Psychology of Gender

FIFTH EDITION

Vicki S. Helgeson

Psychology of Gender

Noted for its fair and equal coverage of men and women, this book reviews the research and issues surrounding gender from multiple perspectives including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and public health, with an emphasis on the interaction between biological and social theories. The implications of social roles, status, and gender-related traits on relationships and health that are central to students' daily lives are emphasized throughout. Students learn how to distinguish the similarities and differences between the sexes and the theories that explain the differences. Methodological flaws that may impact the observance of sex differences are also examined.

Learning activities and pedagogical tools included in the text:

- *Do Gender* exercises that provide an opportunity to test hypotheses and explore data
- *Sidebars* on special interest topics and numerous visuals that bring the studies to life
- *Take Home Points* that summarize key concepts in bulleted format
- Boldfaced key terms and definitions, chapter summaries, discussion questions, and suggested readings, which help students review the material.

New to the fifth edition:

- Expanded sections on cohabitation, homosexuality, online relationships, social media influences, single-sex classrooms, sex differences in math abilities, and gender implications of divorce on health
- Expanded coverage of gender and parenting, gender and the workplace, gender and power, and balancing work and family
- An expanded intersectional approach that highlights how gender is connected to social class, race, and ethnicity, including more coverage of gender system justification theory
- Coverage of transgender issues including recent changes in the DSM guidelines
- Streamlined discussions to further engage students to think about gender issues
- A companion website at www.routledge.com/cw/Helgeson where instructors will find PowerPoint slides, multiple-choice quizzes, and short-answer questions with suggested answers for each chapter; and students will find flashcards of key terms, chapter outlines, and links to related websites and further reading.

This is an ideal text for upper-level gender-focused courses including the psychology of gender; psychology of women or men; gender issues; and gender, women's, or men's studies taught in psychology; women's studies; gender studies; sociology; and anthropology.

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Psychology of Gender
Fifth Edition

Vicki S. Helgeson

To all of the students and research staff at Carnegie Mellon University who have challenged me to think beyond the boundaries of conventional research on gender and inspired me over the past 25 years to be a better teacher, researcher, and person

Brief Contents

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Preface

The purpose of this text is to provide a review of the empirical research and conceptual discussions surrounding gender and to examine the implications of gender for relationships and health. The focus of this book goes beyond sex alone—whether one is biologically male or female—to explore the roles that society has assigned to women and men and the other variables that co-occur with sex, such as status and gender-related traits. The implications of social roles, status, and gender-related traits for relationships and health are examined. This is why the book is entitled *The Psychology of Gender* rather than *The Psychology of Sex*. *Gender* is a term that represents the social and cultural forces that influence men and women in our society. The book discusses the "psychology" of gender because the focus is on the individual in the social context. The primary focus is not on biology and anthropology, although their contributions to the study of gender are included.

Rather than review every topic related to gender, I examine the implications of gender for two broad domains of research: relationships and health. These domains are chosen, first, because they are central to our lives. Friendships, romantic relationships, and relationships at work have a great impact on our day-to-day functioning. Psychological well-being and physical health are important outcomes in their own right. A second reason for the focus on relationships and health is that these are domains in which gender-role socialization plays a prominent role. Observed sex differences cannot be attributed to biology alone; thus, relationships and health are domains that are relevant to the social category of gender.

Multiple perspectives on the development of differences between men and women are offered, but the primary perspective that I emphasize is a social-psychological one. I examine gender as an individual difference variable but focus on the influence of the context—the situation, the environment, the culture—on gender. I have drawn from research in the areas of psychology, biology, sociology, anthropology, medicine, and public health. Rather than consider these disciplines' influence as independent, however, there is greater recognition in this edition of the book of the interaction between biological and social theories.

I do not merely itemize sex differences in this text. In many domains, sex differences are more elusive than people believe. I highlight both similarities and differences and remind the reader about the magnitude of differences throughout the chapters. I also point out methodological flaws or difficulties that may bear on the observance of sex differences. The focus of the book is on the *explanations* for women's and men's thoughts, feelings, and behavior—not simply a summary statement of the similarities and differences between men and women.

Content Overview

The book is divided roughly into three parts, with each section building on the previous one. First, the nature of gender and the development of gender roles are presented. In the first chapter, I provide a brief overview of the field of gender, including how gender is

construed across cultures and some of the philosophical and political controversies in the area. In Chapter 2, I review the scientific method that is used to study gender, including the unique difficulties that arise in this field, as well as provide a brief history of the psychology of gender, which includes a review of the various instruments used to study gender. In Chapter 3, I present research on attitudes toward gender and gender roles, focusing largely on sexism and gender-role stereotypes. Then I turn to the research literature to provide the current data (Chapter 4) and theory (Chapter 5) on sex differences in cognitive, social, and emotional domains. In Chapter 5, I discuss different theories of gender-role development, such as evolutionary theory, social learning theory, social role theory, and gender schema theory. In Chapter 6, I discuss the implications of gender and gender roles for achievement. Thus, in the first section of this book, I provide important information on the similarities and differences between women and men and the theories that explain any observed differences. The data and the theories are important for understanding the subsequent sections of this book that address the implications of gender for relationships and health.

The second section of this book begins with a discussion of women's and men's communication and interaction styles (Chapter 7). These findings have implications for the specific relationships discussed: friendship (Chapter 8) and romantic relationships (Chapter 9). Research on cross-sex friendship, relationships among sexual minorities, and friendships at work are included in these chapters. The role of gender in relationships is critical to understanding the third section of the book, how gender influences health.

The third section begins with a chapter that provides an overview of sex differences in health and theories as to their origins (Chapter 10). Health is broadly construed in this book to reflect physical health problems, such as coronary artery disease, as well as mental health problems, such as depression and eating disorders. In Chapter 11, I investigate how gender affects the association of relationships to health. The effects of marriage and parenting on health are reviewed, as are the effects of relationships gone awry, specifically domestic abuse, rape, and stalking. Chapter 12 presents an examination of how gender affects the association of work to health, which includes a substantive discussion of pay disparity and sexual harassment. The final chapter focuses on the implications of gender for mental health—specifically, depression, eating disorders, and suicide.

New to This Edition

For those of you who are familiar with the previous editions, I would like to highlight some changes that I have made to this fifth edition. I wrote the first edition of this book during the year after my daughter was born. Now she is a senior in high school and could be reading this book like any other text next year. A lot has changed. After my daughter was born, I took a 1-year sabbatical to write this book. It never occurred to me to ask for maternity leave. I don't even know if it existed, but I've seen women colleagues around me take leaves and postpone the tenure clock in the intervening years. I've seen dads take time off, and I've seen more children at work. The work environment is becoming more "family friendly."

This edition of the book seems different from the others. As with the previous editions, I updated all of the research. Gender has always been a moving target. But this fifth edition seems more like an overhaul than a revision. There has been a sea change in the area of gender. There are sections of the book that had to be completely rewritten because of these changes. For example, the debates on cohabitation and single-sex education are no more: The negative effects of cohabitation on relationships are disappearing, and there is no

substantive evidence that single-sex education is beneficial. The murky literature on gender and divorce has been clarified: Men suffer more than women. Despite the fact that society continues to label math as male, sex differences in math have all but disappeared. The science has proliferated and the research has become more rigorous. On a societal level, gender has also changed. It is now legal for homosexual couples to marry, and the shift in opinion toward homosexuals is the most dramatic change in attitude I have seen in my lifetime. In fact, the conversation has shifted from homosexuality to transgender individuals and gender fluidity. This conversation is now part of the text.

There are several other conversations that have become part of this textbook. First, it is now increasingly recognized that the category of gender cannot be studied independent of other social categories, such as race, ethnicity, and social class. This recognition, referred to as "intersectionality," is beginning to be reflected in the research literature and has become part of this text. Relatedly, one theory that is increasingly applied to the study of gender, in terms of sexism and discrimination, is gender system justification. That theory is featured more prominently in this text. Third, our conversations are becoming increasingly electronic. Research on online communication is discussed in terms of its implications for women's and men's relationships. Finally, there is greater elaboration on some topics, such as gender and parenting, gender and the workplace, and balancing family and work.

Website

This edition includes a companion website at www.routledge.com/cw/Helgeson. There instructors will find PowerPoint slides, multiple-choice quizzes, and short-answer questions with suggested answers for each chapter; and students will find flashcards of key terms, chapter outlines, and links to related websites and further reading.

Learning Tools

Gender is a topic with which all of us are familiar, regardless of the scientific literature. Thus, it is sometimes difficult to mesh personal experiences with the research literature. To help students integrate the two, each of the chapters includes mini-experiments (entitled "Do Gender") for students to test some of the research ideas presented. The results of these experiments will not always work out as intended, partly because the sample sizes will be small, partly because the samples will not be representative, and partly because the best ideas do not always translate into the best research designs. The purpose of the exercises is to allow students to gain experience with some of the methods used to study gender and to learn firsthand about how people experience gender in their lives. When topics of special interest arise—or what would be referred to as "going off on a tangent" in class—I included sidebars, such as "How to Raise a Gender-Aschematic Child," "Parenting Among Sexual Minorities," "The Future of Title IX," or "Does Abstinence Only Work?" Other aids to learning include key terms in boldface throughout the chapters and a summary of key terms and definitions at the end of the chapter, summaries of the main points at the end of the chapter, a list of thought-provoking discussion questions, and a list of suggested readings accompanying each chapter. To make the text more user-friendly for students, I have added a section entitled "Take Home Points" at the end of each section of a chapter. Here, I summarize the major points in bullet-point form.

Intended Audience

This text can be used for an undergraduate course on the psychology of gender, the psychology of women or men, women's or men's studies and gender issues taught in psychology, women's studies, gender studies, sociology, and anthropology, preferably for more advanced students. This text could also be supplemented with empirical readings for a graduate-level course. The book should have widespread appeal to students in the sciences and humanities. Students do not have to be psychology majors to read this text, but some knowledge of research methods would be helpful. Because social-psychological theories are so widely discussed in this text, a student who has taken such a course will find the book especially appealing and be able to grasp many of the concepts quite quickly. However, theories are explained in sufficient detail that students without a background in social psychology or psychology should understand the material. I welcome students from other disciplines into my course and find that the diversity in student backgrounds leads to more interesting discussions of the issues brought forth by the text.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of the previous editions of this book as well as the people who gave so generously of their time to read and comment on chapters of the first edition: Rosalind Barnett, Kay Deaux, Alice Eagly, Barbara Gutek, Judith Hall, Susan Sprecher, and Ingrid Waldron. I will always be indebted to Letitia Anne Peplau who read the entire first edition of this book, provided detailed feedback, and asked thought-provoking questions. These people's comments and suggestions have enhanced and endured throughout the editions of this book.

I owe a great deal of gratitude to the many staff members and students at Carnegie Mellon University who have helped me with each edition of the book. I especially appreciate the efforts of Jennifer Shin who spent countless hours helping me to find references, statistics, and Internet articles to update this book and to Abigail Kunz Vaughn for helping me obtain permissions for the figures and for countless other critical tasks that put this book together. I also greatly appreciate the work of Stephanie Boris for helping to create many of the "visuals" in this edition. I will always be indebted to Denise Deverts, who went through every page of the first volume of this book with a fine-toothed comb, asked questions about statements that were less than sensible, and provided creative ideas to bring the book to life. I also want to thank the students in the psychology of gender classes that I have taught over the last 25 years for inspiring me to write this book.

I would like to thank Debra Riegert from Routledge/Taylor and Francis for being the most responsive editor one could hope for. No matter how small my question, I could always count on Debra for a timely response. I greatly appreciate her patience with all of my requests and her accommodating all of my self-imposed deadlines throughout this process.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: my mother and father for all their love and support over the years; my husband, Mark, for keeping me in touch with the "real world" outside of academia and for his patience and assistance with "life work" as I worked on this revision; and my daughter Katja for teaching me about myself, challenging my assumptions, and providing me with vivid examples of gender-role socialization.

V. S. H.

About the Author

Vicki S. Helgeson is a social/health psychologist who studies the intersection of gender, relationships, and health. She has conducted extensive research on the implications of gender-related traits, in particular unmitigated communion and unmitigated agency, for relationships and health. Her work has involved studies of children, adults, healthy populations, and people with chronic illnesses, such as cancer, heart disease, and—most recently—diabetes. She has received continuous funding from the National Institutes of Health since 1993 to support her work. Helgeson has been on the faculty at Carnegie Mellon University for 25 years and teaches social psychology as well as psychology of gender.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In 1998, my daughter was born and so was my own personal experience with the psychology of gender. As an advocate of equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women, I thought this practice should begin with infancy. To start, my husband and I tried not to let gender be the overriding principle by which we chose Katja's toys and clothes. This proved to be far more difficult than we thought. In infancy, there are a fair number of "gender-neutral" clothes and toys. But by 1 year of age, the boys' toys and clothes are in one section, the girls' in another, and there is little common ground. I finally figured out why there are gender-neutral clothes for infants: Many parents-to-be and gift givers make purchases before the baby is born and don't know the sex of the newborn. By age 1, everyone knows.

By dressing Katja in gender-neutral clothes, I learned that the default assumption of others was she must be a boy. Any infant girl in her right mind (or her parents' right mind) would wear pink or ruffles or have bows in her hair (see Figure 1.1) or have her ears pierced!

Figure 1.1 This infant has a bow in her hair to signal to society that she is a female.
Kiley, Lee Anne "Shannon Kiley" 2005

Because I personally dislike pink (probably not a coincidence), Katja had a lot of blue, yellow, purple, and red. (This did come back to haunt me around age 4 when pink emerged as her favorite color! However, it lasted only a year and now she hates pink. See pink frilly dress phenomenon in chapter 5.) When we carried her around as an infant, people in the grocery store or the shopping mall would comment on what a cute boy we had. When we mentioned he was a she, people often subtly reprimanded us for not providing the appropriate cues: the pink, the ruffles, the hair bows. Some people remarked that of course she was a girl because she had so much hair. I know of no evidence that girls are born with more hair than boys. I found it an interesting paradox that the biological default is female (i.e., at conception, the embryo is destined to become female unless exposed to male hormones), but the social default is male. When in doubt, assume the baby is a boy—unless there are strong social cues indicating the baby is a girl. It is not nearly as offensive to assume a girl is a boy as to assume a boy is a girl. But people do expect you to be offended. When someone did mistake Katja for a boy, I wasn't surprised. How can you tell at that age? But the person who made the remark was always extremely apologetic, assuming she had insulted me by assuming Katja was of the other sex.

By age 1, girls' and boys' clothes have little in common. Blue jeans that are plain in the boys' section are decorated with flowers, ruffles, or sequins in the girls' section. A simple pair of shorts in the boys' department is elaborated with a flap in the girls' department so it looks like a skirt. Girls' clothes are covered with an amazing assortment of flowers. Girls also are expected to wear dresses. How practical is it to play in the sand, climb a tree, and run around in a dress? You can't even buy socks that are for both boys and girls; there are boy socks and girl socks. Guess which ones have ruffles.

The point I am trying to convey is that sex is a very important category to us as a society. In fact, sex is one of the first categories learned by children because (a) sex is typically considered to have only two categories, (b) the categories are mutually exclusive, and (c) we are immediately exposed to members of both categories (Zemore, Fiske, & Kim, 2000). An infant's sex is one of the first things you try to figure out about her or him and one of the first things you notice about a child or an adult. Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you didn't know the sex of a person, or mistook someone for the wrong sex? I remember being in a Victoria's Secret with my teenage daughter and having the cashier ask us who helped us. We stumbled trying to figure out a way to refer to the clerk without a pronoun because neither of us were certain whether the person was female or male. (Being in a Victoria's Secret, one might assume the person was female, but we later found out the person was male!) Why are we bothered so much by these situations? Why do we need to know the person's sex to interact with her—or him? A person's sex—really, a person's gender (I explain the distinction in the next section)—has implications for our feelings, our beliefs, and our behavior toward the person. Your own gender has implications for how others feel about you, what others think about you, and how others behave toward you—and perhaps for how you feel and think about yourself.

Gender has been the subject of scientific scrutiny for over a century. Scientists have debated the similarities as well as the differences between women and men: Are men better at math than women? Are women more emotional than men? Are men more aggressive than women? Do men and women have the same capacities to be engineers, nurses, and lawyers? Scientists have also examined the implications of being female and male for one's relationships and one's health: Are women's relationships closer than those of men? Does marriage

provide more health benefits for men compared to women? Are women more depressed than men? Are men less willing than women to seek help for health problems?

You have probably thought about some of these questions. You may be fairly confident you know the answers to some of them. Gender is a topic with which we are all intimately familiar. What woman doubts that men are less likely than women to ask for directions? What man doubts that women are more likely than men to dwell on their problems? We have many experiences we bring to bear on these issues, but our anecdotal observations are not the same as observations gained from well-established scientific methods. In fact, our anecdotal observations may be biased in favor of sex differences when differences do not really exist because differences are more noticeable than similarities and our beliefs can shape what we see. When evaluating the literature that compares women and men, you will see the answer to the question of sex differences or similarities is usually fairly complicated. The appearance of sex differences depends on myriad factors: place, time, audience, and characteristics of the observer.

In this text, I evaluate the literature on the psychology of gender, paying special attention to the implications that gender has for our relationships and our health. I begin this first chapter by defining the terminology used in the study of gender. Next, I comment on how gender is construed in other cultures. Finally, I conclude the chapter by providing an overview of the various political and philosophical viewpoints that many researchers have taken when studying gender.

Definition of Terms

This textbook is called *Psychology of Gender*. Why not *Psychology of Sex*? What is the difference between sex and gender? Is *gender* simply the more politically correct term? One of our first tasks is to define these terms and other sex-related and gender-related ideas.

The first distinction to make is between sex and gender. **Sex** refers to the biological categories of female and male, categories distinguished by genes, chromosomes, and hormones. Culture has no influence on one's sex. Sex is a relatively stable category that is not easily changed, although technology has allowed people to change their biological sex. **Gender**, by contrast, is a much more fluid category. It refers to the social categories of male and female. These categories are distinguished from one another by a set of psychological features and role attributes that society has assigned to the biological category of sex. What are some of the psychological features we assign to sex in the United States? Emotionality is a trait we ascribe to women, and competitiveness is a trait we ascribe to men. These traits are features of gender rather than sex. Whereas sex is defined in the same way across cultures, gender differs because each society has its own prescriptions for how women and men ought to behave. A feature of the male sex category includes the Y chromosome; regardless of whether a male wears a baseball cap or barrettes, or is competitive or empathetic, he is of the male sex because he possesses the Y chromosome. Personality and appearance are related to the gender category. In the United States, a feature of the female gender category is nurturance; a person who is nurturant is behaving in a way consistent with the social category for women. Another feature of the female gender category in the United States is to wear a skirt; typically, if you encounter someone in this country wearing a skirt, you can assume the person is psychologically female as well as biologically female. However, in other countries,

such as Scotland, wearing a skirt or a kilt is quite normal for a person of the biological male sex; thus we would not want to use wearing a skirt as a feature of the female or male gender category in Scotland. It is American culture that views a kilt as a skirt; a person from Scotland does not view a kilt as feminine attire. The content of gender categories—but not sex categories—is influenced by society, culture, and time.

Now that this important distinction has been made, I must point out the distinction is rarely employed in practice. Laypersons as well as scientists often use the terms interchangeably; articles in the newspaper as well as articles in scientific journals do not use the terms consistently. Even the American Psychological Association is not consistent in its employment of these terms. For example, when submitting an article to be published in a scientific journal, the editor often replaces the phrase *sex differences* with *gender differences*. There is a good chance that the author is simply referring to differences between people who are biologically male versus biologically female without any thought to their psychological attributes; that being the case, the correct term would be sex differences. However, some people believe that the phrase *sex differences* implies the basis of the difference is biological. Yet, if you conduct a study of women and men and find that women have better recall on a memory task than men or that men outperform women on a video game, do you have any evidence that the difference is biological? No. A better term to describe these differences is **sex-related behavior**. This term implies the behavior corresponds to sex, but it does not say anything about the cause or the etiology of the difference.

A term that better captures society's influence on the biologically based categories of female and male is **gender role** rather than *gender*. A **role** is a social position accompanied by a set of norms or expectations. For example, one role you most certainly possess is the role of student. What are some of the expectations that go along with this role? One expectation is that you study for class; another might be that you socialize and stay up late at night with friends. In this instance, a conflict may exist between the expectations within a given role.

Gender role refers to the expectations that go along with being male versus female. We typically expect men to be strong, independent, and competitive, and to keep their emotions hidden. These are features of the male gender role. By contrast, we typically expect women to be caring, emotionally expressive, polite, and helpful: features of the female gender role. In other words, we expect men to be **masculine** and we expect women to be **feminine**. Masculinity includes the traits, behaviors, and interests that society has assigned to the male gender role. A masculine trait is self-confidence; a masculine behavior is aggression; and a masculine interest is watching sports. Femininity includes the traits, behaviors, and interests assigned to the female gender role. A feminine trait is emotionality; a feminine behavior is helping someone; and a feminine interest is cooking. In Chapter 2, we discuss the content of femininity and masculinity in more detail.

When expectations within a role conflict, such as the example of the student I described, we experience **intrarole conflict**. How might women experience intrarole conflict within their gender role? Women are expected to be emotional and express their feelings but also to be sensitive to the needs of others. So, should a woman who is unhappy with her marriage express those feelings to her husband? If she expresses her feelings, she is adhering to the expectancy that she express emotion, but she is contradicting the expectancy that she not hurt someone's feelings. How might men experience intrarole conflict within their gender role? One expectation of the male gender role is to achieve; another is to be independent and not ask for help. What should a man who desires to adhere to his gender role do if he can't

figure out how to put something together by himself? If he asks for help, he will further his achievement goal but at the expense of another goal: appearing independent. Just because a given role has a set of guidelines does not mean those guidelines might not conflict with one another from time to time. Gender roles are no exception.

When the expectations of one role conflict with the expectations of another role, we experience **interrole conflict**. You possess other roles besides your gender role. What roles conflict with your gender role? At times the expectations of the role of student may conflict with both the female gender role and the male gender role. In a large lecture class, the expectation of a student is to sit quietly in the class and listen, a passive role that may conflict with the active aspects of the male gender role. In a small seminar, the expectation of a student is to participate actively in class discussion, which may include some debate; this active, assertive role may conflict with the female gender role. Think about some of your relationship roles. Does your role as a friend, son or daughter, girlfriend or boyfriend ever conflict with your gender role? A male student involved in a group project may experience conflict between the male gender role norm to be independent and the student role norm to work together with classmates on group projects. The difficulty here is that the norms for the two different roles clash.

Sometimes role conflict leads us to violate the norms associated with our roles. What are the consequences of behaving in ways that violate norms? The consequences could be minor or severe; it will depend on how central that norm is to the role and how strongly the situation calls for adherence to the role. The consequences for a male asking for help are probably minor. However, the consequences for a male wearing a dress—unless it is a costume party—are likely to be more severe. A central feature of the male gender role is not to appear feminine. What are the consequences for a female not being emotional? It will depend on the situation. A female who fails to express feelings at an emotional event, such as a funeral, may be judged quite harshly, whereas a female who fails to express emotions in the context of the classroom will not suffer any negative repercussions.

Think about the consequences for violating the norms that go along with your gender role. Examine the effects of norm violation in Do Gender 1.1.

DO GENDER 1.1

Engaging in Gender-Role Incongruent Behavior
Try adopting some behavior that does not fit your gender role and see how people respond—verbally and nonverbally.

For example, if you are male, try

> Wearing a dress.
> Wearing makeup.
> Calling for an escort service when you walk across campus in the dark.
> Going into a salon and having your fingernails painted.

If you are female, try

> Chewing tobacco in public.
> Joining a group of guys to play football.

Working on your car with a man standing by (changing the oil or changing a tire).
Going into a barbershop and getting your hair cut.

How did you feel?
How did others respond?

Who do you think suffers more for violating gender role norms, women or men? Many people maintain it is men who suffer more. Today, women who behave "like men" are often accepted and even applauded. It is acceptable for women to dress like men by wearing pants, suits, and even ties; it is acceptable for women to have jobs that were once traditionally held by men, such as doctor, lawyer, even construction worker. And, it is more acceptable for women to participate in sports (see Figure 1.2).

But is it acceptable for men to dress like women by wearing a dress or tights? Are men who possess jobs traditionally held by women, such as nurse or secretary, encouraged or applauded? It is interesting that a little girl who behaves like a boy is called a tomboy, but a little boy who behaves like a girl is called a sissy. *Sissy* has more negative connotations than *tomboy*. Today, parents have no problem giving their little girls trucks to play with and encouraging girls to play sports. But how do parents feel about giving their little boys dolls and encouraging them to play "dress-up"?

Most scientists believe men suffer more negative consequences for gender-role violations than women. Some have even suggested that "manhood" is a more precarious state

Figure 1.2 Soccer, once considered a man's sport, has increased dramatically among girls.

than "womanhood," in constant need of validation. One study showed that college students were more likely to endorse proverbs that showed the tenuous nature of manhood compared to womanhood (Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008). For example, both male and female college students were more likely to agree with proverbs such as "Manhood is hard won and easily lost" than "Womanhood is hard won and easily lost." In one experiment, the authors showed that men felt more anxious than women when their gender role was threatened. Students took a knowledge test and were told that they either scored very close to those of their same sex (no threat condition) or close to those of the other sex (threat condition). Men showed more anxiety following the threat than no threat condition, whereas women's anxiety was not influenced by condition.

Why do men suffer more negative repercussions for gender-role violations than women? One possibility is status. Women who take on characteristics of the male gender role are moving toward a higher status, whereas men who take on characteristics of the female gender role are moving toward a lower status. We applaud the move up but not the move down. The relation of gender to status is elaborated on later in this chapter.

The term *gender role* is used interchangeably with the term *sex role*. Personally, I do not know what to make of the latter term. *Sex role* really does not make sense because it confuses a biological category, sex, with a social category, role. Thus it is peculiar that one of the leading scientific journals in this area is called *Sex Roles* instead of *Gender Roles*. I prefer to use the term *sex* when referring to the biological categories of male and female, and to use the terms *gender* and *gender role* when referring to the psychological attributes and expectations we have for those categories.

Now we can ask whether people abide by the prescribed gender norms of a culture (Ehrensaft, 2011). People who are **gender nonconforming** do not accept these gender norms and behave in ways that contradict prescribed gender roles. We can also ask whether people accept the psychological category that accompanies their biological sex. **Gender identity** or **gender-role identity** is our perception of the self as psychologically female or male. People whose gender identity matches their biological sex are referred to as **cis-gender** individuals, whereas people whose gender identity does not correspond to their biological sex are **transgender** individuals. A transgender person may be biologically female but feel psychologically like a male and choose to live life as a male. This transgender individual may dress and behave like a man, that is, take on the male gender role. **Transsexuals** also have a gender identity that does not correspond to their biological sex, but they have hormonal or surgical treatment to change their sex to correspond with their gender identity. There are about two to three times as many male to female transsexuals as female to male transsexuals (Lawrence, 2008). This may be due to the fact that society is less tolerant of feminine behavior exhibited by a male than masculine behavior exhibited by a female. People who are **gender fluid** disagree with the binary concept of gender, and people who are **gender hybrids** perceive themselves as a combination of male and female. **Intersex** persons are those who are born with ambiguous genitals; these persons typically have surgery to alter their genitals so that they can be consistent biologically.

Transgender individuals have become a much more prominent part of gender conversations. Transgender individuals used to be classified by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* as having Gender Identity Disorder. There was a substantial controversy when this disorder was removed from the updated version of the manual that came out in 2013 (*DSM-5*). See Sidebar 1.1 for a discussion of this controversy. Transgender individuals have appeared in the media, most notably in the character of Sophia on the hit Netflix series *Orange is the New Black*, and recently when Bruce Jenner, the Olympic gold medalist, became Caitlyn

Figure 1.3 Bruce Jenner, Olympic gold medalist, changed his biological sex in 2015 to become Caitlyn Jenner.
Source: Photograph of Caitlyn Jenner by Disney/ ABC/ Image Group LA is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 2.0

Jenner (see Figure 1.3). When Caitlyn Jenner made her debut on the cover of the July 2015 issue of *Vanity Fair*, Jon Stewart from *The Daily Show* congratulated her on the clip he titled "Brave New Girl" and pointed out that she had now completed the final step of the transformation of being a woman—everyone is now focused on her appearance.

❋ SIDEBAR 1.1

The Replacement of Gender Identity Disorder With Gender Dysphoria
The recent version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM-5*) replaced Gender Identity Disorder with Gender Dysphoria. Whether to retain or remove Gender Identity Disorder was a controversial issue. Those who fought to retain Gender Identity Disorder were largely concerned with individuals being able

to seek treatment for distress surrounding the incongruence between sex and gender as well as medical treatment to change one's sex to correspond with one's gender. Insurance companies would be unwilling to pay for treatment of an illness that did not have a diagnosis. Those who advocated for the removal of Gender Identity Disorder argued that classifying people whose psychological gender did not match their biological sex as mentally ill undoubtedly stigmatized such individuals, leading to discrimination and adding to their distress. Some people have suggested that this debate is reminiscent of the debate that ensued when homosexuality was removed from the *DSM* as a disorder in 1980. In the end, the issue was resolved by replacing Gender Identity Disorder with Gender Dysphoria, which is defined as the distress associated with the incongruence between psychological gender and biological sex. Thus, the focus here is on the distress rather than the identity incongruence. There are basically two requirements for a diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria:

1. incompatibility between psychological gender and biological sex
2. distress due to this incompatibility, including impairment in daily functioning.

The treatment of Gender Dysphoria is more complicated in children (Spiegel, 2008). Children and parents can delay the decision to change one's biological sex to correspond with one's preferred sex by the use of medication that delays puberty by blocking the release of hormones. It is easier to change one's biological sex prior to physical maturation. However, the child must be certain about this treatment, as once puberty is delayed and other-sex hormones are administered to change one's biological sex, the person is infertile.

Do not confuse *gender identity* with **sexual orientation**, which refers to whether people prefer to have other-sex or same-sex persons as partners for love, affection, and sex. **Heterosexuals** prefer other-sex partners; **homosexuals** prefer same-sex partners; and **bisexuals** are accepting of other-sex and same-sex partners.

Sex typing (which really should be referred to as gender typing) is the process by which sex-appropriate preferences, behaviors, skills, and self-concept are acquired. How does a girl become feminine? A boy masculine? We review the different theories of sex typing in Chapter 5. People who adhere to the gender role that society assigned them are sex-typed. A male who thinks, feels, and behaves in masculine ways and a female who thinks, feels, and behaves in feminine ways are each **sex-typed**. A male who acts feminine and a female who acts masculine are each said to be **cross-sex-typed**. Someone who incorporates both masculine and feminine qualities is not sex-typed and is often referred to as **androgynous**. Androgyny is discussed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 5.

Thus far, we have been discussing attributes that define a person's sense of self. Gender also comes into play when we think about other people. Our own personal view about how women and men should behave is called a **gender-role attitude**. You might believe women should be caring, be nurturant, and have primary responsibility for raising children, whereas men should be independent, be assertive, and have primary responsibility for earning money to take care of the family—regardless of whether you possess these characteristics. If you hold these beliefs, you have a traditional gender-role attitude. That is, your view

fits the traditional expectations that society has for how women and men should behave. Alternatively, you might believe that both women and men should be assertive and caring and that both should be equally responsible for working inside and outside the home. In this case, you have an egalitarian gender-role attitude. Many people hold what Hochschild (1989) refers to as a "transitional attitude," which fits somewhere between traditional and egalitarian gender-role attitudes. You may believe that both men and women should participate in work inside the home and outside the home, but that women should give the home their primary attention and men should give work their primary attention. This person is striving for an egalitarian philosophy, but some residual traditional gender-role attitudes remain.

Three other terms reflect one's attitude toward the category of sex. Each term maps onto one of the three components of an attitude: affect, cognition, and behavior. The affective (feeling) component of our attitude toward the sex category is called **sexism**, or prejudice toward people based on their sex. Typically, we think of sexism as involving a negative attitude or negative affect, but it could entail positive affect. If you dislike the person your wife hired to take care of your children because the person is male, you are showing sexism. Likewise, if you like the person your wife hired merely because she is female, you are again showing sexism. The cognitive component of our attitude toward sex is a **sex stereotype** or **gender-role stereotype**. These terms refer to our beliefs about the features of the biological or psychological categories of male and female. If you believe the male nanny would not be competent because he lacks the required nurturant qualities, you are engaging in gender-role stereotyping. The behavioral component of our attitude toward men and women is **sex discrimination**, which involves the differential treatment of people based on their biological sex. If you fire the male nanny because you dislike men as nannies and you doubt his competence because he is a man, you are engaging in sex discrimination. Sex discrimination is often a result of both sexism and gender-role stereotyping. These attitudes toward sex are the focus of Chapter 3.

Finally, one last term to discuss is **feminism**. What image did that term conjure up for you? The definitions of *feminism* are vast and varied. At the most fundamental level, a feminist is someone who believes women and men should be treated equally. You are probably thinking, "Is that all there is to feminism? If so, I must be a feminist." In fact, over the years, I have had many students in class tell me they did not realize they were feminists until taking my class. And several students have told me that their parents did not realize they were feminists until the students took my course. A study of masters' level social work students showed that 42% self-identified as feminists, but another 33% agreed with all the principles of feminism but were reluctant to label themselves as feminists (Charter, 2015).

A defining feature of feminism is a high regard for women. Most people in our society would agree women should be valued. However, even when people have a positive attitude toward women, they are typically reluctant to identify themselves as feminists (Suter & Toller, 2006). Why? First, *feminism* has negative connotations. Some people perceive feminists as women who hate men, a stereotype that has been refuted as described in Chapter 3. Second, feminism often includes the belief that society needs to make changes for equality to occur and can include the impetus to take action to make these changes. It is these latter ideas that are more controversial. When feminism is equated with activism, the term becomes less appealing. However, activism can take many forms, ranging from volunteering at a women's shelter to participating in a prochoice rally. See Table 1.1 for examples of feminist activities. Do you participate in similar activities? If so, do you identify yourself as a feminist?

Table 1.1 Examples of Feminist Activities

- Volunteering at a women's shelter.
- Helping set up a day care program.
- Volunteering at a rape crisis center.
- Assisting with a women's study course.
- Participating in a women's conference.
- Donating money to a female political candidate.
- Supporting a female-owned business.
- Attending a women's sporting event.
- Using nonsexist language.
- Buying a baby gender-neutral toys and clothes.

The majority of college women believe that community effort is needed to promote equality for women in general but that their own achievements depend only on themselves rather than others' efforts. In other words, the typical college female believes that women as a group need societal help but she, herself, doesn't need any help. This set of beliefs is similar to the "denial of disadvantage" (Crosby, 1984) discussed in Chapter 12—the idea that most women perceive that other women suffer from discrimination but that they have not been victims of discrimination.

Thus it appears the belief in gender equality is the central feature of feminism, but activism is an important feature of feminism for some individuals. Conduct Do Gender 1.2 to find out how feminism is viewed at your institution.

DO GENDER 1.2

Defining a Feminist

Ask 10 women and 10 men to describe the first things that come to mind when they think of the term *feminist*. This will tell you a couple of things: First, you will learn whether people view the term favorably or unfavorably; second, you will learn the content of this category.

Construct a frequency distribution of the features listed. The features most often listed are those central to the feminist category; the features listed least are peripheral to the category and probably more reflective of that particular individual. What percentage of features is negative versus positive? Do men or women view a feminist in more positive or negative terms? To address this question, calculate the number of positive and negative features identified by the group of men and the group of women.

Ask these same 20 people two more questions. Ask whether they believe women and men should be treated equally, the defining feature of a feminist. You could ask people to respond on a five-point scale: 1 = Definitely not, 2 = Probably not, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Probably should, 5 = Definitely should. Then ask whether each person is a feminist. Do answers to these two questions correspond?

Cultural Differences in the Construal of Gender

I have defined the terminology used in the psychology of gender. All these terms, however, are construed at least somewhat differently by people of different ethnic backgrounds in the United States and by people from other cultures. Ramet (1996) proposes the idea of a **gender culture**, which reflects "society's understanding of what is possible, proper, and perverse in gender-linked behavior" (p. 2). In other words, each society generates its own standards for gender-linked behavior.

Because the majority of research that has been conducted and examined in this book interprets gender—the roles of women and men in society—in similar terms, it might be interesting to step outside our cultural view and consider how gender is construed in a few different cultures around the world.

Cultures With Multiple Genders

One assumption about gender shared by many cultures is that there are only two of them: male and female. Did it ever occur to you that there could be more than two genders? In several Native American cultures, there are four genders. One example of multiple genders among Native Americans is the *Berdache* (Tafoya, 2007; Williams, 1993). Berdache is a term that was institutionalized among the Lakota Indians, who currently reside in South Dakota (Medicine, 2002). The male Berdache and female Berdache are third and fourth genders. Of the two, the male Berdache is much more common. The male Berdache is biologically male but takes on characteristics of both women and men in appearance and manner. These are men who prefer not to be warriors but to take care of children and make clothing. Historically, the Berdache was highly respected and viewed as sacred. The Berdache was believed to be endowed with spiritual powers and had the highest status among the genders. Today, however, the status and respect ascribed to the Berdache have waned. Although Berdache is a social identity rather than a sexual orientation, non-Natives infer sexual orientation from the role. This is the result of Western culture imposing its rigid gender categories on a person who does not easily fit into them.

The appearance of multiple genders also occurs in the Balkans (Ramet, 1996). In this case, people primarily take on the other gender role to serve society's needs. For example,

some biological females are raised as males when the society is in need of those functions best served by men. In the Balkans, these women assume a male social identity and perform the work of men. They are not allowed to marry and are sworn to virginity. These people are highly respected.

In the city of Juchitan, Mexico, the highest status is conferred to a third gender, the *muxe*—biological males who dress like females and take on women's roles in the community (Mirandé, 2014). They do not identify as male or female, are not the subject of discrimination, and are assumed to be born with this identity. They are not only accepted by the community, but parents are quite proud to have a muxe because they are likely to stay with parents and take care of them. Because women are expected to be virgins prior to marriage, muxes are often the first sexual partners of men—heterosexual men. Muxes are not considered by themselves or their society to be homosexual; only Westerners infer homosexuality.

In Western cultures, gender is defined by our genitals. Transgender individuals or transsexuals are not widely accepted by society, and we have no culturally defined category for people who would like to combine elements of both female and male gender roles.

Morocco

In Morocco, there are only two genders, but the two are very distinct (Hessini, 1994). The distinction between the female gender role and the male gender role manifests itself in terms of physical space. Private space, the space reserved for the family inside a home, is female space. Public space, basically everything outside of the home, is male space. The duties of men and women are distinct and take place in their separate physical spaces. The women fulfill their roles in female space, inside the home, and the men fulfill their roles in male space, outside the home. It is clear that public space is men's space because only men are found in coffee shops and theaters or other public places. If women are in public, they are usually scurrying from one place to the next.

The distinct roles of men and women are not questioned in Morocco (Hessini, 1994). The man is the leader of the family and works outside the home to provide for the family; the woman is responsible for the household, which includes the education and religious training of children. Even in modern Morocco, women are not concerned with equality. The Moroccan people believe the two sexes complement one another. Although the cultural code is for men to support the family financially, economic necessity has led to an increase in the number of women working outside the home. This is creating some tension because both women and men believe that women's primary responsibility lies inside the home and that women should not work outside the home.

One way in which women are able to work and enter into public spaces is by wearing the hijab and djellaba when they go out in public (Hessini, 1994). The hijab is a large scarf that covers a woman's head, neck, and shoulders so only her eyes are seen (see Figure 1.4). The hijab provides a sense of Muslim identity and security for women. The djellaba is a long, loose-fitting gown that hides the shape of the body. Women believe these articles of clothing protect them from men and help preserve the social order. A woman who does not wear the hijab and djellaba is viewed as naked. The thought is that other clothing shows the outline of the female body, which provokes and attracts men, leading to adultery. Women are held more responsible for adultery than men; thus, in a sense, the hijab and djellaba are viewed as avenues to freedom for women in that they allow them to go out in public.

The hijab is hardly viewed as liberating by American women. Americans view the hijab as a sign of women's oppression and male domination and as perpetuating the stereotype of women as sexual temptresses whom men are unable to resist. However, a group

Figure 1.4 In this picture, a Muslim woman is dressed in the traditional hijab.
Source: fulyaatalay/ iStock Editorial/ Thinkstock

of educated American Muslim women told a very different story when asked about why they wore the hijab in the United States (Droogsma, 2007). These women said that the hijab defined their Muslim identity, connecting them to other Muslims, and was a constant reminder to follow their religious values. The women also said that wearing the hijab allowed them to resist sexual objectification and freed them from the emphasis placed on appearance in America.

The Agta Negrito

Some people maintain that women's and men's distinct social roles are rooted in biology. As evidence, they cite the distinct roles of women and men in hunter-gatherer societies. Women are biologically predisposed to gather, and men are biologically predisposed to hunt. Women cannot hunt because hunting would reduce their ability to bear and take care of children. In most hunter-gatherer societies, the division of labor is as predicted: Men hunt and women gather.

The Agta Negrito is a society in the Philippines that challenges this idea (Estioko-Griffin & Griffin, 2013). In this society, women hunt game animals, fish, and barter for goods—all alongside men. Both girls and boys start hunting around puberty. The only time that women do not hunt is during the late stages of pregnancy and the first few months of nursing. One reason that women are able to hunt is that the entire family takes care of children. There is only a modest division of labor. Men and women appear to be equally involved in decision making and have equal economic status within the family. Less is known about female-male relationships. However, rape is unheard of or at least uncommon, there is no emphasis on female virginity, and marriage appears to take place by family arrangement or

mutual agreement. The structure of this culture shows that (1) there is no biological reason that women cannot hunt and (2) the division of labor between the two sexes is not carved in stone.

Tahiti

Evidence indicates that men's and women's roles can be similar. Tahiti is an example of a truly androgynous society (Gilmore, 1990). The social roles of women and men are very much the same. Women have the same status as men and have the same opportunities as men in domestic, occupational, and recreational spheres. Not only are women's and men's roles similar, but women and men share similar personalities. There is no pressure on men and women to behave differently or to behave in accordance with traditional gender roles. Men are not worried about proving their masculinity, for example, and do not feel the need to take risks. This similarity of women and men is even reflected in their language; there is no word for gender in the language and there are no female or male pronouns. The society is based on cooperation rather than competition. Perhaps because resources are available to people, there is no economic reason to compete. There is little aggression, no war, and no hunting; that is, there is nothing for men to defend. Thus, there is no basis for an ideology of masculinity to have evolved. The people in this society truly seem to function without thinking about gender.

Status and Culture

With the exception of Tahiti and probably a few other cultures, one commonality in the way gender is construed around the world is that men have higher status than women (Chisholm, 2000). How is this status difference manifested?

There are a number of indices of gender inequality. The higher illiteracy rates of women, less access to medical care for women, a lower earnings ratio of women compared to men, and the legitimization of physical abuse of women in some countries are all manifestations of men's higher status relative to women's (Chisholm, 2000). In 2014, Boko Haram, a Muslim terrorist group, kidnapped nearly 300 high school girls from a boarding school in Nigeria to make the point that women should not be seeking an education that might afford them some status (Kristof, 2014; see Figure 1.5). These girls are auctioned off to be wives of their militant members. The change in birthrate over the past couple of decades is another manifestation of status. Although 105 boys are born for every 100 girls, the proportion of males in the world has increased in recent decades, largely due to policies in China and other countries (Livingston, 2013). In India and China, some female fetuses are aborted because they are less valued than males. The one-child policy in China has led to the abortion of female fetuses even though sex-selective abortion is prohibited by the government. In 2004, the ratio of males to females born peaked at 121.2 males for 100 females (Larson, 2014); this narrowed to 117.6 to 100 in 2013. In India, the sex preference for sons can be observed in family size following the birth of the first child (Vlassoff, 2012). Families are less likely to have additional children if they have a son.

In the United States, Gallup Polls have shown a slight preference for boys over girls that has remained over time. Respondents are asked in these surveys which sex they would prefer if they could have only one child. In 2011, a Gallup Poll of 1,000 adults in the United States showed that women slightly preferred a girl to a boy (33% vs. 31%), but men strongly preferred a boy to a girl (49% vs. 22%; Newport, 2011). One-third had no preference. As shown in Figure 1.6, the preference has remained fairly stable over time.

Figure 1.5 The militant Muslim group, Boko Haram, kidnapped nearly 300 girls in Nigeria to keep them from pursuing an education.
Source: AP Images/ Sunday Alamba, File
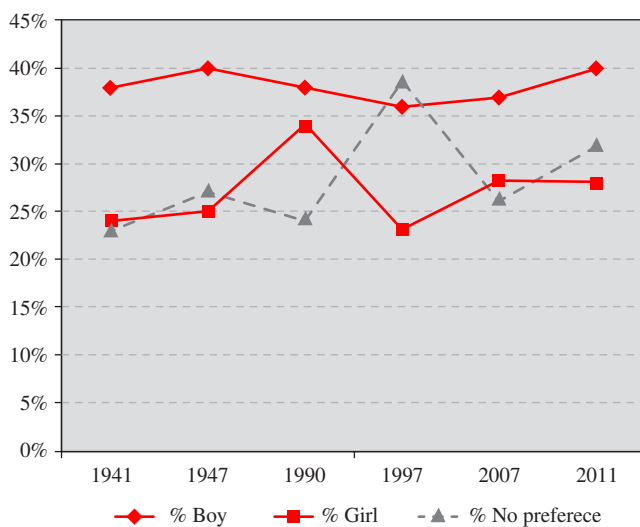
Figure 1.6 Gallup Polls conducted from 1941 to 2011 show that a slight preference for a boy compared to a girl persists but that a sizeable number of respondents have no preference.
Source: Adapted from Newport (2011)

The dominant group in a society has rights and privileges not available to the subordinate group. In our society, we can talk about male privilege, White privilege, heterosexual privilege, class privilege, and even attractiveness privilege. People who have the privilege are often unaware of it; those who lack the privilege are aware. For example, until recently, heterosexual privilege entailed the right to marry, to have a public ceremony that entails celebration and gifts from family and friends, and to have children without being questioned. Heterosexuals do not view this as a privilege because it has come to be expected. Most homosexuals in the United States, however, recognize heterosexual privilege.

What is male privilege? Historically, women were not allowed to vote or own property. At one time, only men were allowed to serve in the military. Today, men have greater access than women to certain jobs and to political office. Until 1972, only men could run the Boston Marathon. The first two women who ran the marathon, in 1966 and 1967, disguised themselves, one by dress and one by name; upon recognition, their completion of the race was dismissed, questioned, and not officially recognized (Rosenbloom, 2000). It was not until the early 1990s that women were allowed to enter the Citadel and the Virginia Military Institute, all-male military schools. In 1993, Shannon Faulkner applied to the Citadel by omitting any reference to her gender; she was admitted, but on learning of her gender, the Citadel withdrew its offer of admission. It was not until 2012 that the Augusta National Golf Club, the club that hosts the premier golfing event, the Masters, allowed two female members: Condoleezza Rice, former secretary of state, and Darla Moore, a businesswoman.

Today, great strides have been made in the United States toward gender equality. Obviously, women can vote, run for political office, and win elections, and they have gained in occupational status. However, women are not nearly as prevalent in government as men, and women are rarely found in the highest occupational statuses, such as chief executive officers of industry. In 1981, Sandra Day O'Connor became the first female to serve on the Supreme Court; today three of the nine justices are female. It was not until 2007 that we saw the first female Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, and there has been no female Majority Leader in the U.S. Senate. Although we have had two female candidates for vice president (Geraldine Ferraro in 1984; Sarah Palin in 2009), we have yet to see a female vice president or president. In 2008 and again in 2016, we saw the first female contender for president of the United States supported by a major political party, Hillary Clinton (see Figure 1.7).

Another way to examine status is to ask people to imagine what it would be like to wake up one day as the other sex. In my psychology of gender courses, I often ask students to write essays on this question. Women and men identify positives and negatives in considering the transformation. Women note several advantages: They would be less afraid, more adventurous, and more independent; but they also note several disadvantages: They would have more difficulty receiving support, and they would have less meaningful conversations. Some aspects of life were considered to have mixed effects. Women said having to work would be a negative, but this would be offset by more opportunities for advancement. On the positive side, women said they would be taken more seriously as men, but on the negative side, this meant more would be expected of them. Men note primarily negatives in their hypothetical transformations to women: becoming more nervous, self-conscious, and concerned about appearance; worrying about men coming on to them; and worrying about walking alone at night. One advantage men note was similar to the disadvantage women noted: As women, the men said they would have more friends and be more sociable. Conduct your own experiment on this issue with Do Gender 1.3.
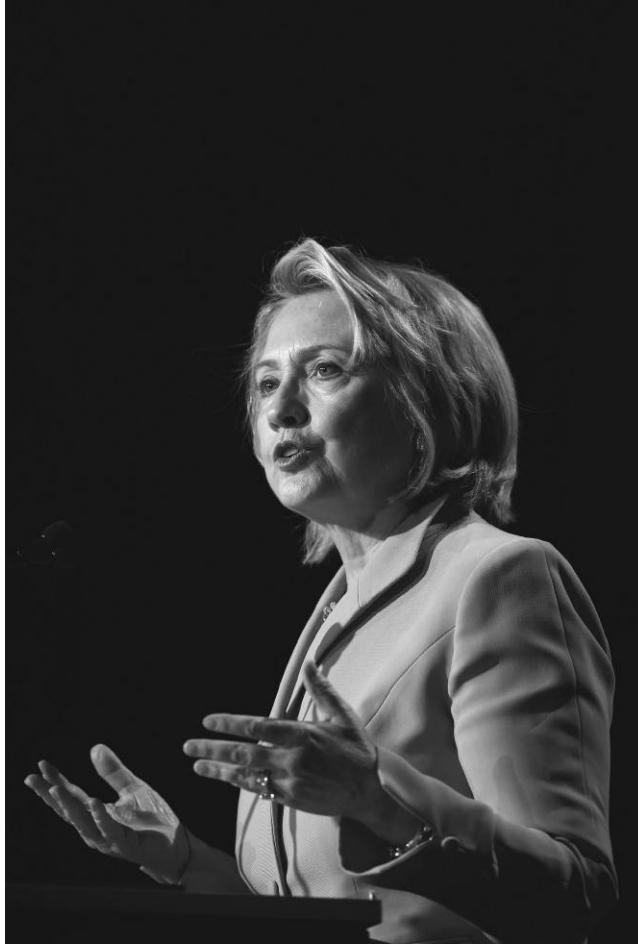
Figure 1.7 In 2008 and in 2016, Hillary Clinton became the first serious female candidate for President of the United States.
Source: Scott Olson/ Getty Images News/ Thinkstock

DO GENDER 1.3

Life as the Other Sex
Select an age group. Ask 10 males and 10 females to answer the following question: "Imagine that you woke up tomorrow and were the other sex. Go through your entire day and describe how your life would be different."

Read through the stories and identify themes. Construct a frequency distribution of those themes.

The similarities and differences in the treatment and behavior of men and women appear in numerous chapters throughout this book. The important point to keep in mind is whether a sex difference in behavior is due to something inherent about being female or male or to something about status.

> **TAKE HOME POINTS**
>
> - Not all cultures have only two genders. Third genders are distinct from male and female, can be afforded high status, and are not tied to homosexuality—despite Westerners' beliefs to the contrary.
> - Throughout the world, men have a higher status than women, but the status differential varies by country. Sex-selective abortion in China is a strong indication that men are regarded more favorably than women. Other indicators of status throughout the world are the number of women in powerful positions in industry and government and the education of women.
> - Although great strides have been made by women in the Western world, parity has not been achieved. Women do not hold leadership positions to the extent that men do, people show some desire for male over female infants, and people view more advantages to being male than female.

Philosophical and Political Issues Surrounding Gender

The last important issue to address in this introductory chapter is the philosophical and political debates that have taken place with respect to gender. The study of gender, in particular research that compares women and men, is a politically charged topic. With gender, scientists are often in one of two camps: those who believe there are important differences between the sexes and those who believe the two sexes are fundamentally the same. There are also investigators who believe we should or should not compare women and men. I address each of these debates and then turn to the political movements that have influenced the study of gender: the women's movements and the men's movements. Finally, I conclude with a note about nonsexist language.

The Sex Difference Debate

People who believe the two sexes are fundamentally the same are known as the **minimalists**. The minimalists believe there are very few differences between women and men, and if the context was held constant, differences would vanish (Eagly, 1995; Hyde, 2005). That is, any differences in behavior observed between men and women might be due to the roles they hold or the situations in which they find themselves. Minimalists would like to deemphasize sex differences and are concerned that people "essentialize" gender, reifying the categories of male and female (or masculine and feminine) to be mutually exclusive. Minimalists advocate equal pay for equal work, the same rights and roles for women and men and full equality under the law.

By contrast, the **maximalists** believe there are fundamental differences between men and women. However, they argue that "difference" does not mean "deficit." Theorists such as Carol Gilligan and Nancy Chodorow point out that women's views of the world and ways of relating to the world are different from but not inferior to those of men. In 1982, Gilligan published *In a Different Voice*, in which she claimed that women and men have fundamentally different ways of viewing morality, but that women's view of morality is equally valuable to the view held by men. Maximalists argue there are two very different and equally valuable ways of relating to the world. Some maximalists are **standpoint feminists**,

not only recognizing that women and men are different but also advocating that women have competencies in domains that are more important than those of men and that the female perspective has advantages not provided by the male perspective (Gergen, 2010).

Whether someone is a minimalist or a maximalist also has implications for whether that person believes gender is worth studying. A maximalist would certainly find gender worth studying, whereas not all minimalists would agree. In a literature review that summarized research on sex differences in 46 domains, Hyde (2005) concluded that women and men are similar on most psychological variables. She raised the concern that our focus on differences ends up reifying stereotypes that have implications for men's and women's behavior and how people respond to their behavior. For example, as shown in Chapter 6, parents have different expectations about females' and males' abilities, which then influence the actual abilities of girls and boys. What is the source of parental expectations? It is our focus on differences!

You may be wondering, "Why should I care about these debates?" The reason you should care is that our political philosophy determines how we interpret a research finding. Take the sex difference in math. There is a sex difference, and the difference is statistically significant. The difference is also small. One group of researchers emphasizes that the size of the effect is small, that most women and men have similar aptitudes in math, and that only a small percentage of highly gifted men account for this difference. These people might also argue we should ignore the difference. Another group of researchers emphasizes the fact that the difference is real and that even small differences can have large effects. These investigators devote time and economic resources to understanding the cause of the difference and how to eliminate the difference.

Social Construction of Gender

Constructionists argue that it is fruitless to study gender because gender cannot be divorced from its context (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2014; Marecek, Crawford, & Popp, 2004). Constructionists maintain that gender is created by the perceiver: Facts about gender do not exist, only interpretations do. Constructionists challenge the use of the scientific method to study gender because they maintain you cannot view the world objectively; our history, experiences, and beliefs affect what we observe. Constructivists argue that the empirical method is not untainted by social forces and that science is not as value free as some expect.

Constructionists argue that psychologists should not make sex comparisons because such studies assume gender is a static quality of an individual. They maintain that gender is a dynamic social construct that is ever changing, a social category created by society. Researchers who make sex comparisons might describe women as more empathic than men. Constructionists would focus on the empathy involved in the interaction, the factors that contributed to the empathy, and how empathy becomes linked to women more than men. Constructionists would examine the explanations as to why empathy was illustrated more in women in this particular situation.

Constructionists are concerned that the study of sex comparisons ignores the variability within women and within men. The study of sex comparisons also ignores the situations and circumstances that influence men's and women's behavior. Constructionists argue that whether women and men are similar or different is the wrong question to ask. Questions that ought to be asked revolve around how social institutions, culture, and language contribute to gender and to gendered interactions.

It is also the case that gender cannot be understood independent of other social categories, such as race, ethnicity, social class, language, and religion, a perspective referred to as **intersectionality** (Cole, 2009). Intersectionality is the idea that a focus on a single

category is limiting, in part because there is overlap among categories. For example, a focus on gender will leave much to be desired in understanding the life of a young Black woman. Intersectionality requires attendance to the diversity within social categories as well as the observation that there are commonalities across categories that are often viewed quite differently. Some of these commonalities have to do with status and power. Intersectionality has implications for our understanding of research, as studies of women often focus on female college students who are not only female but typically White and typically middle class, as well as the generalizability of psychological theories. Intersectionality also has implications for social justice (Chun, Lipsitz, & Shin, 2013), as advocates for social change by one group often implicitly exclude other groups. For example, Black women may be less likely to identify with the traditionally White feminist movement because advocating for justice for women may not advance and may even undermine rights for Black people. Thus, one framework within which gender can be examined is a social justice framework (Miville & Ferguson, 2014). Social justice pertains to power, and the categories of sex, race, and social class intersect with respect to issues of power.

In Chapter 2, I describe a host of research biases that can influence the study of gender, some of which is reflected in the ideas of the social constructionists. In Chapter 4, I review the literature that compares men and women, being careful to point out the size of the effects, the variability within sexes, and the extent to which the situation or context influences sex differences. However, the vast majority of this research does not consider the problem of intersectionality. Thus, one must keep in mind the oversimplification of many of these research findings.

Women's Movements

It is a common misconception that the women's movement in the United States first began in the 1960s. Women's movements first emerged in the 1800s (Murstein, 1974). The issues these women confronted, however, were different from those of contemporary women. These women believed men and women were fundamentally different, and they did not seek to equalize the roles of men and women. Instead, women aimed for greater respect for their domestic role. Women in the 1800s and early 1900s were concerned with abolition, temperance, and child labor laws. These issues became "women's issues" because women were the ones to raise them. But these women discovered that their low-status position in society kept their voices from being heard. By gaining the right to vote in 1920, women could promote their causes. Thus, the suffrage movement is often considered the first women's movement. After that time, the women's movement remained fairly silent until the 1960s.

In 1963, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, in which she discussed "the problem that has no name." The problem was that women's delegation to the domestic sphere of life inhibited their opportunities for personal development. Women were not active in the workforce or in the political community. Friedan organized the National Organization for Women, or NOW, in 1966. The goal of this women's movement differed from the earlier movements. Here, women were concerned with their subordinate position in society and sought to establish equal rights for women. The purpose of NOW was to "take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof, in truly equal partnership with men" (Friedan, 1963, p. 384). In the epilogue to *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan explains that NOW stood for the National Organization *for* Women rather than the National Organization *of* Women because men must be included to accomplish these goals.

NOW is the largest women's rights organization in the United States. To date, it includes more than a half million members and is represented in all states. NOW's goal is not only to take action to ensure equality for women but to eliminate all "-isms"—truly embracing the intersectionality issue. Since its formation, NOW has successfully challenged protective labor laws that kept women from high-paying jobs as well as the sex classification of job advertisements in newspapers. Did you know that job advertisements in the newspaper used to feature a "Help Wanted—Men" column and a "Help Wanted—Women" column? See Table 1.2 for some sample advertisements.

Can you imagine an advertisement for a receptionist today that requested an "attractive young lady"? Can you imagine an accountant position available only to men? In recognition of the work that women perform inside the home, NOW popularized the phrase "women who work outside the home." Most of us feel rightly embarrassed when we ask a woman if she works and she says, "Yes, I work at home all day taking care of two kids, a cat, a dog, and a husband." In 1967, NOW endorsed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which was proposed in 1923 and passed by Congress in 1972 but fell 3 states short of the 38 (three-fourths) needed for ratification in 1982. The ERA was reintroduced to Congress in 2009 by Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Congresswoman Judy Biggert (R-IL), but Congress still has not voted on the bill. [The late Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) was a lead sponsor of the amendment.] In 1992, NOW organized a campaign to elect women and feminist persons to political office, which helped send a record-breaking number of women to Congress and to state governments.

Table 1.2 Job Advertisements

Help Wanted—Female
Assistant to Executive: Girl Friday.   *Assistant Bookkeeper-Biller:*   Young, some steno preferred, but not essential; bright beginner considered.   *Assistant Bookkeeper-Typist:*   Expd. all-around girl.   *Secty-Steno:*   Age 25–35 Girl Friday for busy treasurer's office.   *Receptionist, 5-day wk:*   Attractive young lady, good typist, knowledge of monitor board.
Help Wanted—Male
Pharmacist: To manage large chain-type indep. drug store.   *Refrigeration:*   Shop servicemen, experienced.   *Maintenance:*   Foreman, mach. shop exp.   *Accountant-Sr.:*   For medium-sized firm, heavy experience, auditing, audit program preparation, report writing, and federal and state income tax.

Source: The New York Times, June 11, 1953.

NOW also has organized marches to reduce violence against women and to promote reproductive rights. In 2004, NOW organized the largest mass action in U.S. history, the March for Women's Lives, which brought a record 1.15 million people to Washington, D.C., to advocate for women's reproductive health options, including access to abortion clinics, effective birth control, emergency contraception, and reproductive health services (Reuss & Erickson, 2006). See Sidebar 1.2: "The Morning After" for NOW's advocacy on behalf of Plan B. In recent years, NOW was a strong advocate for same-sex marriage. NOW also has been working to get the United States to ratify the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an international treaty that would ensure human rights for women around the world. The United States is the only industrialized country in the world not to have ratified CEDAW.

✳ **SIDEBAR 1.2**

The Morning After

Levonorgestrel, or Plan B, is a contraceptive that is commonly known as the "morning after pill." It is widely misconstrued as an abortifacient (American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2009; Reznik, 2010). It is most effective in preventing pregnancy when taken within 72 hours of intercourse. Plan B stops or delays ovulation to prevent fertilization. It does not work once the egg is fertilized, which explains why it rapidly loses its effectiveness with the passage of time. Thus Plan B is similar to a high-dose birth control pill and operates in the same way. People often confuse Plan B with Mifeprex (RU-486), an abortifacient that was widely publicized in the 1990s and approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) in 2000. Plan B was approved by the FDA in 1999 with a prescription. In 2009, a federal court ordered the FDA to make Plan B available to women age 17 and older without a prescription. Although the FDA approved a request to make Plan B available to women without age restrictions in 2011, this was overruled by the Health and Human Services Secretary. Finally, in 2013, a federal judge ruled that Plan B would be available over the counter without an age restriction. However, it is not clear how accessible Plan B is. The lack of knowledge about what Plan B is and what Plan B does may make women wary of taking it. In addition, some pharmacists and emergency rooms fail to stock the drug—again, in part due to the failure to understand how Plan B operates.

Today, we are experiencing a third generation of the women's movement (Gillis, Howie, & Munford, 2007; Woodhull, 2007). It is not as cohesive as the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It is more global, recognizing that that there are common concerns that face women around the world. The contemporary women's movement no longer wants to be depicted as one that characterizes White middle-class Western women. The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s was difficult for Black women in the United States to embrace (Cole & Zucker, 2007). How were Black women to reject traditional notions of femininity when they never had access to it? Today, there is a greater recognition of intersectionality in today's women's movement—that sex interacts with other social categories

such as race and class. There is recognition that a women's movement could be threatening to Black women because it could undermine their relations with Black men with whom they are united in the race movement. There is recognition that women's movements could pose a threat to people's national identity in other countries when traditional gender roles are grounded in culture. Yet, there is a core of commonality to women's movements around the world: They are focused on improving the position of women in society.

Men's Movements

Since the women's movement of the 1960s, several men's movements have appeared. None of these movements, to date, has had the cohesion or impact on society of the women's movement. Some men's movements endorse the women's movement and share some of the concerns the women's movement raised about the harmful aspects of the male gender role. One such movement is the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS).

This movement developed in the 1970s as the National Organization for Changing Men, but changed its name to NOMAS in 1983. It supports changing the traditional male role to reduce competitiveness, homophobia, and emotional inhibition. These men are feminists; are antiracists; support equal rights for women; want to end patriarchy; and embrace heterosexual, homosexual, and transgender individuals. They are concerned with social justice and equality for all. They have taken on issues related to child custody, sex trafficking, reproductive rights, fathering, and pornography. They requested that Rush Limbaugh be removed from the radio when he referred to the Georgetown law student, Sandra Fluke, as a slut and a prostitute because she spoke before Congress on behalf of contraception availability for women.

Other men's movements are a reaction against the women's movement and seek to restore traditional female and male roles. These have attracted more men than the profeminist movements. Two such movements are the mythopoetic movement and the Promise Keepers. Both of these movements view men and women as fundamentally different. Both encourage men to rediscover their masculinity and to reject what they have referred to as "the feminization of men." The movements are referred to as promasculinist.

The mythopoetic movement was organized by Robert Bly (1990), who wrote the national best-selling nonfiction book *Iron John: A Book About Men*. The concern of the mythopoetic movement is that the modernization of society has stripped men of the rituals of tribal society that bound men together. The movement involves rituals, ceremonies, and retreats, with the goal of reconnecting men with one another. To promote the movement, in 1992, Bly started the ManKind Project for men to get in touch with their emotions to live a more fulfilling life. The ManKind Project involves weekend retreats for men to connect with their feelings, bond with one another, and embrace a more mature masculinity centered on leadership, compassion, and multiculturalism. Today, Bly's movement is really more of an experience than a movement, which may have contributed to the waning interest among men.

The Promise Keepers is a Christian fundamentalist movement. Worship, prayer, and evangelism are central to the movement. The Bible is used to justify the differences between women and men and the natural state of men's superior position over women. The traditional nuclear family is endorsed; homosexuality and homosexual households are rejected. This organization is viewed as antifeminist because men and women are not viewed as equals. One of the promises men are to uphold is to "become warriors who honor women" (keep this in mind when we discuss benevolent sexism in Chapter 3). The first meeting of the Promise Keepers was held in 1990, and 72 men attended. Attendance peaked in 1996 with 1.1 million men participating in 22 cities nationwide. Since that time, participation has

declined. In 2008, meetings were held in seven cities and 25,000 men attended. In more recent years, the Promise Keepers has involved more community service efforts, such as collecting food for faith-based charities and donating blood.

A Note on Sexist Language

In 1972, an article appeared in *Ms.* magazine that began with the following story:

> On the television screen, a teacher of first-graders who had just won a national award is describing her way of teaching. "You take each child where you find him," she says. "You watch to see what he's interested in, and then you build on his interests." A five-year-old looking at the program asks her mother, "Do only boys go to that school?" "No," her mother begins, "she's talking about girls too, but. . . ."
>
> (Miller, Swift, & Maggio, 1997, p. 50)

But what? Is it acceptable to use the male pronoun to imply male and female? One indication of men's status in our culture is the use of the generic *he* to imply both women and men. In 1983, the American Psychological Association proclaimed that scientists must refrain from using sexist language in their writing. This means that we cannot use the generic *he* to mean both men and women in our scientific writing. The statement was issued more than 30 years ago, but today you can still find the use of the generic *he* in books in many disciplines. I find that many college students use *he* to refer to men and women in their writing. When I correct students' papers (changing *he* to *he/she* or *they*), some are quite offended. Many people will say that everyone knows *he* refers to "he and she," so what's the harm? *He* is more efficient. When you write the word *he* or *him*, do you think of both women and men? The answer is clear: No. The concern with sexist language is that people do not really perceive *he* as representing "he or she." There is now clear evidence that the use of masculine generics leads both speakers and listeners to visualize male names, male persons, and more masculine images (Stahlberg, Braun, Irmen, & Sczesny, 2007).

Sexist language leads to feelings of exclusion (Stout & Dasgupta, 2011). When college students read a description of a work environment with gender exclusive language (e.g., he, him, guys) or gender inclusive language (e.g., he or she, his or her, employees), both females and males perceived the exclusion condition as more sexist than the inclusion condition, but only females felt more ostracized in the exclusion than inclusion condition (see Figure 1.8). Males felt similar about themselves in the two conditions. Females also expressed less interest in the job in the exclusion than inclusion condition, whereas males' interest was unaffected by condition.

One study showed that sexist language may have implications for women's opportunities. In a study of 4-year colleges and universities in nine southern states, institutions that had basketball teams with sexist names were shown to have less equal opportunities for female athletes (Pelak, 2008). A sexist name of an athletic team typically takes one of two forms. Either the name implies maleness (e.g., Rams or Knights) or there is a female qualifier to the team name (e.g., men = Panthers; women = Lady Panthers). In the latter case, the implication is that male is the standard. Just over two-thirds of schools had sexist team names. This is a correlational study—names could have led to fewer opportunities for women, fewer opportunities for women could have led to these names, or names are a symptom of unequal opportunities for women. The take home point is that the name *does* make a difference.
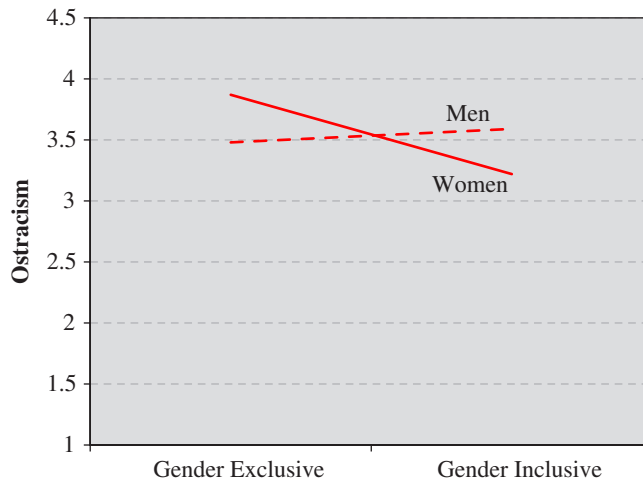
Figure 1.8 Females felt more ostracized following the exclusive than inclusive language, whereas males' feelings were unaffected by condition.
Source: Adapted from Stout and Dasgupta (2011)

There is no language in which being female is indicated with less complex or shorter language than being male or in which female is the standard in language. See Sidebar 1.3 for a discussion of gender in other languages.

❋ **SIDEBAR 1.3**

A Note on Language in Other Cultures
When studying Spanish, I always wondered if there were effects of having masculine and feminine pronouns for objects. The word "the" takes one of two forms in Spanish depending on whether the object is masculine (*el*) or feminine (*la*). Many other languages employ masculine and feminine articles. Although I did not really visualize a book as male (*el libro*) or a window as female (*la ventana*), it seemed that the use of these terms must have implications for gender. Research has now supported this issue. It appears that the same object is viewed as more masculine in a culture that attaches a male pronoun than a culture that attaches a female pronoun (Prewitt-Freilino, Caswell, & Laakso, 2012). It also appears that when languages are constantly reminding people about gender with either pronouns or noun endings, people in those countries are more likely to notice differences between men and women. A study of more than 100 countries showed that those with more gendered language were less egalitarian in terms of economics, politics, and health.

Is there any reason to believe the climate is changing, that nonsexist language is becoming more acceptable and sexist language is becoming more maligned? One group of researchers examined the language used in 1.2 million books from the Google Books
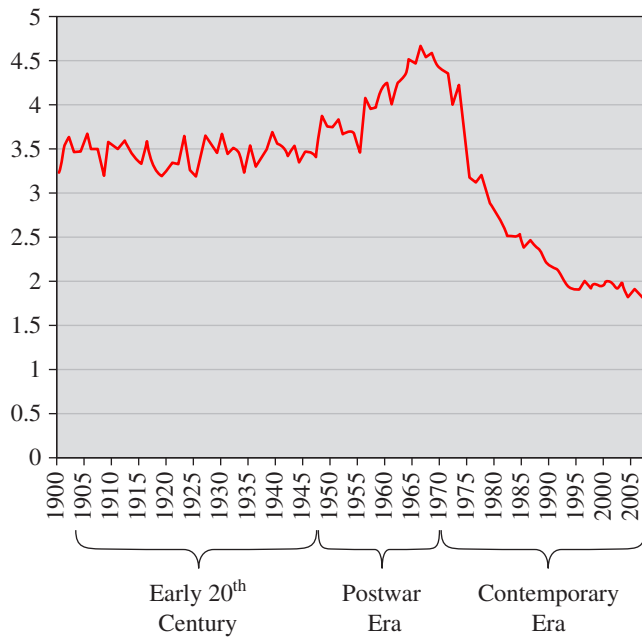
Figure 1.9 Male to female pronoun usage over time from Google Books database.
Source: Twenge et al. (2012)

database between 1900 and 2008 (Twenge, Campbell, & Gentile, 2012). The ratio of male to female pronoun usage was on the order of 3.5:1 between 1900 and 1945, increased to 4.5:1 after WWII (1945 to early 1960s) and then decreased to about 2:1, which is where it is today (Figure 1.9). Across the years, a higher male to female pronoun ratio was correlated with lower levels of education for women, lower labor force participation among women, and lower assertiveness among women. A study that evaluated pronoun usage and gendered terms in *The New York Times* between 1970 and 2000 showed that there has been a significant decline in sexist language and a significant increase in gender inclusive (he or she) language (Earp, 2012). These same researchers asked a group of adults to describe a moral individual. Only 27% referred to this person with the generic masculine, showing some progress has been made. See how students at your school use language with Do Gender 1.4.

DO GENDER 1.4

Do College Students Use Sexist Language?
Ask 30 people to write a description of a person, but make sure that person is described in gender-neutral language. You could ask students to describe a moral person or an interesting person. Then, scan the essays for pronoun usage and gendered language. How often is the generic masculine (e.g., "he") used? If gender neutral language is used, how do student do this—with plural pronouns, with "he/she," with "one," with generic feminine (e.g., "she"). Do female and male students use the same kind of pronouns?

In recent years, the issue has been taken up by state legislatures because some states, such as Florida, North Carolina, Illinois, and Washington, have eliminated gender bias from their state laws, while other states have passed legislation to change their constitutions to use gender neutral language (Myers, 2013). Other states are considering the issue, and several states, such as Wyoming, have recently rejected the change.

How should one avoid sexist language? The easiest way to get around the *he/she* issue is to use the plural *they*. Other tips are shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Tips for Nonsexist Writing

1. Replace masculine pronouns (he, his, him) with he or she.
    The student should raise his hand.   The student should raise his or her hand.
2. Delete masculine pronouns (he, his, him) by rewriting the sentence in the plural.
    The student sits quietly at his desk.   Students sit quietly at their desks.
3. Delete pronouns entirely from the sentence.
    The teacher read the folder on his desk.   The teacher read the folder on the desk.
4. Change pronouns to "you."
    A person should wash his own clothes.   You should wash your own clothes.
5. Change pronouns to "one."
    Tell the student that he can write a letter. Tell the student that one can write a letter.
6. Replace "man" with "someone" or "no one."
    No man is an island.   No one is an island.
7. Replace "mankind" or "ancient man" with "our ancestors" or "men and women" or "humanity."
    This is a giant step for mankind.   This is a giant step for men and women.
                                                 This is a giant step for humanity.
    Ancient man developed the . . .   Our ancestors developed the . . .
8. Replace "men" with "humans."
    Men have always . . .   Humans have always . . .
9. Replace "man-made" with "artificial."
    It is a man-made reservoir.   It is an artificial reservoir.
10. Replace "spokesman" with "spokesperson" or "representative."
    The spokesman for the client's family   The representative for the client's family
    has arrived.   has arrived.
11. Replace "chairman" with "chairperson" or "chair."
    The chairman called the meeting to order.   The chair called the meeting to order.
12. Replace "Englishmen" or "Frenchmen" with "the English" or "the French."
    Englishmen always serve tea with scones.   The English always serve tea with scones.
13. Replace "steward" and "stewardess" with "flight attendant."
    The stewardess served the meal.   The flight attendant served the meal.
14. Replace "salesman" with "salesperson," "salespeople," "sales representative," or "sales clerks."
    Mary is a traveling salesman.   Mary is a traveling salesperson.

Source: Adapted from Miller and Swift (1980)

This Book's Approach to the Study of Gender

According to Deaux (1984), there are three approaches to the study of gender. First, sex is used as a subject variable. This is the most traditional approach to research and is represented in the studies of sex comparisons. The idea here is that sex is an attribute of a person; investigators compare the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of men and women. Deaux (1984) concludes that this approach has shown that most sex differences are qualified by interactions with context; for example, sex differences in conformity appear in some situations (e.g., public) but not in others (e.g., private). A second approach has been to study the psychological differences between women and men: femininity and masculinity. This second approach is still an individual differences approach, but the subject is the social category of gender roles rather than the biological category of sex. Here, we examine how gender roles influence people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Is being female associated with providing help, or is being empathic a better predictor of helping behavior? If the latter is true, both men and women who are high in empathy will be helpful. Third, sex is examined as a stimulus or target variable. Researchers examine how people respond to the categories of female and male. An example of this approach is finding that people rate pictures of infants as more attractive when the infant is thought to be a female and stronger when the infant is thought to be a male. Only with this latter approach can sex be randomly assigned.

All three of these approaches are represented in this text. I examine gender as an individual difference variable but am careful to note how the context influences behavior. I highlight

both similarities and differences between women and men. Most important, I focus on the explanations for the source of any observed sex differences—for example, whether other variables that co-occur with sex, such as status or gender-related personality traits, are the causal source of the behavior. I am hoping to shift the question from "Is there a difference?" to "Why is there a difference?" and "What is the source of the difference?"

I begin this book by addressing fundamental issues in the psychology of gender, such as sexism, stereotypes, sex comparisons in cognitive and social behavior and theories thereof, and achievement. The rest of the book applies this fundamental material to two domains of behavior: relationships and health. Relationships are an important subject in their own right. Relationships contribute to the quality of our life as well as to our mental and physical health. The impact of relationships on our psychological and physical well-being, the prevalence of violence in relationships, and the high rate of relationship dissolution in the form of divorce in the United States are reasons that relationships require our attention. Health also is an important subject in and of itself. Over the past century, we have extended our life span by decades but now are more likely to live with health problems for longer periods of time. We have been made increasingly aware of the role that psychological and social factors play in our health. Gender has implications for those psychological and social forces.

Summary

First, we reviewed some important terms in the psychological study of gender. Sex, the biological category, was distinguished from gender, the psychological category. An important term is *gender role*, which refers to the expectations that society has for being female or male; we expect men to be masculine and women to be feminine—in other words, to act in accordance with their gender role. Other terms defined include *gender identity*, *cis-gender and transgender individuals*, *sexual orientation*, *sex* or *gender typing*, *sexism*, *gender-role stereotype*, and *sex discrimination*. I discussed the multiple meanings of feminism, concluding that equality for men and women was the most central component of the definition. Because each society has its own definitions of gender and ways of defining female and male roles, I also described several cultures that have alternative ways of constructing gender.

Next, I presented various political and philosophical issues in the study of gender. The minimalists, who emphasize the similarities between men and women, were distinguished from the maximalists, who emphasize the differences. A brief history of the women's movements was provided along with a description of the more recent men's movements. The chapter concluded with a discussion of sexist language.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the distinction between *sex* and *gender*? How do you think this distinction should be employed in practice?
2. Describe a personal experience of intrarole or interrole conflict with respect to gender.
3. How would you expect feminists to react to transgender individuals? In particular, discuss the Caitlyn Jenner cover of *Vanity Fair*.
4. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the way that gender is portrayed in other cultures?
5. What are the implications for research if there were more than two genders?

6. What are some ways to determine if one sex has a higher status than another sex in a given culture?
7. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of comparing women and men.
8. Why hasn't any one men's movement gained the strength of the women's movement?
9. What do you think should be the primary concerns of today's women's movement?
10. How can the use of sexist language be harmful?

Suggested Reading

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KEY TERMS

Androgynous—Term describing one who incorporates both masculine and feminine qualities.

Bisexuals—Individuals who accept other-sex and same-sex individuals as sexual partners.

Cis-gender—Individuals whose gender identity corresponds to their biological sex.

Constructionists—People with the perspective that gender cannot be divorced from its context.

Cross-sex-typed—Condition of possessing the biological traits of one sex but exhibiting the psychological traits that correspond with the other sex.

Feminine—Description of trait, behavior, or interest assigned to the female gender role.

Feminism—Belief that men and women should be treated equally.

Gender—Term used to refer to the social categories of male and female.

Gender culture—Each society's or culture's conceptualization of gender roles.

Gender identity/gender-role identity—One's perception of oneself as psychologically male or female.

Gender fluid—People who perceive gender as more of a continuum and not limited to two mutually exclusive categories.

Gender hybrid—Person who considers the self to be a combination of male and female sex categories.

Gender nonconforming—People who behave in ways that contradict traditional gender roles.

Gender role—Expectations that go along with being male or female.

Gender-role attitude—One's personal view about how men and women should behave.

Heterosexuals—Individuals who prefer other-sex sexual partners.

Homosexuals—Individuals who prefer same-sex sexual partners.

Interrole conflict—Experience of conflict between expectations of two or more roles that are assumed simultaneously.

Intersex—A person who is born with ambiguous genitalia.

Intrarole conflict—Experience of conflict between expectations within a given role.

Intersectionality—The idea that a single social category, such as gender, cannot be examined independent from other social categories, such as race, ethnicity, and social class.

Masculine—Description of a trait, behavior, or interest assigned to the male gender role.

Maximalists—Persons who maintain there are important differences between the two sexes.

Minimalists—Persons who maintain the two sexes are fundamentally the same.

Role—Social position accompanied by a set of norms or expectations.

Sex—Term used to refer to the biological categories of male and female.

Sex discrimination—Behavioral component of one's attitude toward men and women that involves differential treatment of people based on their biological sex.

Sexism—Affective component of one's attitude toward sex characterized by demonstration of prejudice toward people based on their sex.

Sex-related behavior—Behavior that corresponds to sex but is not necessarily caused by sex.

Sex stereotype/gender-role stereotype—Cognitive component of one's attitude toward sex.

Sex-typed—Condition of possessing the biological traits of one sex and exhibiting the psychological traits that correspond with that sex.

Sex typing—Acquisition of sex-appropriate preferences, behaviors, skills, and self-concept (i.e., the acquisition of gender roles).

Sexual orientation—Preference to have other-sex or same-sex persons as sexual partners.

Standpoint feminist—A maximalist perspective, supporting the idea that women's competences and perspective provide advantages that are not reflected in those of men.

Transgender—Descriptive term referring to an individual whose psychological sex is not congruent with biological sex.

Transsexuals—Persons whose biological sex have been changed surgically to reflect their psychological sex.

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