

Annual Review of Law and Social Science Gender Inequalities in Markets

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Abstract

Various forms of inequality, such as the gender, race, and class systems of inequality, operate and intersect in societies and markets. In this review, I discuss specifically the gender system of inequality. I focus on market interactions, conceptualizing them as the building blocks for gender inequalities in markets. My objective is to give an account of the complex interplay between the unequal distributions of resources, stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender, and the law. I start by describing the persistence of gender inequality in markets. Building on studies in social psychology, I then identify the ways in which stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender constantly, and unconsciously, frame our market interactions. Lastly, I discuss the limits of the law in altering the ways in which we interact in markets and the potential of the law to bring about lasting change.

MARKET INEQUALITIES

Labor Markets

Studies have documented dramatic changes since the 1960s in gender inequality in the American labor force, following substantial increases in women's college graduation rates and labor force participation (Cotter et al. 2004, 2008). Segregation in educational fields and occupations decreased considerably (Blau et al. 2013, Charles & Grusky 2005, Cotter et al. 2004, England & Li 2006, Weeden et al. 2018), and the gender wage gap decreased significantly (Blau & Kahn 2017). However, progress toward gender equality has slowed in recent decades (England 2010, England et al. 2020).

Even though more women than men graduate from college (or receive doctoral degrees) (DiPrete & Buchmann 2013, England et al. 2007), the desegregation of fields of study and of occupations has stalled since the late 1990s (Charles & Grusky 2005, England et al. 2020). In the United States, women are still less likely than men to hold lucrative positions and positions with authority and decision-making power (Mandel 2013, Smith 2002). A recent report calculated that in 2011, about one-half of the women or men in the United States would have had to change their occupations to fully desegregate the American labor force.

The median hourly wage gap for women and men in full-time employment decreased rapidly during the 1970s and 1980s, but since the 1990s, change has been much slower. In 2018, the ratio of median hourly earnings for women and men in full-time employment was 0.83 (England et al. 2020). It is important to highlight that a significant proportion of the gender wage gap can be accounted for by labor force segregation. Women and men tend to work in different occupations and jobs; occupations and jobs with a predominantly male workforce tend to be more valued and better remunerated than the occupations and jobs with a predominantly female workforce (England 2010).

Women tend to work in ostensibly feminine occupations (such as care work or services), and men in ostensibly masculine occupations (such as manual work, technical jobs, and leadership positions) (Charles & Grusky 2005, England et al. 2002). Studies have shown that predominantly female occupations (occupations with more female workers) tend to pay less than predominantly male occupations. This remains true even when comparing pay levels for occupations with similar educational and skill requirements. Thus, some scholars have concluded that employers tend to devalue the work that women do, and therefore tend to pay workers in predominantly female occupations (both women and men) less (England 1992, England & Folbre 2005, Kilbourne et al. 1994, Levanon et al. 2009, Mandel 2018). Given that predominantly female occupations tend to be devalued and underpaid, it is not surprising that most of the transformations with respect to gender inequality in the labor force have involved women moving into positions previously occupied by men and fewer men moving into positions previously occupied by women (England 2010).

Another structural factor that has contributed to the stalled convergence of the gender wage gap is the gradual and increasing return to long work hours (Mandel & Semyonov 2014). One recent study estimated that men's tendency to overwork (50 or more hours per week) accounts for approximately 10% of the gender wage gap (Cha & Weeden 2014).

Finally, several studies have documented disparities in employment outcomes between mothers and non-mothers in the labor force (Budig & England 2001, Correll et al. 2007, Kleven et al. 2019). After controlling for work experience, mothers face an estimated motherhood wage penalty of approximately 5% for every additional child they have, in addition to disparities in hiring (Correll et al. 2007). Remarkably, women employed in high-status occupations and positions are more likely to remain childless than women employed in other occupations and positions (Goldin 1995).

Interestingly, the forms of gender inequality that have tended to persist in the American labor force are those that are commonly perceived as outcomes of the free choices made by legally equal yet essentially different women and men, such as educational, occupational, and parental choices (Bertrand 2020; Charles 2011; Charles & Bradley 2002, 2009). More generally, perceptions of choice and responsibility tend to legitimize labor force inequalities. One surprising example is that the more motherhood is perceived—either by the general population or by specific decision makers—as "a choice women have," the greater the employment discrimination mothers face compared to childless women (Kricheli-Katz 2012).

To fully understand how gender operates in the labor market, one must consider how gender operates at home. Various studies have shown that women tend to do substantially more household labor and care work than men (Bianchi et al. 2012). In general, there is a correlation between women's absolute earnings and the amount of housework they do: The more women earn, the less housework they do (Gupta 2007). Not surprisingly, at home, like in the labor force, women and men also tend to fulfill different types of tasks. Women tend to do the more "female" types of housework (cooking and cleaning), whereas men tend to do more "male" types of housework (home repair and yard work) (Bianchi et al. 2000, Blair & Lichter 1991). Most importantly, the amount of household labor that women and men do tends to reinforce inequalities in the labor force (Ridgeway 2011): When women do more housework, they are perceived by employers as less available and committed to the labor force; as a result, they are paid, hired, and promoted less than men.

Product, Housing, Financial, and Lending Markets

We know less about how gender operates in other markets, such as the product, housing, financial, and lending markets. An emerging body of literature suggests that disparities in other markets are significant in magnitude, pointing to similarities between the processes generating them and the processes that generate gender disparities in the labor market.

The literature on women and men in product markets suggests that women fare worse, as sellers and as buyers. One audit study conducted at new-car dealerships found that dealers tended to quote significantly lower prices to men compared to women, even though the test buyers used identical, scripted bargaining strategies (Ayres & Siegelman 1995). Studies focusing on the online product marketplace eBay have documented disparities on the basis of gender: One study showed that women were disadvantaged as sellers, compared to men, when selling the exact same new product in auctions on eBay (Kricheli-Katz & Regev 2016). On average, women sellers receive approximately 80 cents for every dollar that a man receives when selling an identical new product in auctions and 97 cents when selling the same used product. Because the data used in the study were taken from auction transactions on eBay, the effects of potential differences between women and men in negotiation patterns can be ruled out. This study also found that women buyers tended to pay more than men in auctions for identical new products. Follow-up research showed that women were penalized more for selling seemingly male-typed products compared to seemingly female-typed products (Kricheli-Katz et al. 2019). Interestingly, in one field experiment, women selling baseball cards (a seemingly male-typed product) on eBay received higher prices compared to men. It was also shown that people believe that women are more likely to handle baseball cards carefully and to mail them to purchasers promptly, and are less likely to present problems in completing the transaction, compared to men (Cotropia et al. 2018). Finally, in a related recent experiment (Tak et al. 2019), ratings for craft beer and cupcakes were compared when the producers were presented as either female or male: As opposed to products made by women, who are disadvantaged in "male-product" markets (beer), products made by men are not disadvantaged in "female-product" markets (cupcakes).

Disparities between women and men can also be found in housing transactions. One extensive study, which used detailed data on housing transactions from 1991 to 2017, showed that single men earned 1.5 percentage point–higher returns per year on housing, relative to single women (Goldsmith-Pinkham & Shue 2020). It was further shown that approximately 45% of the gender gap in housing returns can be explained by differences in the characteristics—timing and location—of the transactions in which women and men are involved. The remaining gap was due to differences in execution prices at purchase and sale, resulting from differences in the choices made by women and men regarding the initial list prices and negotiated discounts. Finally, it was calculated that for the median household, the gender gap in housing returns could explain 30% of the gender gap in wealth accumulation by retirement age. Relatedly, results from the mortgage market suggest that even though women tend to have slightly better credit scores than men, they are more likely to receive subprime mortgages than men (Fishbein & Woodall 2006). It was recently suggested that these differences are a result of gender differences in the tendency to search for the lowest rate.

A related body of literature points to gender differences in negotiation strategies, preferences for risk taking, and competition (Babcock & Laschever 2009, Byrnes et al. 1999, Gneezy et al. 2003, Niederle & Vesterlund 2007, Reuben et al. 2015). Taken together, these studies suggest that women tend to shy away from competition and are more risk averse than men. Women are also more reluctant to negotiate than men. Interestingly, women also tend not to benefit financially from negotiating more often (Babcock & Laschever 2009, Exley et al. 2020).

Ultimately, the literature on gender in the product, housing, financial, and lending markets points to inequalities similar in magnitude and characteristics to those documented in the labor markets: disparities in market outcomes, segregation in the tasks fulfilled by women and men and the products they own and sell, and greater penalties for women who engage in ostensibly male-type tasks.

MARKET INTERACTIONS

To better understand how gender inequalities are generated, maintained, and perpetuated in markets, I now turn to the market interactions that generate market outcomes. I view market interactions as the building blocks of gender (and other) inequalities in markets both because they materially distribute resources and power and because when they do so they reinforce stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender (Fisk & Ridgeway 2018, Ridgeway 2011).

Studies in social psychology underscore the importance of gender as a fundamental and primary cultural frame (Fisk & Ridgeway 2018, Ridgeway 2011). Empirical works point to the ways in which we automatically, immediately, and unconsciously sex categorize others in interactions (Ito & Urland 2003): Whenever we meet a new person, we immediately categorize them as either female or male. After sex categorizing others, we consciously or unconsciously use this gender frame to make sense of them, ourselves, and the social situation (Blair & Banaji 1996, Kunda & Spencer 2003, Ridgeway 2011). In other words, once a person is sex categorized as female or male, stereotypes and cultural beliefs are immediately and unconsciously evoked to frame our expectations of the person we interact with, affecting our own behavior and coloring our evaluations of the behavior of that person.

Why do people rely on stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender in their market interactions? Social and market interactions require coordinating with others under conditions of uncertainty (Brewer 1997, Chwe 2001); in interactions, people are frequently required to anticipate how others are going to behave and to adjust their own behavior accordingly. Social psychologists, game theorists, and sociologists have all shown that to coordinate and organize

everyday interactions, people rely on a body of common knowledge that they possess and presume that everybody else shares (Berger & Luckmann 1967; Chwe 2001; Goffman 1959, 1967; Stryker & Vryan 2003). In fact, people do not necessarily have to believe that the common stereotypes, cultural scripts, and implicit rules are the best benchmark of human behavior, or that they are always accurate; rather, they need only to understand that these rules will lead to successful coordination.

This framing assists people in interpreting everyday interactions and in coordinating with others by evoking the common knowledge (Goffman 1967). The framing of interactions immediately, sometimes unconsciously, evokes the relevant stereotypes, cultural scripts, and implicit rules of behavior that incorporate shared assumptions about who people are, how they should behave, and what the interactions are. People respond to the framing of interactions by making choices that correspond with the relevant stereotypes, cultural scripts, and implicit rules.

What stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender are evoked in market transactions and interactions? A significant body of literature addresses the content of the stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender. These studies have shown that people—both women and men—tend to view men as more agentic, competent, powerful, dominant, assertive, and independent and women as more communal, kind, expressive, interpersonally sensitive, and nurturing (Cuddy et al. 2007, Diekman & Eagly 2000, Fiske et al. 2002, Glick et al. 2004, Spence & Buckner 2000). Relatedly, mothers are stereotypically viewed as less committed to the labor force compared to childless women (Correll et al. 2007). Importantly, both the stereotypes and cultural beliefs about women and the stereotypes and cultural beliefs about men are positive. However, these are translated into status hierarchies in various life arenas. Some (like caregiving) systematically advantage women, whereas others (like markets) systematically advantage men (Ridgeway & Correll 2004, Ridgeway & Nakagawa 2014).

Studies have pointed to at least four important ways in which gender framing generates inequality in market transactions and interactions. First, gender stereotypes and cultural beliefs affect our expectations of others: People expect women to be more communal and men to be more competent and agentic (Fisk & Ridgeway 2018, Ridgeway 2011).

Indeed, field experiments have shown that fictitious resumes with female-sounding names received fewer callbacks for job interviews for ostensibly masculine positions, compared to resumes with male-sounding names (Moss-Racusin et al. 2012, Reuben et al. 2014). Likewise, fictitious resumes of mothers received fewer callbacks for interviews than fictitious resumes of equally qualified non-mothers (but resumes of fathers did not receive fewer callbacks than resumes of non-fathers) (Correll et al. 2007).

Second, stereotypes and cultural beliefs affect our own behavior and performance. Thus, for example, studies have found that stereotypes and cultural beliefs about women's lower math and science ability generate a stereotype threat, negatively affecting girls' and women's actual performance, as well as their willingness to attribute their success to their abilities rather than to their efforts (Spencer et al. 1999). A set of experimental studies found that simply reminding women about the stereotypes regarding their lower ability in math harmed their performance. In fact, stereotypes about women and math are so easily activated that in one study, merely asking women to indicate their gender before taking a math test had a negative effect on their performance (Danaher & Crandall 2008).

Third, stereotypes and cultural beliefs affect how we evaluate the performance of others. In this case, performance of the same task may be evaluated more positively when carried out by men rather than women. Thus, for example, people tend to evaluate manuscripts more positively if they think that they were written by men (Goldberg 1968). In the context of the labor force, sex stereotypes affect evaluations of workers. As a result, women experience disadvantages at work, including biases in hiring, salary setting, evaluation, and promotion decisions (Castilla 2008, Swim

et al. 1989, Wynn & Correll 2018). In one field experiment on an online questions-and-answers mathematics forum in which users post content that is evaluated by other users, with no prior evaluations, women's posts were evaluated more negatively than men's. Further, prior evaluations retained a lingering effect: Following a sequence of positive evaluations, women's posts were evaluated more positively than men's (Bohren et al. 2019). A similar study found that female professors of online courses received lower evaluations, even when the professors were assigned female- and male-sounding names at random (Boring et al. 2016).

Finally, both women and men are penalized for behaviors that violate stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender. In other words, in addition to describing who women and men are, stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender prescribe how women and men should behave (Bertrand 2020). When women and men violate these prescriptions (if men behave in a communal way, or women in an agentic way), they tend to be penalized (Egan et al. 2017, Kricheli-Katz et al. 2019, Prentice & Carranza 2002, Rudman et al. 2012). One example of the powerful prescriptive nature of gender stereotypes and cultural beliefs is that both female and male survey respondents tend to misreport their partners' earnings when wives earn more than their husbands (responses to the Current Population Survey were compared with "true" earnings from administrative income-tax records) (Murray-Close & Heggeness 2018). Another surprising example is that everything else being equal, in couples where women earn more than their husbands, women tend to spend more time on household labor compared to when women earn less than their husbands (Bertrand et al. 2015, Brines 1994).

It is critically important to note that the processes described above affect not only how women and men are treated in their market interactions but also how women and men themselves behave and the market-related choices they make (Bertrand 2020). Although it is impossible to attribute all the differences in behaviors and choices to stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender (Sapienza et al. 2009), it follows from the literature that stereotypes and cultural beliefs do contribute to the observed differences in the market behaviors of women and men, as well as the choices they make (Bertrand 2020).

As I noted above, in the context of the labor force, women and men make different educational and occupational choices, which result in differences in their earnings (Altonji 1993, Correll 2001). In fact, the educational choices that women and men make explain more than half of the gender wage disparities between college-educated women and men (Black et al. 2008). Women and men also make different choices at home, which affect their availability and productivity in the labor force. Some scholars have argued that the prescriptive stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender explain why women do more household labor and care work than men do in general, but also why women who earn more than their husbands tend to do more household labor than women who earn less than their husbands (Bertrand et al. 2015, Brines 1994, Shelton & John 1996).

Taken together, these processes suggest that our routine market interactions, as well as our individual market behaviors, tend—consciously and unconsciously—to be framed by gender in ways that reproduce gender disparities in market outcomes. It is worth keeping in mind that the stereotypes and cultural beliefs about who women and men are and how they should behave tend to closely reflect stereotypes and cultural beliefs about women and men who are white, middle-class Americans (Galinsky et al. 2013). However, women and men are constantly evaluated and affected by these stereotypes and cultural beliefs, even if they themselves are not white or do not belong to the middle class. As a result, the processes described above create additional binds (and sometimes freedoms) for people who are not prototypical of the images embedded in stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender, such as Black women, Asian men, or poor whites (Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz 2013).

THE LAW

A large body of literature explores how gender inequalities in markets persist in the face of a growing body of civil rights law and policies (Albiston 2010; Albiston et al. 2012; Baron et al. 1991; Dobbin 2009; Dobbin et al. 2011; Edelman 1992, 2016; Edelman & Petterson 1999; Edelman et al. 1991; Hirsh 2009; Kagan et al. 2011; Kelly 2010). Although many factors determine the potential effects of the law on gender inequality, here I wish to focus on the interplay between the law and stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender.

Stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender might interact with the law to affect gender inequality in at least three important ways: Civil rights law reflects and reinforces stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender; the meaning of compliance with the law may be constructed in ways that are compatible with the prevailing stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender, and thus create obstacles for social change; and lastly, the law may change people's beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors in ways that may gradually alter the stereotypes and cultural beliefs that they hold about gender (Albiston 2010, Albiston et al. 2012).

Civil Rights Law and Judicial Interpretation

As noted above, the gender inequalities that tend to persist in the American labor force are those that are commonly perceived as outcomes of the free choices women and men make (such as their educational, occupational, and parental choices) (Bertrand 2020; Charles 2011; Charles & Bradley 2002, 2009). Interestingly, these gender inequalities are those most compatible with American individualism, with the stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender differences, and with the institutional logics regarding rights of access to jobs and education (Charles 2011; Charles & Bradley 2002, 2009; England 2010). Therefore, it is not surprising that the courts have interpreted American antidiscrimination law as prohibiting only within-job and not between-job discrimination—even when jobs are of comparable worth (England 1992, 2010; Steinberg 2001). Relatedly, Nelson & Bridges (1999) have shown that courts have gradually accepted the market defense employers present to explain gender wage inequalities, according to which wages are determined by external market forces and female employees within their organizations are paid less than male employees because of the existing external gender disparities in the market pay. The market defense is compatible both with stereotypes and cultural scripts about the deservingness (or not) of women and men and with the institutional logics about free markets.

Organizations and Compliance

Some of the attempts to understand the persistence of gender inequality in the labor market have focused on the nature and magnitude of organizations' compliance with civil rights law and policies (Dobbin 2009; Dobbin et al. 2011; Edelman 1992, 2016; Edelman et al. 1991; Hirsh 2009; Kelly 2010). The sociolegal literature identifies three main factors that affect the tendency of organizations (and people) to comply with the law: the costs of compliance (the probability of being caught and the penalties associated with noncompliance), normative beliefs about the duty itself (and about the rule of law in general), and legitimacy concerns (reputation among workers, shareholders, consumers, and other organizations in the field) (Kagan et al. 2011). Relatedly, studies have highlighted that the meaning of compliance with civil rights law is determined within organizations, by professionals like corporate personnel experts (Dobbin 2009).

In her seminal body of work, Edelman points to the "endogeneity of law" and to the construction of the meaning of compliance to civil rights law as a dialogue between regulatory enforcement officials and the organizations to whom the law applies (Edelman 1992, 2016; Edelman et al. 1991).

Edelman (1992) explains that because civil rights law tends to be broad and ambiguous, organizations can exercise substantial latitude in constructing the meaning of compliance. As a result, the meaning of compliance is constructed collectively through organizational mimicry, on the basis of already-existing organizational structures, cultural scripts, and norms of behavior. Over time, some forms of compliance become institutionalized and are then rapidly diffused among organizations (Edelman 1992). These institutionalized forms of compliance (such as antidiscrimination and antiharassment policies, grievance procedures, and diversity programs) tend to be merely symbolic, not demanding substantive changes to the ways in which organizations operate (Baron et al. 1991, Edelman & Petterson 1999). Lastly, courts that are asked to evaluate the compliance of organizations with civil rights law tend to defer to the organizations' symbolic structures and to the taken-for-granted understandings of compliance (Edelman et al. 1999).

Edelman's work points to the role that the existing organizational structures, cultural scripts, and norms of behavior play in constructing the meaning of compliance to civil rights law. Relatedly, Dobbin et al. (2011) have shown that corporate culture is a key factor in leading firms to adopt diversity programs, regardless of regulatory enforcement. Lastly, Albiston (2010) has shown how stereotypes and cultural scripts about gender and motherhood might limit the positive effects of civil rights laws. The Family and Medical Leave Act entitles employees to 12 weeks of unpaid leave on the birth or adoption of a child, if they have worked for the organization for at least a year and the organization employs at least 50 employees. Yet, Albiston has found that some female workers report being discriminated against and incurring social and financial costs after taking this leave. Consistent with the stereotypes and cultural beliefs about motherhood, female workers who took the leave reported that their supervisors and coworkers viewed them as less competent and committed than before taking the leave, and that the tasks allocated to them upon return were less challenging.

Taken together, this body of research points to the ways in which the taken-for-granted general and firm-specific cultural scripts about gender—together with the institutional logics that are diffused in the legal environment—shape the meaning of compliance to the law, in ways that sometimes render civil rights law ineffective.

Litigation and Case Outcomes

Some of the attempts to understand the persistence of gender inequality in the labor market have focused on the fact that civil rights law tends to generate decentralized systems of rights enforcement that require individuals to mobilize their legal rights to bring about social change. Yet oftentimes, victims of discrimination may not name the injuries they experience as legal ones (Marshall 2003, Quinn 2000)—either because they themselves hold the prevailing stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender (Fisk & Ridgeway 2018) or because of their "legal consciousness" and the ways in which they perceive the relevance of the law to their everyday life experiences (Ewick & Silbey 1998, Nielsen 2000). When victims do decide to litigate, they face financial and social costs as well as structural disadvantages compared to their employers, who are repeat players with advance intelligence, greater expertise, and access to better legal services (Albiston 1999, Berrey et al. 2017, Galanter 1974).

Unsurprisingly, in a study analyzing the outcomes of employment discrimination lawsuits filed in US federal courts between 1988 and 2003, the vast majority of cases filed were individual cases and tended to end with a small settlement. Further, although legal representation and collective legal mobilization significantly affect case outcomes, collective legal mobilization was relatively rare (Nielsen et al. 2010). Lastly, even when plaintiffs did win employment discrimination cases, they tended to be overwhelmed by the financial and emotional costs that they had faced, and their employment environments rarely changed (Berrey et al. 2017).

Another example of the ways in which the legal system reinforces stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender can be found in the outcomes of cases with plaintiffs who experienced discrimination on multiple axes. As noted above, stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender tend to create additional binds for people who are nonprototypical—Black women, Asian men, or poor whites, for example (Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz 2013). Interestingly, a recent study analyzing a representative sample of judicial opinions in equal employment opportunity cases in the US federal court system between 1965 and 1999 showed that plaintiffs who filed intersectional discrimination claims were only half as likely to win, compared to plaintiffs who alleged a single basis of discrimination (Best et al. 2011).

Change

Stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender can limit the positive effects of civil rights legislation on gender inequality. But at the same time, civil rights law can in some instances bring about real social change with respect to stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender.

A growing body of literature points to the expressive influence of the law on people's beliefs, moral judgments, and behaviors (Albiston et al. 2012, Berkowitz & Walker 1967, Cooter 1998, MacCoun 1993, Suchman 1997, Sunstein 1996). It has been argued that the law has symbolic and expressive effects on people; it can alter people's beliefs and normative judgments by implying the social consensus that the illegal prohibited behaviors are also morally wrong.

Recently, Albiston et al. (2012) assessed experimentally whether making salient the Family and Medical Leave Act (which prohibits discrimination against leave takers) affected people's perceptions of mothers who had and had not taken family leave. When the law was made salient, the evaluations of mothers (leave takers and non-leave takers) as less competent and committed than childless women were eliminated. Disparities in wages and promotions between mothers who had taken leave and non-mothers were also eliminated when the law was made salient. Interestingly, however, in this experiment, the effects of making voluntary organizational policies salient seemed to be mixed, in some instances tending to increase biased evaluations.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Although many factors contribute to gender inequalities in markets, I have focused here on the market interactions that generate market outcomes, and on the cultural beliefs and stereotypes about gender that frame them. I have argued that market interactions are important because they are the building blocks of gender (and other) inequalities in markets, and I have explained how they are framed by stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender. Focusing on the roles of stereotypes and cultural beliefs, I reviewed explanations for how gender inequalities in the labor market persist in the face of a growing body of civil rights law and policies and pointed to the great potential civil rights law creates for altering stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender and for bringing about lasting social change.

We know relatively little about how the law operates in the product, housing, financial, and lending markets by way of reflecting, reinforcing, or disrupting gender market inequalities. Given the marked focus of civil rights law on employment discrimination, and the influence that labor market inequalities wield over people's lives, it is not surprising that the sociolegal literature on gender market inequalities tends to address the labor market. However, future research must also investigate the interrelations between other bodies of antidiscrimination law (like the Fair Housing Act and the Consumer Credit Protection Act) and private law in general and between stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender.

Future research must also explore the ways in which stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender affect the market-related choices women and men make, as well as the ways in which the law may contribute to the market-related choices people make and to the normative association between choices and responsibility (Bertrand 2020).

Following Albiston et al. (2012), another promising avenue for future research would be to explore further the mechanisms through which the law can change stereotypes and cultural beliefs about gender, as well as the obstacles that might hinder such change. Moreover, research must explore the effects of the increasing number of people who present themselves in gender-nonconforming ways, and of intersectionality, on the processes described in this review (Fisk & Ridgeway 2018).

Finally, although this review focuses on gender inequalities in markets, many of these insights and findings are relevant to other systems of market inequalities, such as race and class. Future research could look to address similarities and differences across systems of inequality, in an effort to better understand how the law can effectively bring about significant and lasting change.

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