

Chapter 1

The Power of Difference

The Need to Forge Human Connections

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Chapter Summary

Think about playing the game “20 Questions.” One person thinks of a specific item, and the goal of the other players is to name that item by asking up to 20 questions with “yes” or “no” answers. The guesser wants to identify the item with the fewest questions; the questioner wants to stump the guesser.

This common game keeps impatient kids (and even adults) occupied while they wait in lines, take long drives, etc. It draws on a natural human tendency to categorize. By working our way through a hierarchy of categories, often starting with a very global question like “Is it alive?” we try to win this game by funneling down to the specific item. According to cognitive psychologists, this human propensity to categorize gives us the building blocks for thinking (Markman, 1999; Woll, 2002).



Box 1.1 Imagine playing “20 Questions” to identify a single individual.

If your initial questions established that the target is human, your obvious next step would be to ask questions that categorize people. This round of the game would turn toward a process social psychologists call **social categorization**¹ (Hampson, 1988). Look at the picture in Box 1.1. To identify the specific person being considered in the game, how might you start?

You are likely to ask about one of the three primary categories for humans based on *sex*, *age*, and *race/ethnicity* (Schneider, 2004). Categorizing people on the basis of these three social markers is done so frequently that it readily becomes unconscious and effortless (Ito & Urland, 2003). Of these three primary categories, sex may be the most efficient (about 50:50) and most accurate. Although we may look at a person and not know for sure how old they are and what their racial/ethnic background is, we rarely misidentify people’s sex. Think how disconcerting it is to encounter a person whose sex is not readily apparent. A whole comedic act on the television show *Saturday Night Live* centered on trying to the guess the sex of the character “Pat.”

This fundamental categorization of people into the sex categories of female and male is what this book is all about. Sometimes girls/women and boys/men are different, and often-times large variations exist among individual women and among individual men. Sometimes women and men are deeply similar, and at other times, they just appear different because of the gendered social contexts in which they live. Differences can be enriching on the one hand and can lead to disconnection, stereotyping, and even violence on the other hand. Ultimately, differences are linked to power, inequality, and social injustice. My goals for this book are to expose these linkages and seek ways to break them.

GENDER AS A SOCIAL CATEGORY

Although gender is a primary social category, it is part of a broader array of social categories captured in the Diversity Wheel created by Marilyn Loden and Judy Rosener (1991) (see Figure. 1.2). To best understand the wheel, walk yourself around it by identifying each aspect of yourself. Using myself as an example, in the inner wheel, I’m 58 years old, White, Swiss/Polish/Austrian, female, nondisabled,² and heterosexual. In the outer ring,

¹Definitions for words in bold print can be found in the Glossary.

²Following the lead of Johnson (2006), I use the term “nondisabled” to capture the reality that we are all vulnerable to changing our place in this category involuntarily and at any time.

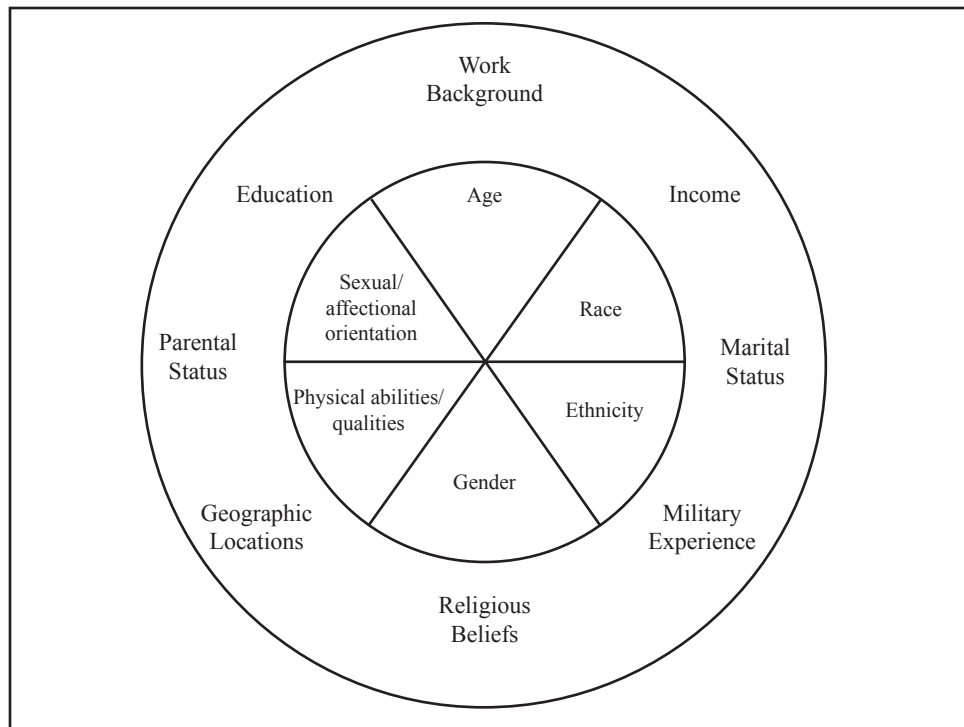


Figure 1.2. The Diversity Wheel: Primary and Secondary Dimensions of Diversity
 Source: Loden & Rosener (1991). Reproduced with permission from McGraw-Hill companies.

I'm a college professor, affluent, married, with no true military experience (although I taught as a civilian at West Point), was raised Catholic in Pennsylvania, live now in Ohio, have two kids, and earned my Ph.D. in psychology.

Think about your list around the wheel. Does it capture who you are? In all likelihood, you'll think that it says very little about who you are—about your hopes, dreams, and feelings—that is, those qualities that are at the center of your own essence (Johnson, 2006). However, if you think about these social categories more, they do represent how *others* often see you and can affect how they think, feel, and act toward you. This is a fundamental point about social categories. They aren't about you at all, but rather are **social representations** of you. Furthermore, the characteristics that form the inner ring are more difficult, if not impossible, for you to change.

There are two important points about the social categories represented in the Diversity Wheel that I want to explore more fully. First, every social category evokes differences: older/younger, Black/Latina, (dis)abled, etc. For almost every individual, these designations sort into groups to which I do (**in-group**) and do not (**out-group**) identify and belong (Deaux et al., 1995).³ More importantly, these differences are not value-free. Rather, our culture assigns power to these differences such that one designation is dominant or powerful compared to the subordinated other(s) within each category. But before we get into these points, let's first examine gender as a social category.

³Note that this is a rather simplistic overview of social identity. For example, some multiracial individuals struggle to establish their identity without fitting easily into any single category designation (see Root, 1996).

Why Gender?

Are you: male female (check one)

Almost every time you complete a survey, you encounter an item like the one above. In all likelihood, you check a box without even thinking. Humor me with what seems like a crazy request: Stop and think about how you know which box to check. Make the most objective case you can to support your choice of boxes.

Now, consider the possibility that tomorrow morning you woke up as the other sex. How might your life be changed? What would happen if you dressed the same way you did the day before? Would your name seem out of place? What would change about your daily activities? What would be better and what would be worse? In all likelihood, at least some things would change. Gender matters. Indeed, it fundamentally affects both our experiences and our identity.

To really shift social categories in our example above, you would need to do more than dress and act differently. For the transformation to be complete, you would need to undergo some serious physical changes. If you go back to the inner circle of the Diversity Wheel, each entry has a different interplay of physical and psychosocial factors. For example, biologists generally agree that there are no clear biological markers to distinguish the races, yet physical characteristics, such as skin color, have been socially designated to demarcate race (Johnson, 2006).⁴ Although researchers continue to look for the “gay gene,” genetics does not distinguish the categories associated with sexual orientation as clearly as it does for sex.

The category of gender then serves as a complex case for exploring this basis for difference. I argued above that it’s the social meaning that we give to differences that can link social categories to power. For example, being White would carry no privilege in a society where everyone was White. However, when we turn our thoughts to gender, **patriarchy**, which privileges men and boys, is almost universal. The pervasiveness of patriarchy suggests that there’s something more fundamental than culturally supplied social meanings that maintain distinctions between female and male.

This fundamental “something” oftentimes refers to biology (genes, hormones, brains, reproduction) where some clear markers seem to establish undeniable differences between girls/women and boys/men. I bet that if you return to your defense of which box you checked (female or male), your most convincing evidence had something to do with biological markers of sex (e.g., having a vagina or penis). This thinking about sex is captured more broadly by a perspective called **essentialism**, which claims that differences reflect the very natures (essences) of women and men. In other words, this approach tends to root differences *inside* women and men by emphasizing the way they are “naturally.”

Essentialist thinking extends beyond biology to any explanation for differences between women and men that focuses on women and men themselves as the cause of the difference. Consider the common adage referring to children: “Boys will be boys.” This statement first sets up an assumption of difference (in that boys are *not* girls), and then goes on to ground that difference *within* boys themselves (biology and/or personality). Such “essentializing” of differences makes them seem stable, unchangeable (Unger, 1979), and universal (Craw-

⁴This point is captured well with the concept of “socio-*race*,” which highlights how race is socially constructed (Helms & Cook, 1999).

ford, 1989). Thus, what is implied in this statement really is: *all boys always* will be boys. Examining folk wisdom about sex differences, the more students believed that sex differences were caused by biological factors, the more difficult they thought it would be to eliminate those differences (Martin & Parker, 1995). Furthermore, essentializing gender differences appears to be strongest in contexts where change is threatening the status quo and by the people most threatened by that change (Morton et al., 2009).

Before reading on, turn your attention to the person pictured in Box 1.3. Is this person female or male? How certain are you? Again humor me and articulate your strongest defense for your choice.

Genitals aren't an option here so you might try to discern some secondary sex characteristics (looking for breasts or facial hair). If those "certainties" don't work out (stay tuned for Chapter 3), you might turn to clothing, hair styles, jewelry, etc. Sometimes you don't even need these visual markers—a name or a disembodied voice over the telephone will suffice.

Now let's return to what would change in your life if you awoke tomorrow as the other sex: your name, your clothes, your hair, your voice. You could enact these changes without having to transform your body and probably pass as the other sex. This sense of what makes up gender is captured by **social constructionists** who view gender as something we do, create, or construct with the consensus of others (Gergen, 1985; West & Zimmerman, 1987). In contrast to essentialist thinking, which frames sex as something we ARE, social constructionists regard gender as something we DO. You don't simply have a gender; you work at creating one, often unconsciously, by actively "**doing gender.**" How specifically we enact our gender is dictated by our culture, reflecting the general consensus of others about what is and is not appropriate for girls/women and boys/men. You understand this social constructionist alternative if you can make sense of the statement "All gender is drag" (Butler, 1990).

The question that opened this section focused on why gender forms a social category, that is, why we readily divide people into girls/women and boys/men. Essentialists would



Box 1.3 *Not doing gender*

One way to get a clearer sense of how we all "do" gender in our everyday lives is to imagine how we might NOT do gender. In other words, consider what you might do every day to minimize differences between girls/women and boys/men. Next, expand your focus outward, and think about how you might minimize gender differences in your relationships (with intimates, friends, and coworkers) and in various organizations (schools, stores, and your workplace). Finally, what might we as a society do to de-emphasize gender differences. Consider, for example, language and the media.

I think this exercise shows how widespread doing gender is as well as how "natural" it appears. Is this naturalness because these differences truly reflect our differences (essentialism) or because everything that is so widely accepted and pervasive comes to feel natural (social constructionism)? How might history affect your answer to this last question?

say because it's a universal biological/physical fact. Social constructionists would argue that there are social meanings attached to this major division that might, for example, work to fill different social roles (e.g., mother and breadwinner) (Eagly, 1987). Indeed, the origins for this division of humans into female and male raises all sorts of interesting arguments (Sanday, 1981a), but many of these are beyond our interests here.

The key point I want to make is that only social constructionism opens up the possibility that differences can be modified, leading us next to ask how far we want to go with these modifications and for what purpose. Might there be ways to assign individuals to roles, for example, that draw on individual abilities and preferences rather than on assumptions about social categories? If we are simply what our bodies or personalities determine us to be (essentialism), questions such as this one make no sense.

Sex, Gender, and Difference

We need to digress for a moment and reflect upon the language we have been using. I have switched back and forth from the terms *sex* and *gender* above in a way that may make them look synonymous. They aren't—and like most psychologists, I find distinguishing between these constructs useful (Muehlenhard & Peterson, 2011). **Sex** implies biological bases (such as chromosomes, hormones, genitals, etc.) (Unger, 1979). (Sex is not to be confused with **sexuality**, which deals with sexual activities and reproduction.) **Gender**, in contrast, implies psychologically, socially, and culturally based differences between women and men. On the face of it, sex seems more determined and unchangeable; gender, more malleable.

If we dig deeper, though, biological sex isn't as immutable as we might have thought at first. There is growing evidence that not only does biology affect behavior, but experiences affect biology as well, reflecting what has been called a **principle of reciprocal determinism** (Cacioppo & Berntson, 1992). For example, the brains of adults exposed to long-term childhood sexual abuse may differ from those without these experiences (Mukerjee, 1995); women in close contact may synchronize their menstrual cycles (McClintock, 1971); and men's testosterone levels may vary with changes in their social rank within a confined group (Jeffcoate et al., 1986). Even chromosomes may change what activates and slows them (their epigenome) with exposure to the environment so that the more identical twins live apart, the less genetically similar they become (Heine-Suner et al., 2005). The relationship is reciprocal and circular: biology influences behavior *and* behavior changes biology.

If we view biology as a prime directive that shapes everything subsequent to it, then it is easy to see that biology isn't a very promising possibility for reducing inequities between women and men. A perspective of biological determinism would argue that differences are natural (hence good?) and trying to change them might even prove harmful to individuals. This line of reasoning then is inconsistent with a social justice agenda. Ignoring biological explorations would be logical—arguing instead for an exclusive emphasis on gender.

However, I believe that as the flexibility of biology becomes more and more acknowledged, social scientists will find it useful to let go of the presumed distinction between sex and gender, nature and nurture (see Riger, 2000a, Chapters 2 and 3). This opens the door to regarding *sex and gender as inseparable and intertwined* so that a holistic understanding of women and men, girls and boys, will include biology (sex) and what our culture makes of our biological sex (gender). This argument will be pursued more fully in Chapter 3.

FEMINIST VALUES

You may have noticed that a rather serious assumption runs through the above discussion of sex, gender, and how we explain differences between girls/women and boys/men (essentialist or social constructionist). That assumption rests on valuing change to an unfair system that perpetuates inequities. Although this book is grounded in research and scholarship, here is one place where scientific data do little to set our course. Now I'm talking about **values**.

Our values lie at the very core of what we do both personally and professionally. Whenever we as researchers choose to pursue one research project, we necessarily disregard a whole array of potential other questions. Similarly, whenever we as instructors elect to cover one topic and to focus on certain theory and research related to that topic, we give less consideration to other possible topics and approaches (Kinsler & Zalk, 1996). These choices may reflect funding opportunities (some research attracts grants more readily than others), whether or not results are likely to be published in highly ranked journals, researchers' particular interests, what our colleagues hold in high esteem, what is and is not covered in textbooks, and so on. Underlying all of these choices, whether apparent or not, whether explored or not, are values.

Let me come forward then with my values. With no apologies for using the f-word, I identify as a feminist. This raises an obvious question: What is a feminist? Ideologically, there is a wide array of feminisms (Henley et al., 1998), but they all converge, along with young women's lay definitions (Rudolfsdottir & Jolliffe, 2008), on the notion of social justice—ensuring “a society based on fairness and equality for its members regardless of social status” (Tuleya, 2007). Research, theory, teaching, and practice in feminist psychology all contribute to the feminist goal of social change to end sexism in our own thinking, in our relationships with others, and in larger organizations and social institutions. *Feminism is fundamentally about a social justice agenda.*

Social justice doesn't seem to be such a radical goal to pursue, yet negative stereotyping about feminists continues to undermine women's self-identification as feminists (Roy et al., 2007); to implicitly associate feminist with bad, not good, words (Jenen, 2009); and to link feminists with romantic incompatibility (Rudman & Fairchild, 2007) and being lesbian (Wilkinson, 2008). In contrast to these stereotypes, I happen to be married (over 30 years!); have two awesome kids, a loveable dog, and an endearing cat; live in a medium-sized city; and drive a Hyundai (if I had a van I'd look like a soccer mom). Much of what I study as a feminist psychologist seeps into my personal life (and vice versa), so you'll come to know my family in some of the examples I use. My partner, John Zipp, also is an academic (sociology); my daughter Kate was born in 1986 and Dan in 1991. As I write this, Kate is 25 and Dan, 20.

I am open about my feminist values. It's important for you to be forthcoming with your own. You may find that much of the research described throughout this book resonates with your own experiences or helps you to understand those experiences. What is more challenging to explore is those times when scholarship diverges from your experiences or from widely held folk wisdom or makes you feel uncomfortable or defensive.

These are times to engage in active self-reflection. Ask new questions that may reconcile your experiences with the general patterns supported by the research. Recognize that “bandwagon concepts” supported by folk wisdom may be intuitively obvious, simple, and

basically satisfying, but may be rooted in unquestioned myth rather than researched evidence (Mednick, 1989). Also, consider how the research itself may be narrow or flawed. It is in this way that we move beyond the limits of what we know so far. To me this is the excitement of our exploration—the challenge of asking questions, thinking, and going beyond one’s own narrow view of the world. Our journey will be frustrating at times, but it will be compelling and well worth your investment.

GENDER DIFFERENCES AND POWER

I have made the case so far that sex and gender intertwine to form a social category through which we divide girls/women from boys/men. Whatever the origins of this distinction, it clearly is long-standing and almost fully, if not completely, universal. Consistent with a social constructionist view, this social category rests on the social meanings we give to sex, basing this social category truly on “gender.” Following this social constructionist logic even farther, we actively work to maintain this gendered divide—by “doing gender” in our everyday lives, we make it clear that we are either female OR male.

Stepping back for a moment and looking at the big picture of the arguments I am developing, it’s important to remind ourselves that there is nothing inherently wrong with differences. In fact, seeking novelty may be a fundamental human preference (Milewski & Siqueland, 1975). Just think how boring the world would be if everyone was a clone of the same one person. The trouble with difference then is not difference per se but rather the linkages we socially construct between social category differences (that is, group differences) and power (Johnson, 2006). This linkage brings in comparisons of groups as dominant (privileged) and subordinate (oppressed).

Privilege exists when a group gets something of value, denied to others, simply by being a member of the dominant group, not because of something deserving an individual did (McIntosh, 1995). For example, as a married heterosexual I qualify for family health insurance; as a White person, I won’t wonder if I was pulled over for “driving while White”; as a Christian, I get my major holidays off from work; as nondisabled, I can hear a movie in a theatre; etc. It is rare to find someone in our culture who isn’t privileged in some ways by a dominant category to which they belong. In fact, one of the biggest benefits of privilege is the luxury of being oblivious to the benefits it brings our way (Johnson, 2006).

The corollary of privilege for dominant category designations is **oppression** of the subordinated category or categories (Johnson, 2006). Oppression refers to the social forces that make it more difficult to reach one’s goals (Fyre, 1983). Privilege and oppression exist within a **system of inequality**. Both exist as a consequence of social categorization, so that members of a dominant social category benefit from privilege and members of a subordinated social category are disadvantaged by oppression. Both are *group* processes, so that being privileged doesn’t guarantee any single individual happiness or success, nor does oppression cause all members of a group to fail miserably. Neither, though, serves to level the playing field.

The next step in our reasoning takes us to the relationship between gender and power, or more specifically, between being male and privileged and being female and oppressed within a system of inequality. Thus, we explore male privilege, female oppression, and systems of inequality in the following pages.

Male Privilege

Privilege based on group membership comes in two forms: unearned entitlements and conferred dominance (McIntosh cited in Johnson, 2006). **Unearned entitlements** are fundamental valuables everyone should have, such as feelings of safety and esteem. For example, we'll see in Chapter 13 that women's general sense of safety is compromised by the very threat of sexual harassment and rape so that men have the privilege of thinking much less about their vulnerabilities in these areas. **Conferred dominance** takes privilege a step farther by granting men power over women and thus less inhibited access to resources and rewards than allotted women. There is solid research evidence linking men to resources (Ridgeway, 1991); greater power in interpersonal relationships (Felmlee, 1994), families, sexuality, the workplace, and politics (Lips, 1991); and male privilege itself (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). Indeed, one goal of diversity classes is to raise awareness of male privilege (Case, 2007).

Male dominance may be one of those intuitively obvious concepts that is hard to document. A concrete example of research illustrating both its power and its subtlety may help (Dovidio et al., 1988). Dominance in this research was measured by how much two people looked at each other while speaking and listening.⁵ **Visual dominance** is established whenever one looks at one's partner more when speaking than when listening (saying, in combination, "Look at me I'm talking to you!" and "I don't need to pay attention to you"). In contrast, being visually submissive occurs when one looks at one's partner more when listening than when speaking (saying together, "See, I'm paying attention to you" and "You don't need to pay attention to me"). Notice that this measure taps patterns of *nonverbal* dominance largely outside the awareness of both parties in an interaction.

Dovidio and his colleagues conducted two studies, both with pairs of women and men (mixed sex dyads) talking together in 3-minute discussion sessions. In the first study, they measured each person's **expert power** by asking participants to identify areas in which they felt especially knowledgeable. They then formed dyads in which one party had more expert power than their partner on the assigned discussion topic. In the second study, the researchers randomly assigned **reward power** to one over the other partner by telling one participant in each pair that they could judge their partner's work and award extra research credits to them. In both studies there were control conditions in which power was not measured or manipulated. In these control conditions then, the only power differences between women and men that might exist would be based on differences associated with their gender. The design of this series of two studies is diagrammed in Figure 1.4.

When power differences between partners were based on expert or reward power, women and men behaved similarly. Women and men high in expert or reward power exhibited more visual dominance during their interaction with their partner, and women and men low in these forms of power engaged in patterns of eye contact indicative of submissiveness. This pattern makes it clear in these studies that visual dominance is connected to power and that when power is clearly established, women act similarly to men. Most interestingly in the control conditions, men displayed visual patterns similar to those exhibited by high power women and men. Additionally, control women showed visual submissiveness similar to both women and men with low power. Not knowing

⁵I should note that there are racial/ethnic differences in eye contact, with Dovidio and his colleagues' work largely drawing on Whites' propensities (Sue & Sue, 2003, pp. 129-130).

Groups	Outcome
Study 1(a): woman has expert power	woman is visually dominant/ man is submissive
Study 1(b): man has expert power	man is visually dominant/ woman is submissive
Study 2(a): woman gives rewards	woman is visually dominant /man is submissive
Study 2(b): man gives rewards	man is visually dominant/ woman is submissive
Control: no power manipulation	man is visually dominant/ woman is submissive

Figure 1.4

Dyads comprising one woman and one man were randomly assigned to one of the five groups designated above. The partners then engaged in a discussion between themselves that was video-taped and later coded for eye contact as an indicator of visual dominance and submissiveness.

Source: Adapted from Dovidio et al. (1988). The relationship of social power to visual displays of dominance between women and men. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 54, 233–242.

anything more than the sex of one's partner, visual dominance was expressed by men, not women.

Female Oppression

Just as boys' and men's unawareness of male dominance doesn't mean it doesn't exist, the same can be said for the oppression of women and girls (Johnson, 2006). As we'll see in Chapter 14, some women accept without question their subordinated place in the Diversity Wheel (Downing & Roush, 1985). One purpose of this book is to critically examine evidence about when and how women, as a social category, are regarded, and when disadvantages are documented, to challenge them. (Remember our social justice agenda.) The validity of claims of both privilege and oppression cannot be based on feelings or opinions, but rather they must be grounded in scholarly evidence. This is the ultimate challenge for this text. To start, we need to explore the relationship between privilege and oppression within systems of inequality.

Systems of Inequality

There are four points that I'd like to make here (Johnson, 2006). First, one must be a member of an oppressed group to be affected by that form of oppression. Second, few people are universally oppressed. Third, being privileged is not the same as being oppressive. Fourth, being oppressed does not free one from the possibility of being oppressive. In other words, men cannot be directly oppressed by sexism; few men are completely privileged; being male doesn't necessary make one sexist; and being female does not automatically make girls and women nonsexist. All of these outcomes occur because sexism resides in a system of inequity that encompasses all of us.

Sexism and men. A growing body of research evidence points to the negative health consequences of strong beliefs in traditional masculinity by men (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Good & Sherrod, 2001). For example, men are more likely than women to engage in risky

behaviors (like reckless driving) and are less likely to take preventive and remedial health measures (like regularly seeing a physician and seeking care for psychological distress). Men not only perpetrate violence much more than women, but men also are the more likely victims of violence. Men who associate being masculine with toughness have more difficulties in their intimate relationships and experience more psychological stress.

Although it is clear that demands of **hypermasculinity** can be painful for boys and men, is this sexism? The answer, Allan Johnson (2006, p. 39) says, rests in the *balance* between costs and benefits. For example, not being able to openly express some emotions like being hurt and crying may be painful. However, as Jack Sattel (1976) points out, expressing hurt ultimately makes one vulnerable by showcasing one's deepest emotions, and researchers find that men are most likely to fall back into rigid gender stereotypic thinking when they feel emotionally vulnerable (Vogel et al., 2003). In contrast, refusal to express what one is feeling can be empowering—it not only avoids exposure but also keeps outsiders at bay (see Sprecher & Felmlee, 1997). On balance, boys and men as a group, unlike girls and women, gain much more from their social category than they lose. Peter Blood and his colleagues (1995, p. 159) sum up this point: “However much men are hurt by sex roles in this country, the fact remains that they are not systematically denied power simply because of being born a certain sex, as women are.”

This doesn't mean that men and masculinity should be ignored; in fact, these topics can merit a course in and of themselves. However, this book purposively is a psychology of women text. By this I mean that I put women front and center in my analyses, and the value of my work is determined by how well it serves a social justice agenda (Kahn & Yoder, 1989). The key, I think, is to adopt a women-centered perspective that values diverse women and women's experiences and that is rooted in gendered understandings.

An example may clarify. Consider women's leadership (Yoder, 2001). We can describe women's styles of leadership as precisely that: *women's* styles (recognizing that they are diverse and without judgmental comparisons with men's). We can learn even more about women's leadership by understanding the role gender plays. If we envision leaders as cool, calm, collected, rational, and powerful decision-makers, then cultural taboos against public displays of emotion by men make men suitable candidates for these leadership roles. At the same time, culturally based liberties allowing women's public expressiveness work to undermine women's perceived suitability in these power-based contexts. Following this logic, not only do men generally make good leaders in these power-based contexts, but women also make bad leaders. By focusing on women (women-centered) and the gendered context (gender-sensitive), women's leadership can be described as women's (without being seen as deviant from men's) and contexts can be examined that both exaggerate and minimize the importance of power (versus cooperation, for example). In leadership, and throughout this book, descriptions of women and gendered understandings converge to provide one central feminist focus.

Interlocking oppressions. Take another walk around the Diversity Wheel, identifying the areas now where you are a member of an oppressed social category. Very few people can avoid being oppressed by some characteristic perceived by others. Sometimes this makes it difficult to sort out what the basis for an oppression is. For example, is the need for “big boys” not to cry a matter of their gender category or pressure to avoid being labeled gay (homophobia)? Oppressions support each other (Pharr, 1988).

Nowhere was this point of interlocking oppressions clearer to me than in raising my daughter. As parents, John and I talked openly about wanting Kate to be free from restrictions in clothing, staying clean, washing long hair, etc. We soon developed a reputation among our family members as being opposed to anything feminine for Kate, so some relatives took it upon themselves to offer her dresses, hair ribbons, and other feminine accoutrements. Kate would come back from family visits with all kinds of new items that quickly fell into disuse at home. When she got older, we'd talk about how she felt about these things and the assumption that we forbade them because they were "sexist." Kate is the one who eventually pinpointed the true fear among her relatives. They weren't really worried about her identity as a girl (Kate had a strong sense of being female), but rather feared that she would grow up to be a lesbian. We'll see in Chapter 4 that there are strong ties to how we do gender in how we raise girls and boys that are intermeshed with homophobia.

Another important point here is that by grouping people into social categories, we gloss over individual and subgroup diversity among them. Stop for a moment and think of a woman. Feel free to stereotype!

This is the typical procedure of **stereotyping** studies; give raters (commonly, mostly White college students) a stimulus and ask them to describe that person. Usually, "a woman" is described, among other things, as being neat, talkative, vain, gentle, passive, dependent, and tender (Broverman et al., 1970). But, who is this woman? Is she an African American woman? Hope Landrine found that these women were rated as dirty, hostile, and superstitious; as strong and domineering in a more recent study (Donovan, 2011). Is she a working class woman? Landrine (1985) found that these women were evaluated negatively as confused, dirty, hostile, illogical, impulsive, incoherent, inconsiderate, irresponsible, and superstitious. Furthermore, Landrine's data showed that stereotypes of the "typical" woman overlapped with those of White, middle class women. In other words, the "typical" woman we likely described at the start of this section is not typical at all. Rather, she is a specific kind of woman, a woman who is White and middle class (and probably a lot of other things we assumed, like heterosexual, young, and physically able). A women-centered psychology must be inclusive of *all* women—recognizing both commonalities and diversity (Yoder & Kahn, 1993).

Divisions among women have been fostered by the assumption that sex and gender can be studied in isolation of other ascribed social statuses (Cole, 2009). Although the Diversity Wheel does an excellent job of facilitating our understandings of various social categories, it does draw clear lines around each entry, implying that these are separate and distinct categories. In reality, each of us is a jumbled mix of categories such that no one stands without the others—an understanding that is captured by an approach called **intersectionality**. To get a clearer sense of how this point fits in with some of the ideas we have discussed so far, take a look at Figure 1.5.

To capture this idea of the intersection of multiple social categories, Candace West and Sarah Fenstermaker (1995) describe how to "**do difference**" from the perspective of social constructionism. Every one of our social category memberships is constructed, day-in and day-out, through interactions with other people. Each defines us within our society, and all are constructed in unison, affecting each other in intersecting ways.

An example from my own research with women firefighters may help bring home this last point (Yoder & Aniakudo, 1997; Yoder & Berendsen, 2001). Very few professional firefighters (less than 5%) are women. They stand out as different from "normal" firefighters (men) and are frequently considered deficient. They often are excluded, are marginal-

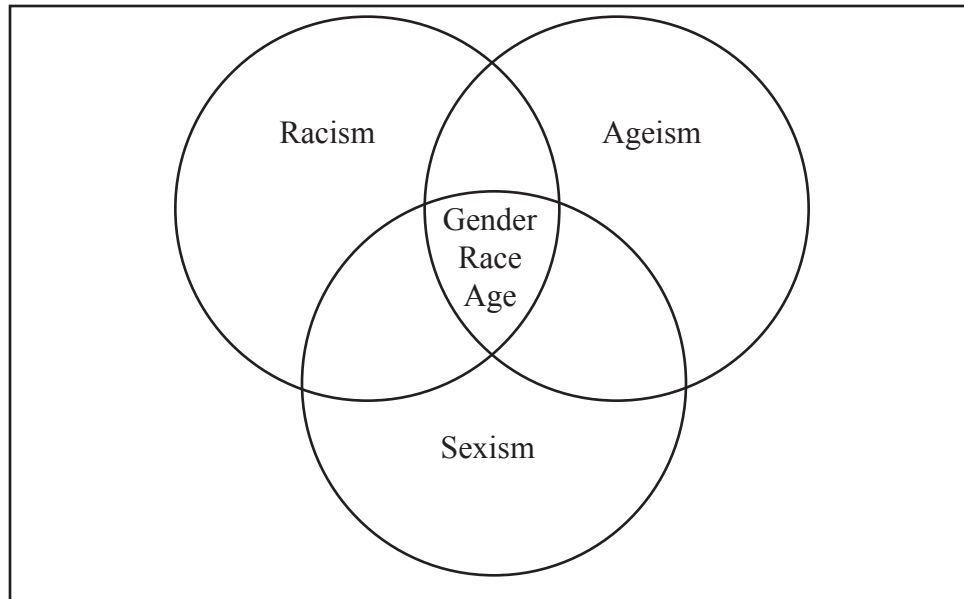


Figure 1.5

If we consider only the three social categories that people register first (gender, race, age), we each have social representations (how others see us) as well as our own individual identities and experiences at the intersection of all three (the center area). Considered within a system of inequality, on the other hand, few of us are oppressed by sexism, racism, and ageism; rather, we spread across all areas of the chart, oppressed by some and privileged by others.

ized as outsiders, and are harassed (Yoder & Aniakudo, 1996). One part of how others deal with their difference is to rely on gender stereotypes about women. This process of being stereotyped happens for both Black and White women firefighters, with both groups reporting stereotyping in equal measure.

However, there are key differences in how this stereotyping qualitatively plays out for women in each racial/ethnic category. The stereotype that Black women cope with marks them as self-sufficient and independent so that even when they need help, others typically don't think it's necessary. In contrast, the stereotype for White women often includes imagine of being fragile and needing care, so that these women commonly feel overprotected by their male counterparts. In both cases, women are stereotyped and these stereotypes limit how effectively they can do their jobs. Moreover, the specific ways these processes occur differ, in that Black women report feeling overburdened; White women, underburdened. A fuller understanding of the intersectionality of each woman's experience must reach beyond just understanding her gender to seeing how it is shaped by other social categories as well.

A *womEn*-centered exploration must stress the plurality of "women." Women are diverse; no singular, generic woman exists—although we may be misled to think so by conjuring up our culture's mainstream assumptions for women (White, middle class, heterosexual, Christian, physically able, young, mother...). One core goal for this book is that we not lose track of this **diversity** as we review research and that we don't stereotypically include some groups of women only when the topic "fits." Watch for this throughout the book, and keep it in the back of your mind as you think about each topic we cover.

Privileged ≠ oppressive. Powerful words like privilege, oppression, and injustice are uncomfortable. They can readily imply meanness by an individual and arouse guilt in that person. Some of these reactions come from the **individualism** of Western culture, which stresses individual over group needs (Oyserman & Lee, 2008). When we think individuals control much of what they do, it's easy to blame individual men for women's oppression.

Think of a time when you didn't like what you saw yourself doing. Allan Johnson (2006) does this quite effectively by describing himself when he plays the board game *Monopoly*. He becomes cut-throat competitive with his own kids, driving them out of the game by greedily gobbling up their properties. Is this part of his nature? Clearly, he can be induced to behave this way, but usually only in the context of this game of unchecked capitalism. Certainly, we all incur personal responsibility for what we do, but as social psychologists have long shown, the worst (and the best) in people can be drawn out by the social context in which we operate.

This understanding takes us to men and the role men play in a psychology of women. One potential role is as the "bad guy." Understanding that sexism is part of a larger system of inequalities should help us understand why being privileged by the system isn't the same as being oppressive as an individual. Lots of good people, like Johnson playing *Monopoly*, get caught up in bad situations without being "bad guys."

A frequent claim leveled against women feminists is that we engage in **male bashing** (the derogation of men and boys for being male). Remember that our goal is to end sexism, not hate men. Sue Cataldi (1995) writes a thoughtful analysis of the discourse used to talk about "male bashing" and how charges of man hating serve to undermine women's solidarity as feminists and silence their voices. She concludes: "One can be against sexism without hating men, just as one can be against racism without hating Whites or against homophobia without hating heterosexuals" (p. 77).

I think a better approach is to draw men into being pro-feminist in support of a social movement to end sexist oppression. An understandable barrier against drawing men into the women's movement rests in *ignoring* male privilege. Why would men work to change a status quo that benefits them? Putting this question out there bluntly is a first step toward working through it successfully.

It's somewhat idealistic to conclude that it's simply "the right thing to do." Johnson (2006) calls this the "tin-can" approach, which does capture well the underlying message of begging and the disempowerment that implies for members of the oppressed group. More effectively, men need to recognize that they can benefit themselves by supporting the feminist agenda we outlined here. Because, as we have seen, oppressions sustain each other, men who are devalued because of their race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etc. are indirectly oppressed by sexism as well (Blood et al., 1995). For example, an all-too-common practice in both the military and sports is to challenge men's masculinity and heterosexuality by demeaning them as "girls." The effectiveness of this epithet in controlling men's behavior is rooted in homophobia that in turn maintains gendered divisions.

I think there's another reason if we look beyond ourselves to the other significant people in our lives. What about mothers, daughters, partners, sisters, friends, and coworkers? We will learn that one consequence of seeing differences, instead of similarities, is disrupted connection. Each and every one of these relationships with women in men's lives suffers

when sources of connection, understanding, and empathy are broken. Feminism isn't about male bashing; it's about **social justice**—something we all have a stake in pursuing.

Oppressed ≠ non-oppressive. The same reasoning that led us to the conclusion above that men can support a feminist agenda explains why all women don't necessarily openly and without reservations embrace feminism. Indeed, at a more personal level, it helps us understand why even feminists can be sexist sometimes. We all are part of larger systems of inequality that force us to work actively and continuously at breaking free of just going along the easily sexist “path of least resistance” (Johnson, 2006).

If Johnson can't play Monopoly without turning into someone he doesn't want to be and I can't look through a fashion magazine without feeling inadequate about my body, why should any of us do these things? We need to recognize how these systemic forces are affecting us, and then take charge of them, rather than let them take charge of us. Paradoxically, personal empowerment may depend on how much we understand when we do, and especially when we don't, control our own lives.

CONSEQUENCES OF GENDER DIFFERENCES

We have seen that it's the linkage of difference to power that makes difference troublesome. Here I want to examine exactly what troubles gender difference may produce. The *American Heritage Dictionary* (2006) identifies three primary definitions of different: (1) not alike in character or quality (dissimilar); (2) distinct or separate (“other”); and (3) differing from all others (unusual). These definitions give us clues about what these negative consequences of difference may be. We shall see that dissimilarity can result in designations of normal for the privileged group and deficiency for the subordinated; regarding other people as “other” can produce stereotyping and disrupt contact between groups; and unusualness can lead to loss of connection between individuals (see Table 1.6).

Dissimilarity: Normal versus Deficient

Consider the following results from a large study of a nationally representative sample of lesbian and heterosexual women. The authors (Hegarty & Pratto, 2004, p. 448) concluded:

Interview studies show that straight and lesbian women recall very different childhood experiences. In one study, 90% of the lesbians interviewed recalled

TABLE 1.6
Aspects and Consequences of Difference

<i>Definitions of Difference</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
(1) Unlike in form, quality, amount, or nature DISSIMILAR	Normal versus deficient
(2) Distinct or separate “OTHER”	Stereotyping
(3) Differing from all others UNUSUAL	Disrupted connection between individuals

enjoying extremely “female-typed” activities from childhood (e.g., dolls, hopscotch). 65% of the straight women interviewed recalled enjoying such activities.

<i>Social group</i>	<i>Percent who enjoyed activities</i>
Lesbians	90%
Straight women	65%

Take a minute and in your own words, please explain this difference.

It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to notice that the results appear counterintuitive; that is, they run against common stereotyping of lesbians as unfeminine. Indeed, the data above were fabricated as part of a larger study by Peter Hegarty and Felicia Pratto (2004). In their study, some undergraduates read the version above, whereas for others, the percentages were switched so that their “results” were consistent with folk wisdom about lesbians and heterosexual women. Three pieces of data were collected from the students who read one version. Trained coders, unaware of which version the student read, judged the explanations that students wrote for: (1) how many times lesbians and heterosexual women were mentioned, (2) references to how accurate they believed these reports of childhood experiences were; and (3) students also guessed what the two percentages might be if a second study was conducted.

Notice that we are looking inside one subcategory (women) of the broader social category of gender (women and men). Within this subcategory of women, heterosexual women represent the dominant, privileged group, in contrast to lesbians as a subordinated, oppressed group, at least in terms of their sexual orientation. Turning to the results of Hegarty and Pratto’s study, regardless of which version students read, they made significantly more references to lesbians than to heterosexual women. In other words, lesbians’ memories took center stage in their explanations. What heterosexual women purportedly did was taken for granted (normalized) and what lesbians reportedly did needed explaining. Thus, the dominant group, heterosexual women, was set up as the standard against which lesbians needed to be understood. This pattern illustrates the first part, **normality**, of the normal-deficient consequence of difference.

The second part of this consequence, **deficiency**, is a bit more subtle. When students predicted the likely outcomes in a follow-up study, they estimated that the results would be closer to those in the first study for heterosexual women than for lesbians. In other words, the data from heterosexual women would hold up better over repeated testings presumably because heterosexual women are providing more valid data. In contrast, there’s something relatively deficient about the data coming from lesbian interviewees.

What’s most fascinating about Hegarty and Pratto’s study is that it demonstrates the process through which difference produces both a normalized, baseline group (heterosexual women) and a deficient “other” group (lesbians). We see in these data firsthand how women and men college students construct meaning from the differences they see in research findings.

Hegarty and Pratto’s experiment demonstrates the process of how normalizing the dominant group and questioning the oppressed group happens. Turning to the social category of gender, the process of normalizing men as the dominant group and regarding women as the subordinated group as comparatively deficient is not uncommon in the social sciences. **Androcentric bias** refers to this male-centeredness, such that what men do is

regarded as normative (that is, what should be done) and what women do is considered relatively deficient.⁶

Take a look at the incomplete bar chart in Figure 1.7 and take a minute to finish it. Peter Hegarty and his colleagues (2010) ran a series of six experiments to explore the subtle biases we take for granted in seemingly objective charts and graphs. They found that people expected the first (left) bar to represent men and, in separate studies and independent of gender, to represent the more powerful party, even when not rating power. In fact, these parallels serve to link being male to being powerful, a point we'll explore later. For now, these two findings collude to make it likely that you labeled the left bar "men" and drew it taller.

If, on the other hand, you wanted to illustrate that women were more powerful, you would have had to break one of these unspoken rules by putting women first or by drawing the taller bar to the right. Whatever you did, one point that emerges from these studies is that androcentric bias typically continues in subtle ways. When we put men "first" (to the left) on a chart, they automatically become the comparison point, that is, the group against which the bars to the right are compared, thus conforming to an androcentric bias. The good news though is that we need not succumb to this bias; when we think about it, we are capable of flipping our perspective to make women the default gender (Hegarty, 2006), giving us two ways to think about the same phenomenon and thus expanding our perspective.

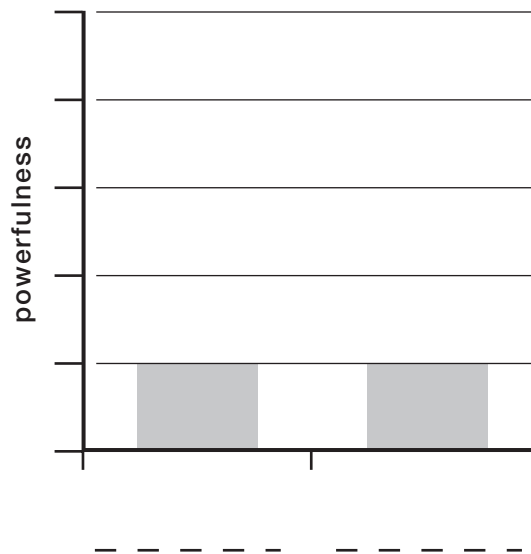


Figure 1.7

Assume that there is a gender difference in powerfulness and illustrate that difference in the above chart by: (1) labeling each bar (fill in the two blank lines on the x-axis to label each bar so one is for women; the other, for men), and (2) extend each bar vertically to illustrate the difference.

⁶Ironically, the equation of maleness with generic humanness misses the essential nature of masculinity—of what men are like as *men*. A corrective to this oversight is offered by profeminist approaches to men's studies (in APA's Division 51 on Men and Masculinity).

“Other”: Stereotyping and Disrupted Contact

Thinking about women as a group as “other” compared to men as a group is a concept that has been part of feminist thinking for a long time (De Beauvoir, 1952). As with androcentric bias described above, we continue to talk here about women and men as groups, in this case distinct and separate groups. The cognitive process of thinking about women and men as different is referred to as **gender polarization** (Bem, 1993). Such thinking is based on two critical assumptions: first, that women and men are represented by two mutually exclusive groups with no overlap, and second, that each group is homogeneous (that is, all women are alike as women and all men are alike as men).

This point may seem as obvious as my earlier request to check the box that describes you: male or female. Surely, we all know which box to check so that all women, and only women, check female and all men, and only men, check male. Even the language we commonly use to relate women and men as the “opposite” sex captures this distinction and separateness. Pictorially, this comparison would look like the figures below.



Try to think of a characteristic that would sort all girls and women into the first square and all boys and men into the second. If you think having a penis or not works, check out Chapter 3. If you think reproductive differences sort effectively, consider women who have had a hysterectomy or men with insufficient sperm counts. Obviously, no personality trait (aggressiveness, sociability, etc.) would do it. Try self-identification, but then what would we do with transgender folks (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008)? Boxing everyone in isn’t as easy as it might look on first blush.

However, we squeeze people into these two boxes every day. As we saw at the opening of this chapter, sex (or, as we now know, our perceptions of others’ sex) is one of the three primary indicators by which we sort people into social categories. What are the costs associated with this distinction and separation, and who do they affect? Conversely, does anyone benefit?

The **out-group homogeneity** effect (that is, regarding members of the “other” group as all alike) (Judd & Park, 1988) sets up **sexist stereotyping**. As we’ll see in Chapter 7, stereotypes move from being simple descriptors of what women and men as groups are like, to proscribing what they *should* be like and, in taking this leap, work to limit the possibilities open to girls and women (Glick & Fiske, 1999a). By confining us to the square above designated by our gender, they literally box us into what’s expected of us as members of our gender category. This process has real implications for how far each of us can and cannot develop our own individual propensities and abilities. For example, in Chapter 5 we’ll see that expectations regarding the gender appropriateness of occupations can subtly channel women and men away from certain college majors and career paths toward others.

Outside our homes in the public sphere of our lives, such as in our schools and our workplaces, contact between women as a group and men as a group is surprisingly limited. Just think back to your schools before college and picture your lunchrooms and play-

grounds. As we'll see in Chapter 4, these likely were gender segregated (Maccoby, 1990). Much to my chagrin, my son's middle school actually instituted separate girls' and boys' lunchtimes to be able to ascertain easily if kids were where they were supposed to be during lunch and recess. The principal defended this policy, even though we know that every-day, casual relationships between girls and boys are central to breaking down stereotyping and discomfort between two groups (Pipher, 1994). However, as we'll discover in Chapter 9, we largely segregate occupations by gender, so maybe schools are simply preparing us well for what lies ahead.

Stereotyping and limited contact occur between groups. They work together to reinforce each other in a cycle of less contact and greater stereotyping. Mere contact alone cannot bridge in-groups with out-groups, but rather this contact must be equal-status, involve intergroup cooperation, be sustained over time, take place within a social climate that favors equality, and allow for potential friendships to develop (Pettigrew, 1998). Individual women and men interact with each other every day, but is that enough to break down stereotyping? Read on...

Unusualness: Disrupted Connection

In our private lives many women and men live in intimate interdependence, unlike most of the social groups around the Diversity Wheel (Lee et al., 2010). Yet these close interactions between women and men don't appear to guarantee connection because they co-exist within systems of inequality. All kinds of popular debates ask "What do women want?," "Why can't women and men get along?," and so on.

The ultimate popularized example of this difference thinking is captured in the very title of a bestseller on this topic: *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus: The Classic Guide for Understanding the Opposite Sex* (Gray, 2004). In fact, this book (first published in 1992) has garnered so much popular attention that a noted gender psychologist, Rosalind Barnett, co-authored a book for a general audience tackling the gender myths perpetuated by Gray's book and showing how these misconceptions about differences hurt women's relationships, children, and jobs (Barnett & Rivers, 2004).

Take, for example, intimate relationships. A survey for the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University of over 1,000 Americans, age 20 to 29, concluded that most are looking for a "soul mate for life" (Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001). There's a "two cultures" model of intimate, heterosexual relationships, played up in the popular media by books like Gray's, that claims that women and men want different things from their relationships and communicate differently so that they never can connect fully with each other (Dion & Dion, 2001). Indeed, the very definition of "manhood," at least in the abstract, assumes disconnected autonomy from others (Parent & Moradi, 2011).

We'll see in Chapter 8 that this differences model resides more in popular folk wisdom than in scholarly evidence. Ironically, folk wisdom about the "war" between the sexes may undermine not only people's expectations about the likelihood of finding the soul mate they seek, but also the very interactions that are part of being connected to one's soul mate when they are found. We'll see that intimate relationships based on equal sharing don't just happen; rather, they take considerable, never-ending work (Blaisure & Allen, 1995; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2005)

At its most extreme, the disconnection that results from seeing another individual as unusual (and not like me) is a critical first step psychologists have identified toward violence. Social psychologist Erwin Staub (1989) looked at various national cases of genocide and identified a slow progression of difference thinking as one important step toward committing otherwise unthinkable acts. As people begin to think about others as less and less like themselves, and thus less and less human, pathways toward unspeakable violence are forged.

As we'll see in Chapter 13, a similar pattern of objectifying women combines with motivations of entitlement and for dominance to underlie acceptance of rape myths and propensities for men to sexually abuse women (Hill & Fischer, 2001). I certainly do *not* mean to exaggerate the role of difference thinking by implying that it alone inevitably leads to rape. However, it is clear that people who are respectful of others cannot take these steps. Nowhere is it clearer to me that enlisting men in such efforts is important.

My general point here is that we need to think more deeply about difference thinking (gender polarization) and whether what it does for us outweighs some potentially significant costs. This is why I am starting this book with this very fundamental exploration of social categorization and difference, and why the next few chapters will explore these ideas more fully. I think that by taking a closer look at the power of difference, we'll be well prepared to think more critically and thoughtfully about the applied chapters that compose the second half of this text.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Because the overall focus on this text is on sex as a major marker for social categorization, we started by exploring how social representations in general can lead to difference thinking. Difference is linked with power in systems of inequality that promote both privilege for members of dominant groups and oppression of subordinated group members. Seeing people as members of in-groups, to which I belong, and out-groups takes a step toward three consequences. First, differences set up one group to be normative in contrast to deficient others. Second, differences can encourage stereotyping, and third, differences can disrupt connection between individuals.

Gender is just one of many ways in which we categorize people around the Diversity Wheel. However, even among the core characteristics that define similarities and differences among people, gender is primary. The frequency with which gender is used to sort individuals into groups of female and male can be understood to result from either the fundamental essentialism of this difference or our vigilant social construction of gender through hard, yet often unconscious, work throughout our everyday lives.

This understanding puts gender differences and power at center stage in this text. By thinking of women and men as different (gender polarization), we can readily slide down a slippery slope toward androcentric bias, that is, seeing men as the normal standard and women as relatively deficient, toward sexist stereotyping and disrupted contact, and toward disrupted connected. The system of gender inequality this reinforces confers dominance and unearned entitlements on privileged men and disadvantages women.

Ironically, even most men ultimately are not benefited by this system of interlocking oppressions that work to sustain each other. Rather, an overall social justice agenda is

needed to dismantle these systems of inequality, including the feminist agenda we have seen helps give meaning to the body of theory and research we construct as social scientists. Indeed, what lies ahead for us in this book is an exploration of this theory and research, especially focused on the power of gender differences.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

This first chapter sets up the four themes that run across this book. First, we are striving to construct a psychology that is guided by a social justice agenda and given meaning by our feminist values. To do this, we need to understand difference and how it relates to power, privilege, oppression, and systems of inequality. In short, we need to transform psychology.

Second, we need to understand that transformation is an ongoing process of continual change and critical thinking, not a static endpoint. In the next chapter, we'll look at how far we have come in this transformation by looking back at our history and critically examining the tools (our methods) that got us where we are today. We'll raise questions about the very questions we ask (and don't ask), about how we frame our questions, and about how we collect data and interpret our findings.

Third, we began to explore the need to take a holistic approach to understanding women and gender by bringing together nature (biology), nurture (socialization), and social context (environment). Within this way of thinking, sex (biology) and gender (how culture makes meaning of sex) are inseparable and intertwined.

Finally, there is no singular woman's experience, but rather a wide diversity of women and men and their experiences must be brought together. It is clear that psychology has been transformed by feminists and feminist theories, research, and practice, and that this process continues.

Throughout our odyssey through this feminist approach to psychology, there undoubtedly will be times when we become frustrated, overwhelmed, and angry. This course hits too close to home to be approached dispassionately. It is not uncommon for folks to approach this course with feelings of apprehension, wariness, and suspicion. You may find yourself disturbed by what you'll read, motivating you to dismiss some conclusions or argue vehemently against them. You also may be disturbed by events and people in your everyday life that you hadn't noticed or cared about before reading this text. These are critical moments. Try not to let them pass without exploring what you're feeling and why. You may seek out additional readings or others to talk with at these points. Remember through these times that being aware of this work is better than ignoring it, for awareness is a first step toward realizing the social justice we all deserve (see Greenwood & Christian, 2008).

SUGGESTED READINGS

Johnson, A. G. (2006). *Privilege, power, and difference* (2nd ed). New York: McGraw Hill.

This very reader friendly book brings together much of the logic and research that links difference to power, privilege, oppression, and systems of inequality. Allan Johnson helps put gender within this paradigm as well as connects gender to other markers of social identity around the Diversity Wheel. I recommend this book highly as a supplement to this chapter.

Muehlenhard, C. L., & Peterson, Z. D. (2011). Distinguishing between *sex* and *gender*: History, current conceptualizations, and implications. *Sex Roles*. doi: 10.1007/s11199-011-9932-5.

Without offering any easy answers, this insightful article explores the history, current thinking, and unresolved issues in defining sex and gender, leaving the reader with a more nuanced and complex understanding of these seemingly simple terms.

Zucker, A.N. (2004). Disavowing social identities: What it means when women say “I’m not a feminist but...” *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 28, 423-435.

Alyssa Zucker explores what it means to be an “egalitarian,” that is, a woman who adopts feminist values but eschews the label of “feminist.” Her data argue that there’s more in a name than we might think, sparking discussion of what feminism is and means.

Bem, S. L. (1993). *The lenses of gender: Transforming the debate on sexual inequality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sandra Bem takes a careful look at how three schemas (lenses through which we perceive our social worlds), androcentrism, gender polarization, and biological essentialism, work together to perpetuate systems of gender inequality.

Gergen, K. J., & Gergen, M. (2004). *Social construction: Entering the dialogue*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publications.

Kenneth and Mary Gergen provide an up-to-date introduction to the ideas of social construction.