetrical picture of men and women where such asymmetry does
not exist. Leacock (37) has noted that women's isolation in menstrual huts is commonly interpreted as their exclusion from society, while men's parallel isolation in men's houses is interpreted as the exclusion of women from the men's world. Faithorn (22) disputes the traditional anthropological treatment of female pollution in highlands New Guinea, pointing out that for one eastern highlands group, the Kafe, it is not women per se who are regarded as polluting, but certain reproductive substances such as menstrual blood and semen. Because they too may pollute, men must take care to keep their semen-stained bodies and clothing from touching, and must avoid stepping over, other people or their food. Faithorn charges that because New Guinea ethnographers have conceptualized women themselves rather than their bodily excretions as the agents of pollution, they have paid no systematic attention to taboos surrounding male sexuality. Rohrlich-Leavitt, Sykes & Weatherford (67) have detailed the bias of male ethnographers in treating Australian aboriginal women as profane, ritually unclean, and economically unimportant. Female ethnographers cited by these authors (27, 32) have painted a different picture of aborigine life, in which women play a central role in subsistence, perform their own important rituals, and are treated by men with respect and dignity. Briggs (6) differs with earlier ethnographers in claiming that Eskimo men do not devalue women or their economic contribution.

Linton (46) has attacked the male bias contributing to an undue theoretical emphasis given hunting in anthropological reconstructions of the evolution of hunting-gathering groups. Draper (17) has pointed out that among the foraging !Kung Bushmen she studied, the return of women from gathering expeditions is greeted by just as much excitement and anticipation as the arrival of men from the hunt, contrary to the common ethnographic representation of the latter activity as being more highly culturally valued. She also counters the ethnographic stereotype of female foraging, in contrast to men's work, as individualized, repetitious, and boring. Rather, !Kung gatherers must command the ability to discriminate among hundreds of plant species at different stages of their life cycle, and must also collect information as to the "state of the bush," crucial to band movements and hunting decisions.

Anthropologists generalizing from others' ethnographic accounts may contribute another level of male bias. Di Leonardo (15), for example, critiques Goodenough's (28) definition of marriage as universally entailing a man's unilateral acquisition of sexual rights in a woman. Di Leonardo returns to the primary ethnographic sources on which Goodenough has drawn to show that he has neglected the appreciable sexual rights which women have in their husbands, reported for these societies. Likewise Bossen (5) faults Evans-Pritchard (21) and others for characterizing women in traditional societies as wholly devoted to domestic activities, in spite of women's roles as traders and subsistence producers in so many of these societies.

Other writers have pointed out that the penetration of Western colonialism, and with it Western practices and attitudes regarding women, have so widely influenced women's role in aboriginal societies as to depress women's status almost everywhere in the world. Boserup (4) has called attention to the detrimental influence colonial
practices had on the economic position of women in agriculture, restructuring traditional land tenure systems to preclude female inheritance, everywhere encouraging men to take over farming, and introducing cash crops and new farming technologies exclusively through men. In a pastoral economy, Bossen (5) has noted the similar role of government policy in transferring livestock rights and grazing land ownership to Navaho men. Mintz (51) points to a similar reduction in women traders’ traditional share of the West African and Haitian markets as men’s commercial activities expanded—possibly because of the preference of European representatives for dealing with men. In another context, Leacock (38) has described the impact of the fur trade on the Naskapi, eastern Canadian hunter-gatherers. The fur trade disrupted the collective economy and put ownership of trap-lines, furbearing animals, and the commodities for which fur was exchanged in the hands of individual men. Martin (48) has pointed out that cash cropping, industrial wage labor, and other colonial practices which encouraged portable wealth and the accumulation of this wealth by men not only decreased the productive importance of women but also fostered the development of the independent nuclear family, which in turn has accentuated the domestic isolation of women.

Everywhere under the modernization of traditional economies, opportunities for wage labor, higher-paying jobs, and training for skilled and supervisory positions in the modern labor force favored men. Women were either relegated to marginal wages or left behind in noncompetitive and shrinking traditional sectors, or at best channeled into “women’s professions” (4, 5, 65). This pattern reflects employer preferences imported from the developed countries. Women in both low-skill wage labor and traditional work thus find themselves in oversupply, and in effect, suffer disguised unemployment (5). Unlike men with higher pay, women are unable to accumulate capital for investment in large-scale trade and other economic enterprises (5, 65). Additionally, because of the experience and travel they gain in their jobs, men become more knowledgeable about the modern world (4, 5).

Perhaps less attention has been paid to the consequences of colonialism for women's political position. Van Allen (83) has discussed one case: the British misinterpretation and consequent suppression of the traditional practice of “sitting on a man,” by which Igbo women applied political influence within their communities. Leacock (38, pp. 608–11) maintains that under the influence of wage labor and trade, North American Indian “chiefs and other men of influence began to play roles beyond that of spokesmen, often as entrepreneurial go-betweens in commercial matters, or leaders of resistance, and the masculine ‘authority’ of ethnographic accounts took shape.” She argues from colonial accounts that egalitarian societies such as the Naskapi were not governed by male authority; instead, decision making was widely dispersed among adults of both sexes, and the twin ethic of group solidarity and individual autonomy enforced through ridicule and teasing deterred anyone from forcing his will on others. Sacks (73) has suggested that while women did occupy positions of authority on a par with men in some prestate societies, male and female forms of authority differed. For example, Iroquois and Delaware men initiated and executed policy concerning war and peace, whereas women exercised
veto power over these decisions. Men dealt with external, women with internal relations. To view these kinds of authority as unequal rather than simply different, reflects not the views of the participants in prestate polities, but a "state bias" in Western anthropological interpretation of these political systems, Sacks argues.

Martin (48) notes the parallel effects of Christian and Islamic theology, which taken together blanket large portions of the modern world, in fostering domestic, subordinate roles and sexual restrictions for women. Goodale (27) has described the loss of domestic influence suffered by Tiwi women because government and mission officials considered the husband to be the boss of the family, and interpreted attempts by his mother or mother-in-law to arbitrate marital disputes as unwarranted interference. Similarly, Leacock (38) reports, the Jesuits taught the Naskapi the importance of permanent monogamy, wifely obedience, and a husband's exclusive sexual rights over his wife.

Together, the bias of male informants in reporting, ethnographers in describing, and cross-cultural workers in interpreting various disparate customs as evidence of women's universally low status, and the depressive effects of colonialism on many aspects of women's lives, may seem to leave very little cross-cultural female subordination to explain. Certainly an awareness of such potential distortions instills caution toward some of the most widely and firmly held anthropological truths about women; and new examples challenging these generalizations are accumulating in the literature.

The next section will deal with universals, variously biological, psychological, and economic, which are currently entertained as viable explanations for the universal disparity in the roles and statuses of the two sexes. [Arguments against some earlier notions about universal sex differences are effectively marshalled by Linton (46), Rosaldo & Lamphere (69), and Martin & Voorhies (48)]. The section following the next will treat a number of variables which have been proposed to explain cross-cultural differences in the status of women. Throughout, the specific effects which particular universals or variables are purported to have on women's status will be distinguished from any general claims that these factors lower women's overall status.

**UNIVERSAL DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN'S STATUS**

*Men's Greater Physical Strength*

It is undisputed that men have greater physical strength than women. Men are larger, although this difference holds only within, not across, populations (14). Men have longer arms and sprint-adapted pelves (30). And a large number of physiological sex differences, summarized by Hutt (31), equip men for a more active and strenuous life: greater caloric intake, greater potassium needs after puberty, higher basal metabolism, proportionally larger hearts and lungs, larger, stronger muscles and less fat, continued development in strength after puberty (girls reach a plateau), and the promotion of tissue growth and repair, particularly in muscle and bone, by the male hormone testosterone. Other hormonal effects are:
Boys and men have a lower resting heart-rate but a higher systolic blood pressure, which means the heart has more 'room for manoeuvre' in cases of stress or physical exertion. They are also able to carry more oxygen in the blood and have a considerable increase of haemoglobin particularly after puberty. This increase in red cells is due directly to the action of the male hormone. Males are also more efficient at neutralizing metabolites like lactic acid which are the by-products of exercise and work (31, pp. 78–79).

Not so widely agreed upon are the differences in behavior which result from these physiological and skeletal differences. One obvious consequence of the male advantage in strength and energy is the ability of men to carry out more arduous physical tasks. This ability is viewed, in turn, as an adaptation complementary to women's biological role as bearers and nurseries of children in early human societies subsisting by hunting and gathering. Most writers agree that hunting is incompatible with pregnancy, carrying small infants, and child care, although they are not always agreed as to whether is is the actual physical exertion which hunting demands, the danger it involves, or the long-distance travel it engenders which is most critical to this incompatibility. A similar argument can be made for the incompatibility of childbearing, nursing, and rearing with female participation in defense. Friedl (25) has pointed out, in addition, that female exclusion from warfare may be adaptive to the female role in human reproduction: since a man may father large numbers of offspring but a women bears few children over her lifespan, men's lives can be more readily expended without threatening population maintenance. Thus men are thought to have evolved specialized adaptations to the tasks of hunting and warring which devolved upon them. Liebowitz (42) has cautioned by analogy to nonhuman primates, however, that greater male size and strength may be a female adaptation to reproduction rather than a male adaptation to roles involving protection, aggression, leadership and provision. Once females begin to reproduce they cease to grow, thus insuring efficient energy allocation; there is no such adaptive advantage for the cessation of male growth.

Whatever the evolutionary history behind men's greater size, strength, and energy, writers (e.g. 14, 53) have considered that these characteristics suit men for heavy labor and thus help explain the near-universal exclusion of women from such tasks as tree felling, plowing, and the operation of heavy agricultural machinery as well as hunting and warfare. And the resulting division of labor between the sexes has been argued by some to initiate far-reaching effects on the status of women. These hypotheses will be considered in the section on Cross-Cultural Variability in Women's Status. More directly, the physical advantage of males has been construed by some as an explanation of the universal dominance of men over women. In this connection, greater male strength and energy are no more relevant than another documented physiological sex difference with behavioral consequences: greater male aggressiveness.

**Men's Greater Aggressiveness**

In a cautious reevaluation of the psychological literature, Maccoby & Jacklin (47) overturn or call into question most of the sex differences which have been raised in
this literature, by the simple strategy of tallying studies in terms of positive and negative findings. One of the few behavioral differences which survives this test is the finding that males are more aggressive than females. This difference extends to both physical and verbal aggression, begins at ages 2 to 2½, and holds cross-culturally. Analyzing behavioral observations of children in seven widely separated societies, Whiting & Edwards (88) found that boys engaged in more rough-and-tumble play, exchanged more verbal insults, and were more likely to counterattack physically or verbally if aggressed against. An exception is reported by Draper (18) for foraging !Kung Bushman children; possibly because play groups are hetero-sexual and children are not expected to do chores which would put different demands on girls and boys, 4 to 7-year-old sample girls actually exceed boys of the same age in amount of roughhousing. Inexplicably, this trend is reversed by ages 8 to 14. Physiologically, levels of aggression have been convincingly tied to levels of male hormones in both humans and subhuman primates and both males and andro-gnized females. This evidence is evaluated by Maccoby & Jacklin.

Voorhies (48) considers the aggressiveness of human males to be an adaptation to their role in defense, analogous to its adaptive function in some primate species. Maccoby & Jacklin (47) speculate further that another consistent finding of aggressiveness studies—boys aggress primarily against one another and seldom against girls—is adaptive to species survival because it insures that a higher proportion of females will survive to reproductive maturity.

Hutt (31) argues that aggressiveness is closely linked physiologically to two other male behavioral characteristics: ambition and drive. But this conclusion is jeopardized by Maccoby & Jacklin’s summary of findings from experimental studies. In these studies, the trend for male subjects to be more competitive is not consistent and the various measures of competitiveness are not free of contamination by other motivations; and boys and girls through college age show similar levels of achieve-ment motivation. Voorhies (48), in rejecting a physiologically based interpretation of male ambitiousness, points to the early cross-cultural finding of Barry, Bacon & Child (2) that boys are trained in achievement and self-reliance. In the latter au-thors’ sample of 31 societies for which the socialization of achievement was ade-quately reported, fully 87% pressured boys more than girls to be achievers. Achievement training was defined (3, p. 249), for purposes of rating ethnographic materials, as “usually on the basis of competition, or imposition of standards of excellence in performance.” Such training is gained, presumably, in the actual performance of chores, and also in games, informal play, ceremonies, and other opportunities to watch and imitate adult male models. Barry, Bacon & Child (2, 3) consider that the training of boys in achievement and self-reliance functions as preparation for male tasks requiring skill and separation from home, particularly large game hunting and fishing, which also require individual initiative to replenish storable food supplies daily. By contrast, girls are trained in nurturance, responsibil-ity, and obedience, traits which suit them for their economic role in child care and domestic routines. Moreover, these authors [(2); discussed in D’Andrade (14)] show that overall sex difference in socialization is greater in those types of economy which put a premium on male strength and skill, a finding which bolsters an
interpretation of male achievement motivation as a product of socialization. The absence of a sex difference in the achievement motivation of Western children, based on experimental studies, is consistent with this interpretation; for the subject boys and girls, most achievement occurs in the context of school, where both are equally pressured to so achieve (88, 89).

Like male physical advantage, male aggressiveness has often been used to explain the universal dominance of men over women. But “dominance” is used, in the literature on women’s status, to mean a wide range of behaviors and institutional arrangements including, for instance, men’s monopoly over political office-holding, their claim to female deference, and their right to exchange women in marriage. Implicit in these usages is the notion that men are somehow able to gain such rights and monopolies by aggressive use of force. There are two sources of evidence against such an assumption.

The first evidence comes, once more, from Maccoby & Jacklin’s review of the psychological literature on aggressiveness. These authors claim that in adolescence and adulthood, aggression declines as the means for achieving dominance (or leadership). As the power to influence others comes to depend more and more upon competencies and mutual affection and attraction, rather than simple power assertion by force, equality of the sexes in power-bargaining encounters becomes possible (47, p. 274).

While dominance among groups of primates or young boys is largely attained by fighting or threats, studies show that among girls such attributes as attractiveness, popularity, style-setting ability, special interests, and social skills are influential, and increasingly among male adolescents and adults, popularity and leadership qualities such as the ability to achieve group goals displace fighting prowess and compete with athletic ability as marks of leadership. Dominance in adulthood may derive from such diverse social talents as flattery, deception, competence, or supportiveness toward other group members; and interpersonal aggression may be detrimental to effective leadership. Thus Maccoby & Jacklin doubt that men monopolize positions of status and authority in any society by means of their naturally greater aggressiveness.

Gough (29) has indeed speculated that, to the limited extent that men do hold power over women in hunting societies, this power derives from their monopoly over weapons and their physical strength, which give them ultimate control of force. But Webster (86) notes the lack of evidence that men in hunting-gathering societies ever turn their weapons or their strength against women or use this strength as means of social control. Moreover, while sex may be the overriding basis for the formation of interest groups in some societies, among which the Mundurucú are described as an extreme example (55), it is usual in many other societies for disputes to align mixed-sex groups of kin against one another. Friedl (25) points out that conflicts within hunting-gathering bands or between intermarrying bands are most frequently settled by departure of one disputant, with his followers, or engagement in public ritual contests, such as song competitions. This picture of conflict management accords well with Maccoby & Jacklin’s discussion of the social means by which adults in Western society gain dominance and leadership.
A possibility which writers on this subject have overlooked is that the greater verbal aggressiveness of males, rather than their strength and physical aggressiveness, may help to explain their assumption of formal leadership roles cross-culturally. Verbal assertiveness seems more compatible with the other interpersonal skills which leadership demands than the exercise of physical force. A description of the sex difference in verbal participation in Israeli kibbutz assemblies is instructive: "... when women do take the floor in formal situations they talk briefly and to the point ... It is men who often repeat themselves and argue ponderously and bombastically" [Tiger & Shepher (82, p. 136)]. A conclusion whether this is a Western sex difference or a pan-cultural one awaits anthropological attention. Varied ethnographic observations that men preempt the role of spokesmen vis-à-vis outsiders (38, 55, 66) are again only suggestive.

Is there any sense in which their greater physical strength and aggressiveness does permit men to "dominate" women? Maccoby & Jacklin (47) admit that dominance in some adult relationships does depend upon brute force. Most suggestively, the illustration they choose is a British newspaper account of chronic wife-beating. While Maccoby & Jacklin consider that the use of force is rare in modern marriages, presumably because of social opinion and legal sanctions, anthropological reports of wife-beating come from many societies. The use of physical force by men against women may be prototypical of the one-to-one, intimate relationship of marriage. Schlegel (76) discovered this when she compared matrilineal societies in which authority over women is exercised by their brothers, to those in which such authority is exercised by their husbands. In coding one index of the locus of male authority, socially tolerated "aggression" on the part of either or both of these men, Schlegel found that ethnographic reports of husbands' and brothers' behavior were qualitatively different. While a husband's physical aggression might be tolerated, a brother's right to threaten or punish his adult sister seemed rarely to rest on his potential or actual use of physical force, but depended rather on his recognized claim to authority.

This is not to argue that the marital relationship is the only one in which male aggression against women is practiced or licensed; in some societies, it is reported, individual women may be beaten by their kin or gang-raped by their husband's age-mates. It is indicative that Mundurucú women avoid gang rape by traveling together in bands outside the settlement (55). The relatively high frequency of wife-beating among forms of physical aggression against women, may simply reflect, as well as the intimacy of the marital relationship and the inevitable tensions which arise within it, the greater opportunity which men have to aggress against women when they are alone with them in the privacy of their households. Kafe women protect themselves against this eventuality by avoiding private quarrels and airing marital grievances at public gatherings (23). Male strength and physical aggressiveness, while not plausible explanations of men's collective preemption of political offices and authority, are plausible factors in the power of men over individual women, often when these women are socially isolated, and notably in the domestic context.
Women's Role in Childbearing and Childrearing

Like men's advantage in strength and aggressiveness, women's role in childbearing and childrearing is argued to affect their economic role. Friedl (25) has suggested an interconnected set of conditions related to women's reproductive functions which select for a fixed division of labor between the sexes in hunting-gathering societies. Since carrying burdens would interfere with a hunter's ability to run long distances and to use weapons, any particular foraging expedition is devoted exclusively either to hunting or to gathering. Because of the unreliable supply of game, hunters must be free to keep hunting until they meet with success, a condition best met if provisions of regularly available gathered food are the responsibility of others. Women's unsuitability for hunting, and thus their availability for gathering, is determined by the large amount of time they are either pregnant or nursing small children who must be carried on long trips. The early marriage and continuous childbearing and nursing of women in hunting-gathering bands makes it unfeasible for women to take part in hunting for any appreciable length of time in their adult lives, and insures that no sizeable pool of mature, strong women is ever available for the hunt. White et al (87) have further proposed that women beyond childbearing age or those who do not produce children are still excluded from male tasks because they have not learned the necessary skills, while investment has already been made to train them in the skills they need to perform women's tasks. Spiro [(79), quoted by D'Andrade (14)] has remarked, in the context of the reemerging sexual division of labor on an Israeli kibbutz, that when a sizeable proportion of the women are on pregnancy leave they must be replaced in their productive jobs by men, and women seem to have difficulty regaining these jobs once men preempt them. However, Tiger & Shepher (82) raise a question as to why women do not similarly preempt the jobs of kibbutz men called away on military duty.

That women nurse children and do not roam as far from home apparently overdetermines their role in childrearing as well; everywhere, women are primarily responsible for child care (8). There is also some evidence, summarized by Maccoby & Jacklin (47), implicating female hormones in maternal responsiveness, and male hormones in the suppression of maternal behavior; such hormonal effects presumably also predispose women to take on the role of child care. Tiger & Shepher (82, p. 272) have argued that this "species-wide attraction between mothers and their young" explains the initiative taken by the kibbutz women they studied to institute the "hour of love," a practice whereby mothers interrupt their work schedules to spend an hour each day with their children, and familism, whereby children sleep at home rather than in the children's houses. Mothers have agitated for familism even though their work load is much heavier in familistic kibbutzim.

Tiger & Shepher conclude rather grandly that kibbutz women have acted against the principles of their socialization and ideology, against the wishes of the men of their communities, against the economic interest of the kibbutzim, in order to be able to devote more time and energy to private maternal activities rather than to economic and political public ones (82, p. 272).
Thus maternal responsiveness is made to seem the "key" to women's apparent disinterest in occupational equality and political participation, reflected in the evidence that women pass up opportunities to occupy "male" jobs and fail to participate as fully as men in the general assembly and kibbutz committees. However, it would seem less tortured to treat the findings regarding motherhood, political participation, and the sexual division of labor independently. In particular, it is difficult not to conclude from the material presented by these writers that kibbutz residents retain a persistent and pervasive ideological bias toward a traditional European division of labor by sex, in spite of the authors' disclaimers and the self-consciously egalitarian official ideology of the kibbutzim.

The demands of child care place restrictions on the energy, mobility, and attention women can deploy at other pursuits. Brown (8) has argued that it is the special demands of child care, rather than women's inability to perform heavy physical labor, that determines whether they are able to participate in any particular subsistence task. She concludes (8, pp. 1085–86) that subsistence activities in which women can participate are those which "do not require rapt concentration and are relatively dull and repetitive; they are easily interruptible and easily resumed once interrupted; they do not place the child in potential danger; and they do not require the participant to range very far from home." Brown points out that these restrictions alone account for the universal pattern of women's exclusion from large animal herding, large game hunting, deep-sea fishing, and plow agriculture. Murdock & Provost (53), in an analysis of coded data for 185 societies, found that "quasi-feminine" activities, assigned predominantly or exclusively to women in a number of societies, fit Brown's description well: fuel gathering, preparation of drinks, gathering of wild vegetal foods, dairy production, spinning, laundering, water fetching, cooking, and preparation of vegetal food. These authors argue, however, that Brown neglects another feature of such activities: the daily attention they require makes them incompatible with men's tasks such as warfare, hunting, fishing, and herding, all of which commonly require long absences from the household. Murdock & Provost also identify a set of "strictly masculine activities"—hunting large aquatic fauna, smelting ore, metalworking, lumbering, hunting large land fauna, woodworking, fowling, musical instrument making, trapping, boatbuilding, stoneworking, work in bone, horn, and shell, mining and quarrying, and bonesetting. The male advantage for performance of most of these activities, they say, resides in men's great physical strength and capacity for bursts of energy, coupled with their ability to travel distances from home unfettered by pregnancy and infant care.

Friedl (25) considers it more instructive to examine the ways in which child care is accommodated to women's customary work. She feels that Brown overstates the constraint on women's mobility, in view of the large number of societies in which female gatherers, cultivators, or traders do walk long distances either daily, sporadically, or seasonally. The pace and strenuousness of the travel must be taken into account. Trading, for example, nicely complements the care of infants still small enough to be carried on long walks; much of a trader's time may be spent sitting in the marketplace, attending to buyers only intermittently. C. Smith (personal communication) relates that in western Guatemala, marketing is done exclusively
by women, and peddling, except for an occasional postmenopausal woman, exclusively by men. This pattern, which may be duplicated elsewhere, probably reflects the greater difficulty and hazard of travel and transport over peddling routes. Likewise, large game hunting and large animal herding, as well as being strenuous, preoccupying, and hazardous, require fast-paced travel.

Friedl (25) notes that shifts in body balance during the latter stages of pregnancy bar women from hunting as effectively as the burden of transporting nursing infants after birth. Not only the necessity of nursing their infants, but other considerations regarding infants’ physical and emotional well-being, may determine how long they will be carried. Lee (39, p. 331) relates that !Kung infants and young children have an extremely close relationship with their mothers and that, while children are carried by their mothers less and less and babysat by others more and more between the ages of two and four, “at age four, well after they have been weaned from the breast, they are weaned from the back.” Thus while older children and elderly people in many societies provide substitute child care for periods as long as a day, freeing mothers to carry out distant, laborious, or time-consuming subsistence tasks (25), clearly this is truer of the care of older children than that of younger ones who still need to nurse and who are still regarded as requiring maternal contact.

Friedl suggests that one adaptation to the requirements of women’s tasks among some hunter-gatherers and horticulturalists is low fertility and wide spacing of children. Lee (39) argues that the particular feature of gathering to which child spacing is a response is the physical impossibility of one woman carrying two children (or a child and a fetus) at once. Thus !Kung births are spaced an average of 4 years apart.

Nerlove (56) has pointed out that some degree of flexibility is also introduced into the subsistence roles open to women by the practice of supplementing mother’s milk. Nerlove hypothesizes that early supplementary feeding of infants is a strategy more likely to be adopted by women who are required to participate heavily in subsistence. Testing her hypothesis on a sample of 83 societies for which pertinent information was available, she found that the greater women’s participation in a society’s subsistence activities, the more likely are infants to be started on supplementary foods before they are a month old. As Nerlove is careful to say, this finding does not invalidate observations about the pattern of subsistence tasks from which women are excluded, but applies within these constraints on women’s activities.

Children’s Socialization

Since women are the bearers, nurses, and primary caretakers of children, the role of primary child socializers also devolves upon them. As elaborated by Chodorow (11), this role accounts for further, far-reaching differences between male and female personalities. Chodorow develops the implications of the fact that, universally, both boys and girls are brought up by women. Both sexes must learn their appropriate gender identity, but a girl accomplishes this simply by modeling after her mother; as has long been recognized by psychoanalytic theorists, a boy, in order to become a man, must give up a primary identification with his mother and shift to an identification with his father or other salient adult males. Chodorow argues that
because a man does not play a caretaking role and because in most societies his male activities take him away from home, he is relatively inaccessible to his son.

As a result, a boy's male gender identification often becomes a "positional" identification, with aspects of his father's clearly or not-so-clearly defined male role, rather than a more generalized "personal" identification—a diffuse identification with his father's personality, values, and behavioral traits—that could grow out of a real relationship to his father (11, p. 49).

Consequences of the boy's struggle to define his gender under these conditions are denial of femininity, denial of attachment to and dependence upon his mother (coupled with her tendency to push him into the male role), and in the attempt, devaluation of whatever he considers feminine. By contrast, the development of a girl's gender identity is continuous, unproblematic, and mediated by the real affective relationship with her mother. The explicit training boys receive reinforces their differential development: it is oriented toward achievement and self-reliance rather than nurturance and responsibility [a conclusion based on the cross-cultural study of Barry, Bacon & Child (2)]; it is delayed rather than continuous; and it entails a transitional period of universalistic membership in a group of peers rather than particularistic role relations. While women's particularistic interactions cut across generational lines and encompass diffuse relationships and responsibilities, men's interactions are likely to crosscut kinship units, to be restricted to a single generation, to be recruited along universalistic criteria, and to invoke highly specific relationships and responsibilities.

From the complex of effects Chodorow describes, Rosaldo (68, p. 25) singles out as significant this experience of "horizontal and often competitive peer groups, which cross-cut domestic units and establish 'public' and over-arching ties." Consequent are the boy's need to achieve status as a peer and as a man rather than assume it naturally, and his knowledge of this status as an abstract set of rights and duties, associated with formal authority and formal roles, in contrast to a young girl, who "probably has more experience of others as individuals than as occupants of formal institutionalized roles; so she learns how to pursue her own interests by appeals to other people, by being nurturant, responsive, and kind" (68, p. 26). Together these features of boys' upbringing cause them to prize achievement, seek out competition for status, and maintain the social distance requisite to authority. These traits in turn account for the universal monopoly of men over the public world and the relegation of women to the domestic world. Politically, this means that men occupy, and women are excluded from, the ranked, institutionalized positions. In economic terms, it means that women's work is relatively less public, and done individually or in small, loosely organized groups. The products of this work are used within the family and household or, if distributed more widely, appropriated by men in their pursuit of prestige. The more marked the differentiation between domestic and public spheres of activity in a given society, the more women's political and economic status will suffer.

Ortner (60) argues further that along with women's unalienable biological function in reproduction and their domestic confinement as a result of their nursing and
child care responsibilities, women's personality contributes to their symbolic identification with nature and their consequent exclusion from the realm of culture. The feminine personality traits of personalism and particularism, which result from the socialization experience detailed by Chodorow, lead women to enter into direct, relatively unmediated relationships "embedded in things as given" (60, p. 82). Thus women lend themselves to a universal interpretation as closer to nature than men, whose propensity to superimpose on relationships "abstract categories and transpersonal values" identifies them as products of culture. Chodorow's argument can be made to bear implications of the broadest scope.

The claim that their socialization by women has sharply different effects on boys and girls must be evaluated cautiously however. Chodorow's psychoanalytically based picture of sex differences is largely clinically supported; experimental and cross-cultural research aimed at isolating the socialization experiences and the psychological consequences described by Chodorow, Rosaldo, and Ortner is lacking. Their picture may be biased by the distinctively Western ideology which emerged with the industrial revolution (see section on Economic Variables) and which emphasizes women's place in the home and their expressive role in the family.

One body of experimental data (47) contradicts this picture. This research suggests that males no less than females, and perhaps more so, employ "Machiavellian" strategies—that is, act accommodating and even submissive as part of a plan to influence another's behavior. On a "Mach" scale measuring the extent to which a subject uses exploitative and manipulative behavior in interpersonal relations, and predicting success in bargaining with others for desired ends, adult men have generally proven more Machiavellian than women. A sample of 10-year-old children tested on a modified version of the scale, while showing a great deal of variability, did not differ by sex. This finding does not jibe with Rosaldo's (68, p. 26) delineation of the young girl, in contrast to the boy, learning "to pursue her own interests, by appeals to other people."

Chodorow views the content of task socialization as contributory to sex differences in interpersonal involvement, although it requires a somewhat broad construction of nurturance, responsibility, achievement and self-reliance to allow that differential training in these behaviors contributes to a more general pressure on girls "to be involved with and connected to others, boys to deny this involvement and connection" (11, p. 55). In experimental studies on altruism (47), children of both sexes are found to be equally helpful; however, Maccoby & Jacklin cite the cross-cultural evidence (2, 88) that girls are more helpful and responsible. In Whiting & Edwards' (88) analysis of behavioral observations of children in seven cultures, girls show more help-giving behavior and offer more emotional support than boys, and this tendency becomes stronger with age, suggesting that it is socialized rather than innate. Girls also "suggest responsibly" more than do boys. Maccoby & Jacklin interpret this cluster of feminine behaviors as relating to the more frequent assignment of girls to babysitting responsibilities. Of course, a greater maternal responsiveness on the part of girls (section on Women's Role in Childbearing and Childrearing) might predispose them to accept babysitting assignments more readily than boys, and therefore to develop the behaviors elicited by this task. Whiting & Ed-
wards draw attention to the fact that the American girls in their cross-cultural sample score low in offering help and support, and because of the small size of families and the time occupied at schoolwork, do very little infant care compared with girls in other societies. Correspondingly, boys in the Kenyan community studied, many of whom care for infants and perform domestic chores, more frequently offered help and support than boys in other societies. In a separate study (19), sisterless boys in a western Kenyan community who did child care, cooking, and other domestic chores proved to be more like girls over a range of behaviors, although this particular study did not measure differences in nurturance; these boys were more responsible, less aggressive both physically and verbally, less "dependent" in the senses of seeking help, support, attention, information or material goods, and less "egoistically dominant" in the sense of dominating, reprimanding, or prohibiting others' actions nonresponsibly. Interestingly, boys who did women's work outside the homestead, such as fetching wood and water, digging root crops, picking vegetables, and taking flour to be milled, did not score more feminine than boys who did no "feminine" work at all, indicating the specificity of the context in which this complex of behaviors is learned.

This cross-cultural evidence supports a view of nurturance and responsibility as learned in the context of specific tasks. As pointed out earlier (section on Men's Greater Aggressiveness), the cross-cultural association of achievement and self-reliance training with male subsistence tasks demanding skill and initiative, and the experimental evidence that American middle-class boys are not more achievement oriented than girls who experience the same pressure to achieve at school and the same exemption from subsistence chores at home, equally support an interpretation of achievement and self-reliance as sex differences learned in the performance of different tasks. The evidence that American boys are any more competitive than girls is equivocal (section on Men's Greater Aggressiveness), presumably also because both are socialized to compete in school. Thus cross-cultural differences in task socialization of boys and girls seem less to support sex differences in nurturance, responsibility, achievement, self-reliance, and competitiveness as to fully explain these differences. When differences in task socialization are narrowed or obliterated, these sex differences in behavior are not maintained by the differential opportunities of girls and boys to interact with and model after same-sex adults, as Chodorow's argument requires.

Lastly, Maccoby & Jacklin (47) conclude that there is no consistent tendency across relevant studies for girls to be more dependent, as might be expected from Chodorow's (11, p. 51) suggestion that boys' sex-role learning "involves denial of attachment or relationship, particularly of what the boy takes to be dependence or need for another," while girls continue to be dependent on their mothers in adulthood. Anthropological studies, however, provide some support for this aspect of Chodorow's hypothesis. Anthropologists (88) have found that boys do roam farther from home during free time. This difference has been viewed by some as reflecting not necessarily girls' greater dependence but boys' greater investigativeness and aggressiveness (52), coupled with their assignment to chores which require self-reliance and mobility (88) and grant them greater opportunity for exploration (57),
while the chores of girls keep them close to home. But Draper (18) provides a critical test of these alternative interpretations, with an analysis of differences between bush !Kung boys and girls. She holds that differential socialization for task performance cannot account for sex differences between these children, since they perform virtually no chores in this unusually leisured economy. Nevertheless, bush girls stay inside the camp or outside it within view and earshot of adults more than boys. They interact with adults more often, particularly with women, and interact with peers less often. Supporting this picture are the behavioral observations from seven societies, analyzed by Whiting & Edwards (88), who found that younger girls sought help more often than did younger boys, and girls as a whole sought and offered physical contact more often than boys, a difference which decreased with age. Whether the sex difference in dependency is innate, or whether it is due to the particular socialization experience proposed by Chodorow, remains unresolved.

Women's Compliance

At the end of their lengthy review of the psychological literature on sex differences, Maccoby & Jacklin (47) hazard a novel hypothesis about universal feminine subjugation, one which has not yet received consideration from anthropologists. Their argument stems from their discussion of sex differences in the dominance behavior of children. Boys do not dominate girls because they do not play with them; they tend instead to play in large all-boy groups and dominate one another. However, Maccoby & Jacklin remark on the tendency of girls to comply more readily, not to dominance attempts by other children, but to directives from parents and teachers. Maccoby & Jacklin consider several interpretations of this finding: perhaps adults deliver requests to girls with more assurance; or perhaps girls seek coalitions with adults in order to cope with the greater aggressiveness of boys. Interestingly, Draper finds it equally puzzling that girls in settled !Kung villages become the chief butt of their mothers’ demands for the performance of frequent small tasks such as pounding grain, child care, and fetching. She concludes that little girls are usually on the premises and easy targets for their mothers’ commands; little boys seem to be either gone from the village (on errands already described) or else visible but distant enough from the women so that their help cannot be enlisted conveniently (17, p. 102).

It is not clear from this description whether mothers single out their daughters for chores because they are conveniently close, or as Whiting & Edwards (88) suggest in relation to other cross-cultural data, whether they keep them close by so as to be able to recruit them as needed. But Draper’s (18) observations of differences between foraging !Kung boys and girls suggest to her the former interpretation. As noted earlier (section on Children’s Socialization), bush girls, although they are not sent on errands or set to do small chores, also stay closer to adults and interact with them more frequently than do boys. Because of girls’ proximity and their preference for adult company, adults may interrupt and redirect them more frequently, Draper argues, reinforcing their tendency to stay close by. Thus girls are predisposed to be “ready targets for heightened pressure for cooperation, errand running, and child
tending,” the need for which arises in sedentary !Kung villages and settled communities elsewhere. Task assignment, in turn, fosters compliance. Draper (18, p. 611) tenders a final speculation: “the notion that females are more sensitive to social cues and to the needs of others may have its origins in the restricted mobility and greater orientation to adults of females.”

Maccoby & Jacklin suggest:

Perhaps the traditional assignment of certain jobs to men and others to women has come about not so much because men are in jobs that call for aggressiveness as because women, being slower to anger, are less likely to protest onerous assignments. We have seen that girls are more likely than boys to comply with demands that adults make upon them; although it has not been demonstrated, it appears likely that in adulthood as well they will “take orders” from authority figures with less coercion. To put the matter bluntly, they are easier to exploit (47, p. 371).

What is perhaps unusual about this hypothesis is that it locates a cause of women’s “oppression” not in some objectionable quality of men—their aggressiveness, their competitiveness, their inability to enter into intimate, particularistic relationships, their unwillingness to participate in the domestic sphere—but rather, in a psychological trait of women themselves. Presently, the hypothesis is wholly untested.

CROSS-CULTURAL VARIABILITY IN WOMEN'S STATUS

Economic Variables

In the literature on women’s status, hunting-gathering groups in which women’s gathering supplies a substantial proportion of subsistence (25) have come to represent one end of a continuum, at which women’s status is as nearly equal to men’s as in any society in the world. Certainly this situation is related to the absence in such societies of well-defined male-held political offices, and the restraint frequently placed on any form of authority over others, political conditions which make it easier for women to participate in group decisions and to exercise individual autonomy (34, 38). Important also may be the fact that many hunter-gatherers seem to lack even an incipient division of men’s and women’s worlds into public and domestic domains (34). Draper (17) points out that, unlike sedentary !Kung, foraging Bushmen live under conditions which permit no distinction between the domestic and the public sphere. Camp inhabitants live in a wholly public world, sleeping and eating outside in a small circular clearing, within which all activities are visible and normal conversations audible. Women and men mix freely, and both are about equally absent from camp on foraging expeditions.

Thus while Rosaldo (68) discusses the division between public and domestic domains as a universal focus for the sexual division of labor, entailed by women’s role in child-bearing, nursing, and rearing, other writers have preferred to stress the particular economic conditions which enhance the “inside-outside dichotomy” (48, p. 290). Draper’s comparison between seminomadic and settled !Kung suggests to her that the dichotomy arises as a consequence of settlement. Permanent settlement leads to a much greater investment in habitations; and doors and encircling fences,
which create inner courtyards around the houses, are built to keep out unpenned domestic animals. Sedentism also invites the accumulation of possessions; and, as a result of the architectural changes, new differences in material wealth which would not be tolerated in the bush can be privatized in houses. Somehow, and Draper is not sure why, "men, more than women are defined as the managers or owners of the property" (17, p. 108); houses, goats, and children are referred to as belonging to adult males, and women are attached to men's households. Moreover, there is a growing disparity in the mobility of men and women. Men are more often away from home, caring for animals, clearing fields, working for wages, and interacting with Herero men. Women, in turn, are at home more than formerly. Their gathering activities curtailed, they spend much more time processing and preparing domesticated foods than was necessary for gathered foods. And the houses and possessions which come with the settled way of life require time-consuming upkeep.

Draper's account of changes in !Kung Bushman life does not contradict Martin's (48) thesis, that the sharpest isolation of women from public life arose with developed agriculture. Martin invokes some of the same changes, intensified under agriculture, which are incipient in the Bushman case. As Boserup (4, see also 25) has earlier pointed out, women play an important role in shifting cultivation; while men clear the land for planting, women are often the sole cultivators of the staple crops planted, and almost always share in their cultivation. "With the innovation and spread of intensive cultigative techniques, however, women dropped out of the mainstream of production for the first time in the history of cultural evolution" (48, p. 290). As Boserup has argued, weeding, a time-consuming female horticultural task, is reduced or eliminated by plowing. Plowing itself, as well as the construction and maintenance of irrigation works used in some systems of intensive agriculture, are men's work—presumably because of the demand for physical strength and perhaps also, as Brown has suggested (section on Women's Role in Childbearing and Childrearing), because of the interference with infant care which such labor entails. Thus women are excluded from agricultural labor in all but a minority of cases, notably East Asian paddy rice cultivation. The pattern observed by Boserup and Martin, women's high contribution to shifting cultivation and their low contribution to intensive agriculture, has been confirmed by Sanday (74) for a large cross-cultural sample.

Martin relates the sudden change in women's status which accompanies intensive cultivation to several concomitants of the new technology. The reduced need for female cultivative labor makes multiple wives an economic liability rather than an asset and renders the polygynous family obsolete. At the same time, the individualization of land tenure under intensive agriculture undermines the extended family, and the nuclear monogamy characteristic of newly emerged urban communities serves as a model, further encouraging the trend to nuclear families. In these small, self-sufficient units, women come to rely upon their husbands for subsistence. Women's labor, freed from cultivation, is absorbed by repetitive, monotonous tasks within the household, particularly food processing. Grain cultivation, and the storage of grain necessitated by the reduced mobility and limited growing season of agriculturalists, require hulling, washing, winnowing, and pounding into flour.
Their new economic role effectively isolates women from men and from public life. As Boserup (4) notes, the Islamic segregation of women is particularly compatible with such an economic arrangement, but certainly non-Islamic groups such as the southern French farming community described by Reiter (63) exhibit the same pattern. Martin speculates that this isolation and segregation of women in the domestic sphere insures their immobility and their exclusion from male activities, including politics, and keeps them in permanent adolescence. They remain minors who have no legal rights, whose sexual behavior must be closely circumscribed, who must be protected and supervised by men, and who owe these men, including their own grown sons, deference and submissiveness. This complex of customs spelling their immaturity arises from the fact that women have no direct access to the public sphere but must rely on men to mediate their social, legal, and economic affairs.

While Martin argues that the domestic isolation of women in industrial societies is a survival of the economic definition of sex roles arising from the practice of developed agriculture, others have held that this modern pattern of isolation is a direct outgrowth of new political conditions. Reiter (63), for example, implicates the rise of states, which subsume authority over legal matters, property, and labor power (e.g. conscription for public labor and war, taxation) formerly under the control of kin groups. In a similar argument, Sacks (72) emphasizes that the emergence of states represents the rise of class societies. In such societies the ruling class not only takes over functions formerly belonging to kin groups, but does so with the end of expropriating for rulers the surplus labor and goods which were formerly redistributed to the many. As men’s labor is more intensively utilized in the public domain, all of the tasks related to household production are relegated to women (63). The function of kinship shrinks to that of reproducing and sustaining labor power; and these become defined as private matters. Reiter argues that the low status of women in state societies derives from the fact that the performance of these activities, unlike that of public ones, goes unrewarded by power and prestige. Sacks, like Martin, stresses that women are no longer even awarded adult status.

Sacks distinguishes between women’s domestic status and their extradomestic status in society. But state societies so fully curtail women’s adult status by excluding them from public production as to limit their power with regard to their husbands as well as their extradomestic power. An exception is the instance of precapitalist states in India, in which women did participate in public labor and, while suffering economic inequalities, did enjoy adult status. In prestate societies, Sack’s examination of four African groups argues, women’s public and domestic statuses are freer to vary independently, high domestic status depending primarily on the absence of private estates or the joint ownership of the estate by both spouses, and high public status depending upon women’s participation in the productive activities which confer public power and prestige on society members.

Compatible as is Sacks’s argument for the independence of women’s social and domestic statuses with the position taken in this review, the ethnographic indices which she selects to measure these respective statuses seem ill chosen. She includes the freedom of women to enter into extramarital sex relations, to initiate divorce, and to seek extradomestic dispute settlement as measures of their public status,
while treating a seemingly similar right to their own fertility (as reflected in the absence of any customary compensation for women's adultery) as an index of women's domestic status. Surely a double standard with regard to divorce and extramarital sex, just as much as a double standard with regard to adultery compensation, may be reflective of an unequal domestic power relationship. Again, Sacks (72, p. 226) uses the presence of menstrual and pregnancy restrictions as measures of women's domestic status, arguing that such taboos "seem to operate to separate women's reproductive functions from contact with the social production of exchange goods." Schlegel (76), for a much larger sample of (matrilineal) societies, found menstrual taboos to be unrelated to male domestic authority over women. Schlegel concludes that menstrual restrictions reflect something about women's extradomestic status, reaching the same conclusion as Sacks regarding the independence of women's statuses in these two domains, but differing as to which domain menstrual taboos should be assigned.

Why, Sacks and Reiter ask, do the activities of the domestic, private economy fall upon women in state societies? One answer seems to be that the earliest state projects are likely to be massive construction works and military expeditions, pursuits to which men are physically more suited, just as they are suited to large game hunting (63). Also, men are favored for public labor because they are more mobile, and can be more intensively exploited than women, who must interrupt their work to bear and nurse children. Sacks cites the historical example of seventeenth-century England, where women and children were deliberately excluded from wage work by employers under conditions of extreme oversupply of labor from the ranks of landless peasantry.

Reiter feels that industrial capitalism, with its ideology of the sanctity of the nuclear family and its radical separation of home and work place, further intensified the distinction between private and public domains. Zaretsky (91) develops this theme at length, arguing that by the nineteenth century the family under Western industrial capitalism, its productive functions attenuated and its reproductive role in the economy obscured, became a repository of emotional life and a bastion against the impersonality of large-scale industry and technology. Women, increasingly excluded from wage-labor, became identified with the home and with emotional life. By the time women reentered the labor force in large numbers, they were at a permanent disadvantage. Unemployment and underemployment had become structural features of capitalism, and the idea that women's real place was in the home helped define them as a marginal labor force. Sacks (72) similarly stresses the interaction of ideology and economic conditions in women's exploitation as a source of cheap labor.

Just as Sacks takes issue with Engels's notion that it is property ownership alone which determines women's status, so other writers (25, 74, 75) have argued with the assumption that participation in production is the key to this status. Once again, hunting-gathering groups, appealing because of their relative economic simplicity, have been used as a model. Friedl (25) and Rosaldo (68) point out that, despite the considerable importance of gathering, which may equal or outweigh that of hunting in the subsistence of such groups, it is hunting which confers power and prestige.
Friedl argues that this difference arises from the fact that large game, unlike vegetable food and small animals, is shared extradomestically. She attributes the extradomestic distribution of meat to its value as a scarce good; but surely also the size of individual kills and the threat of spoilage make their immediate distribution economically practical. Plant foods are regularly available and may be gathered in small quantities as needed. Friedl (25, pp. 21-22) claims that, because of the distribution of meat, “men have a larger circle of people with whom reciprocal relations exist. This is a major source of difference in the power of men and women.” Those who distribute meat are highly valued, and generous givers are accorded honor and prestige. Further, such men “bind others to repay them and thereby exercise a kind of superior power as creditors until the return transaction takes place.” Compared to the successful hunter, the most skillful gatherer and forceful personality among women has limited resources to parlay into recognition and debt. This difference explains any disparity between the sexes in the leadership of hunting-gathering bands.

Control over the production of subsistence foods, however narrowly they may be distributed, is not entirely irrelevant to the status women attain, however. Draper (17) comments that one factor contributing to the sexual egalitarianism of foraging !Kung, reflected in women’s autonomy and their participation in group decisions, is the fact that these women do not need the assistance of men at any stage in the production of gathered foods, nor the permission of men to use any natural resources entering into this production. Friedl (25, p. 19) likewise points out that male dominance is greatest in hunting societies like the Eskimo, in which hunting is the sole source of food. Women’s contribution to subsistence, in such groups, is limited to the processing of meat and skins, a role similar to the food processing role of women in developed agricultural societies; “a woman cannot initiate activities which independently provide her and her children with the staples of a livelihood.” This is true even though, as Briggs (6) stresses, men recognize women’s contribution as seamstresses and processors as vital to their own hunting success.

Among Eskimos, male dominance seems to consist in sexual aggression against women, the right of husbands to exchange sexual access to their wives, to beat them, to make travel and domestic decisions, and to veto women’s plans, although women retain the freedom to initiate sexual encounters (though not always to repulse sexual advances), to leave their husbands, and to elect to stay behind when their husbands travel (25). Friedl does comment on two other features of Eskimo life which may have independent effect on the degree to which men dominate women: the importance of male competitive achievement, in which skill at obtaining sexual access to women is an element; and the social isolation of women, due to their food processing roles. The possible effects of female domestic isolation on licensed male aggressiveness, female submissiveness, and female exclusion from public activities have already been touched upon in this review; the effects of male competitiveness, in societies which give rein to this behavior, will be discussed below. The particular fate of Eskimo women may be a complex outcome of these several factors, not attributable solely to their role in production.
Friedl (25, pp. 8–9) comments that “those who work to produce goods have a greater chance to be assigned the control of distributing them, but do not automatically gain the right to do so.” More particularly, Sanday (74) has drawn attention to an intriguing curvilinear relationship between women's participation in production and their status. As measures of women's status in a pilot sample of 12 societies Sanday selected four indicators, which could be arranged in a Guttman scale: (a) female control over produce; (b) external or internal demand or value placed on female produce; (c) female participation in at least some political activities; and (d) female solidarity groups devoted to political or economic interests. The scale suggested to Sanday that their ownership or control of strategic resources is a precondition to women's political power, a thesis developed in detail by Brown (7) to account for the striking political influence of women in one of Sanday's sample societies, the Iroquois.

Sanday found that in societies in which women's productive activities account for less that 30% of subsistence, women have predictably low status. Women's status is highest in those societies in which the sexual division of labor is fairly evenly balanced. Less accountably, women have low status in three societies in which they contribute predominantly to subsistence activities—Tikopia (75%), Azande (59%), and Somali (45%). In all these groups, women's efforts are confined to production of goods with low prestige and market value; men produce highly valued goods. Additionally, among the Azande and Somali, women are alienated from what they produce; they are, effectively, slave labor. Thus Sanday concludes, with Friedl, that their contribution to production is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the improvement of women's status.

Sanday (75, pp. 194–95) argues that “initially female energy is concentrated in the reproductive and childrearing sphere, whereas male energy is concentrated mainly in the subsistence sphere,” and men's resultant control over strategic resources confers on them political as well as economic advantage. It is only later, with the increased threat of human predation, that men move out of the subsistence sphere and into the defense sphere. Under conditions of prolonged warfare, women displace men in some subsistence activities, leading to a balanced division of labor and women's high public status. Sanday draws on a study by Ember & Ember (20) to document the relationship between men's involvement in warfare-related activities and women's greater participation in production. [As Friedl (25) has noted, endemic raiding may have an opposite effect, excluding women from cultivation altogether because of the danger of their working unprotected in the fields.] Sanday points out that other conditions, such as the long-distance sea trade of Pacific Islanders noted by Ember & Ember, require prolonged male absence and open the way for increased female participation in subsistence activities. Again, the Iroquois provide an example: not only were Iroquois men away at distant wars for years at a time (7); they also left home so often on hunting and trading expeditions and diplomatic missions, that Wallace (85, p. 369) was led to characterize them thus: “The Iroquois population was, in effect, divided into two parts: sedentary females and nomadic males.” While men were in charge of preparing the fields, women...
carried out all the remaining agricultural activities. Sanday cites a further study by LeVine (41) which documents the relegation of traditionally male tasks to women and children due to the prolonged absences of migrant laborers under colonial rule in many parts of Africa. As LeVine’s discussion of Gusii women illustrates, male absence need not result immediately in improvement of women’s economic and political position. Gusii men retain their traditional rights over land and livestock, as well as control over cash income from their migratory employment and the sale of cash crops. On the other hand, women must work exceptionally hard because they have taken over additional tasks formerly done by men.

While Sanday is undoubtedly correct in treating prolonged male absence as an independent variable increasing women’s participation in subsistence, she is unjustified in assuming that, prior to the emergence of warfare and other activities requiring male absence, men preempted the subsistence sphere. This assumption is at odds with Draper’s and Friedl’s picture of hunter-gatherers. Women in many foraging societies carry out vital subsistence activities compatible with their reproductive role; they may provide over half of the food eaten; and the economies of these societies seem to revolve around a sexual division of productive labor, rather than a division between male production and female reproduction. Friedl’s (25) carefully reasoned argument (section on Women’s Role in Childbearing and Childrearing) suggests why the division of labor between male hunting and female gathering is adaptive.

Sanday’s sample societies are suggestive of factors other than male absence which facilitate female political participation. Of the three societies having both female political participation and female solidarity groups, Sanday notes that women’s political position among the Iroquois seems to have been strengthened by men’s prolonged absences; among the Yoruba by women’s participation in long-distance trade and the resultant trade guilds in which female leadership was based; and among the Samoans, whose women did not hold political power traditionally, by women’s movements growing out of European contact. The effect of trading, in particular, has been noted by several other writers. While trading does not always result in women’s trade guilds and their entry into politics, it does consistently give women an unusual degree of economic autonomy—control not only of their own produce but of their own capital; and where warring is not endemic (75), great freedom of movement. As Friedl argues:

The independence from male control of a woman’s trading activities is probably to be accounted for by the need for her working decisions about prices, quantities to buy or sell, and the like to be made right at the market place or on the way to it, where there is no opportunity to consult with a husband or other male relatives (25, p. 64).

The capability of supporting themselves through trade may also give women domestic equality vis-a-vis their husbands, as resulted in the Afikpo Ibo case (61). However, side by side with women’s involvement in trade may persist men’s traditional involvement in the production and exchange of prestige goods. Afikpo Ibo men grew yams for ceremonial exchange, and rejected the cultivation of the introduced cash crop, cassava, as beneath them (51). Production and marketing of cassava gave Ibo
women a new-found economic freedom. While Mintz ties the failure of these women to achieve greater economic mobility to the relatively small-scale, short-range and part-time nature of their cassava marketing, and the low capital accumulation resulting from this activity, there is no reason to believe that marketing of any scale would have secured women entry into the traditional sphere of male prestige exchange. Economic independence of the sort women are able to derive from trading, and the prestige which they may be denied by their exclusion from ceremonial exchange activities, independently influence women's position.

The indispensability of female labor, the unavailability of male labor due to male absence, and the economic independence of women through trade may combine to explain cases in which women control their own production, and to set the stage for political participation as well. But Sanday is understandably puzzled over the cases in which the disparity between women's heavy contribution to production, and their lack of economic control and low political status, is wide. She proposes (75, p. 200) that in these societies women's disproportionate contribution to production does not accord them power in relation to men because women are, or were at some time, "far more dependent on men to meet nonsubsistence survival needs than men are on women to meet subsistence needs." One such critical need men fulfill, Sanday suggests, is defense. She leaves to the imagination how one function strategic to the survival of a society becomes established, and accepted by both sexes, as more critical than other strategic functions. As Gonzalez (26, p. 44) comments, Sanday's argument

misses the point that lives themselves may be strategic resources, especially in societies where population size itself is a crucial variable in determining survival for the entire group. Why, then, should women not have achieved a more prominent position as a result of their control in this domain?

Divale & Harris (16) provide a more detailed and complex scenario for the association between warfare and women's status. They suggest that "the number of males available may become the most critical factor determining the survivability of the entire population" (30, p. 268). This situation arises not because of the strategic role of men in defense itself (the argument admits that "in an energy-cost sense, women are almost universally a better energy bargain than men"), but because warfare in band and village societies supports a "male supremacist complex" which provides ideological justification for the practice of female infanticide, in turn critical to population control in the absence of modern contraception. Female infanticide is argued to be more economical than the death of adult women due to induced abortion, although the economic costs of raising men to die in war are not added into this equation; and both the disposal of females as infants and, more questionably, the death of adult men in battle (because such deaths can be blamed on outsiders) are held to be less costly emotionally than the death of adult women from abortion.

Warfare is argued, by a dubious chain of inference, to support a dazzling array of customs composing the "male supremacist complex" in band and village societies. These customs in turn, by reinforcing the low valuation of women, sustain the
practice of female infanticide. Women are excluded from military training and possession of military weapons so that they can be reared to be passive, so that they will submit to decisions concerning the allocation of their sexual, productive, and reproductive services, so that sex can be used as the principal reinforcement for male military bravery. Divale & Harris consider that deprivation of food and shelter, which would impair warriors' physical fitness, are the only alternatives to sexual deprivation which would induce men to risk their lives in war. Polygyny is said to function as a reward for military prowess, and to intensify the shortage of females and reinforce such prowess, encouraging combat for the sake of wife capture. Supernatural ceremonial activities assist in rearing passive and submissive females. Patrilocality, patrilineality, male control over property, and the survival of male dominance in matrilocal, matrilineal societies are due to the solidarity of males with a joint interest in defense. Other practices which flow from this configuration are brideprice, male monopoly over hunting and weaponry, assignment of women to drudgery work (an example of which is carrying infants), exclusion of women from headmanship and "big-man" status, and ideologies and rituals emphasizing the inferiority of women, including the beliefs that women are ritually unclean, menstrual blood is polluting, and female witches are more evil than their male counterparts, and the facts that supreme gods and legendary heroes greatly outnumber goddesses and heroines, men keep sacred items with which to menace women and children in men's houses, and widows are sent to the grave with their husbands. The Divale-Harris hypothesis, then, stands as a supreme example of a "key" theory, explaining all manifestations of women's low status across a wide range of societies. Indeed, these authors seem to regard its parsimony as one of the chief attractions of the theory. It must also be evaluated, however, both in terms of the inferences which its own internal logic requires, and in terms of the position taken in this review: that some of the ethnographic picture relied on by Divale & Harris is biased; many of the customs they cite are distributed independently across societies; these customs have widely different effects on the position of women and do not all spell women's devaluation; and convincing alternative hypotheses have been separately argued for many of the same customs.

Sanday (75, p. 200) speculates that even when warfare ceases and men's crucial role in defense is ended, they are able to retain their power advantage by instituting "expressive or actual mechanisms . . . to perpetuate female dependency." Women may be kept in a subordinate position by force or threat of force, or alternatively, by use of ideological devices, an example of which is the belief in romantic love. A similar notion of how ideology may be used to perpetuate female inferiority is developed by O'Laughlin (59), in a study of Kpau Mbum food prohibitions. The economic subordination of Mbum women is not explicable in terms of the division of labor, for the contributions of the two sexes to production are fairly equal. Yet female subordination is reflected in the organization of production—in predominantly male ownership of tools and breeding animals; greater male opportunities to inherit property and recruit surplus labor; and senior male authority over the distribution of grain, the cash revenues of household members, and the allocation of both household and recruited labor. O'Laughlin suggests that senior males main-
tain their advantage by controlling the various forces of production. They accumulate surplus, control over which is expressed by their consumption of beer, porridge, chicken, and goats, the prestige foods, and with this surplus they are able to trade for iron tools and to maintain a stock of seed grain. Male elders also have authority over the reproductive rights of female lineage members, and hence control over the labor force, the scarcest factor in Mbum production and the primary means of intensifying production. Senior males depend upon ideology to bolster their position. One such ideological elaboration of male dominance is the prohibition on female consumption of goats and chickens, a taboo which metaphorically equates women to other domesticated animals kept for breeding and exchange.

O’Laughlin explicitly disclaims the argument that ideological devices, such as the Mbum prohibition against women eating chicken, by themselves explain female subordination. Rather, she feels, the origin of women’s subordination defies historical reconstruction; ideological mediation of contradiction is interdependent with the system of social relations itself—"power breeds power"—in maintaining this subordination once established. O’Laughlin thereby circumvents the most interesting and difficult question about the Mbum and similar societies in which women have an important subsistence role but a subordinate position.

What may be distinctive about such societies is that they feature pronounced male prestige-seeking activities. Competition for prestige involves men in the exchange of prestige goods; women are often excluded from the production (25,75) and always from the exchange of these goods. Typically, ceremonial exchange occupies a considerable amount of men’s time and women’s labor frees men for this activity (81). The suitability of women for almost all horticultural labor, and the slight demands on men’s labor in many horticultural economies, allow the latter an unusual amount of leisure time for pursuit of prestige (35). Mount Hagen women, for instance, cultivate vegetables for subsistence and also raise the pigs which men distribute to gain “big-man” status (81). Notably, these women retain the exclusive right to harvest and allocate their own subsistence produce; it is only the prestige goods they produce which men control. Subsistence goods have low value in comparison with prestige goods, and women’s role as producers of prestige goods is devalued in contrast to the role of men as transactors. Thus the variables which Sanday treats as measures of women’s low status in such societies—their alienation from control of their own production and the relatively low prestige value assigned to this production—can be viewed, along with women’s predominant role in subsistence, as a complex of outcomes arising from men’s prestige-seeking activities.

Some writers on women’s status have speculated about the conditions which foster or discourage competition for prestige among men. Draper (17), for instance, has suggested that the efforts of !Kung men to gain prestige through property accumulation are constrained, not only by the limits on accumulation imposed by the seminomadic life, but also by the social pressure for distribution of whatever belongings people do accumulate, because of the visibility of property. Leacock (38) has argued that among the Naskapi, the economic interdependence of the group enforces cooperation, sharing, and collective ownership. The Eskimo example suggests, however, that the noncompetitiveness of Kung foragers and aboriginal Nas-
kapi trappers is not characteristic of all hunting men. At the other end of a continuum, the emergence of hereditary office or class stratification may stifle male competition for prestige. Friedl (25) observes of egalitarian horticultural societies that distribution validates the right to prestige and rank, while in nonegalitarian horticultural groups, distribution is an entitlement of rank, which is validated on other grounds.

The residual question, and one which remains among the most puzzling in the literature, is why women are excluded from institutionalized competition for prestige whenever such institutions arise. If, as Friedl (25, p. 61) argues for hunter-gatherers, “rights of distribution and the control of channels of distribution of goods and services, rather than rights of control over production, are the critical elements for the understanding of differences in power between the sexes,” it is unclear how men gain control of distribution in egalitarian horticultural societies. Among hunter-gatherers the distribution of the meat they hunt is said to give men an advantage in prestige and power over a larger circle of people. But a similar argument does not hold for horticulturalists, among whom men and women participate in different stages of production of the same foods (25).

Perhaps women are not so much forcibly excluded from prestige activities, as comparatively disinterested in pursuing them. Several ethnographic descriptions (6, 55, 81) suggest that while women may resent men’s exemption from domestic drudgery and envy men’s physical freedom or their involvement in exciting activities, they do not envy them their prestige. It seems reasonable that the differing socialization experiences of the sexes might lead them to have unequal interest in prestige-seeking. This difference might rest on Chodorow’s assertion (section on Children’s Socialization) that their socialization by women and their consequent struggle to achieve manhood causes boys to be more achievement-oriented and competitive, or it might be explained by the more direct effect of task performance in preparation for the adult male role (section on Men’s Greater Aggressiveness). While boys receive more achievement training than girls in most societies, this difference is most pronounced in societies subsisting predominantly by large game hunting and fishing. Barry, Child & Bacon (3) go on to speculate, although not to test the relationship, that adult male participation in warfare will have an effect on boys’ training similar to that of hunting and fishing. The competitiveness and drive to excel which boys learn in the course of such training may exhibit itself in prestige activities, in societies where a male prestige sphere is compatible with other features of the economic and political system discussed above. Research is needed to untangle these variables and test for relationships among them.

Women’s greater compliance and willingness to take orders from those in authority (section on Women’s Compliance) may contribute to the maintenance of male prestige activities. Strathern (81, p. 146) says of Mount Hagen women that they “accept, and do not denigrate, the ethos of exchange,” accept their domestic, nonpolitical roles, and agree that men’s strength gives them a prerogative over speech-making and fighting.

An important consequence of men’s exclusive participation in competition for prestige and rank in egalitarian societies may be men’s assumption of political
authority as such societies become less egalitarian and more class-stratified. While, as Friedl (25) points out, women do have access to political office by hereditary principles, those women who gain office by such means are always in a small minority (68). It may be that their occupancy of “big-man” status makes men the natural heirs to chieftainship, and helps to explain the monopoly men hold over formal political office.

**Social Structural Variables**

In some societies, competition between males for prestige is tied to marriage; women are not only excluded from seeking prestige but are themselves objects of men’s exchange and subject to men’s disposal. They may, as among the Hageners, create avenues for ceremonial exchange. Or they may themselves be valuables, either producers of prestige goods which men require to enter competition, or exchangeable for some such goods. The study of societies in which marriage exchange is linked to male competition for prestige has led some writers to confound the effects, on women’s status, of these two practices. But marriage exchange is also practiced in societies in which institutionalized competition for prestige is absent. Marriage is important in many societies as a means of alliance between households or descent groups to keep the peace or insure military support in case of war; to enable cooperative endeavors requiring pooled labor or other resources; or simply to provide a reliable source of future mates. Since it is such a multipurpose institution, marriage alliance is widely distributed among human societies, and has some distinctive and broadly similar effects on the position of women who are so exchanged.

To some degree the autonomy of women who circulate in marriage exchange is necessarily curtailed, it has been argued that such women “do not have full rights in themselves” (71, p. 177). Most obviously, exchanged women are said to lose autonomy with respect to selection of their marriage partners, although this claim needs qualification. Young men in such societies may suffer a similar loss of choice, and Strathern’s (81) description suggests that young Mount Hagen grooms find their lot more difficult to bear than brides do theirs. Also, as Strathern shows by comparison of several highlands New Guinea groups, the degree to which women exercise choice of spouse in such systems may vary widely. Mount Hagen women can successfully resist particular selections made for them in favor of others, and can divorce early in the course of an unhappy marriage, because the ceremonial exchange which depends upon marital links is initiated after a marriage has proven stable. By contrast, Kuma marriage is strictly reciprocal between clans, so that any particular marriage is critical to the ongoing network of exchanges between men. A woman cannot object to the marriage planned for her, nor can she later appeal to her kin to support her divorce. Mount Hagen women, though, lose their options as their marriages mature; male kin may not back them in divorce if this would require the return of bridewealth which has already been distributed in ceremonial exchange; alternatively kin may encourage divorce if bridewealth payments are outstanding (71, 81). Depending upon the importance of the alliances their marriages establish, women may not only be encouraged, humored, and cajoled into entering into and staying in the marriages arranged for them; they may also be
beaten and returned to their husbands, denied refuge by their kin (81), or even killed for their recalcitrance (78); alternatively, divorce may be quite easy (38). Divorced and widowed women may gain choice over whom they will remarry, although their loss of value for alliance making or bridewealth exchange may reduce their prestige and their attractiveness as marriage partners. And, as among the Nuer (73), marriages involving large bridewealth payments and committing brides to the legal jurisdiction of their husbands' kin groups may comprise a small minority of unions.

Rubin (71, p. 182) suggests that not only women's marital choice but their sexual freedom will be constrained in societies in which marriage exchange is practiced. Such a system would operate most smoothly "if the woman in question did not have too many ideas of her own about whom she might want to sleep with." Hence female sexuality in such societies is responsive rather than assertive; in this respect, societies in which marriage exchange is practiced resemble societies in which women's domestic segregation is marked. As Rubin points out, however, considerable variation with regard to women's sexual freedom may coexist with marriage exchange. Strathern (81, pp. 277, 299) cites the example of Kuma girls, whose desirability confers prestige on their sexual partners, and who enjoy courting parties and "take the initiative in sexual adventures." After their marriage, "men cannot afford their wives to be sexually desired valuables"; out of fear that they will persist in sexual adventuring, married women are proscribed from conversing with other men out of their husbands' presences. This drastic reduction in women's autonomy accounts for Kuma emphasis on the traumatic change of status which women suffer at marriage.

Although Rubin (71, p. 175) argues for marriage exchange as the "ultimate locus of women's oppression," other writers have emphasized that women in societies which practice marriage exchange are not particularly oppressed in other areas of their lives. Their role in carrying out subsistence activities may be unaffected, along with the community respect and domestic equality which this contribution earns them. They may have important rituals of their own (67). As Strathern (81) details for the Hageners, women take pride in their own work and in their reputations for industriousness and generosity, and their reputations as "important women" are based on these qualities as well as on the contributions they make to their husbands' successes in ceremonial exchange. Additionally, marriage exchange itself provides women with certain opportunities. Older women may take part in arranging marriages, setting up exchanges for their children (23, 27, 67) or influencing their daughters (11, 81). D'Andrade (14) has noted that systems in which a man marries his mother's brother's daughter, such as those of the Lovedu and the Tschambuli, may give women an advantage in negotiating marriages, and co-wives who are clan sisters a basis for banding together in coalitions against their husbands. Women also gain a kind of prestige by being valuable scarce goods and repositories of their families' prestige (84). And, by cooperating in marriage exchanges, women indent, and thus gain power over, the men who give them away (84). They may threaten to leave their husbands in order to exact concessions from their kin. Thus marriage exchange, like other institutions, has specific and limited effects, not always negative, on women's status.
The marriage practice of polygyny has been said to have effects on the status of women. D'Andrade (14) cites findings that polygyny is associated with sexual restrictiveness, particularly with respect to women. The reason for this association is not obvious; perhaps their sexual restriction is a response to the relative scarcity of women which polygyny creates. Both D'Andrade and Schlegel (76) assume that sororal polygyny will enhance female autonomy because sisters can present a united front to their common husband; but Schlegel considers that jealousy is likely to arise between co-wives who are not sisters. She finds (76, p. 96) that in those matrilineal societies in which nonsororal polygyny is practiced, co-wife jealousy is significantly associated with a pattern in which their husbands have exclusive authority over women, and she concludes that “dependence of the wife upon the husband is a corollary of husband authority over the wife, so that competition threatens the wife's security with this authority pattern more than it does with other patterns.” Martin (48) considers that co-wives who are not sisters will always be competitors for the economic resources of their husbands; Leis (40) argues that it is the economics of resource division which determines whether such competition will arise. In a controlled comparison of two Ijaw villages in the Niger Delta, Leis contrasts the situation of co-wives in Patani, the northern village, who farm the land of their husband's patrilineage, with that of co-wives in Korokorosei who acquire land from their respective mothers. Because the former receive equal shares of land, they are not in competition for their husband's financial assistance; the latter may have access to widely different amounts of land, and poorer women have to approach their husbands individually for help. Indicatively, Patani co-wives cook for their husband as a group, taking turns, while Korokorosei women cook individually; and Patani wives, unlike those of Korokorosei, sometimes join forces to register a common complaint against their husband. Clignet (12; see also 34) adds that polygynous wives will always have somewhat reduced domestic power over their husbands, compared to a monogamous wife, whose individual contribution to her husband is greater; in wholly monogamous societies, married men have no access to alternative sources of reward. On the other hand, a rate of polygyny which keeps wives in short supply may give women power over their husbands, especially if men are highly desirous of being polygynists (58).

Anthropologists have long noted that descent seems to have an independent effect on women's status, which is noticeably higher in matrilineal societies. For example, Martin (48, p. 224–25), discussing horticulturalists, who are distinguished by an unusually high frequency of matriliney, states that “whereas the position of females is quite variable in patrilineal societies, it is almost universally high in matrilineal ones.” She considers that this is so because women in matrilineal systems are the “focus of the entire social structure,” links through females channeling resource allocation and defining political and social relationships. The women who occupy these linking positions therefore wield considerable decision-making influence. Martin offers the Iroquois as an example. As noted (section on Economic Variables), others have identified prolonged male absence and women's consequent role in production and control of food as the key to Iroquois women's exceptional political influence. Martin (48, p. 226) argues that matriliney was a critical ingredient, since
“a frequent accompaniment of matriliney—the manipulation of access rights to seeds and to arable land by matrilineal descent groups themselves—gave Iroquois women exclusive control over the production and storage of food. They were not only the primary producers, but collectively owned the means of production as well.” However, others have emphasized that the Iroquois are unusual among matrilineal peoples. Friedl (25) stresses that in most matrilineal societies it is the men tracing descent through women who allocate land and oversee political and ritual affairs. The structural position of women in matrilineal descent groups, while facilitating the kind of economic control and political influence Iroquois women exercise, does not insure it.

Schlegel (76) has emphasized as well that matrilineal societies vary with regard to the domestic autonomy women possess. She found that in sample matrilineal societies in which domestic authority over women is divided between their brothers and their husbands, less overall authority is exercised over these women than in matrilineal societies in which either husband or brother has exclusive authority. Groups in which authority over women is divided are less likely to permit husbands to beat their wives and less likely to entitle brothers to threaten or punish their adult married sisters. Nonsororal polygyny, the form most divisive of co-wife solidarity, is unlikely to be practiced. The males in authority are less likely to punish women for adultery, and husbands are less likely to have the right to dispose of their wives’ sexuality. Males do not have exclusive control of domestic property. On the other hand, divided authority over women does not correlate with some measures of female autonomy located outside the domestic sphere—the right of women to share important male-held positions outside the home, and the observation of menstrual restrictions. Thus Schlegel provides a demonstration, rare in the literature, of the independence of two aspects of women’s status. Schlegel (76, p. 135) interprets her findings to mean that in matrilineal societies, and presumably in other societies as well, “domestic power declines as it disperses.” Apparently it is more difficult for the men involved to exercise their share of authority when this authority is divided between them, but Schlegel does not hazard a guess about the interactional process. Are rights over women in such societies simply less important, and therefore unassigned? Or does each man encounter resistance from the other in attempting to exercise his authority over the woman in whom they both have rights? Something like the latter seems to take place among the Tiwi (27), for instance, among whom a husband must refrain from beating his wife too severely or too often lest her kinsmen, who are still considered her “boss,” should come and take her away from him.

Schlegel also sheds light on the conditions under which women may owe deference to men. The distribution of women’s deference to their husbands or brothers in matrilineal societies closely matches the distribution of tolerated force, either physical aggression by husbands or the right of brothers to use punishment and threat, which these men may exercise over them. Deference behavior in this context may constitute a culturally instituted strategy available to women for avoiding or minimizing aggressive behavior aimed at them.

The husband authority pattern in matrilineal societies, and the dependency of wives on their husbands which this pattern implies,
casts doubt upon the widely held notion that the woman in matrilineal societies, because she is a central figure in her descent group, is relatively independent of her husband. What these findings suggest is that the critical factor is not the descent system per se but rather the organization of the domestic group (76, p. 96).

Schlegel concedes that husband authority may be comparatively less severe in matrilineal than in nonmatrilineal societies, though this comparison awaits further investigation.

Critical to the domestic position women occupy in matrilineal groups is the frequently associated practice of matrilocal residence. Friedl (25) contrasts the differing consequences of matrilineal descent with matrilocal residence, and patrilineal descent with virilocality. Under the former arrangement, the inmarrying husband is confronted with a lifelong domestic coalition between his wife and her mother and sisters, and broader kin relations which commit his wife's primary loyalty to her brothers and their matrilineage. Women in patrilineal, virilocal societies, residing with their husbands' kin, are unlikely to have their own patrilineal relatives nearby to support them in times of stress. Such a woman must face the loneliness of a new life among strangers and the scrutiny of her husband's relatives who are waiting to see whether or not she is hardworking and fertile.

In matrilocal households, Friedl continues, strains are slight; what strains are inherent in relationships between affines involve people living apart. Coresident women of a matriline have little basis for quarreling among themselves, unlike coresident males of a patriline and their unrelated wives who frequently quarrel over male-held patrilineal resources. The relations between the spouses themselves are less tense than in patrilineal societies, because unions are of less practical importance to the relatives of the couple. In patrilineal, virilocal groups, the strains between husband and wife may be further intensified when an older woman attempts to align her son against her husband and the other members of his descent group. And in these societies, women are likely to be considered kinds of property: wives work their husbands' land, bear the progeny of their husbands' descent groups, and may also marry in exchange for brideprice. In contrast, women have a greater opportunity, in matrilineal, matrilocal societies, for domestic equality. In case of divorce, a matrilocally resident woman need not shift households, nor find kin willing to take her back. However, Schlegel's findings (76) caution that matrilocality does not ensure women's domestic autonomy; while matrilocal societies rarely exhibit a pattern of husband authority and frequently exhibit one of divided authority, almost as frequently as Schlegel's sample of matrilineal societies, their brothers exercise exclusive authority over matrilocally resident women.

Matrilocal residence has extradomestic implications as well. Martin (48, p. 229) emphasizes that much of the influence of Iroquois women both within and without the longhouse derived not from their role as food producers alone, but from the additional fact that "related women remained together throughout life, forming tightly knit residential as well as social units." Related women of the same longhouse formed collective work groups and collective distribution groups, these latter being the means by which women asserted their control over food production and storage and its allocation to men and children. As Brown's (7) account makes clear, the
group of women coresident in a longhouse, supervised by its elder matrons, were in a position to dispense or withhold daily meals, to evict inmarrying husbands and break up their marriages, and by withholding provisions, to hinder mens' organization of hunts and war parties. Brown sees this economic control as the key to Iroquois women's broad political power and influence. Thus, as Martin concludes, it is local group formation rather than descent group structure which determines women's economic control.

Matrilocality, among all types of residence associated with systems of descent, perpetuates the coresidence of related women after marriage. Matrilocality may facilitate the solidarity and influence of women even in the rare case where it is coupled with patrilineal descent (55). By contrast, the avunculate, where it is practiced in matrilineal societies, like virilocality in patrilineal ones, disperses related women and keeps together related men whose wives are outsiders to the residential group and strangers to one another (48). Martin also points out that matrilocality disperses related males, denying them a geographic basis for grouping. Also, she notes, if matrilocally polygynous is practiced it is likely to be sororal, a type favoring the formation of domestic coalitions among co-wives (this section).

Thus it would seem that while men are enabled to commit aggression against isolated women, women acting in groups are enabled to gain both domestic control and extradomestic political influence over men. D'Andrade (14) has pointed out the rarity across societies of matrilocally residence. The infrequency with which patterns of residence group together related women and disperse related men, rather than the other way around, helps to explain why the degree of political influence exercised by Iroquois women is characteristic of few societies.

Common interests among coresident women may foster women's solidarity, and their consequent political influence, even when they are not living matrilocally. In her comparison of two Ijaw villages, Leis (40) identifies the factors which account for the presence of strong women's associations only in the northern village, Patani. In both villages, virilocally married women are strangers to one another and to the community, and the only people with whom they have something in common are other inmarrying women. A similar argument is made by Wolf (90) to explain the strength of women's friendship ties in a Taiwanese community. But Patani women farm the land of their husband's patrilineage, and the authority of the patrilineage over all the women and children of a residence group provides a further basis for common interests. At the same time, Patani men spend their lives with their own kinsmen in the same village, a situation which encourages them to give their undiluted loyalty to their lineage group. In the other Ijaw village of Korokorosei, women are less integrated into their residence groups because their own farmland and that which their children will inherit lies elsewhere, encouraging them to maintain kin ties in other groups. Men continue close relationships with their matrikin and with their fathers, so that both sexes have diffuse kinship loyalties. Unlike Patani women, those of Korokorosei do not relate to the men of the village as a group, and do not orient themselves primarily toward one another. Other differences between women in the two communities rest in the relationships between co-wives (this section) and the commercial opportunities open to women. Patani
women enter into marketing and trading, the income from which allows them, like Yoruba women, the domestic autonomy to join in activities and groups on their own without the permission of their husbands. Patani women's associations hold formal meetings; act as mediators in disputes between co-wives and other women, and sometimes between spouses; levy fines against women who commit certain offenses; pass laws that may affect nonmembers; lend money to men and women in and out of the association; and sanction those who refuse to accept their judgments or fail to pay debts owed to them. Sanctions may take the form of hazing, confiscating indispensable household items, or keeping offenders under siege in their houses; people do not resist the will of the association for very long. Thus, again, women's collective action brings them considerable political power.

Unrelated inmarrying women may have conflicts of interest which preclude collective action (34). By contrast with situations in which women's interests form a basis for their political organization, writers have characterized the especially weak position of wives marrying into patrilocal extended households. While such women may, as in the Taiwanese case (90), form neighborhood friendship networks which exert social pressure to support young wives against the unjust treatment of their affines, within the household itself these young wives are isolated. Such a bride suffers the loneliness and the scrutiny of her affines which typifies the lot of all virilocally married women (this section); in addition she may find herself under the authority of a hostile mother-in-law, whose interests are opposed to hers in competition for the affection and loyalty of her husband. Her only claim to status rests on her success in bearing and raising sons and her eventual position as a mother-in-law herself (13, 90). Typically, women can only gain power in such households indirectly, through men (13, 34), and their strategies for so doing may be characterized by gossip, persuasion, indirection, and guile. Collier (13) argues that such societies are marked by a distinctive ideology of women as irresponsible and sexually threatening, reflective of the divisive part young wives play in the household. At the same time mothers are idealized as warm and self-sacrificing, reflective of the loyalties which women engender in their sons.

Collier points out that the political acts of women in patrilocal extended households are individual rather than collective ones. Such acts may have extradomestic repercussions; for example, Collier notes, the divorces and household segmentation which Zinacanteco women cause account for the shallowness of lineages and the resultant importance of wealth and influence in a man's ability to attract a political following from among his relatives. But such community-wide political effects are incidental to the political ends toward which women work within their households. Unlike Iroquois or Patani women, Taiwanese and Zinacanteco women do not participate directly in events beyond the household.

Ideologies of Sexual Opposition

A distinctive complex of customs, which has been labeled "sex antagonism," has long been recognized as typical of societies in two widely separated regions of the world—the Brazilian Amazon and the New Guinea Highlands. Because the institu-
tions associated with sex antagonism are unusual and extreme, these customs figure in composite pictures of male supremacy (16). From these two parts of the world come ethnographic accounts of institutionalized gang rape (45, 54). Other elements of the complex are a concern with female pollution; a preoccupation with male sexual depletion; and elaborate male ceremonial activities, knowledge of which must be kept secret from women. Faithorn (23, p. 87) has summarized ethnographic description of sex antagonism in New Guinea as centering on “the three interrelated themes of sexual segregation, male dominance/female subservience, and male purity/female pollution.” Interpersonal relations between the sexes in these societies are also characterized as hostile and antagonistic.

Although, of course, customs such as gang rape and menstrual pollution are reported from other parts of the world, the confinement of the “sex antagonism” complex as a whole to the Amazon and highlands New Guinea ought to warn against treating sex antagonism as a universal feature of male-female relationships. Moreover, Meggitt (49) early observed that sex antagonism may underly very different relationships between men and women in different societies. He hypothesized that there are at least two separate complexes in New Guinea, the “Mae syndrome” in the western and southwestern highlands and the “Kuma syndrome” of the central highlands. The former stresses protection of men from contamination by women, and derives from the fact that groups like the Mae Enga recruit their wives from enemy clans; the latter syndrome is characterized by opposition of interests between the sexes, men continually striving to dominate women and women to escape this domination. Lindenbaum (44, 45) has suggested that this difference in emphasis may be linked to population density, representing adaptive strategies to cope with the threat of overpopulation, on the one hand, scarcity of women, on the other. Among the Enga, with high man-resource ratios, emphasis is on male chastity; among the Fore, with relatively low man-land ratios, beliefs in female pollution, while present, are deemphasized and do not inhibit male access to women; instead, male fears (like those of Kuma men) revolve around female sexual independence and the loss of one’s wife to male competitors.

Recent ethnographic reports suggest an even more complex situation. Shapiro contrasts two well-studied Amazonian groups, emphasizing that Mundurucú women unlike Yanomama women engage in significant communal, cooperative labor and that Mundurucú women orient their lives around female relatives, Yanomama women toward their husbands. The Mundurucú cult of the sacred trumpets is necessary to keep these solidary women in control: “the fact that the trumpets must be hidden from them at all times seems to indicate the fear that if women were to see them, they would also see ‘through’ them” (77, p. 5; see also 55). While Yanomama women are excluded from male ceremonial life, they are not the targets of such a secret male cult. In New Guinea, equally, recent reports (9) stress the variable forms sex antagonism may take across groups. Some of the customs associated with the “sex antagonism” complex may be entirely absent in some societies, as is the belief in menstrual pollution among the Etoro (33). Not only do female pollution, male sexual depletion, secret male knowledge, and other customs in the complex receive widely different emphasis from society to society, but
the same custom may figure symbolically in wholly different interpretations of
women's role in nature and society. Thus Buchbinder & Rappaport (10) argue that
marriage and sexual intercourse are threatening to Maring men because of the
Maring association between fertility and decay. Kelly (33) interprets a similar Etoro
ambivalence toward sexual intercourse as stemming from the belief in women's
ability to deplete male life-force. And Meggitt (50) associates the same fear and
ambivalence of Enga men toward marriage and sex to the aforementioned "enemy"
origins of their wives. Each interpretation is embedded in a highly coherent analysis
of an interrelated system of symbols. Thus different societies seem to incorporate
common material into quite different conceptions of women's role.

Further, Langness (36) points out, interpersonal antagonism pertains, in different
highland societies, not between the sexes in general but between men and women
in particular roles. This antagonism may be confined to relations between husbands
and wives (23). Or it may, as among the Maring, be more characteristic of relations
between brothers and sisters, mothers and sons, due to a conflict of interests over
marriage arrangements, while relations between spouses "in well-established mar-
rriages seem generally to be warm and unsuspicious" (10, p. 17). It is even possible
that some of the strongest antagonisms between kin do not cross sex at all, but as
among the Enga, pertain between fathers and sons (50). Equally, taboos may apply
not to all members of the opposite sex, but to certain restricted categories of kin,
such as the Kafe taboo prohibiting a man who has stepped over his food bag from
giving that food to his wife, children, or affines of either sex (23).

In the face of evidence that features of the so-called "sex antagonism" complex
are differently distributed and emphasized among societies sharing this complex,
and incorporated into wholly different views of women, and restricted to different
male-female relationships, it would be difficult to argue a unitary explanation for the
complex as a whole.

One general explanation for a component of the sex antagonism complex is
proposed by the Murphys (55, p. 139), who ask of Mundurucú women: "Why do
not the women have rites and myths that validate their position and express their
opposition to the men?" It is a major theme of their analysis that Mundurucú men
harbor anxieties about women which are not reciprocated. This male anxiety is
characterized (55, p. 95) in terms strikingly similar to Chodorow's (section on Child
Socialization). The myth of the sacred flutes reflects the "uneasy overlordship,
obtained only by expropriation from the original custody of the women," which men
feel. The myth is an allegory of man's birth from woman, his early dependence upon
his mother, and the necessity to break this bond and assert his autonomy and
manhood. The male role can only be maintained by vigilance and self-assertion.
Though the antagonism which Mundurucú men direct against women is not uni-
versal, where it exists its unidirectionality may be traceable to the fact that the men
of such societies confront special difficulty in throwing off their attachments to
women as they grow up. Briggs (6) has raised the same possibility to explain why
Eskimo women are attributed with greater power to contaminate and subjected to
more stringent taboos than men. The relationship of childrearing experiences which
result in a difficult transition to manhood, and adult male antagonism toward
women, requires cross-cultural verification. Alternatively, the Murphys suggest that Mundurucú men's antagonism toward women is accentuated by the struggle over social allocation of children, arising from the combination of patrilineal descent and matrilocal residence. This hypothesis relates sex antagonism once again to a real-life conflict of interests between adult men and women. Future research needs to inquire more systematically into the possible cross-cultural links between particular ideological themes of sexual opposition and different realistic concerns men have about women: for example, their enmity, as Meggitt has suggested, their scarcity, as Lindenbaum has suggested, the scarcity value of their production and reproduction, as O'Laughlin (section on Economic Variables) has suggested, their threat to the kin group, as Collier (section on Social Structural Variables) has suggested, or, as the Murphys propose, the affective control they exercise over their progeny.

The secret male cult of the Mundurucú is susceptible to a further interpretation with general implications. The cult is argued to maintain a precarious control over women that is necessary because in reality women have extreme autonomy in their daily lives and influence within their households. Men are interlopers in these households. Matrilocal related women are bound together by stronger emotional ties than men and have strong affective sway over their children. Women are not servile to men; they regard them as exploitative and dominant, but not superior. As a result of women's considerable autonomy and influence, men's ideology of dominance is defensive and uneasy, male status insecure. Women are regarded as unpredictable and difficult to manage, and the myth of the sacred trumpets, on which the ideology of male dominance rests, describes women as the original owners of these ceremonial objects and the secret knowledge pertaining to them. When women owned the trumpets, sex roles were reversed; men were made to submit to women's sexual advances and to do the housework. Similarly among the Fore of New Guinea, female challenge to male authority is a major cultural theme (although emphasis is on management of female sexuality rather than the threat of female solidarity), and a similar myth about sacred flutes, once in the hands of women but wrested from them by men, is reported (45).

There is a correspondence to be noted between this picture of male-female relations among the Mundurucú and a model of male-female relations which Rogers (66) has derived from ethnographic observations in a northwestern French village. Rogers and Friedl (24) attest to the power women exercise in European peasant households, in spite of the formal position and prestige of men and a pervasive ideology of male dominance. Women wield informal power over their children's marriage arrangements, their husbands' career choices and political activities, decisions about major household purchases, and the like. Men claim power in the village sphere, leaving women to control the less prestigious domestic sphere, which Rogers argues is the only domain over which villagers have effective control. The "myth of male dominance" serves to disguise this situation. While neither sex believes that the myth accurately reflects the actual situation, both sexes maintain the illusion of male dominance so that each can continue to exercise the forms of power allocated to them. Women retain control of their households and covertly manage their husbands' activities.
Rogers attempts to sketch some conditions leading to the “myth of male dominance” wherever it arises, not only in peasant, but in other traditional societies as well. She hypothesizes that such societies will be characterized by an association of women with the domestic sphere, a marked domestic orientation, the importance of informal relationships and forms of power, the greater accessibility of formal rights to men, and the approximately equal economic, social, and/or political dependence of men and women on each other. The latter condition insures that both groups will “play the game,” maintaining an even balance of power. Contributing to the picture may be a felt lack of power on the part of men. Women’s informal power in the domestic sphere is supported by the wider female solidarity groups often reported in peasant societies. Rogers reviews the literature to indicate the fit between her model and a wide variety of ethnographic descriptions of peasant communities. While the model is too exploratory to lend itself to a close analysis of nonpeasant societies, certainly some of its features—particularly, men’s felt lack of power, the economic interdependence of the sexes, the importance of informal power and women’s exercise of this power by means of female solidarity—are in conformity with the Mundurucú case, suggesting the profitability of a search for specific cross-cultural preconditions to ideologies of male dominance along the lines Rogers has initiated. It is noteworthy that by her interpretation, male dominance myths, far from reflecting women’s overall low status, arise precisely because women have considerable economic importance, personal autonomy, and domestic influence.

CONCLUSION

To underline the argument for independence of different aspects of women’s status, the hypotheses reviewed can now be rearranged. The components of women’s position which have concerned anthropologists will be considered separately, and the specific conditions to which each component has been attributed will be summarized.

In the literature reviewed, male strength, maternal responsiveness, and the role of women in childbearing, nursing, and rearing have been proposed either singly or in combination to explain women’s exclusion from warfare and a wide range of subsistence tasks and their exclusive assignment to other tasks. The willingness of women to comply with the commands of those in authority has been entertained in explanation of their tendency to accept assignment of unattractive tasks. However, the portrayal of at least one universally female task, gathering, as dull and repetitive has also been attributed to male ethnographer bias.

The universal female role in child socialization and the universal experience by which girls are socialized by women to be particularistic and personalistic have been invoked to account for the confinement of women to the domestic sphere. However, this confinement has also been treated as a consequence of sedentism and intensive agriculture, which reduce women’s role in food production and increase their burden of food processing and household upkeep. In other views, the rise of the state and industrialization were critical in bringing about women’s domestic isolation,
because each of these developments expropriated men's labor (for the state or the capitalist) and relegated women to private production in the home.

While women's role in production does not necessarily guarantee them control over their products, such control may be augmented by the importance of women's contribution to subsistence and the unavailability of male labor due to male absence. On the other hand, institutionalized male prestige-seeking may mean that women's production, however important to the economy, is confined to the subsistence sphere or alienated from them to be circulated in men's prestige activities. In such societies women and their activities are granted low prestige by comparison to men and their activities.

The fact that women themselves do not participate in prestige activities may be explained by the different socialization experience of boys and girls. Either the effects attributed by Chodorow to the socialization of both sexes by women, or the cross-cultural pattern of task socialization by which children are prepared for their adult economic roles, might be invoked to explain why boys are socialized to be achievers and competitors. The greater compliance of girls may also explain their willingness to support men's prestige activities with their efforts.

Men's exclusive participation in prestige activities and their occupancy of "big-man" status, in turn, may help to explain their assumption of political office as societies develop hereditary political positions. Several other factors have been proposed to explain the monopoly men hold over formal political office. It has been suggested that because children of both sexes are brought up by women, boys but not girls learn to interact with others in the abstract, impersonal manner required of formal political roles. This reviewer, while rejecting the male advantage in physical strength and physical aggressiveness as an explanation of male political control, has suggested that the greater verbal assertiveness which is part of the picture of innate male aggressiveness may be implicated in men's assumption of political roles.

In more egalitarian societies without formal political offices, women have a more nearly equal part in domestic and extradomestic decision making, and this was truer of such societies before colonial contact. In many other societies women are said to exert informal political influence even though they are excluded from formal office. A crucial factor in women's ability to exercise political power is said to be their success in forming solidarity groups, whether these groups be facilitated by matrilocality, residence or other kinship bonds, the lack of extraresidential kin to turn to, co-wife coalitions, or trading activities which foster trade associations and provide women with the independent means and economic autonomy to organize such associations. Conversely, any conditions which divide women's interests such as the competition for resources among co-wives or the unrelated wives of patrilineally related men, or the conflicts between inmarrying wives and their in-laws, will reduce women's chances of achieving collective political influence. Individual women lacking collective political bases are likely to adopt indirect strategies by which to manipulate events.

Separable from the degree to which women participate in prestige activities or exercise political influence is the question of how much individual autonomy they
have, both extradomestically and within the domestic context. Women are thought
to lose autonomy in societies which practice marriage exchange, although this
constraint may apply narrowly to their marital choices and their sexual freedom,
and may vary widely in different marriage alliance systems and for women of
different ages and marital statuses in such systems. Sexual restriction of women is
also associated with the practice of polygyny. Their sexual freedom, personal auton-
omy, and legal rights are also circumscribed wherever women are isolated and
segregated in a domestic sphere and must rely on men to mediate their access to
the public world. Women may gain autonomy through economic independence, for
example as traders or as producers of important subsistence foods. And women’s
autonomy is high in hunting and gathering societies which lack male-held political
offices and circumscribe the exercise of authority over others.

Women’s domestic autonomy is threatened by men’s greater strength and aggres-
siveness, since men are most likely to exercise this potentiality for physical aggres-
sion against isolated women, and domestic relations between spouses are frequently
set in such isolation. In addition, social structural arrangements may affect the
domestic position of women. In patrilineal societies women may be treated by their
husbands and affines as male-owned property rather than autonomous group mem-
bers. Virilocality may further weaken their autonomy because it isolates women
from the support of their own kin and requires them to change residence in case
of divorce. Women’s domestic autonomy is also lessened in matrilineal societies by
structural arrangements which place domestic authority in the hands of one man,
either a woman’s husband or her brother, rather than dividing it between them. On
the other hand, women’s autonomy and influence within marriage may be enhanced
by sororal polygyny, which encourages co-wife coalitions, or monogamy, which
increases a man’s dependence upon his wife; nonsororal polygyny, while it may
increase the competition for wives and hence their domestic power, may also foster
competition among co-wives, increasing the dependency of each upon her husband
and hence his power over her. Women also lost domestic autonomy under colonial
policies which imposed Western Christian notions of wifely obedience on aboriginal
marriage customs. Finally, women’s loss of adult status in state societies is said to
extend to their marital relationship.

Accompanying a loss of autonomy may be the requirement that women show
defereence to the men who control them. Thus women owe deference and submis-
ness to men in societies which confine them to a domestic sphere and reduce them
to legal and social minority. Women also owe deference to those men, whether their
brothers or their husbands, who are permitted to use force against them in ma-
trilineal societies; but women do not behave deferently toward either of these men
when authority is divided between them and the use of force by either is not socially
tolerated.

Ideologies which exalt men, denigrate women, or picture women as threats to men
have been variously explained. Sex antagonism has been attributed to the anxiety
men feel about women due to the difficulty boys experience in severing their initial
attachment to their mothers. Antagonism toward women, reflected in various cus-
toms, has also been attributed to real-life conflicts between adult men and women over the allegiance of their progeny, or the women themselves to their husbands or their husbands' kin groups, for example. Others have described fearful male attitudes which invest women with dangerous powers as stemming from more primary beliefs associating fertility with death or sexual intercourse with depletion.

The "myth" of male dominance has been explained as a product of the balance of power between the sexes and the advantage which each sex gains by acting as if men are dominant. An ideology of women as irresponsible and sexually threatening has been suggested as an outcome of the real threat inmarrying wives pose to the unity of the household. An ideology of women as immature and requiring male protection and supervision is said to accompany the extreme domestic isolation of women associated with the rise of intensive agriculture and the state. An equation of women with domesticated animals has been argued to reinforce the arbitrary male control over women's scarce reproductive and productive contribution to the economy of one society. It has also been argued that women are everywhere ideologically devalued because of their universal identification with nature and their consequent exclusion from the world of culture. Men's devaluation of women, as well as their antagonism toward women, has also been attributed to the early difficulty men experience in breaking away from their mothers to achieve their manhood. Other writers caution against the generalization that ethnoideologies always devalue women or treat them as the objects of men's hostility; ethnographic reports generally omit the women's side of the picture.

The general observations which have most puzzled anthropologists are these: the universal monopoly men are said to hold over formal political office, the exclusion of women from prestige spheres, and the seemingly universal ideologies of sex differences favoring men. These generalizations, taken together and at face value, go far to create the compelling picture of universally low female status which has occupied so much anthropological attention. Taken separately, some of these observations may require revision under the impact of fresh ethnographic material and new perspectives, and each may prove susceptible to independent explanation. What is clearest in the literature reviewed is the need for further investigation into each of the separate claims which has been made about women's status, and the conditions under which each claim holds true. What is most impressive about this literature is the overwhelming number of specific researchable questions it has produced. Hopefully the social forces which inspired anthropological interest in women's status will sustain this interest through the long second stage of research fashioned to explore these new hypotheses.

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