

Mr. Moms and WoMo's: The Shift in Middle-Class Marital Gender Roles After the Second Wave of the Feminist Movement

Countless women and men have attempted to define their roles as husbands and wives in their marriages. During the 1950's, men and women had very strict gender roles within their marriages. Men worked outside the home as the primary breadwinners while women stayed at home to take care of the house, husband, and children. However, the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1960's and 1970's broke these traditional roles. The second wave helped women attain acceptability in American society working outside the home. As a result, the roles of husbands and wives have changed over the past 60 years, breaking down the gender-specific roles of marriage. In this presentation, I plan to describe the relationship between the second wave and the shift in middle-class marital gender roles. In order to effectively portray these changes in middle-class marital gender roles I will employ pop culture to act as a gateway into the lives of Americans before and after the second wave. I will provide evidence of how the second wave changed the definition of what it means to be a husband or wife in middle-class American society through a comparison of the television shows, *Leave It to Beaver*, a sitcom before the second wave of feminism, and *The Modern Family*, a recent sitcom that reveals the current gender roles within American families.