



Michelle Obama Criticizes America at UN for Treatment of Women

In a recent address to a United Nations education event, First Lady Michelle Obama decided to shine the light on a certain nation's treatment of women. No, it wasn't Saudi Arabia where females aren't allowed to drive, or the Congo where rape is brutal and systematic. It was the United States.

Here's the [relevant portion](#) of the First Lady's speech of September 24: "[W]omen here are still woefully underrepresented in our government and in the senior ranks of our corporations. We still struggle with violence against women and harmful cultural norms that tell women how they're supposed to look and act."



Now, it's not just that singling out the United States for such criticism in our rough-hewn world is a bit like maligning a neighbor who wouldn't buy his wife a new mink while ignoring the wife-beater across the street; it's that, critics might point out, what's explicit and implicit in M. Obama's criticism is very much the opposite of the truth.

Starting with the matter of violence, men are more likely than women to be victims of assault. Moreover, as *The New American* recently [reported](#) and contrary to conventional wisdom, women in America commit domestic violence more frequently than men do.

The matter of "underrepresentation" is an interesting one. While what the First Lady says is true, skewing the picture is what she doesn't say: Everybody is underrepresented in something.

For example, while 71 percent of young women now [enroll in college](#) immediately after high school, only 61 percent of young men do. And 25 percent [fewer men](#) graduate from college. Then, as Walter E. Williams [wrote](#) in "Do Statistical Disparities Mean Injustice?":

[S]harks are nine times as likely to attack and kill men than they are women. If sinister motivation is attributed for this disparity, as is done in the cases of sex and racial disparities, we can only conclude that sharks are sexist. Another sex disparity is despite the fact that men are 50 percent of the population and so are women, men are struck by lightning six times as often as women. I wonder what whoever is in charge of lightning has against men.

While Williams is being comedic, the above reflects a certain reality: The sexes make very different choices in lifestyles and careers. As to the latter, performing virtually all the most risky jobs, men suffer 92 percent of work-related deaths. Feminists don't lobby to eliminate that disparity, though.

In fact, while the First Lady mentioned college enrollment, she didn't lament the inequality of men's underrepresentation but instead called it "progress." Her husband went her one better in 2012, [characterizing](#) men's collegiate woes as "a great accomplishment." This could make many conclude that



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equality rhetoric is [more ploy than principle](#).

As for men's numerical dominance in government and the senior ranks of corporations, there are good reasons for it. Full-time men work longer hours than "full-time" women, being twice as likely to work more than 40 hours a week; men also work longer in years, with 45 to 54-year-old men having greater job tenure (experience) than women in the same age group.

Moreover, the sexes choose to pursue different degrees. As I [wrote](#) in "Equal Pay for Equal Work Means Paying Men More," "Where women are more likely to major in 'soft sciences' such as psychology and sociology and even fields such as 'Women's Studies,' men tend toward the hard sciences; in fact, the disparity is great enough that statisticians have proposed applying Title IX dictates to the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math) to artificially equalize the sex ratio in them."

This, of course, corresponds to the sexes' different career choices. As Politifact's Truth-O-Meter pointed out in a January [piece](#) analyzing Obama's State of the Union address, "[M]en and women historically enter certain fields more than others — a phenomenon known as 'occupational segregation.' Women more often choose to be receptionists, nurses and teachers, while men pursue paths as truck drivers, managers and computer software engineers, according to the [Institute for Women's Policy Research](#)."

Lastly, as author Carrie Lukas has [highlighted](#), women aren't as likely to try to climb the corporate and government ladders in the first place. For example, they're more likely to decline promotions, and they value personal fulfillment and workplace flexibility over money when choosing a job.

And what of "harmful cultural norms that tell women how they're supposed to look and act"? This cuts both ways. Girls sometimes develop "eating disorders" due to concern over their appearance, but boys may take steroids due to concern over theirs.

Delving deeper, however, the First Lady is lamenting "sex stereotyping," which is currently cast as a stifling patriarchal straitjacket. But the open-minded might consider another possibility:

Just as we might provide a math prodigy with much different interest-specific opportunities and tutelage than a music prodigy, so-called "sex stereotyping" merely reflects the recognition of — and desire to augment — each sex's natural inclinations.

Regardless, while some complain about pigeonholing boys and girls, raising children is all about categorizing, molding, and limiting. And it isn't just the so-called "gender straitjacket" that supposedly violates a child's right to choose his own "gender" (this term is misused). Just as psychologists define "gender dysphoria" — the belief that you're one sex stuck in the body of the other — they also define "clinical lycanthropy," the sense that you're really an animal. Texas girl Sarah Rodriguez, for instance, [insists](#) she's a "canine" and goes by the name Wolfie Blackheart. Despite this, we still pigeonhole children by putting them in clothing, and teaching them language, manners, and the whole range of human norms. We don't refrain from limiting a child with a "species straitjacket" because he may one day conclude he's a ferret.

Having said this, given that no society is perfect a woman may want to exercise her right to choose where to live. So here's a [short list](#) of nations for comparison purposes:

- Afghanistan — a woman dies during childbirth every half hour, 87 percent of women endure domestic violence, more than one million widows are homeless, and it's the only nation in which more women than men kill themselves.
- Iraq — fear of abduction and rape prevent girls from attending school. Millions of women go hungry



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and more than a million have been displaced.

- Nepal — unmarried teenage daughters may be sold to traffickers, and widows labeled witches suffer extreme abuse.
- Mali — most all women suffer genital mutilation.
- Sudan — rape is used as a demographic weapon; justice for women is impossible.
- Pakistan — as in much of the Muslim world, honor killings of females are not uncommon.
- China — large numbers of girls are still aborted, murdered after birth, or abandoned because of the nation's one-child policy and preference for boys.
- United States — women must endure female-oriented affirmative action and quotas, free contraception, the right to vote, unprecedented opportunities, and, as the Left has warned, the War on Women.

Michelle Obama, please advise.

Photo: First Lady Michelle Obama delivering her speech at UN education event, Sept. 24, 2014



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