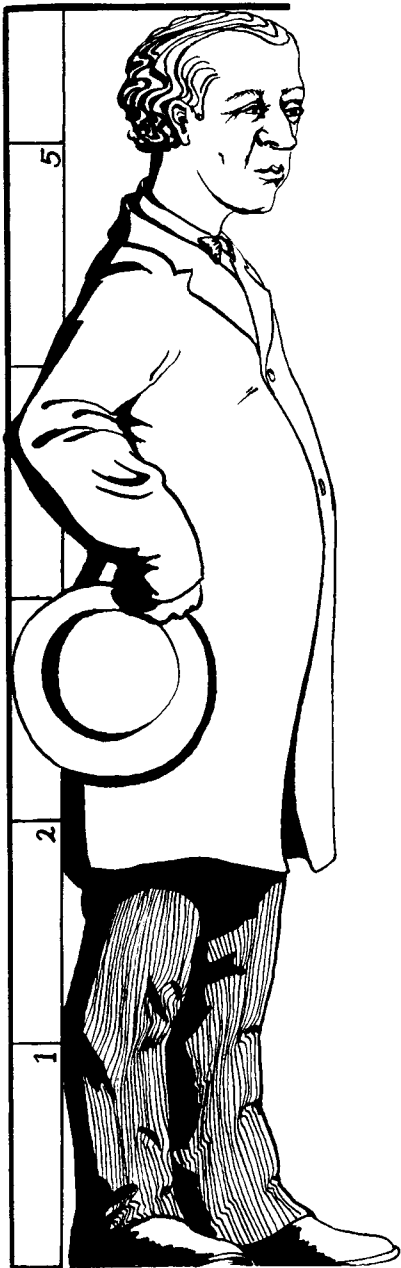


The Double Standard



As an Indicator

of Sex-Status Differentials

by Margrit Eichler

The recent years have seen a vast output of writings on the "status of women." The "status of women" means, however, quite different things to different authors. Some authors define the "status of women" in terms of the relative position of women in comparison with men with respect to occupational prestige, educational level and average female income expressed as a proportion of the average male income. Other authors utilize the concept "status of women" in very broad terms to refer to changes in sex-status itself. Sex-status is conceptually linked with sex roles. The concept of sex roles refers to behaviour expectations on the basis of gender: sex-status refers to those

rankings which are made on the basis of gender alone. Where sex roles are sharply differentiated, sex-status is therefore seen as of more importance than in cases in which sex roles are blurred.

We shall here deal with the question of how we can measure changes in the status of women over time. Our aim will be to conclude with a reasonable operationalization of a measure of sex-status. Currently, four approaches to the changing status of women can be distinguished:

- a) The achieved equality hypothesis which purports that women used to be underprivileged but have now caught up with men in terms of opportunities, at least on the North American continent. Whatever inequalities remain are due to individual preferences not to structural differentiation.
- b) The increasing gap hypothesis which maintains that the gap between women and men in terms of income, education and occupation has been in-

creasing and that therefore the status of women has been lowered. A sub-variant of this approach would be the stable gap hypothesis which maintains that the gap between women and men has remained stable over the past decades.

c) The different but equal hypothesis which is based on the supposition that women and men are biologically and therefore fundamentally different and that this biological difference by necessity results in different functions. This is supposed to have been so in the past and to continue into the indefinite future. In spite of functional differentiation, the hypothesis maintains that each sex is of equal worth. Subvariants of this hypothesis maintain that either women or men are superior.

d) The differential sex-status hypothesis which maintains that women have always had a lower status than men. Over the centuries and millenia, they have been oppressed and exploited. With each age, the form of oppression or exploitation changes but the inferior status remains constant.

We shall now discuss each of these approaches to the changing status of women and in the process identify what conception of status underlies each one and consequently what types of questions can and cannot be answered with such an approach.

The Achieved Equality Hypothesis

There are only a few sociologists to-

day who adopt such a stance. One example would be Smuts (1971) who, after having stated that the median income of women in 1955 was less than two-thirds of the median income of men, then argues: "This suggests that it is not particularly important to a great many working women whether or not they earn as much as men, or have equal opportunities for training or promotion. What they seek first in work is an agreeable job that makes limited demands. Since they have little desire for a successful career in paid work, they are likely to drift into the traditional women's occupations. They are willing to become teachers, though they could earn more as engineers; willing to take factory and service and clerical jobs that hold little hope of substantial advancement." (Smuts, 1971: 108)

Economic underprivilege is here explained in terms of conscious or unconscious volition. Such an explanation, of course, overlooks the mechanisms which perpetuate the low economic status of women, such as the counselling of people into different types of occupations by sex, the overall socialization process, the stag effect, the lack of protégé relationships for female professionals, the lack of role models for achievement oriented women and other social and psychological barriers against the penetration of women into the upper level occupations. These processes have by now been carefully analyzed by

such authors as Bernard (1971), Epstein (1971), Theodore (1971), Roby (1972), Safilios-Rothschild (1974), Rossi (1972) and others.

The criterion of equality underlying the achieved equality approach is primarily the absence of laws permitting sex segregation and in some cases the presence of laws forbidding sex segregation. The most important historical fact that is cited is the dramatic increase of female participation in the labour market, irrespective of the level at which women enter the labour market. Status equality is, therefore, defined as formal (although this is unreal) equality of opportunities for women and men.

Status is here defined in terms of such indicators as income, education and occupation. If women rank beneath men in terms of these indicators, this is due to the interaction of these variables and some social-psychological mechanisms which function as intervening variables. For instance, if women would seek as high a level of education as men, they would then be eligible for high level occupations, given equal commitment and career orientation. And if women do enter high level occupations, they have an income and authority that is equal to that of men in comparable occupations. In other words, this approach does not see sex as an independent variable which influences other status vari-

ables nor does it adequately deal with the problem of sex-status itself.

The types of questions raised by this approach can--and have been--empirically investigated by comparing educational, income and occupational data for the sexes and by comparing the relative prestige of occupations with different sex incumbents. The criticism of this approach has been effectively and conclusively carried out by proponents of the increasing gap hypothesis and by proponents of the differential sex-status hypothesis.

The Increasing Gap Hypothesis

The increasing gap hypothesis is the obverse of the achieved equality hypothesis. As such, it asks: has the increased influx of women into the labour market altered their position appreciably?

Knudsen (1969) recently analyzed American sex differentials in income, education and occupation and concludes that his data "indicate a gradual but persistent decline in status (for women) as measured by occupation, income and education." Gross (1968) asked himself whether the increased participation of women on the labour market has effectively changed the sexual segregation of occupations. For this purpose he constructed an index of sexual segregation of occupations and found that the latter remained remarkably stable between 1900 and 1960.

Ferris (1971 : 114-117) even more recently has replicated this finding with a somewhat modified version of the index.

In Canada, the situation is quite similar. The sex differential in income has remained similar over half a century: in 1921, women in the Canadian labour force earned 55% of the average male income; in 1931, 60%; in 1941, women earned 49% of the median male income; in 1951, 55%; in 1961, 56%; and in 1971, women earned 51% of the male median income. (1) That is, overall, women earn about half of what men earn. The equal pay legislation of recent years has had no discernible effect in narrowing the gap, on the contrary, all available evidence points to the fact that the gap between female and male wages has increased rather than decreased. (McDonald, 1977; Gunderson, 1975; Gunderson, 1976)

In terms of occupations, women have been and are still clustered in low-prestige, low-paying jobs. (See Table 1)

In terms of education, women earn a lower percentage of university and postgraduate degrees than men. Although the percentage of female B.A.s has increased since 1950, women in 1967 still earned only about one-third of the B.A.s, and their share of M.A.s vascillates around one-fifth,

while their share of Ph.D.s reached a low of eight percent in 1967. (See Table 2) Recently, the enrolment of women in institutions of higher learning has increased considerably (cf. Robb and Spencer, 1976) but this has so far not resulted in any significant changes in salary differentials.

This approach has provided an important criticism and refutation of the achieved equality hypothesis that increased female participation in the labour market indicates a lessening or disappearance of the status inequality between the sexes in terms of types of occupations available and in terms of income. It is a limited approach, however, in so far as it does not address itself to the sex-status proper.

Judging only on the basis of the indicators of status discussed in this approach it would seem that the position of women has remained about constant over the past decades. However, during this same period significant social and legal changes affecting the position of women have taken place, such as changes in family law, the granting of suffrage and resulting participation of women in the political process (although only at a very modest level). If we wish to speak about the status of women in general, surely we must in some way take into account such changes.

Table 1

Women as percentage of the total employed labour force, and percentage distribution of women and men by occupation, Canada, 1974

| Occupation | Women as percentage of the total employ- ed labour force. | Percentage dis- tribution | |
|--|---|------------------------------|-------|
| | | Women | Men |
| | % | % | % |
| | <u>1974</u> | | |
| Managerial and administrative | 16.0 | 2.7 | 7.6 |
| Natural sciences, engineering and mathematics | 8.4 | 0.8 | 4.4 |
| Social sciences | 43.4 | 1.5 | 1.0 |
| Religion | . | . | 0.4 |
| Teaching | 55.7 | 7.0 | 2.9 |
| Medicine and health | 73.9 | 9.2 | 1.7 |
| Artistic, literary and recrea- tional occupations | 32.1 | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| Clerical | 72.9 | 35.4 | 6.9 |
| Sales | 32.3 | 10.1 | 11.2 |
| Service | 51.4 | 18.0 | 9.0 |
| Farming, horticultural and animal husbandry | 14.7 | 2.3 | 7.1 |
| Fishing, hunting and trapping | . | . | 0.4 |
| Forestry and logging | . | . | 1.1 |
| Mining and quarrying | . | . | 0.9 |
| Processing | 15.9 | 2.1 | 5.8 |
| Machining | 5.5 | 0.5 | 4.3 |
| Product fabricating, assembling and repairing | 23.9 | 6.8 | 11.5 |
| Construction trades | . | . | 11.0 |
| Transport equipment operation | 2.8 | 0.3 | 6.4 |
| Materials handling | 17.1 | 1.4 | 3.6 |
| Other crafts and equipment operating | 14.3 | 0.6 | 1.8 |
| All occupational categories | 34.6 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Figures too small to be reliable.

Adapted from Women in the Labour Force: Facts and Figures. Labour Canada. Women's Bureau. 1975 ed., Ottawa: Information Canada, p. 49.

Table 2

Number of University Degrees Granted in Canada and Percentage of Degrees Granted to Women, in Selected Years, 1930-31 to 1966-67

| Academic Year | Bachelor and first professional degrees* | | Master degrees and licences** | | Doctorates (earned) | | | | |
|---------------|--|--------|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----|----|------|
| | Total | Women | Total | Women | Total | Women | | | |
| | | | Percentage of Total | Percentage of Total | | Percentage of Total | | | |
| 1930-31 | 5,290 | 1,338 | 25.3 | 468 | 100 | 21.4 | 46 | 7 | 15.2 |
| 1940-41 | 6,576 | 1,582 | 24.1 | 673 | 71 | 10.5 | 75 | 5 | 6.7 |
| 1945-46 | 8,192 | 2,200 | 26.9 | 877 | 99 | 11.3 | 104 | 12 | 11.5 |
| 1950-51 | 15,754 | 3,200 | 20.3 | 1,632 | 227 | 13.9 | 202 | 11 | 5.4 |
| 1955-56 | 13,770 | 3,151 | 22.9 | 1,459 | 303 | 20.8 | 266 | 17 | 6.4 |
| 1960-61 | 20,240 | 5,211 | 25.7 | 2,447 | 466 | 19.0 | 305 | 26 | 8.5 |
| 1961-62 | 23,102 | 6,320 | 27.4 | 2,813 | 603 | 21.4 | 321 | 26 | 8.1 |
| 1962-63 | 25,221 | 7,053 | 28.0 | 3,152 | 657 | 20.8 | 421 | 34 | 8.1 |
| 1963-64 | 29,084 | 8,368 | 28.8 | 3,490 | 671 | 19.2 | 481 | 38 | 7.9 |
| 1964-65 | 33,497 | 10,416 | 31.1 | 4,096 | 835 | 20.4 | 569 | 54 | 9.5 |
| 1965-66 | 38,470 | 12,660 | 32.9 | 5,233 | 996 | 19.0 | 697 | 76 | 10.9 |
| 1966-67 | 43,843 | 15,137 | 34.5 | 6,253 | 1,290 | 20.6 | 788 | 60 | 7.6 |

* Includes equivalent diplomas, for example, in theology and honours degrees.

** The licence in the French language universities was the next degree after the bachelor's degree and corresponded more or less with the master's degree in the English educational system. Since 1961, license is roughly the equivalent of a bachelor's degree.

! Excludes master and licence degrees (e.g., in law, optometry), which are in reality first professional degrees and which are included in that column.

Adapted from table 1 of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970, p. 170.

In addition, the increasing gap hypothesis approach is limited by defining increase or decrease of status in terms of, for example, occupational prestige rather than examining whether occupations themselves may change their character depending on whether they become male or female occupations. In other words, although this approach does recognize sex as an important independent variable, it applies it only to a very narrow range of dependent variables. Lastly, the increasing gap hypothesis, as is the case for the equality achieved hypothesis, is inapplicable to housewives who are, as is common in stratification studies, ignored. The different but equal hypothesis falls into the other extreme.

The Different But Equal Hypothesis

According to this approach, women and men are fundamentally biologically different. This fundamental biological difference is most clearly manifested in differences in their contribution to procreation but it pervades their entire being. Therefore, functions within society are by necessity differentiated by sex. Given that women and men at the aggregate level do and must continue to perform different tasks, male status categories are essentially inapplicable to women. (cf., e.g., Goldberg, 1973: 44-47, 68-73)

While the sexes are fundamentally different, they are, however, of equal worth. This is a statement about sex-status, recognizing its existence and postulating equivalence of two different statuses. Erickson, (1964:26), writes:

An emancipated woman, thus does not necessarily accept comparisons with more "active" male proclivities as a measure of her equivalence, even if and after it has become quite clear that she can match man's performance and competence in most spheres of achievement. True equality can only mean the right to be uniquely creative.

This approach, by its focus on functional differentiation between the sexes, has the following consequences for discussing the status of women: sex-status proper, in which all women share through birth, determines the status of women. Other indicators of status such as occupation and income underestimate the "real" status of women since they are male categories applied to females and thus bypass the essential aspect of femininity. Sex-status cannot be measured by such extrinsic factors as increased labour force participation, although it may be affected by it--mainly for the worse. Sex-status is declared equal by fiat although we know that there are powerful psychological mechanisms which lead us to assign different ranks to different groups. Sub-variants of this approach declare the

female sex-status as superior or inferior. Montagu (1970), for example, implies superiority of the female sex-status, while Goldberg (1973) postulates the inferiority of the female sex-status.

In essence, then, there should never be a change in the status of women, which is permanently different from but equal to that of men. It is only in times in which we apply male status categories to women that we are led to believe--falsely--that women's status is lower than that of men. And we might add, since things which are believed to be real are real in their consequences, this attitude leads to an actual denigration of women's essentially equal status. Our effort must therefore go towards re-establishing the primacy of sex-status over all other possible status indicators.

This approach focuses exclusively on sex-status and denies the comparability of the status of women and men. It also does not allow for an internal ranking of women. We therefore have a model of stratification according to which men are ranked on many dimensions but women represent a unified group which is ranked as a whole--on a dimension that is different from the male dimensions. In effect, then, the status of women cannot change over time, which makes it unnecessary to try to measure changes.

The Differential Sex-Status Hypothesis

The differential sex-status hypothesis is similar to the equal but different hypotheses in that it focuses on sex-status but, contrary to the previous approach, it maintains that the sexes are evaluated differently, with women being considered inferior to men. Gender, therefore, is seen to have an effect on ranking even if all other status variables are equal. This process is referred to as sexism. "Sexism. . . is the creation of thousands of years of thought and reinforced patterns of behaviour so deeply imprinted, so utterly subscribed to by the great body of Western conviction, that they are taken for "natural" or "instinctive." Sexism has made of women a race of children, a class of human beings utterly deprived of selfhood, of autonomy, of confidence--worst of all, it has made the false come true!" (Gornick and Moran, 1971: xiii their emphasis) Their approach recognizes sex-status as a central aspect of differences in male-female status and assumes that sex is an independent variable which affects other status indicators such as occupational prestige, income, education and authority. Most analyses which treat women as a caste would fall into this category. (cf. Hacker, 1951: Andreas, 1971: Stoll, 1974: 44-47: Mydral, 1944)

In addition, there have been several suggestions in the literature which

emphasize the importance of sex-status. Goode (1964:70), for instance, charges that "Whatever the strictly male tasks are, they are defined as more honorific." (Goode's emphasis) However, he marshalls no evidence to support this statement. D'Andrade (1966:180), after a review of the cross-cultural literature on the sexual division of labour, concludes that "Apparently a cultural under-evaluation of women cannot be corrected by abolishing the female role." This statement refers to the experience of the Kibbutzim which suggests that the lower prestige of women is not only due to the low-prestige jobs they perform but also to the fact that they are women. Margaret Mead (1968:168), likewise, suggests that "Men may cook, or weave, or dress dolls or hunt hummingbirds, but if such activities are appropriate occupations for men, then the whole society, men and women alike, votes them as important. When the same occupations are performed by women, they are regarded as less important."

While such general statements affirm the importance of sex-status, there are also some empirical investigations which examine the effect sex has in otherwise equivalent circumstances. The by now classic study in this respect is Goldberg's. Goldberg (1968) asked a sample of college women to rate six articles for value, persuasiveness and profundity and to rate the authors for writing style, professional

competence, professional status and ability to sway the reader. Half of the sample received a set of articles three of which were ostensibly authored by women and three by men, the other half of the sample received the identical articles but with the sex of the authors reversed for each article. Goldberg found that even in fields which were traditionally female-dominated, the female authors were rated consistently lower than the male authors of the identical articles. He concludes that:

clearly, there is a tendency among women to downgrade the work of professionals of their own sex Since the articles supposedly written by men were exactly the same as those supposedly written by women, the perception that the men's articles were superior was obviously a distortion. (Goldberg, 1968:30) Women--at least these young college women--are prejudiced against female professionals and, regardless of the actual accomplishments of these professionals, will firmly refuse to recognize them as equals of their male colleagues. (Goldberg, 1968:30)

In other words, this experiment indicates the presence of a prestige gap between the sexes which is independent of any "objective" differences between the sexes.

Walker and Bradley (n.d.) have followed up this line of research concerning sex-status in terms of the prestige accorded to a job dependent on the sex of the incumbent of a position. Half of their sample rated the prestige of jobs in which half of the incumbents were identified as female and the other half as males. The other half of the sample rated the same jobs but with the sex of the incumbents reversed. They found that, in general, positions designated as filled by a woman received a lower rating than those same positions filled by a man.

However, differences in occupational prestige were statistically significant only for male-typed and blue-collar positions and for those requiring masculine attributes for their performance. Thus a woman's occupational prestige was rated lower only in occupations that contrast sharply with what a woman is supposed to do in our society. Men, on the other hand, did not receive higher prestige in positions considered appropriated for women, in this case no significant differences emerged. (Walker and Bradley, n.d.:5)

Maddox, as reported by Reiss, also found that "women and men were ranked differently on the same jobs by most people and pay differed also." (Reiss, 1960:93, ft. 4) A recent Canadian study found that occupational prestige scores vary by sex of the in-

cumbent and that women in male dominated occupations and men in female dominated occupations suffer a loss in occupational prestige. (Eichler, 1977)

Studies of this nature indicate that there is a prestige differential between women and men in equivalent situations. There are also clear indications that men earn more money than women of equal or superior qualifications within the same occupations. For instance, among secretaries and stenographers in 1970, men in all age categories with grade 8 education or less earned on the average more than women in the same age categories with a masters degree or a doctorate. (Table 58, Labour Canada, 1975: 155) No matter what the occupation, the same trend is consistently documented: women with a higher education in the same age brackets as men earn less than men in the same occupations. (cf. Tables 1 - 147, *ibid.*) All these figures refer to full-time, full-year workers. Whatever other explanations one may come up with, the fact remains that equivalent education does not give women equivalent remuneration, even within the same occupation. Besides less pay for equal work, women are, in addition, segregated into occupations that generally draw lower salaries compared with occupations which are dominated by men.

To examine whether or not occupations that are female-dominated are low-prestige and low-paid because they are female dominated we attempted to devise a measure which would allow us to correlate the relative income of an occupation in comparison with other occupations with its feminization or masculinization. To this purpose, we computed first the percentage of females within selected occupations over a thirty-year period (1921-1961). Then, the average income of all professions for each of three census years was equated with 100 and the average income of professionals within each occupational grouping was computed in relation to the overall averages. For instance, while the average professional in 1931 earned 100%, an author, editor or journalist earned 138% of the average income of all professionals, and a school teacher earned 89% of the average income of all professionals in 1931. The bases for each of the census years therefore represent different absolute figures to account for inflation and monetary devaluation. We were only interested in the relative pay of an occupation compared with other occupations for any given year.

Our hypothesis is that with the increasing feminization of an occupation the average income of that occupation will decrease relative to the overall average income of all professionals and that with increasing masculiniza-

tion of an occupation the average income of that occupation will increase relative to the overall average income of all professionals. As can be seen from Table 3, the results, in general, support the hypothesis. While the female proportion of the category authors, editors and journalists increases between 1931 and 1961, their share of the average income decreases. In the case of librarians, the highest proportion of females in the occupation is found in 1941 (91%) and at that time the average income is at its lowest (76% of the average professional's income). Nurses and social welfare workers do not conform to the pattern and we suspect that this may be due to a classificatory change in both categories. School teachers conform to the pattern, as do professors and college principals, lawyers and notaries and clerical workers. Physicians and surgeons and accountants conform more or less to the pattern, although their average income remains stable in a year in which it should have dropped slightly according to our hypothesis. The magnitude of the changes remains unexplained at this time but the pattern is unmistakably present: when women enter an occupation in greater numbers, the average income of that occupation relative to other occupations seems to go down, when men come into an occupation, the average income of that occupation relative to other occupations seems to go up. We take this as a further indication that the sex

Table 3

A Comparison of Degree of Feminization and Relative Pay of Selected Occupation, 1931-1961, Ontario

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u># of females in occupation</u> | | | <u>average income earned for each occupation as % of total professional income</u> | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>1931</u> | <u>1941</u> | <u>1961</u> | <u>1931</u> | <u>1941</u> | <u>1961</u> |
| Total Professional | 46 | 40 | 40 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Author, Editor, Journalist | 16 | 17 | 26 | 138 | 136 | 116 |
| Librarian | 88 | 91 | 84 | 80 | 76 | 82 |
| Nurse-grad. | 100 | 99 | 99 | 62 | 52 | 58 |
| Social Welfare Worker | 70 | 67 | 55 | 93 | 84 | 76 |
| School Teacher | 77 | 70 | 68 | 89 | 90 | 100 |
| Physician & Surgeon | 3 | 5 | 8 | 200 | 200 | 140 |
| Professor & College Principals | 14 | 9 | 16 | 211 | 213 | 164 |
| Lawyers & Notaries | 1 | 2 | 3 | 209 | 201 | 158 |
| Accountant | 4 | 7 | 6 | 184 | 130 | 130 |
| Total Clerical | 53 | 49 | 64 | 62 | 70 | 60 |

composition of an occupation partially determines the pay of that occupation, i.e., the monetary value put upon the services performed.

Studies of this nature point toward the existence of a differential sex-status which results in less prestige and pay for women in otherwise equivalent situations with men. Obviously, many more studies of this sort need to be devised and carried out before we can make comparative statements either across time or across sub-cultural or cultural barriers. Nevertheless, it seems safe to accept the existence of a sex-status differential. By simply demonstrating the presence of a differential sex-status, we have provided an implicit criticism of the achieved equality hypothesis, and the different but equal hypothesis. Obviously, if with the same formal characteristics women and men are evaluated differently, equality in terms of occupational opportunities or other such indicators of status do not tap at the differential evaluation of equivalent positions depending on the sex of the incumbents. Likewise, it is obviously fictional to claim equivalence of worth of the sexes, when in terms of all conventional indicators of status the women occupy the inferior position. The increasing gap hypothesis remains a valuable approach, but like the achieved equality hypothesis it cannot tap at the differential evaluation of the

equivalent positions and therefore needs to be supplemented with some independent measure of sex-status. It is here suggested that such an independent measure of sex-status can be the double standard.

The Double Standard

It is here believed, with Reiss, that: The core of the double standard seems to involve the notion of female inferiority. The standard gives men more rights than women and assumes that such distribution is proper. It is not just a question of different roles--anyone looking fairly at the division of roles will see that women's roles are given low status as compared to men's roles. The particular role does not matter; whatever a woman does is valued less and whatever a man does is valued more, e.g., if men herd then herding is highly valued--if women herd, it is not. This is the state of affairs in double-standard societies. (Reiss, 1960: 92-93)

The double standard expresses itself in many ways, some of which are directly related to the physical sexual relations of women and men and some of which are only indirectly related to them. Chafetz, for instance, lists thirteen ways in which the double standard may be legally incorporated into the social system (although with-

out ever using the term "double standard.") Most of these indicants of a legal double standard are only indirectly related to direct physical sex relations. Her indicants are: legal differences in the treatment of "presumed coercion," treatment of women as minors, language requirements for males in the presence of women, examinations for venereal disease for men only, the legal definitions of prostitution and rape, laws concerning the crimes of passion, laws and practices concerning abortion, different minimum marriage ages for the sexes, inability of women to serve on juries, liability to being drafted for men only, protective labour laws for women, and welfare regulations. (Chafetz, 1974: 141-145) As the double standard we shall here regard all norms, rules and practices which evaluate, reward and punish identical behaviour of women and men differentially. This definition is, of course, similar to that of sex-status which was defined as differential ranking of people on the basis of gender when all other things are equal.

In spite of many different types of manifestations of the double standard, the physical sexual relationship as mediated through social controls is at the heart of the double standard. Let us look at some examples. In renaissance Europe and frontier America, women had to do public penance when they were caught in extra- or pre-marital sexual affairs while men, al-

though probably emotionally hurt, were spared social ostracism. In Goethe's play, *Faust*, is a scene where two girls discuss the pre-marital experience of one of their former friends. Gretchen is informed that Barbara is expecting an illegitimate child and says thereupon (having herself engaged in pre-marital sex): "Poor thing!" Her friend replies: "You really pity her! When the like of us were at the spinning, our mothers never let us go down at night. She stood sweet with her lover; on the bench before the door, and in the dark walk, the time was never too long for them. But now she may humble herself, and do penance, in a white sheet in the church." Gretchen replies: "He will surely make her his wife." But the friend retorts: "He would be a fool if he did. A brisk young fellow has the world before him. Besides, he's off." (Goethe, translated by Hayward, 1870: 166)

Even more drastically, some societies allowed for the killing of the woman if she transgressed against the sexual code of behaviour, while of course no such penalties were imposed upon the man:

In Judaic society the adulterous wife was stoned; in Greek society, if she was not put to death she became infamous and was forced to dress in a way which would enable others to recognize her transgression; in China and Vietnam she passed through the

Seven Hells. Despite these variations, the husband everywhere had the power of life or death over his adulterous wife. (Sullerot, 1971: 20-21)

In more recent times, we find laws concerning crimes of passion which allow the husband to kill his adulterous wife when caught in the act of adultery and receive only a nominal penalty. These are extreme examples of a double standard which is based on a differential sex-status which in turn is mediated through differential sex roles. In the above examples, the sex roles pertaining to a sex-status are so important that a violation of the sexual code on the part of the woman negates the importance of all her other status attributes.

In general terms, a double standard society is based on a differentiation of roles by sex. This role differentiation is justified by the biological differences between the sexes. It almost invariably includes greater sexual freedom for the boys and men than for the girls and women. Greater sexual freedom for the males involves greater sexual activity which is (if not exclusively at least in large part) directed towards females. If, however, all women were more restricted than all males in their sexual activities, then there would be no outlet for the greater sexual activity of men unless it was purely homosexual. Therefore we find the phenom-

enon of a double classification of women into "good" women who are exempted and protected from such sexual activity and "bad" women who deliver the sexual services so that the males can indulge in greater sexual activity than the "good" females. As Engels (1902) has pointed out a century ago, prostitution is the inevitable companion of a one-sided (that is female, not male monogamy). The fact that a society differentiates between "good" and "bad" women on the basis of their presumed or actual sexual behaviour indicates how strongly sex-status overrides other status indicators.

So far we have analyzed only the sexual component of the double standard. There is, of course, also an economic component to it, in a double sense: the double standard is (at least partially) based on a specific economic relationship of the sexes and the double standard itself exemplifies a property relationship between the sexes. When Gilman (1898) analyzed the sexuo-economic relationships of her times, she stated that women as a group and women as individuals were economically dependent on men. Their only avenue for a "decent" livelihood was marriage. However, since through marriage women were economically supported they could not actively and openly seek a husband as this would have equalled an outright request for economic support, i.e., beggary. This

paradoxical situation in which women needed a husband but could not actively contribute to finding one resulted in such monstrosities as mothers lying to their daughters about the natural functions of procreation (although they themselves would be painfully aware of the consequences of such ignorance) in order not to reduce the marketability of their daughters on the marriage market.

With increased economic independence of women, this situation is altered. It should be noted here that although the percentage that females earn of the male salary has not increased over the past 70 years, at least the percentage of women who earn something has increased dramatically, and even if she does not earn anything, most women could if they needed to--that is, economic dependence of women on men has been substantially reduced. With increased economic independence of women, therefore, sexual relationships have changed. We could now regard the support of a married woman through her husband as a luxury more than as an absolute necessity and sexual relations, consequently, have also taken on more luxury qualities. Today, a woman's sexual knowledge, at least at the theoretical level, may very well increase her marketability on the marriage market (see, among other things the high rate of remarriage for divorcees). Satisfactory sexual knowledge is now considered a necessary ingredient for maintaining the

marriage. While this still treats sex as a marketable commodity, it is now in a remarkably changed context and it indicates some reduction of the double standard though by no means its abolition.

More important in our context, however, is the property relationship that is generated through and maintained by the the double standard. We stated previously that the double standard presupposed a division of women into "good" and "bad" women. Another way of phrasing this would be to say that the double standard divides women into private property (i.e., "good" women) and public property (i.e., "bad" women). This is, of course, an exaggeration, but only in degree and not in kind. Consider, for example, the rape laws and court practices in both Canada and the United States. It is common practice to probe the sexual reputation of a rape victim during the court proceedings. If she has a "bad" reputation it is most unlikely that the rapist will be convicted, even if it has been established that penetration has taken place. What is the philosophy behind such judgement? Apparently, once a woman has become a "bad" woman, she is considered sexually available for every male whether or not she is willing to participate in sexual encounters. That is, she is treated in her sexual capacity as public property, and denied the right to choose her own sexual partners and to reject others. On the other hand, if

the rape victim was a "good" woman, as established through virginity or monogamy, then the rapist has transgressed in a private domain which is legally closed to him. Consequently he is punished for the transgression. It is important to note that the emphasis in this reasoning does not lie on the assault aspect of a rape, the aspect which concerns the woman most directly, but on the technicality of penetration.

The "good" married woman, on the other hand, is in some crucial ways treated as the private property of her husband. A wife cannot, legally, be raped by her husband, just as it is almost impossible for anybody to legally rape a prostitute. In other words, in the case of the prostitute, every man has a right to sexual intercourse, in the case of the wife, the husband has the right to sexual intercourse irrespective of the wishes of the woman concerned.

As stated previously, a double standard society presupposes the existence of a sufficient supply of "bad" women. The most specialized "bad" women are, in our society, the prostitutes. It is, therefore, in a very real sense the double standard which creates prostitutes. Once women have taken on this function to supply the needed sexual services, the standard of "good" behaviour is applied to their conduct and they are punished for performing those services for which the need has

been generated through the sexual double standard. A single standard society would have no prostitution in a legal sense, even if there were still some people who would sell their sexual activities for money, although presumably there would be less need for this type of service. One of the distinguishing features of prostitution is that the female prostitute is guilty of a legal offense whereas the male client is not, clearly indicating that two standards are applied to similar behaviour. In a single standard society, either both the buyer and the seller of sexual services would be punishable, irrespective of sex, or neither would be punishable. Rape laws and court procedures and prostitution are therefore good indicators of a double standard society.

While rape laws and court proceedings and prostitution are good indicators of a legally ingrained double standard for the entire society, they directly affect only a small minority of the entire population. But every member of society is affected by norms concerning the sexual conduct of all women and men. A double standard society expects a different sexual conduct from every "good" woman but not from every man since men are not differentiated in a sexual sense into "good" or "bad." Such different normative standards have been empirically studied. Luckey and Nass (1969), for instance, analyzed the answers of respondents in four countries to the

question "Do you think it is reasonable for a male who has experienced coitus elsewhere to expect that the girl he hopes to marry be chaste at the time of marriage?" They interpreted a yes response as potential support for the double standard. The results are summarized in Table 4. As can be seen from the results, the United States and Canada give a substantially higher percentage of double standard responses than England and Norway. The same picture emerges from the next question that Luckey and Nass analyzed, namely "Would it trouble you to marry a person who had experienced premarital coitus with someone else before becoming seriously involved with you?" The results are shown in Table 5. In terms of their attitudes, we could therefore conclude that college students in the United States and Canada are more double-standard oriented than college students in England and Norway. In other words, the sex-status of women in England and Norway can be considered as higher in terms of a lesser differential in normative standards concerning sexual conduct than the sex-status of women in the United States and Canada.

The Double Standard as an Indicator of a Differential Sex-Status

At the beginning of this paper we asked ourselves the question how we could measure changes in the status of women. Of the four, the achieved

equality hypothesis and the different but equal hypothesis were ruled out as empirically and theoretically unsupported. According to the approach suggested by the increasing gap hypothesis, the status of women has not improved in either Canada or the United States over the past few decades when measured in terms of pay differential between the sexes and in terms of sexual segregation of occupations. While this is an important datum, it was argued that this is only a partial aspect of the status of women and needs to be supplemented with some measure of changes in the sex-status defined as differential evaluation of people according to their gender. It was then demonstrated that indeed such a sex-status exists and it was suggested that a fruitful way of measuring it would be through measuring the amount of double standard within a society. Once we have good indicators of a double standard we should then be able to make statements about relative changes in the importance of sex-status over time within one society, among different subcultures within one society and between different societies.

To date, a double standard has usually been operationalized as different normative standards concerning male and female sexual behaviour expressed in attitudes concerning male and female virginity and extramarital sexual activities. This is certainly one

Table 4

Percentage male and female responses to: "Do you think it is reasonable for a male who has experienced coitus elsewhere to expect that the girl he hopes to marry be chaste at the time of marriage?"

| | United States | | Canada | | England | | Norway | |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Yes | 21.3 | 35.9 | 20.5 | 32.6 | 15.1 | 10.9 | 1.2 | 6.5 |
| No | 68.4 | 53.4 | 71.1 | 56.2 | 59.7 | 54.5 | 71.8 | 66.1 |
| Preposterous Anachronism | 10.3 | 10.7 | 8.4 | 11.2 | 24.5 | 34.7 | 27.1 | 27.4 |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| (N) | (643) | (716) | (83) | (89) | (139) | (101) | (85) | (62) |

Source: Luckey and Nass (1969), pp. 368-369

Table 5

Percentage responses to: "Would it trouble you to marry a person who had experienced coitus with someone else before becoming involved with you?"

| | United States | | Canada | | England | | Norway | |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Yes, seriously | 16.7 | 9.0 | 15.0 | 12.4 | 10.1 | 6.9 | 2.4 | 6.5 |
| Some, but not seriously | 53.5 | 29.8 | 54.0 | 41.6 | 43.5 | 34.7 | 50.6 | 35.5 |
| No | 29.8 | 61.2 | 31.0 | 46.0 | 46.4 | 58.4 | 47.0 | 58.0 |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| (N) | (658) | (722) | (87) | (89) | (138) | (101) | (85) | (62) |

very good way of tapping the attitudinal dimension of a double standard. It will indicate, for instance, sub-cultural differences concerning the double standard. However, it does not suffice as an indicator of the degree of double standardism within a society. It is quite feasible and even likely that in most industrialized societies there are certain individuals and groups who adhere to a single standard. This does not, of course, signify that such single standard groups or individuals live in a single standard society, since the society most likely will exhibit a legally ingrained double standard. It is therefore suggested that attitudinal measures of a double standard be complemented by indicators of a legal double standard, namely rape laws and prostitution.

A society would be single standard if there are either no people who sell their sexual activities, or if there is no punishment for doing so, or if males and females and buyers and sellers are punished equally. As long as female and male prostitutes are treated differentially and as long as the prostitute is punished and the client is not punished, we are dealing with a legal double standard. As far as rape is concerned, a single standard society would regard as irrelevant the sexual reputation of the rape victim and would convict rapists on the basis of assault rather than on penetration. As long as the sexual reputation of

rape victims is considered relevant in establishing whether or not a punishable crime has been perpetrated, we are dealing with a double standard society. Likewise, as long as it is impossible for husbands to rape their wives, we have a further indicator for a double standard society.

It is therefore suggested that the double standard be operationalized in terms of:

- 1) normative differences concerning male and female virginity
- 2) normative differences concerning male and female extra-marital behaviour
- 3) punishment of prostitutes with concurrent non-punishment of the clients of prostitutes
- 4) different treatment of male and female prostitutes
- 5) relevance of sexual reputation on the part of a rape victim for the conviction of a rapist
- 6) relevance of achieved penetration in a case of rape
- 7) impossibility of raping one's wife.

Other indicators for particular societies are of course possible as Chafetz has shown, but the ones above have been suggested for the reason that they should be universally applicable to all societies and, therefore, once they have been refined and applied in different empirical studies,

should allow comparisons of the degree of double standardism in different societies and over different time periods. It is further suggested that a measure of the degree of double standardism in conjunction with more conventional indicators of status will give us a more accurate picture of changes in the status of women. Conversely, analyses of the status of women that ignore the double standard may well miss out on one of the most important dimensions of sex-status.

NOTES

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1. Computed from: Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. 5, Tables 16 and 15; Census of Canada 1941, Vol. 7, Table 6; Census of Canada 1951, Vol. 5, Table 21; Census of Canada 1961, Vol. 3, Part 1, Catalogue 94539, Table 21; Statistics Canada, January 25, 1974, Catalogue No. 11-001, P54.

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