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Female Sexism

Abstract

Sexism in the sciences is not just relevant to the sciences but in all fields of study. Woman are steadily on the rise, many going to college, and much more graduating with a degree in sciences and other male dominated fields. But despite the increase of female academic success, there are still fewer females in careers like science and professorship. Many factors contribute to sexism in the sciences, those factors being motherhood and family commitments, social interactions of female and male from early youth, social barriers in the field, and possible biological theories.



A female scientist looking through a microscope.

Introduction

In modern times, discrimination between sexes has always been relevant. Females are just as successful as males. Females have the same potential to males. But the number of successful females showcasing their work in their career is limited. There are numerous studies on why females are less likely to be successful in their actual careers. In this poster, you will be informed about some of those factors.

Females have more of a tendency to worry about their career and balancing it out with other events in their lives then men do. Since long ago our society is patriarchal, male dominated, and still is today. In particular the field’s studies like biological sciences and math, males are still the ones who are prominent in these fields, despite the growing number of females. The question still looms in, why are there more male participants in these fields then females? Many studies have shown several factors in which why there are fewer females in the field; most of which being family commitments. That being the decision of having a family often collides with the decision to tenure in a female’s career. As the mother of the household often takes care of their family and cares for them, a female is more likely to give up her career for her family. There are also arguable stances to why there is such a gap between the genders, like biological, characteristics of the genders, invisible barriers and, social upbringing between the two. We explore this issue on sexism, as to why does sexism in the science affect the success of woman and, in what ways.

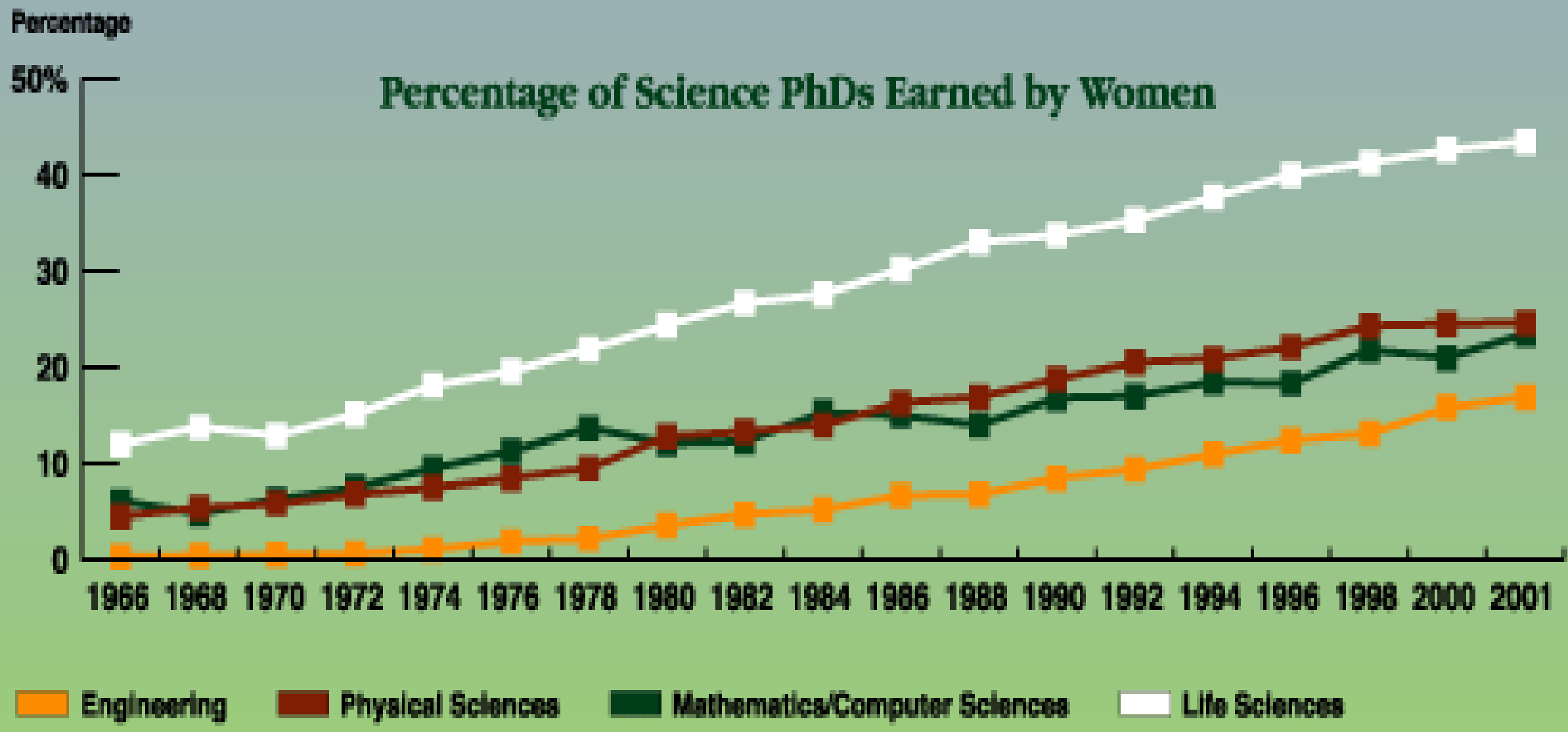
Discussion

The first initial way sexism occurs is the family commitment. Often time’s woman who are in an established career want to create tenure, but that collides with the prime time of having a family. Family is a full commitment. Many females give up their educations in order to spend more time with their families (Glazer). The science field requires long hours of research and dedication and it’s difficult to retain the work and family's time. Many females give up or put their careers to the side, in order to take care of their families instead. Even if the female decides to go back to their field, she isn’t looked strongly upon, making it all the much harder to successfully contribute to her field of study (Greenfield)

Studies have been done to determine the gap between males and females (Gwyneth). Arguably the factor of biological differences is heavily debated on, with the different uses of the brain by female and males (Glazer). But the gears have been shifted more towards academic success between the genders. Typically, males used to dominate the amount of students entering college. But now there is a higher percentage of women going to college and more than half of them succeeding in getting their degrees, especially in the sciences and math/computer science fields (Clark).

PhDs for Women Increased Steadily

The percentage of science PhDs awarded to women steadily increased from 1966 to 2001, with women making dramatic gains in engineering. In life sciences, women now earn nearly half the PhDs awarded.



Source: National Science Foundation, "Science and Engineering Degrees, 1966-2001," www.nsf.gov.

The graph here illustrates the amount of PhDs earned by woman from 1996 to 2001 (Glazer).

Specifically in the biological science, “women have earned the majority of bachelor degrees and more than 39% of all doctoral degrees since 1996, women only represented 48% of the bachelor level biologists and 35.6% of doctoral level biologists in 2003 (Wyss)”, Despite females holding more degrees, the amount of females showcasing their work out in the field is little.

The social upbringing of females to males in their youth is also a crucial point that adds to the sexism. Where boys were brought up to more challenging events then females, who are taught to refrain from such behavior, instead females are more known to “think” the solutions then males are (Glazer). However, despite the differences, females have become just as achieved as males in academic and careers. But females face the challenge of the glass ceiling, which is “the language to describe the artificial barriers that block women and minorities from advancing to the top -- in business, labor, government and other institutions throughout the American workplace (Adams)” Whereas males don’t face this challenge, and often times deny the glass ceiling idea itself.

Analysis

Females are successful in today’s society. What we drew from the research is that despite the numerous successes from females everywhere, we are still being discriminated in a way that limits our full potential. The factor of family commitment shouldn’t collide with a female’s career, and should be balanced out, where institutions give special policies regarding woman to their careers (Adams). We can draw from the research that females do want to be on par and equal with males. But the glass ceiling and social upbringing often affects the performance of females. To create a more successful career path for woman, the barriers holding females back should be abolished, although it would be a tedious path.

Conclusion

Sexism in the sciences and other fields of studies for woman is undeniable. Efforts to eliminate the barrier are steady, but slow. In the fields of studies woman struggle more so than men, because of the family commitments and the decision to raise a family out beats their career. Men don’t have this implication in their careers and are more likely to pursue their careers and become established than commit to their family, leaving that role to their significant other, the female. The female arguable has more complications in career than men. Even in academic terms, females are steadily increasing in getting their degrees, but the amount of females who use those degrees for their careers drop to almost half.

Few Women PhDs Hold Faculty Positions

The pool of potential female candidates for faculty positions is plentiful, but faculty search committees and chairs say they receive few applications from women PhDs. Recent female PhDs say they do not perceive the academic environment as desirable and so they do not apply for faculty positions. For example, while women have earned 31 percent of the chemistry doctorates awarded in recent years at the top 50 U.S. research institutions, they held only 12 percent of the chemistry faculty positions. Similarly, 27 percent had math PhDs, but only 8.3 percent of math faculties were women.

Percentage of Female PhDs and Female Faculty

Discipline	PhDs (1993-2002)	All Faculty Ranks
Chemistry (2003)	31.3%	12.1%
Math	27.2	8.3
Computer Science	20.5	10.6
Astronomy (2004)	20.6	12.6
Physics	13.3	6.6
Chemical Engineering	22.3	10.5
Civil Engineering	18.7	9.8
Electrical Engineering	11.5	6.5
Mechanical Engineering	10.4	6.7
Economics	29.3	11.5
Political Science	36.6	23.5
Sociology	58.9	35.8
Psychology	66.1	33.5
Biological Sciences	44.7	20.2

Source: Nelson, Donna, "A National Analysis of Diversity in Science and Engineering Faculties at Research Universities," Jan. 6, 2005.

The amount of woman holding a PhD and the amount of them using it in a faculty position(Glazer).

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