



Progress and Perils: New Agenda for Women





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Dear Reader,

I am proud to present "Progress and Perils: New Agenda for Women, a groundbreaking survey of over 3,300 American women. It is the most ambitious, in-depth research ever undertaken by the Center for the Advancement of Women (formerly Center for Gender Equality). The Center was founded in 1995 to be a major research-based advocate for women. Its unique mission, to conduct research and broad-based public communications and advocacy, has been affirmed by the women whose opinions you will read about in this report.

Having fought on the front lines of the women's movement of the 70's and 80's, I've considered a number of questions for some time: Is my brand of feminism relevant to my daughter's generation? Is it time to make the transition to a new era in the struggle for fairness and opportunity? Do we need a new paradigm for progress? This report addresses these, and other, questions.

Today's women are a diverse generation of doers; they are also independent thinkers with strong wills and convictions. The political and social progress won during the 20th Century makes it possible for our daughters to grow up believing, implicitly, that there is nothing they can't do, given desire, will, and perseverance. After all, they never lived during a time when education and career opportunities for women were limited and back alley abortions were the norm.

Documenting women's views about the women's movement, feminism, their priorities and opinions on key policy issues is essential to raising public awareness and activism. Over a two-year period, Princeton Survey Research Associates conducted two surveys for the Center. The Center's goal was to talk to a broad sample of women of different backgrounds and characteristics.

We learned that the priorities of women have changed as society has changed. We learned that, despite contemporary conventional wisdom, feminism is not a dirty word; the majority of women say it is a positive part of their identity. We learned that there are opportunities for progressive action on key priorities.

Ironically, issues at the top of the agenda of today's women flow from the victories that established rights of choice, fairness and opportunity. The equal rights movement unquestionably led to better conditions for women, but some hard-won rights now hang by a thread. Women do not feel locked into traditional roles of parenthood and domestic obligations, so it's not surprising that equal pay for equal work, child care and improving women's health care occupy positions of prominence.

We must watch for the myths born of conventional wisdom. For example, we did not find resentment between working and non-working women. Women now believe one can be a good wife and mother, and pursue a professional career. Love, marriage and motherhood are solid priorities. Women believe that they can have it all.

There is alarming news. We are losing ground on many hard-won victories for women's rights, which could ambush the status that women have achieved. An overwhelming number of women fear for their physical safety, ranking domestic and sexual violence at the top of their priority list. Preserving reproductive rights, core to every woman's liberty, is far down on the list of women's priorities.

There is significant and growing support for severe restrictions on abortion rights. Support for affirmative action, one of the most important avenues to women's advancement, has declined among White women. In spite of these warning signs, few women are joining organizations or making financial contributions to women's rights groups.



As we enter the 21st century, the need has never been greater for women to assert the power of our leadership, framed within a global community, that makes clear that poor women and women of color will not be left behind. A new women's agenda must address the independent aspects of women's lives that unite us and that preserve the power of liberation – freedom of choice.

Triumphs won and hardships faced by women of all nations are now shared across the borders, and our increasing global consciousness helps us recognize that the economic, political, and social progress made by some are still being sought by others.

There are no easy panaceas in the struggle for justice, no evading the hard work earlier reformers passionately undertook. I hope that after reading this report you will be inspired to engage in individual and collective action to protect women's gains and work for our progress:

- Discuss the issues with others
- Contact your legislators (national and local) and leaders of institutions important to you to press for policies that protect women's rights
- Join, actively support and contribute to organizations working for priorities women want to see addressed
- Visit the Center for the Advancement of Women's web site at www.advancewomen.org for more information or to take action

The women's movement of the 20th century is not a footnote in our history – it's the foundation for the direction of women's lives in the 21st century. The voices of women, embodied in this report, hold the potential for a new women's action agenda, which will be defined by the quality of our vision and the courage of our leadership. Our future and the future of our daughters depend on it.

Faye Wattleton



Progress and Perils: New Agenda for Women

A two-year study of more than 3,300 women

Commissioned by the Center for the Advancement of Women

Conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates

KEY FINDINGS

- Women want a new women's movement
- Violence and equal pay top women's priorities, followed by childcare and health care; abortion rights low on priority list

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

- 80% say the women's movement has improved status for women
- 60% say today there is a need for a revitalized women's movement to push for changes that benefit women
- African-American (63%) and Hispanic (68%) women see the need for a movement in higher proportions than non-minority (41%) women
- 74% say a movement should stay away from trying to change the way people behave in personal relationships

FEMINISM

- 54% say that being a feminist is an important part of who they are

MEN, MARRIAGE AND MOTHERHOOD

- 75% say it is important to them to be married or to be in a committed relationship
- 62% believe the best marriage is one where both husband and wife have jobs and both take care of children
- 91% agree that you can have a successful career and be a good mother
- 72% disagree that the experience of motherhood is necessary to have a complete life

ABORTION

- 30% say they believe abortion should be generally available to those who want it
- 51% say abortion should be available only in cases of rape, incest, or if the life of the woman is endangered, or not at all

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

- 50% say affirmative action programs should continue
- 31% say affirmative action programs should be phased out or ended immediately
- 71% of African-American women and 65% of Hispanic women say affirmative action programs should be continued

FOREIGN POLICY

- 47% say the U.S. should use its influence to improve conditions for women in other countries
- 46% say the U.S. should accept different values and not get involved

WOMEN'S PRIORITIES

- 92% say reducing domestic violence and sexual violence should be a top priority
- 90% say equal pay for equal work should be a top priority
- 85% say childcare should be a top priority
- 83% say health care should be a top priority
- 41% say keeping abortion legal should be a top priority



Progress and Perils: New Agenda for Women

Contents

- 1 Introduction**
- 5 A Different Kind of Movement**
- 6 Men, Marriage and Motherhood**
- 9 How Women Feel about Women**
- 11 No Single Issue**
- 12 Declining Support for Abortion Rights**
- 14 Affirmative Action**
- 14 Are Women Paying Attention?**
- 17 A Typology of Women From Survey**
- 24 Methodology**
- 25 Acknowledgements**

Introduction

In 2001, the Center for the Advancement of Women (formerly the Center for Gender Equality) completed a wide-range survey of women on their opinions related to gender and the role it plays in their lives. Two years later, the Center commissioned a follow-up survey to provide secondary analysis on some key questions—and to ask some important new ones. This groundbreaking report is based on the findings from this two-year effort.

Given the Center’s mission, to advocate for women’s progress, research is essential to uncovering the range and depth of feelings among women about their individual lives, including family, politics and the workplace. Women’s views must influence the shape and direction of issues that are crucial to improving fairness and opportunities. To that end, the Center commissioned the highly regarded non-partisan Princeton Survey Research Associates to conduct these opinion polls of women in America. *Progress and Perils* is based on two nationally representative telephone surveys of 3,329 women aged 18 or older, living in the continental United States. Interviewing for both surveys was conducted by Princeton Data Source, LLC, a subsidiary of Princeton Survey Research Associates.

More Effort Needed to Improve the Status of Women

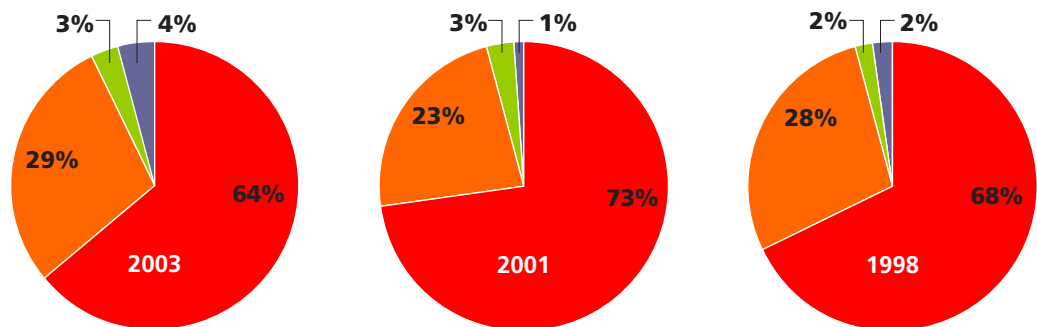
Since 1998, polls conducted for the Center for the Advancement of Women show that a majority of women believe more effort is needed to improve the status of women in the United States today.

More than 6 in 10 also agree that, “the United States continues to need a strong women’s movement to push for changes that benefit women.”

Still a long way to go

Do you think more effort needs to be made to improve the status of women in the United States today, or is it all right the way it is?

64% say **more effort** needs to be made to improve the status of women in the U.S.



more effort needs to be made	status of women all right the way it is	neither (vol)	don't know	based on national survey of 1,000 women conducted for the Center for Gender Equality by PSRA
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Progress and Perils: 3
New Agenda for Women

A call for action	2003 n=1,537	2001 n=2,329	2001 African American n=352	2001 Hispanic n=324	2001 White n=1,537
Some people say that the United States continues to need a strong women's movement to push for changes that benefit women. Do you agree or disagree?					
Strongly agree	43%	47%	63%	68%	41%
Agree, not strongly	19%	21%	16%	11%	24%
Strongly disagree	19%	15%	10%	10%	17%
Disagree, not strongly	14%	13%	49%	9%	14%
DK/REF	5%	3%	2%	2%	4%

Though support has weakened slightly in the past two years, most do believe that a movement is needed and that more effort is necessary to improve the status of women in the United States.

I warned five years ago that if the women's movement didn't move into a second stage and take on the problems of restructuring work and home, a new generation would be vulnerable to backlash. But the movement has not moved into that needed second stage, so the women struggling with these new problems view them as purely personal, not political, and no longer look to the movement for solutions.

Betty Friedan
 "The Second Stage"

On many fronts there is still work to be done. Here are compelling statistics to explain why:

Large majorities believe gender discrimination continues to exist in the workplace (84%) when it comes to promotions to supervisory positions and 65% when it comes to entry-level jobs. Most think it is widespread when it comes to everyday transactions as well (85%).

In numbers that are far too high, women say they have personally experienced gender discrimination (43%), physical or sexual assault (23%), or sexual harassment to such a degree that they felt their grades or jobs were threatened (19%).

For African American women, race trumps sex: 63% say they have experienced discrimination based on race compared to 48% who say they have experienced it based on gender.

Nine in ten say that top priority issues for them are "reducing domestic violence and sexual assault" and "equal pay for equal work."

Eighty-two percent of women say they always or sometimes feel rushed even to do the things they must do, and an equally large majority (81%) points to making time for themselves as a vital personal goal.

Widespread gender discrimination		often 2001	sometimes 2001
52% believe women are discriminated against when it comes to buying or fixing a car	How frequently, if ever, do you think women experience certain kinds of discrimination because they are women?		
	Everyday things like buying a car or having a car fixed	52%	33%
	Getting promotions to supervisory positions	36%	48%
	Entering or serving in the clergy	35%	35%
	Applying for bank loans or credit	27%	42%
	Applying for entry-level jobs	22%	43%
	Applying to a college, university or other school	10%	32%

Given these findings, it may come as no surprise that women are consistently far more likely to say that men have “the better life in this country” than they are to say women do.

It's a man's world	2003	1993	1989	1975
All things considered, who has the better life in this country — men or women?		National survey of 534 women conducted by Gallup/CNN/ <i>USA Today</i>	National survey of 617 women conducted by the Gallup Poll	National survey of 768 women conducted by the Gallup Poll
Men	55%	69%	54%	35%
Women	16%	16%	18%	26%
Same	19%	12%	20%	31%
DK/REF	10%	3%	8%	8%



A Different Kind of Movement

When women are asked to reflect on the women's movement of the past, 8 in 10 (80%) say its impact on society was mostly or completely positive. But the concept of a "movement" seems to have evolved. Unlike the single issue of equal rights that propelled the 1970s movement, women today are concerned with a broader range of issues that are less amenable to a sound bite, slogan or rally. In essence, women in America want more than the right to live their lives the way a man would. They want something that is inclusive of the wide variety of lives that women lead and the wide variety of issues that women care about.

In the 1970s, the call for action came mostly from middle class, non-minority women. In contrast, these findings show that African American and Hispanic women are not only more likely than non-minority women to feel *strongly* that our country needs a strong movement to benefit women (63% of African American, 68% of Hispanic and 41% of non-minority), they also are more likely to say being a feminist is an important part of who they are (68% of African American, 66% of Hispanic and 50% of non-minority women).

It's Not Personal

The survey findings suggest that women, by and large, want a movement that will forge change in the public realm rather than one that strives to alter personal behavior. When asked the best way to improve the lives of women today, a plurality chooses "changing the way society treats women" over individualized approaches.

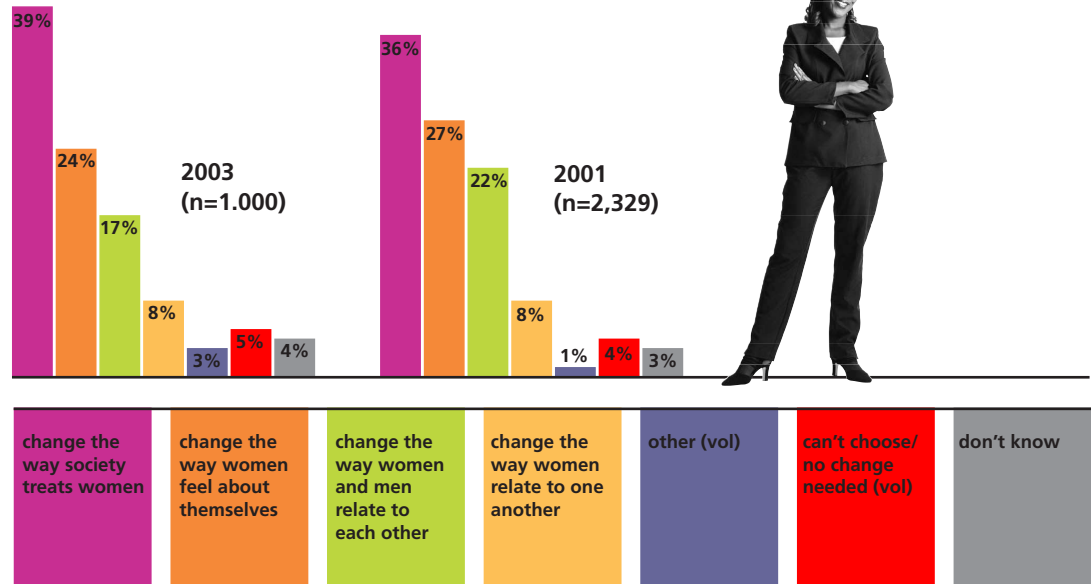
Moreover, by a huge margin, most women believe that a women's movement today should "stay away from trying to change the way people behave in personal relationships," (74%) and should not focus on "one-on-one relationships, like with co-workers or on dates" (21%).

*I think feminist is
just a strong woman.
I think without
feminists women
wouldn't be where
they are today.*

Society needs to change

39% say changing the way society treats women

What kind of change would be the best way to improve the lives of women today?



Men, Marriage and Motherhood

Intentionally or not, one message that came across during the heyday of the women’s rights movement was “you don’t need a man.” Those opposed to women’s rights seized upon this and made it an effective tool for their cause, alleging that “women’s libbers” and “bra burners” were motivated by their desire to confront the institution of marriage, eschew the responsibility of motherhood and make havoc of all that is good between women and men. Truth be told, marriage and motherhood, and the indisputable staying power of relations between the sexes, have outlived all predictions of their demise. A close analysis of the data shows that women’s rights, love and marriage are in harmony for contemporary American women.

Who should do something about pushing for more equal opportunities for women? Is it a personal fight? Is it a group who should be doing something? I think it is a personal fight.

It’s Nice to Have a Man Around*

Most women want and value men in their lives. Three in four say it’s important to their own identity to be married or in a committed relationship (54% say it’s very important and 21% say somewhat).

* 1% of population surveyed identified as lesbian or bisexual.

Progress and Perils: 7
New Agenda for Women

More than 6 in 10 women say it's very important to them personally to have a man in their life for companionship, for love and affection, and to have a family. But women are more likely to place importance on the emotional aspects of having a relationship with a man than on the practical ones. They are considerably less likely to say it's very important to have a man in their life for what are considered stereotypical reasons, such as for men's physical protection, financial support or to make household decisions.

It's nice to have a man around	very important 2001	somewhat important 2001
66% of surveyed women say it is very important to have a male companion	Women have different feelings about how important it is to have a man in their lives. Whether or not you have a man in your life right now, please tell me how important you feel it is for you personally to have a man to do the following?	
To be your companion	66%	21%
To give you love and affection	65%	22%
To have a family	64%	13%
To give you physical protection	34%	30%
To do physically demanding work around the house	28%	35%
To support you financially	26%	29 %
To make major household decisions	22%	32%

Wedding Bells

Unquestionably, marriage is a significant and highly regarded aspect of life for most women. Almost 6 in 10 surveyed (59%) are currently married or living as such, and among those who have never been married, 67% were still relatively young at the time of the survey (between 18 and 29 years old), and 53% deem marriage to be among their personal goals over the next few years.

In the main, most women want a marriage based on egalitarianism. Sixty-two percent say the best kind of marriage is one where both wife and husband have jobs and both take care of kids; 30% prefer a marriage where the man is the provider and the woman is the homemaker. Women who have never been married (78%), single mothers (76%) and women who do not have children (71%) are more likely to prefer a marriage characterized by shared responsibilities, as are African American (84%) and Hispanic (76%) women compared to non-minority women (56%).

Nowadays you work. I mean you raise the kids and you work and you do everything. You are superwoman and yet the man makes the most [money] at the same job.

The Joy of Motherhood, and More

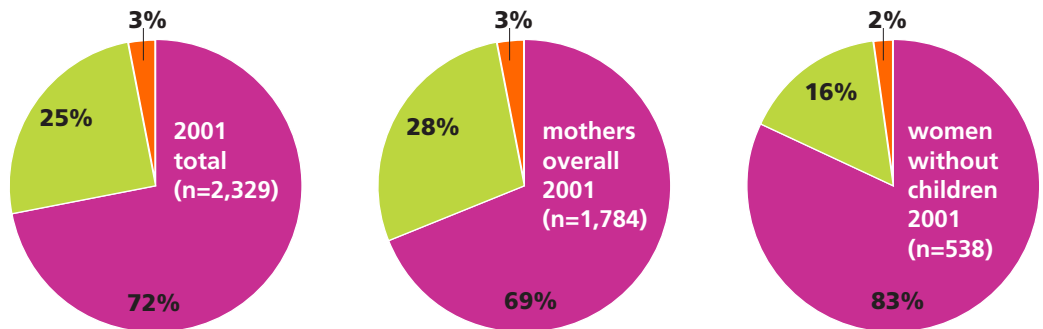
The vast majority of American women (83%) say being a mother is a very important part of who they are, and 77% of the women who participated in this 2001 survey are mothers. Among those who are not, 52% were still relatively young at the time of the survey (between 18 and 29 years old), and 4 in 10 (40%) named "having a child" as a personal goal over the next few years.

Virtually all women (91%) agree that a woman can be both a good mother and have a successful career, and, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 74.7% of women with children are in the paid workforce.* More than 7 in 10 (72%) disagree that a woman needs "the experience of motherhood in order to have a complete life," including majorities of women who do not have children (83%) as well as mothers themselves (69%). It would be a

Motherhood identity

Does a woman need the experience of motherhood in order to have a complete life?

72% say no



mistake to interpret these findings as a repudiation of motherhood; rather, they are better characterized as an affirmation that women today have choices, and that a woman is no longer solely defined or constrained by her capacity to procreate.

The data are unequivocal: women in America have a great desire for, and pride and joy in, motherhood. One in three women (33%) point to their own mother as the one woman they admire most, a proportion twice as large as any of the other women voluntarily mentioned.

* Current Population Survey March 2001

Not As Critical As They Are Made Out to Be

Contrary to conventional wisdom and countless headlines, there is little evidence of a battle between working mothers and those who stay home full time with children. Only a minority of women say it happens often that “working women look down on women who stay at home to take care of their families” (23%) or that “women who stay at home to take care of their families are critical of working mothers” (21%). Still, many do say that both of these things happen sometimes (49% and 55%, respectively).

How Women Feel about Women

The survey posed a series of questions about women’s views on how women relate to one another, both on a personal level and in the workplace. On one hand, women’s views about the success of their own gender in business and politics are encouraging, and they seem to defy some old-fashioned notions about women’s nature. Virtually all agree—with large majorities *strongly* agreeing—that a woman can retain her femininity and still be effective, assertive and in a position of power at work. Virtually all also agree that a woman can be both beautiful and taken seriously.

Trade-offs	strongly agree 2001	somewhat agree 2001
79% believe a woman can be both feminine and an effective leader	Some people think women have to make certain trade-offs to be successful in business or politics, while others think these trade-offs are not necessary. Do you agree or disagree?	
	A woman can both be feminine and be an effective leader	79% / 18%
	A woman can both be feminine and be in a position of power	75% / 20%
	A woman can both be feminine and be assertive	74% / 22%
	A woman can both be a good mother and have a successful career	67% / 24%
	A woman can both be beautiful and be taken seriously at work	63% / 29%

Similarly, most women say that female supervisors are understanding when it comes to women’s family responsibilities and that women in power treat female employees respectfully—almost 9 in 10 say these behaviors happen either “often” or “sometimes.” Yet, similarly large majorities also believe that women “often” or “sometimes” are very critical of other women and that they resort to using their physical attributes to get what they want.

Woman to woman	often 2001	sometimes 2001
57% say woman are very critical of each other		
Here are a few statements about ways some people say men and women behave. How often does each happen?		
Women are very critical of other women	57%	38%
Men resent woman who have more power than they do	51%	43%
Female supervisors at work are understanding about women’s family responsibilities	33%	56%
Men do not take women seriously	33%	59%
Women in powerful positions treat women who work for them with respect	29%	57%
Women use their sexuality to get what they want	27%	60%
Working women look down on women who stay at home to take care of their families	23%	49%
Women who stay at home to take care of their families are critical of working mothers	21%	55%

Top priorities

There are many issues a women's movement could focus on, but not all can be a priority. Below is what women responded to as "top priority."

2003:
92% (2001: 93%)
reducing domestic violence & sexual assault

90% (2001: 93%)
equal pay for equal work

74% (2001: 78%)
time off from work to care for family members

64% (2001: 66%)
improving women's lives in other parts of the world

85% (2001: 88%)
child care

72% (2001: 78%)
reducing drug and alcohol addiction among women

61% (2001: 57%)
getting more women elected to political office

83% (2001: 89%)
improving women's health care

71% (2001: 68%)
reducing sexual harassment

41% (2001: 49%)
keeping abortion legal

66% (2001: 67%)
increasing the number of young women who study math, science and technology

38% (2001: 41%)
increasing the number of girls who participate in organized sports

No Single Issue

No single issue has a corner on the market of women's attention. Asked to rate a dozen areas where a future women's movement should focus, substantial majorities point to 10 out of the 12 as "top priority" items. Highest on the list are "reducing domestic violence and sexual assault" and "equal pay for equal work." Last are "keeping abortion legal" and "increasing the number of girls who participate in organized sports." Asked to pick just one of these 12 issues that would be *most* important to them personally, "equal pay for equal work" (22%), is by far the most popular choice.

Declining Support for Abortion Rights

Abortion is a contentious issue that often divides rather than unites. It is a topic women may choose not to think about except, as *Boston Globe* columnist Ellen Goodman quips, in cases of “rape, incest or me*.” After 30 years, “keeping abortion legal” is relatively low on the list of priorities for women.

Still, abortion continues to command headlines, impact local and national politics and generate controversy. It also persists as a passionate moral issue for those who care about it. The Center for the Advancement of Women continues to document a distinct increase in support for restrictions on abortion rights. In 2003, 30% of women say they believe abortion should be generally available to those who want it, down from 34% in 2001.

Declining support for abortion		2003	2001
34% say it should be against the law except in cases of rape, incest, and to save the woman’s life	Which one of the following comes closest to your own view on abortion?		
	It should be generally available to those who want it	30%	34%
	It should be available but under stricter limits than it is now	17%	19%
	It should be against the law except in cases of rape, incest, and to save the woman’s life	34%	31%
	It should not be permitted at all	17%	14%
	[No opinion]	2%	2%

Beyond the restrictions, we saw an increase in women who would not permit legal abortion under any circumstances. Eight in 10 women say they have no second thoughts about their views on abortion.

A Supreme Lack of Concern?

Even during the 2000 presidential campaign, the media and others speculated on what might happen to the make-up of the Supreme Court if George W. Bush were to become president, particularly on what might happen to the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized nationwide abortion. As the Bush presidency is at the halfway mark, vacancies on the Supreme Court appear imminent. Women were asked if they think the Supreme Court will

* *The Boston Globe*, January 19, 2003, “A Warning Bell on *Roe v. Wade*.”

change the law about abortion in the next few years to make it harder to get, easier to get, or if the Supreme Court will keep the law the same as it is now. Fifty percent predict the law will remain as is, 26% that abortion will be made harder to get, and 14% that it will be made easier. A close look at this finding, however, shows that women are about twice as likely to say the Court will make it harder rather than easier (26% vs. 14%).

Violence against Women

Safety continues to be a perennial concern among American women. More than 9 in 10 say “reducing domestic violence and sexual assault” should be a top priority of any formal efforts taken on behalf of women today, and almost 1 in 4 women (23%) say they have personally experienced either physical or sexual assault. Only a minority of women say they feel very safe walking in their neighborhood after dark (29%) or “when in town at night” (17%), although majorities do say they feel very safe at home at night (73%) or when walking about their neighborhood in the daytime (75%).

If there hadn't been feminist or feminism we wouldn't have come as far as we have.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

After law professor Anita Hill came forward with allegations that her former boss, then Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas, had behaved towards her in a sexually inappropriate manner, reports of sexual harassment in the workplace skyrocketed. Since then, concerted efforts have been made to educate the public about what sexual harassment is—and what it is not.

About 7 in 10 women indicated that reducing sexual harassment should be a top priority of a future women's movement. Indeed, the survey findings show that a majority (54%) view sexual harassment as a serious problem for many working women. Nevertheless, the findings also show that a surprisingly large proportion—1 in 3 women (33%)—view it as “just innocent flirting intended as flattery.” Asked who typically is at fault when they hear about cases of sexual harassment, 56% point to the man and 17% to the woman. (Twelve percent volunteer “none of the above,” and 15% say they don't know or refused to answer the question.)

African American (63%) and Hispanic (73%) women are more likely to say sexual harassment is a serious workplace concern than non-minority (49%) women. That may be an obvious explanation for why women of color are more likely to say that reducing sexual harassment should be a top priority (83% of African American, 72% of Hispanic and 65% of non-minority women).

A feminist movement to me is a movement where a woman says, “no, I can do this,” or “I want to go out. I want to get a job.”

No one has ever told us, our generation, that you can't do this because you are a woman. I think a lot of it is more kind of implied. No one is ever going to tell you that you are not going to be promoted or you are not going to be the CEO of this company because you are a woman, but there will be other little blocks that will happen because you are a woman. So it is harder to fight.

If you don't throw it [women's rights] out there, like poke the fire, it will go away, it will go out.

Affirmative Action

More than 4 in 10 women (43%) report that they have personally experienced prejudice or discrimination because they are women. Yet, women's overall support for affirmative action policies does not seem to be as strong as such a large percentage would merit. While 50% of women say affirmative action programs—whose purpose is to promote fair treatment for women and minorities in jobs and education—should be continued for the foreseeable future, about a third think they should be either phased out (23%) or ended immediately (8%). (Another 19% say they don't know or refused to answer the question.)

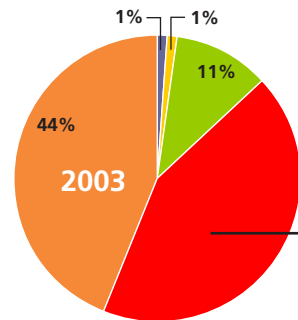
As might be expected, women of color show higher levels of support: African American (71%) and Hispanic (56%) women are more likely than non-minority (45%) women to say affirmative action programs should be continued rather than phased out or dismantled. Recall that 63% of African American women say they have experienced race discrimination, compared to 48% who say they have experienced discrimination or prejudice because they are women.

Are Women Paying Attention?

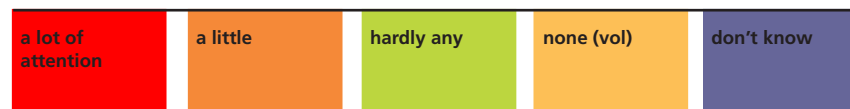
After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, interest in—and outrage about—how women in other parts of the world are treated was high. In a survey conducted by the Center only two months after 9/11, 85% of American women were able to identify—without prompting—specific examples of mistreatment and inhumane conditions for the women of Afghanistan. In 2003, the Center asked women about their interest in “women’s issues or rights” in the United States and in other countries around the world. Forty-three percent say they pay “a lot of attention,” and 44% “a little,” to stories about women in America; 30% say they pay “a lot of attention,” and 46% “a little,” to stories about women around the world.

Are women paying attention?

How much attention do you pay to news stories about women’s issues or rights in the United States?

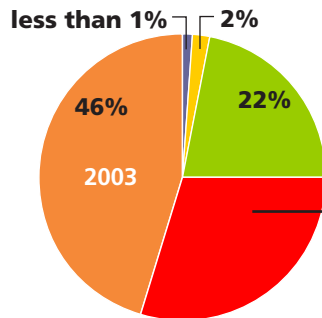


43% said they pay a lot of attention to news stories about women’s issues or rights in the U.S.

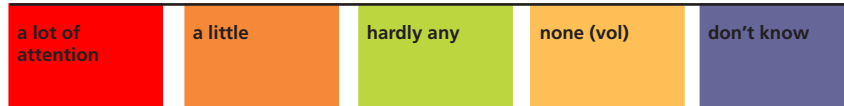


Are women paying attention?

How much attention do you pay to news stories about women's issues or rights in other countries around the world?



30% of women pay a lot of attention to news stories about women's issues or rights in other countries.



Mind Our Business?

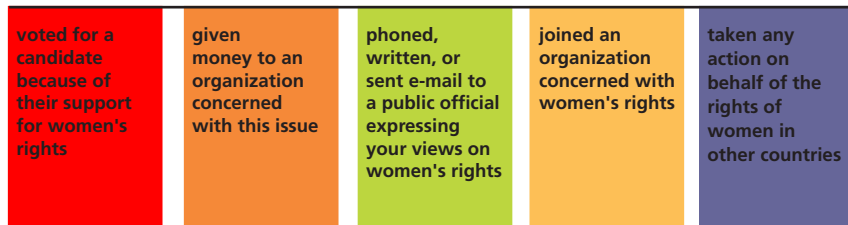
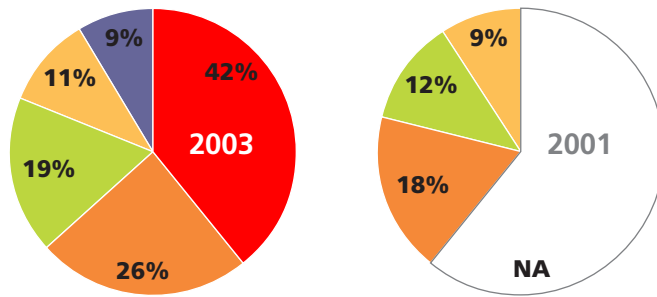
It is a fact that shocking conditions for women exist in many countries throughout the world—including our own. Nonetheless, even before the U.S.-Iraq War, women were split down the middle on whether the United States should take action to help improve the lives of women in other places. Almost half (47%) say the United States “should use its influence to improve conditions for women in other countries,” and almost half (46%) say the United States “should accept that other countries have values about women that are different from ours and not get involved.”

In terms of conventional political activity, more than 4 in 10 (42%) of women say they have voted for candidates because of their position on women’s issues. Smaller numbers of women say they have ever done the following: given money to an organization concerned with women’s rights; contacted a public official expressing their views on women’s rights; joined an organization concerned with women’s issues; or taken any action on behalf of the rights of women in other countries.

Taking action

Please tell me which of the following political activities related to women's rights, if any, you have ever participated in. (% responding "yes")

42% voted for a candidate because of their support for women's rights



As I got older I thought older women would be more like my mom. Now, I'm realizing that there are women out there who are my grandmother's age who are rock stars or CEO's of companies and I think that as I get older I am not going to quit, retire from life and vegetate when I turn 60. I am going to have all these role models around me.

A Typology of Women

In an effort to shed light on the differences among women—and to counter misperceptions of women as a group—the Center created a typology based on answers to key questions in the survey. Relying mainly on respondents’ attitudes about women’s roles and status in society, six distinct “types” of women were developed from the data.

Each type contains a demographic mixture of women—young and old, Democrat and Republican, wealthy and struggling, African American, Hispanic and non-minority women. Except when noted, there was nothing distinctive about where women were from geographically. Some characteristics are strongly shared across groups. For example, the majority of women in each group have been married, most are mothers and most consider motherhood a very important part of who they are. In addition, a “feminist identity” was considered important to the majority of four of the groups.

The overwhelming majority in each category says that “making time” for herself is an important goal. And in each group a majority says that more effort needs to be made to improve the status of women in the United States today.

While each group has its own distinctive constellation of attitudes, women in different groups may, of course, share the same perspective on individual issues.* On the other hand, the women in each group also are very different from one another on a wide range of attitudes, beliefs and preferences. On the following pages we delve into these differences in detail. Here is a summary of the profile of each group:

Traditionalists are characterized by a politically conservative mind-set that favors separate spheres for women and men.

Family First Women strongly value motherhood and the importance of family but not in an exclusive or extreme way.

Separate-but-Equals believe women and men are basically different and attribute this to biology, yet at the same time exhibit a strong egalitarian mind-set.

Movement Legacies are unique in the degree to which they strongly identify with the tenets of the women’s movement of the 1970s.

*The statistical processes used to create the groups are described in *Progress and Perils: New Agenda for Women* (Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Center for the Advancement of Women, 2001).

Modern Feminists are unusual compared to other groups in that they profess a feminist sensibility yet hold the opinion that men and women should play different roles in the family, in relationships and in the workplace.

Advocates come closest to what would conventionally be described as a feminist and are most likely to have taken personal action on behalf of women's rights.

We caution readers that there are many findings in the typology that challenge conventional notions about women—particularly the notion that women fit into neatly defined categories. For example, in even the most conservative groups there are women who consider themselves feminists, and in the most liberal groups there are women who show little support for abortion rights. As a result, readers may find themselves asking if the word “feminist” has lost its traditional meaning, or if abortion rights have lost their traditional base of support.

In fact, when the Center created this typology, we hoped it would stimulate thinking about many issues and expected it to raise provocative questions. Ultimately, perhaps, it will offer a new way of looking at the issues that are important to women in America today—and a reminder that it may be unwise to presume a person's views based simply on gender.

Traditionalists

Eight in ten (80%) say their religious views are a very important part of their identity (by far the largest percentage across the groups), and they are the only group where a majority (58%) self-describes as born-again or an Evangelical

Christian. Twelve percent are African American or Hispanic, the smallest percentage across the groups. **Traditionalists** are more likely to be older (49% are 50 or older), Republican (48%), and from the South (43%). Half have at least some college (49%) and half do not (51%); similarly, about half are employed (46%) and about half are not (53%). They are fairly well represented across the income spectrum—about equally as likely to have a household income of under \$20,000 (13%) as they are to have \$75,000 or more (16%).

There are sizeable numbers of **Traditionalists** that challenge preconceived notions of what it means to be conservative—or traditional, if you will. For example, 35% identify as feminist, 45% consider the word “feminist” to have a generally positive connotation, and 69% think the overall impact of the women's movement was a positive one. But, unlike the majorities of the other groups, the majority of **Traditionalists** do not consider feminism to be an important part of their identity. However, a majority (54%) thinks more effort needs to be made to improve the status of women, and 44% support the idea of a strong women's movement to push for changes to benefit women.

Traditionalists also are characterized by their strong belief in separate spheres for women and men. Overwhelming majorities believe that women should play different roles in relationships (90%) and in families (96%), and that the best marriages are those where

Progress and Perils: 19
New Agenda for Women

husbands provide financially and wives take care of the home and children (94%). But they are less certain about workplace roles: a much smaller majority (61%) believes that women and men should do different jobs.

Traditionalists—16% of the sample—are by far the most politically right leaning of the six groups. They are far less supportive of abortion rights or affirmative action than any of the other groups. Only 17% think abortion should be generally available; 47% that it should be legal only in cases of rape, incest and if a woman’s life is in danger; 22% that it should never be available; and 13% that it should be available but under stricter limits than it is now. Only 35% believe affirmative action programs should be continued for the foreseeable future.

Three in four **Traditionalists** (74%) have volunteered their time at a church, charity or community organization in the past year, compared to just over half in each of the other groups.

Family First Women

Family First Women have a slightly higher proportion of Hispanics than other groups (16%), and are more likely to have never been to college (25% have less than a high school education and 32% hold a high school diploma as their highest educational achievement). 40% of **Family First Women** were identified as Evangelical or born-again Christian. About half are currently employed, half are not (48% and 51%, respectively). Thirty-six percent are Democrat; 26% Republican; 26% Independent.

On one hand, the women in this category—15% of the sample—place an extremely high value on the experience of motherhood and the importance of family. Sixty-four percent think motherhood is necessary for a woman to have a complete life (an extremely high proportion compared with any of the other groups).

Despite the strong emphasis **Family First Women** put on the experience of mothering, it’s crucial to point out that these women are not remnants of the “biology is destiny” school of thought. Only 4% believe that women and men are different based solely on their biological make-up, and a plurality (42%) thinks women and men are essentially the same. Working mothers pose no problem for **Family First Women**: 89% agree that women can successfully combine career and motherhood. They are less likely, however, to say the better marriage is one where both mother and father work and share family responsibilities (38%) than they are to say the better one is where father provides financially and mother stays home to focus on family (54%). On this question, the other groups are more extreme at both ends of the spectrum.

In terms of valuing the role women play in the realms of family and work, **Family First Women** clearly prioritize family. Few believe men and women should play different roles in the family (16%) or relationships (14%), or that they should do different jobs (19%). **Family First Women** are appreciative of the part the women’s movement has played in

women's lives. Two in three (66%) say women's issues are very important to them, and more than 3 in 4 (77%) say the women's movement had an overall positive effect on society. But like the majority of others, they think women still have a long way to go: Most say more effort is needed to improve women's status in society (68%) and that there is room in America for a strong women's movement (66%).

Only 28% say abortion should be generally available to women who want it. Forty-two percent support the continuation of affirmative action programs.

Separate-but-Equals

Most Separate-but-Equals have at least some college (53%), most are employed (63%), and 1 in 5 (20%) have household incomes of \$75,000 plus. Religious beliefs are a very important part of identity to 65% of this group. More than 8 in 10 (82%) are non-minority women. A plurality (34%) identifies as Democrat, 29% as Republican and 28% as Independent.

What makes **Separate-but-Equals**—17% of the sample—stand out is that 100% share beliefs on two important points: *all* believe that women and men are basically different when it comes to personalities, interests, and abilities, and *all* attribute the difference to biology.

One might think that such universality of views on the differences between the sexes would translate into a "separate spheres" mind-set: that men are more suited for certain things and women for others. But the findings show that it does not. Relatively few **Separate-but-Equals** think women and men should do different jobs (17%), play different roles in the family (13%), or have different responsibilities in relationships (17%). Ninety-one percent believe a woman can be both a good mother and have a successful career, and 63% prefer a marriage where wife and husband both work and share child care and household duties. Eight in ten (81%) do not think women need the experience of motherhood to have a complete life. And 86% do not believe that women and men should be valued differently by society. For all practical purposes, these are amazingly strong numbers in support of an egalitarian point of view.

A minority think gender discrimination happens often to women in the following circumstances: entering or serving in the clergy (31%); getting promotions to supervisory positions (23%); applying for bank loans or credit (16%); applying for entry-level jobs (8%); or applying to college (3%). But almost half (48%) acknowledge that discrimination happens often when it comes to everyday things like buying or fixing a car. And 40% say they have personally experienced prejudice or discrimination based on their gender.

These seemingly easygoing views about the prevalence of discrimination against women are in sharp contrast to some of the other views of **Separate-but-Equals**. For example, almost half think affirmative action programs should be continued (46%), rather than ended (6%) or phased out over the next few years (27%). Seven in ten (71%) think more effort is needed

today to improve the status of women. And 65% agree that there is a need for a strong women's movement in this country. Thirty-five percent hold a pro-choice view on abortion.

Separate-but-Equals are essentially split as to whether being a feminist is an important (50%) or unimportant (46%) part of their identity. In contrast, the other groups appear to be more definitive about where they stand.

Movement Legacies

Movement Legacies are distinctive by their youth (30% are between 18 and 29 years old, and their median age is 38 years). Twenty-eight percent of **Movement Legacies** have never been married and 37% do not have children. Sixty-one percent have at least some college, including 30% who are college graduates. Three out of four (76%) are currently employed, and about 1 in 5 (19%) have household incomes of \$75,000 or more annually.

Movement Legacies are less likely than any of the other groups to say their religious beliefs are a very important part of their identity (56%). Almost half (47%) are Democrats.

Movement Legacies almost perfectly mirror the universe of American women in terms of race and ethnicity; none of the other groups comes close.

Movement Legacies—20% of the sample—are unique in the degree to which they strongly identify with the tenets of the women's movement of the 1970s. Nine in ten **Movement Legacies** (90%) say the women's movement had a predominantly positive effect on society as a whole, 3 in 4 (75%) say they have a positive view of the term "feminist," and 62% say "being a feminist" is an important part of who they are. **Movement Legacies** also are in favor of a revitalized women's movement (77%) and for more efforts to improve the status of women (82%). When asked about 12 items that should be a priority, **Movement Legacies** stand out when it comes to "keeping abortion legal"—60% say it should be a top priority.

Furthermore, 98% of **Movement Legacies** believe that a woman does not need the experience of motherhood to have a complete life, a powerful notion born of the 1970s women's movement. Virtually all **Legacies** say that it's possible for a woman to be a good mother and have a successful career (97%), and large majorities say that the better marriage is one where both wife and husband work and share child care rather than one where the husband provides financially and the wife stays home with the kids (87%). Ninety percent say that women and men should not be valued differently by society.

Zero percent—that is *none* of the **Movement Legacies**—believe that women and men are fundamentally different by virtue of biology; 24% think the sexes differ mainly as a result of the way they are treated by society, and 15% because of the way women and men are raised. In contrast, more than 4 in 10 (44%) believe that the sexes are basically the same when it comes to personalities, interests and abilities. And on the issues of discrimination against women, surprisingly, 33% of **Movement Legacies** say none of various forms of discrimination happen often in society.

Finally, **Movement Legacies** are the most likely to be pro-choice of all the groups, with 47% believing that abortion should be generally available. Still, more than half (53%) would restrict abortion at least somewhat. Fifty-five percent support the continuation of affirmative action programs.

Modern Feminists

Demographically, there is one important instance where Modern Feminists stand out compared to other groups: a larger number are African American (18%) or Hispanic (13%). A majority (72%) says religious views are very important to their identity, and 48% identify as born-again or Evangelical Christian. Most are not college educated (58%). A majority are employed (63%), but 1 in 4 (24%) have household incomes of less than \$20,000 annually. Almost half (45%) identify as Democrats.

Modern Feminists—18% of the sample—are unique in that most profess to be feminist yet have views that seem to contradict the term. Six in ten say being a feminist is a very (28%) or somewhat (32%) important part of their identity, and 65% have a positive opinion of the word. But in an apparent contradiction of the conventional definition of “feminist,” overwhelming majorities of **Modern Feminists** think women and men should play different roles in the family (90%) and in relationships (89%), and a large majority think women and men should have different jobs (63%). They also are far more likely than other groups to think women and men should “be valued differently by society” (35%). The data do not provide insight on whether it is women or men who should be valued more or less; this is worthy of future research.

One in three (33%) believe that women often “use their physical attributes to get what they want,” and a similar number says that “what many women call sexual harassment is just innocent flirting intended as flattery” (38%).

On the other hand, virtually all **Modern Feminists** have an egalitarian sensibility when it comes to marriage: 94% prefer a marriage where both wife and husband work outside the home and share family responsibilities. Virtually all also believe it is possible for a woman to be both a good mother and have a successful career (97%), and a large majority (70%) say a woman does not need to be a mother to have a complete life.

Only about 1 in 3 (31%) **Modern Feminists** hold a pro-choice view on abortion. More than half (54%) support the continuation of affirmative action programs.

Advocates

Advocates are one of the more ethnically diverse groups; about 1 in 4 are African American (15%) or Hispanic (11%). Most are employed (63%), but 26% have household income of less than \$20,000 annually. Almost half (45%) identify as Democrats.

Advocates—14% of the sample—come closest to what would conventionally be described as a feminist. Large majorities say that “being a feminist” is a very (30%) or somewhat (34%) important part of their own identity; that women’s issues are *very* important to them (81%); and that the United States continues to need a strong women’s movement to push for changes that benefit women (87%). They are much more likely than other groups to say it happens often that “men resent women who have more power than they do” (68%).

Three in ten (31%) **Advocates** have taken action on behalf of women’s rights, i.e., contacted a public official on an issue related to women’s rights (19%), or given money to (24%) or joined (14%) an organization concerned with women’s rights. Stronger majorities than in the other groups would give top priority in a new women’s movement to reducing sexual harassment (80%), increasing the number of women who take up math and science (78%), and improving women’s lives in other countries (74%). They also are more likely than four of the other groups to say “keeping abortion legal” should be a top priority (59%, along with 60% of **Movement Legacies**).

Advocates stand out especially in terms of their views on sex discrimination. They are considerably more likely than women in any other group to say discrimination happens often in: promotions to supervisory positions (91%); daily life (81%); applying for bank loans or credit (78%); entry-level jobs (73%); serving in the clergy (62%); and college admissions (35%). And they tend to be more likely than other women to have personally faced a variety of forms of discrimination: 59% because they are women; 33% because of age; 33% because of ethnic background; 29% because of physical appearance. They also are more likely to say they have been physically or sexually assaulted (31%) or have experienced sexual harassment to such an extent that they felt their job or grades were threatened (29%). Not surprisingly, they are by far the most likely of the groups to say that affirmative action programs “should be continued for the foreseeable future” (69%) rather than ended or phased out.

But there are some surprises—more reminders that women cannot be pigeonholed, that a woman’s views should not be presumed simply because we know she is a feminist, for example, or because she appears to be sympathetic to progressive issues. Abortion is a case in point. While a plurality (43%) of **Advocates** say abortion should be generally available to women who want it, still, more than half would place further restrictions on abortion rights. Similarly, women who are **Advocates** are no exception when it comes to the importance of religious beliefs in their own lives: 66% say their religious views are a *very* important part of who they are—and more than 1 in 3 (35%) self-describe as born-again or Evangelical Christian.

Methodology

The first survey took place between December 9, 2000, and January 21, 2001, and included interviews with 2,329 women. In order to obtain substantial numbers of interviews with African American and Hispanic women, the sample was designed to target telephone exchanges with disproportionately larger proportions of African American and Hispanic households; interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, according to the preference of the respondent. Statistical results are weighted to correct for the disproportionate sampling and for other known demographic discrepancies. All subgroup analysis in this report—for example, comparisons based on race/ethnicity, marital status, motherhood status, and gender “typology”—are based on findings from this survey. The margin of sampling error for the 2,329 interviews conducted in the first survey is +/- 2.2 percentage points; the response rate is 48%.

The second survey, which included 20 trend questions and 15 new ones(not counting the demographic questions), took place between December 17, 2002, and January 2, 2003, with 1,000 women. Interviews were conducted in English only. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the 1,000 interviews conducted in the second survey is +/- 3 percentage points; the response rate is 37%.

Please refer to Princeton Survey Research Associates’ original reports for further details on the study design, execution, and weighting procedures; for the formula for calculating response rates; and for the methodology for creating the women’s typology.



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