CHAPTER

Introducing Sex and Gender

Key Concepts

How Do We Explain Central Concepts in the Psychology of Sex and Gender?
   Sex and Gender
   The Sex and Gender Binaries
   Gender Identity
   Sexual Orientation
   Intersectionality
   Masculinity and Femininity

What Makes Sex and Gender So Complicated?
   Complexity and Change
   Ubiquity and Invisibility

How Have Gender Movements Shaped History?
   Structures of Power and Inequality
   Women’s Movements and the Rise of Feminisms
      Women’s Movements
      Feminisms
   Debate: Are Men Overlooked in Feminist Movements?
   Men’s Movements
   Gay Rights Movements
   The Transgender Movement
   Where Are We Now? Inclusivity and Intersectionality

About This Book
   Our (Interdisciplinary) Psychological Approach
   Our Challenge to You: Critical Thinking

Learning Objectives

Students who read this chapter should be able to do the following:

1.1 Explain central terminology in the study of sex and gender.

1.2 Evaluate how culture, gender identity, and sexual orientation shape the experience and expression of sex and gender.

1.3 Evaluate the meaning and relevance of feminisms, gender movements, and systems of power, privilege, and inequality.

1.4 Demonstrate how to approach the textbook material in “critical thinking mode.”
Introducing Sex and Gender

Why study sex and gender? One answer to this question lies in how these topics are, at the same time, both central to our daily lives and near-constant sources of controversy and change. Think about how dramatically different our views of sex and gender are today from those held 20, 10, or even 5 years ago. A few recent examples from around the world illustrate these changes. In 2016, for the first time in U.S. history, a woman ran for president as the candidate of a major party. Hillary Rodham Clinton won the popular vote against Donald J. Trump but lost the election, and following Trump’s inauguration in early 2017, women and men around the world staged the largest collective protest in human history (the “Women’s Marches”) to bring attention to gender issues raised during the campaign. In 2014, 17-year-old Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani girl who survived a murder attempt by the Taliban, became the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize winner for her education rights advocacy for young girls around the world. Also in 2014, Laverne Cox became the first openly transgender person to be nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for acting, and in 2017, the Boy Scouts of America opened its doors to transgender children for the first time. In 2016, the New York Times profiled a college football coach at the University of Houston, Tom Herman, who defies gender stereotypes by motivating his players with hugs and kisses on the cheek. In 2017, following a brutal attack on a gay couple holding hands in the Netherlands, men all over the country walked hand in hand in public to show their solidarity. In 2015, the United Nations endorsed an initiative called “Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality,” with over 90 countries vowing to take concrete steps to decrease gender inequality. And the list goes on and on.

Sex and gender play substantial roles in shaping our identities, interpersonal interactions, opportunities, and societal institutions. It would be difficult to escape their influence, even if we tried. In this book, we examine the roles that sex and gender play on individual, interpersonal, social, and cultural levels. Along the way, we address questions such as these: How have ideas about sex and gender changed over the time, and how do they vary from culture to culture? How do gendered environments shape brain development? How do various sexes and gender identities differ? How do sex, gender, race, class, and sexual orientation interact to shape our identities, life experiences, and opportunities? We hope that you share our interest in these—and many other—questions about the psychology of sex and gender.

While the field of psychology got its official start in the late 1800s, researchers in mainstream psychology did not consider gender a legitimate topic of study for much of the field’s history (Crawford & Marecek, 1989). This began to change in the 1970s, largely due to an upsurge in the scholarship of feminist psychologists at the time (for more on this, see the “Women’s Movements and the Rise of Feminisms” section of this chapter). Since then, the scientific study of sex and gender has grown exponentially, with methods becoming more sophisticated and theories more advanced. In this book, you will learn about the most central theories and recent research findings on sex and gender.

This chapter sets the stage for the rest of the book by introducing you to some important terms and concepts and situating the study of sex and gender within a historical context. Chapter 1 covers a lot of territory in order to set the stage for future chapters that will go into greater depth and detail.
How Do We Explain Central Concepts in the Psychology of Sex and Gender?

To communicate about sex and gender effectively, it is important to understand some basic terminology. In this section, we clarify the terminology used throughout this book, but keep in mind that not all scholars agree on the definitions of terms such as sex and gender. When relevant, we acknowledge disagreements and clarify our preferred conceptualizations. See Table 1.1 for an overview of terms.

Table 1.1 Central Terminology in the Psychology of Sex and Gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Central Question</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>To which category do I belong?</td>
<td>Male, female, intersex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>What attributes, tendencies, and experiences (traits, interests, roles, attitudes, stereotypes, socialization practices, etc.) are associated with my sex?</td>
<td>Masculine (or male-typed), feminine (or female-typed), androgynous, agendered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender identity</td>
<td>How do I identify myself and experience my gender internally?</td>
<td>Boy, girl, man, woman, transgender man (transman), transgender woman (transwoman), agender, genderqueer, nonbinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex–gender correspondence</td>
<td>Does my gender identity match my assigned sex?</td>
<td>Cisgender, transgender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender expression</td>
<td>How do I express myself outwardly (via dress, social behavior, etc.)?</td>
<td>Masculine (or male-typed), feminine (or female-typed), androgynous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender roles</td>
<td>What socially expected gender-related behavior patterns do I enact?</td>
<td>Provider/caretaker, leader/follower, protector/protected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender traits</td>
<td>What are my personality characteristics?</td>
<td>Masculine (or male-typed), feminine (or female-typed), androgynous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender role attitudes</td>
<td>What do I believe are the proper roles for women and men in society?</td>
<td>Traditional, transitional, egalitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender stereotypes</td>
<td>What attributes do I believe men share? What attributes do I believe women share?</td>
<td>Women are emotional and kind (communal). Men are decisive and independent (agentic).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>What is my sexual orientation? To whom am I attracted?</td>
<td>Straight, gay, bisexual, pansexual, polysensual, asexual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sex and Gender

In a classic article, Rhoda Unger (1979) argued that the meaning of the word sex was conceptually unclear in psychological research because it was overextended. For example, sex was used to refer to sex chromosomes and sexual anatomy—both of which are biological factors—as well as to sex roles and sex differences in personality, which arguably reflect sociocultural influences. And yet, despite being used to refer to different types of factors, the term sex was often interpreted in a primarily biological sense. Thus, differences between men and women, labeled sex differences, were assumed to reflect biological causes. However, differences between women and men do not always—or even mostly—stem from biological factors.

To reduce ambiguity about the causes and interpretations of sex differences, Rhoda Unger (1979) suggested using the term gender to refer to the nonbiological, culturally constructed aspects of being female or male and the term sex when discussing the biological aspects. Unfortunately, this is not as easy as it might seem, for at least two reasons. First, for any given difference between women and men, we do not know precisely how much of that difference stems from biology and how much stems from socialization, cultural norms, and life experience. Take differences in physical aggression rates, for example. On average, boys and men are more physically aggressive in comparison with girls and women (Archer, 2004). But this difference reflects a complex combination of biological and social factors. For instance, the hormone testosterone predicts aggression, and men have higher levels of testosterone than women do (Severson & Barclay, 2015). But boys and men are also socialized to perform physically active, risky behavior and to deal with negative emotion by directing it outward. Both of these factors likely contribute to sex differences in aggression, which makes it very difficult to disentangle the root cause of any observed sex difference.

Second, even the very meanings of biological and social factors can be somewhat fuzzy. For instance, people generally understand hormones as biological factors and socialization as a set of social factors. However, performing male-typed behaviors can increase testosterone in women, and performing female-typed behaviors can decrease testosterone in men. Since women and men learn from experience to perform male-typed and female-typed behaviors at different rates, some researchers question whether seemingly biological testosterone differences between women and men might actually reflect the result of gender socialization experiences (van Anders, Steiger, & Goldey, 2015; van Anders, Tolman, & Jainagaraj, 2014). In other words, differentiating biological from social causes of difference is not a straightforward process, a topic we will explore more fully in Chapter 3 (“The Nature and Nurture of Sex and Gender”).

To resolve the issue in this book, we follow a convention adopted by Alice Eagly (2013) and use the word sex when we refer to male, female, and intersex as categories or groups of people. For example, we will refer to sex differences when discussing average differences between women, men, and those identifying as nonbinary (where available) on some variable of interest. By using the word sex in this context, however, we do not imply anything about the causes (biological or social) of the observed difference. In contrast, we use the term gender to refer to the meanings that people give to the different sex categories. Thus, gender refers to broad sets of identities, traits, interests, roles, tendencies, attitudes, stereotypes, and socialization practices commonly associated with maleness and femaleness. For instance, gender roles are social roles (e.g., provider or
caretaker) that are typically associated with people as a function of their sex. Importantly, aspects of gender often differ by age, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, social class, and historical era, a point that we will emphasize throughout this book. As with sex, however, our use of the term gender does not imply anything about the causes of the phenomenon in question. That is, the gender roles that men and women tend to occupy likely result from a combination of biological and social factors (W. Wood & Eagly, 2012). Finally, we suggest that you do not get overly preoccupied with wording. While language is important, people often use terms differently, and consensus eventually emerges over time.

The Sex and Gender Binaries

Do sex and gender exist solely in binary (either/or) form? Are all people either male or female, boy or girl, man or woman, masculine or feminine? The sex and gender binaries refer to overarching social systems that conceptualize sex (male or female) and gender (masculine or feminine) as consisting of two opposite, nonoverlapping categories. Most—though not all—human societies and cultures operate under the framework of the sex binary, in large part because this binary tends to simplify social interactions, organize labor divisions, and maintain order in social institutions. However, the binary also oversimplifies the complexity of the natural world. According to biologist Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000), nature offers us a lot of variety when it comes to the biological components of sex. In a review of medical studies published between 1955 and 2000, Fausto-Sterling and her colleagues estimated that approximately 1.7% of human infants are born with some form of intersexuality (Blackless et al., 2000). Intersexuality is a condition in which the biological components of sex (chromosomes, hormones, genitals, and internal and external sex organs) do not consistently fit the typical male pattern or the typical female pattern. For example, an individual may be genetically male (XY) with undescended testicles and external genitalia that look female. This happens when people are born with Complete Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (CAIS). Because they appear female, infants with CAIS often are assigned female at birth and raised as girls, leading them to develop a female gender identity despite having male sex chromosomes.

The complexity of biological factors underlying sex illustrates that sex does not operate cleanly in a binary fashion with only two categories. Taking this idea further, some scholars propose that the very idea of “biological sex” (the categories of male, female, and intersex) is a social construction (Marecek, Crawford, & Popp, 2004). This means that the categories of sex are not fixed, universal facts in nature but instead are shaped and constructed by different belief systems within specific cultures. Of course,
by extension, the sex binary is also not a fixed, natural reality. To illustrate this, consider the following quote:

The genitals of [intersexual individuals] are only ambiguous if they must be labeled as female or male (i.e., seen in terms of two nonoverlapping categories). If sex is not dimorphic, then the intersexed do not have ambiguous genitals but variations of the two more commonly known forms. In other words, what looks like ambiguity from the perspective of a two-sex categorization scheme is natural variation viewed from outside that scheme. (Golden, 2008, p. 139)

Similar to the sex binary, the gender binary—the assumption that individuals embody either masculine or feminine traits and tendencies—is also socially constructed. The concept of androgyny is relevant here. Androgyny refers to possessing high levels of both stereotypically masculine (e.g., assertive and confident) and feminine (e.g., warm and generous) traits (Bem, 1974). As we will discuss, masculinity and femininity are complex, multidimensional constructs, and some dimensions (e.g., gender-related occupational preferences) show more evidence of being binary than others (e.g., gender-related personality traits; Lippa, 2005b).

In sum, the sex and gender binaries are oversimplified categorical structures that people often impose on the world. However, some cultures recognize more than two sexes and genders, with a great deal of cross-cultural variety emerging in the meanings, norms, and beliefs that people attach to these groups. For example, two-spirit people live outside the sex/gender binary in traditional Native American societies and adopt elements of both the female and male gender roles. In different Native American societies, two-spirit people may be lesbian or gay, live as the other sex, hold sacred or spiritual roles, or perform work typically associated with another sex. In India, hijras are a separate caste of people who live as neither men nor women. Considered sacred within Hinduism, hijras often play important roles in religious rites such as births and weddings, but they also tend to occupy a low social status and face negative stereotypes. In the western Balkans, sworn virgins, though biologically female, either are raised as boys from childhood or become men later in life. These individuals dress and live as men but must pledge to remain virgins and never marry. In contrast, mustergil are girls and women in Iraq who live like men but can return to the female gender role to marry (Lang & Kuhnle, 2008). These examples demonstrate some of the many ways that cultures attach meaning to nonbinary individuals who are neither male nor female. While many Western cultures have been slow to recognize and accept people who fall outside the sex and gender binaries, this is starting to change. We will return to this idea later in this chapter (see the section “Complexity and Change”).

Stop and Think

Why do you think certain people and certain cultures enforce sex and gender binaries? What do cultures gain from this? Why are some people and some cultures more accepting than others of going beyond sex and gender binaries? What other features of a culture might correlate with the tendency to acknowledge more than two sexes and genders?
Gender Identity

Gender identity refers to individuals' psychological experience of their gender and how they identify their gender as that of a man, woman, girl, boy, or something else. Gender identity often (though not always) involves feeling a basic sense of belongingness to a sex category. Many people—referred to as cisgender—experience a match between their assigned sex at birth and the gender with which they feel a sense of belonging. On the other hand, transgender individuals experience a mismatch between their assigned sex at birth and their psychological sense of their gender. Moreover, some people are agender, meaning that they do not feel a sense of belonging to any category of sex.

Sidebar 1.1: Gender-Neutral Pronouns?

Some transgender, agender, and gender-neutral individuals prefer that others use gender-neutral pronouns (e.g., ze instead of she or he and zir instead of her or him) when referring to them (Bennett, 2016). Others prefer a plural pronoun (e.g., them). Because it can be difficult to know which pronouns people prefer, it is generally considered polite simply to ask.

In her multifactorial theory of gender identity, Janet Spence notes that a wide variety of attributes (e.g., roles, traits, interests, and attitudes) shapes gender identity and that these attributes are uncorrelated factors that vary greatly from person to person (Spence, 1993; Spence & Buckner, 1995). For example, knowing that someone identifies as a man (a male gender identity) would not necessarily allow us to predict accurately whether he also likes sports (a male-typed interest), makes decisions easily (a male-typed trait), occupies a leadership position (a male-typed role), or believes that men make better leaders than women (a traditional gender role attitude). For some individuals, these attributes do align in a male-typed manner; for others, they do not. Moreover, there are many different constellations of these gender attributes that can contribute to a person's gender identity. Despite this variability, most people develop a sense of belongingness to their assigned biological sex early in life and maintain this identity throughout life. They do so by staking their gender identity on the sex-typical attributes they possess and by discounting the importance of the sex-typical attributes they do not possess.

While Spence’s (1993) theory acknowledges the multidimensionality of gender, it fails to account for the full spectrum of gender identities that people feel and express. For instance, her theory does not consider people who are agender or genderqueer (neither, both, or a combination of man and woman). More current conceptualizations not only recognize a wider range of gender identities, they also allow for dynamic identities such as gender fluid, which describes people whose gender identities shift over time and depend on the situation. Examples of gender-fluid identities include bigender (shifting between woman and man) and trigender (shifting among female, male, and third gender identities). Recognizing this complexity, Kay Deaux and Abigail Stewart (2001) conceptualize gender identity formation as a dynamic process and caution against viewing gender identity as a single, inflexible identity that emerges early in life and remains stable throughout life. They instead view gender identity as a set of overlapping identities.
that are negotiated dynamically and shaped by norms and other people in social contexts (Deaux & Stewart, 2001).

**Sexual Orientation**

Unlike gender identity, sexual orientation refers to people's tendency to develop romantic and sexual attractions to others based on their sex. Note that both cisgender and transgender individuals can have any sexual orientation. For example, a biologically female person who identifies as a woman and is attracted only to women would be considered a cisgender lesbian, whereas a biologically male person who identifies as a woman and is attracted only to men would be a transgender heterosexual woman (or heterosexual transwoman). Sexual orientation category labels include gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, polysexual, pansexual, and asexual. Of course, just as imposing category labels oversimplifies sex and gender, some argue that labeling sexual orientation categories is also an oversimplification. Proponents of this view point to the fact that sexual orientation is a complex, multidimensional construct that consists—at the very least—of cognitive, motivational, and behavioral factors (Herek, 2000), as you will read more about in Chapter 9 (“Sexual Orientation and Sexuality”).

**Intersectionality**

Traditional psychological perspectives on sex and gender tend to view “women” and “men” as uniform groups rather than focusing on the differences among them. This approach ignores the fact that people do not belong solely to a sex or gender identity category but simultaneously occupy categories of race, class, age, nationality, physical ability, and sexual orientation. Moreover, because different social categories correlate with different levels of privilege and discrimination, people who occupy more than one disadvantaged group may face unique experiences not shared by other members of their sex or gender identity group. The notion of intersectionality refers to the ways in which different forms of discrimination and oppression (e.g., sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and transphobia) interact to shape people’s experiences (Crenshaw, 1993; Hurtado, 1996; McCall, 2005). For instance, rather than just focusing on how “women” as a group are affected by sexism, an intersectional perspective might focus on how sexism interacts with racism and classism to shape the experiences of poor Latinas.

Sociologist Patricia Collins (2000) proposes the idea of a matrix to represent the intersecting identities that exist within cultural and historical contexts. All individuals and social groups occupy a specific social location within a matrix that is defined by cross-cutting social categories (e.g., sex, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation). Each social location within the matrix is associated with different levels of privilege or oppression and, accordingly, with different life experiences. Proponents of intersectionality argue that a nuanced understanding of sex and gender will require psychologists to examine more fully the intersecting identities and oppressions that shape people’s lives. We return to this idea in the upcoming section “Women’s Movements and the Rise of Feminisms.”
Masculinity and Femininity

What makes someone masculine, feminine, androgynous, or other? It has been surprisingly difficult for gender researchers to answer these questions (Spence & Buckner, 1995). In a groundbreaking article, Ann Constantinople (1973) declared masculinity and femininity to be two of the muddiest concepts in the psychological literature. Despite this, researchers generally agree that masculinity refers to the possession of physical and psychological attributes typically associated with men, and femininity refers to the possession of physical and psychological attributes typically associated with women. As noted, psychological androgyny refers to the possession of high levels of both masculine and feminine attributes.

Stop and Think

Do you consider yourself masculine, feminine, androgynous, or none of the above? What do the terms masculine and feminine mean to you? How do you interpret it when, for example, someone describes a man as being “in touch with his ‘feminine’ side”? When you think of people who are androgynous, how do you picture their personality? What about their physical appearance?

Sidebar 1.2: Is Androgyny Good for Your Health?

Having an androgynous personality means being high in both male-typed traits (e.g., “analytical” and “independent”) and female-typed traits (e.g., “affectionate” and “understanding”). Since both of these types of traits predict positive outcomes in important life domains (e.g., personal achievement and interpersonal relationships), some researchers propose androgyny to be “good for your health.” In fact, one large study of over 4,800 White, Black, and Latino youth examined the correlations between androgyne scores and quality of life across physical, emotional, social, and school domains (S. M. Scott et al., 2015). Androgyny correlated positively with quality of life but only among White and Latino girls. Among boys, high levels of male-typed traits and low levels of female-typed traits best predicted quality of life. Why do you think these different patterns of associations might emerge for girls and boys?

What Makes Sex and Gender So Complicated?

“There is nothing simple about sex and gender.”

—Rhoda Unger (2001, p. vi)

In this statement, Unger conveys the complexity of sex and gender well. Even something as seemingly simple as identifying and naming the different sexes is more complicated than...
it first appears. In this section, we discuss some complexities in how people and cultures think about sex and gender, as well as the tendency for sex and gender to fall out of consciousness and become invisible.

**Complexity and Change**

While several non-Western cultures have long recognized third and fourth categories of sex and gender, most Western cultures recognize only two sexes. However, this is beginning to change, as understandings of sex and gender become more complex. Consider the cases of Alex MacFarlane and Norrie May-Welby in Australia. In 2003, Alex MacFarlane became the first Australian (and likely the first person in the world) to indicate a third sex (“X”) identity on a passport (“Ten Years of X Passports,” 2013). MacFarlane has Klinefelter syndrome, a genetic condition and type of intersexuality in which the individual’s sex chromosomes are XXY, rather than the more common XX (female) or XY (male). In Western cultures, people with Klinefelter syndrome are typically assigned male at birth and accordingly develop a male gender identity, but MacFarlane identifies as neither male nor female.

Between 2003 and 2011, the Australian government offered the third sex option on passports only for diagnosed intersex individuals like MacFarlane. Then, from 2011 to 2014, Australia gradually broadened its policies to allow all nonbinary transgender individuals to specify a third sex/gender option on official documents as long as they provided a letter signed by a medical doctor. This change came about largely due to the efforts of Norrie May-Welby. Assigned male at birth, May-Welby had genital reconstructive surgery in 1989 but subsequently came to identify as both male and female simultaneously (or “spansexual,” in May-Welby’s words). In 2014, the High Court of Australia ruled that May-Welby had the legal right to register as gender nonspecific, which paved the way for other gender-neutral Australians to do the same (Rawstron, 2014). Now, this third gender is recognized by the Australian census, as well as by at least one health insurance provider in Australia (Pash, 2016).

Between 2007 and 2015, several other countries followed suit and acknowledged a third sex/gender option. For instance, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Pakistan, New Zealand, Germany, Denmark, and Malta added a third sex/gender option on various official documents (Byrne, 2014; Macarow, 2015). Though Argentina, Columbia, and Ireland do not allow this third option on official documents, they do allow individuals to change their sex category (from female to male or vice versa) without requiring any medical or psychological documentation. In the United States, no third sex/gender option was offered on official documents until recently, when New York City issued the first intersex birth certificate in late 2016 to Sara Kelly Keenan (Scutti, 2017). In 2017, Oregon became the first state to allow a third gender option on identity cards such as driver’s licenses (A. Ferguson, 2017). Overall, policies regarding changing one’s sex designation on birth certificates and other official documents vary from state to state in the United States, with most states requiring proof of genital reconstructive surgery before allowing the change (Byrne, 2014; “Changing Birth Certificate,” 2015).

Why is this important? Cases like those of Alex MacFarlane and Norrie May-Welby illustrate not only the complexity of sex and gender but also the powerful roles of social and cultural factors in shaping our understandings of sex and gender. Some social
understandings of sex and gender have remained remarkably similar across time and cultures while others change quite rapidly. For example, the tendency to view women as more warm, moral, and appearance oriented than men seems to transcend time and culture (Glick et al., 2000). In contrast, beliefs about the existence and acceptability of third sex/gender options show a great deal of cross-cultural variability and, in some cultures, have changed substantially over the past 10 years.

Sidebar 1.3: Toddler Fashion Flashback

Sex-typed styles of dress have changed a lot over time. For example, take a look at the famous American depicted in the image below. Who do you think this is? In fact, this is a 2-year-old Franklin D. Roosevelt (the 32nd president of the United States) in 1884. In the late 19th century, Americans considered this outfit gender neutral rather than feminine. At the time, people dressed girls and boys similarly—in dresses—until the age of 6 or 7 (Paoletti, 2012).

Regardless of this change, sex and gender are powerful schemas—or mental frameworks—through which most people process their social worlds. At the same time, we do not always notice their influence. Let's examine this paradox further.

Ubiquity and Invisibility

Sex and gender play pervasive roles in many aspects of life, from our occupations and our physical health to our educational and political outcomes, our appearance and dress, and even our understandings and interpretations of basic constructs like colors, numbers, and food. For example, across cultures, people typically associate red meat (especially steak and hamburgers), potatoes, and beer with men and salad, pasta, yogurt, fruit, and chocolate with women (Sobal, 2005). In the United States, people tend to associate pink with girls and blue with boys (Paoletti, 2012). Around the world, about 55% of all languages are gendered, with nouns designated as masculine, feminine, or gender neutral (Prewitt-Freilino, Caswell, & Laakso, 2012). Even numeric digits are gendered. Consider this: Which number, 1 or 2, do you view as more masculine? When James Wilkie and Galen Bodenhausen (2012) asked people this question, they found a tendency for the number 1 to be perceived as more masculine than the number 2. Wilkie and Bodenhausen reasoned that the number 1 represents a solitary, autonomous entity, which makes it seem masculine relative to the more relational, “feminine” number 2.
Sex and gender clearly permeate our lives. A quick Internet search for “gender in the news” reveals hundreds of recent stories about topics such as gender role norms (“Jameis Winston Apologizes After Saying Girls Should Be ‘Silent and Polite,’” 2017), gender in politics (“What’s Next for the Women’s Movement?” 2017), and gender in the workplace (“When a Company Is Failing, Female CEOs Get Blamed More Frequently Than Men”; Peck, 2016). At the same time, because the influence of gender on our everyday interactions and behaviors is so routine and normalized, we sometimes fail to notice it. Sociologist Judith Lorber (1994) argues that we should attempt to reverse this trend and make gender even more visible in order to challenge dominant gender norms, beliefs, and institutions because these often reinforce gender inequality. But how can we make sex and gender more visible?

One way is by flipping gender norms for men and women to expose how they operate. For example, in a 2015 video created by the Cover the Athlete campaign, reporters asked world-class male athletes questions routinely asked of female athletes. Examples included the following: “If you could date anyone in the world, who would you date?” “How has your weight gain affected your mobility?” and “Could you give us a twirl and tell us about your outfit?” Male athletes responded with disbelief and open irritation to these questions, illustrating the absurdity of gender norms that make topics such as appearance and sexuality acceptable fodder for interviews with female athletes.

People can also make the influence of sex and gender more visible by discussing it directly. To this end, we will regularly ask you in this book to reflect on and evaluate how sex and gender shape people at individual, interpersonal, and societal levels. Perhaps not surprising, the extent to which people recognize the influence of sex and gender depends on the groups to which they belong. For example, the more dominant and privileged the group (as with male or cisgender individuals), the less group members tend to recognize the influence of sex and gender in their daily lives (Case, Hensley, & Anderson, 2014; McIntosh, 2012). Conversely, less privileged groups (female and transgender individuals, for example) tend to more readily recognize the influence of gender in their lives. Privilege is an automatic, unearned advantage that accompanies membership in certain social groups. In many Western cultures, privilege is associated with being male, White, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied, and wealthy. Because privilege often comes with an absence of certain experiences (e.g., an absence of discrimination or an absence of stressful identity-based encounters), it can be difficult to recognize when one has it. Inspired by an essay about White privilege by Peggy McIntosh (1989), some educators use “privilege lists” to encourage members of dominant groups to recognize how their group status shapes their experiences (Killermann, 2013). See Table 1.2 for examples of cisgender, male, and heterosexual privilege lists. Interestingly, exposure to videotaped discussions of male and heterosexual privilege can reduce people’s sexist attitudes and increase their motivation to avoid prejudice (Case et al., 2014).

---

**Stop and Think**

Do you fall into any of the categories of privilege listed in Table 1.2? McIntosh (1989) asserts that members of privileged groups should reflect on the automatic advantages that their group membership affords them. What are the pros and cons of this sort of reflection? What other ways might there be to encourage people to think about their privileged statuses?
Table 1.2 **Lists of Cisgender Privilege, Male Privilege, and Heterosexual Privilege.** Privilege can be difficult to detect when one has it because it is often characterized by an absence of stressful and unpleasant experiences, rather than by the presence of pleasant experiences. As a class exercise, instructors sometimes ask their students to consider which of these experiences are familiar to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cisgender Privilege</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You can use public restrooms without fear of verbal abuse, physical intimidation, or arrest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Strangers don’t assume they can ask you what your genitals look like and how you have sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You can walk through the world and generally blend in, not being constantly stared or gawked at, whispered about, pointed at, or laughed at because of your gender expression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. You can reasonably assume that you will not be denied services at a hospital, bank, or other institution because the staff does not believe the gender marker on your ID card to match your gender identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. You don’t have to fear interactions with police officers due to your gender identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Privilege</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A decision to hire you won’t be based on whether the employer assumes you will be having children in the near future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. You can generally work comfortably (or walk down a public street) without the fear of sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You can decide not to have children and not have your masculinity questioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. You can have promiscuous sex and be viewed positively for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. You are less likely to be interrupted in conversation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heterosexual Privilege</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You can count on immediate access to your loved one in case of accident or emergency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. You can easily find a neighborhood in which residents will accept the make-up of your household.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You can expect to share joint child custody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. You can go wherever you wish knowing that you will not be harassed, beaten, or killed because of your sexuality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. You do not have to worry that people won’t let their children play with your children because of your sexuality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, sex and gender sometimes become more salient when we encounter patterns that do not match our expectations. For example, consider this scenario:

A man and his son get into a car accident. The man dies instantly, but the boy is rushed to the hospital for surgery. The surgeon enters the room and says, “I cannot operate on this boy. He is my son.” How is this possible?

When Margo Monteith, then president of the Midwestern Psychological Association, mentioned this riddle during her presidential address at a conference, she listed a variety of answers that her students had generated over the years. Some solved the riddle by assuming that the boy’s parents were a gay male couple; others thought that the surgeon must be the boy’s stepfather; one even suggested that the surgeon was a Catholic priest who called all male people “my son” (Monteith, 2014). In contrast, people less frequently guess the actual solution to the riddle, that the surgeon is the boy’s mother. Revealing this answer to those who are stumped by the riddle can bring visibility to otherwise invisible gendered assumptions. Note, however, that not everyone finds this riddle perplexing. Children tend to have an easier time identifying the surgeon as the boy’s mother. What might this say about the role of learning in our gendered associations?

How Have Gender Movements Shaped History?

Structures of Power and Inequality

Not all individuals within any given society share the same rights and enjoy equal access to resources and power. Some form of hierarchical social structure exists in all human societies, though the specific forms that hierarchies take vary from culture to culture (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006). Within hierarchies, dominant groups have more access to education, leadership positions, and resources, and subordinate groups have less access to these opportunities and resources. In turn, access to power and resources allows dominant group members to shape the norms and laws that govern society and thus to shape the outcomes of subordinate groups.

Though not the only factors, sex and gender shape status hierarchies within societies. In patriarchal societies, men as a group rule the society and control how it operates. In contrast, matriarchal societies are defined as ones in which women rule the society and control how it operates. While we lack evidence of any true matriarchal societies throughout human history, there are many known matrilineal societies in which family relationships and ancestry are traced through the mother’s line. For example, among the Garo people in India and Bangladesh, daughters inherit property from their mothers, and sons move in with their wives’ families upon marriage (Burling, 1963). Similarly, several Native American societies, including the Navajo, Hopi, Iroquois, and Tinglit, are traditionally matrilineal. Note, however, that being matrilineal does not make a society matriarchal because men still tend to hold more political and decision-making power than women do in these societies.
Social scientists offer many theories to explain how social hierarchies operate. For example, according to social dominance theory, group-based social hierarchies and dominant group advantages result from a system of discrimination that operates on individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In this theory, legitimizing myths (consensually shared values and beliefs that primarily reflect the interests of dominant group members) emerge to justify unequal social hierarchies. An example of a legitimizing myth is the belief that women have qualities that men lack, such as gentleness and moral purity, that make them both well suited for mothering roles and needful of protection from men. Another legitimizing myth is the model of hegemonic masculinity, which refers to a culturally idealized yet difficult-to-attain version of manhood characterized by aggression, competition, success, emotional restraint, toughness, courage, and antifemininity. Framing manhood in this way can serve to reinforce and justify male dominance (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Throughout history, group-based power imbalances have sometimes prompted disempowered groups to organize and advocate for equal and fair treatment. Relevant here is the distinction between equality (treating everyone the same, regardless of background or differences) and equity (treating everyone fairly by taking background and difference into account). Whereas equality can still disadvantage some people relative to others if they possess different capabilities or attributes, equity typically leads to more just outcomes. As an example, consider using an equality versus an equity principle to guide the treatment of vision problems. Because people differ in how well their eyes focus on distant objects, treating all vision problems with the same eyeglass prescription would be truly “equal,” but it would not be equitable: Some people’s vision would be improved by the prescription while others would still have difficulty seeing. Many gender movements—including the women’s movements, gay rights movements, and transgender movement—tackle these issues of equality and equity head on, and men’s movements often address how gender shapes men’s experiences. Although the goals of men’s movement groups vary, some focus on how the male gender role can be oppressive and harmful to men. We will now examine the progress made by women, sexual minorities, transgender individuals, and men as a result of political movements.

Women’s Movements and the Rise of Feminisms

Women’s movements. As discussed in the opening of this chapter, the Women’s Marches of January 2017 were possibly the largest collective protest in history. With an estimated 4.2 million people participating in the United States and hundreds of thousands of people marching in over 200 other nations (Frostenson, 2017), it is difficult to discount the power and organization of this social effort. Moreover, despite the name, the Women’s Marches were attended by people of all sexes, and they represented a range of political movements.

The Navajo of North America are traditionally matrilineal, passing property from mothers to daughters. Here, a Navajo woman and her mother (seated) pose in front of their hogan (traditional dwelling).

Source: © iStockPhoto.com/tobkatrina

Hegemonic masculinity: A culturally idealized version of manhood that reinforces men’s control over women.
These marches did not emerge in a vacuum but instead drew on decades of political action and effort by feminists and gender activists.

So what efforts preceded the Women’s Marches? Some argue that the women’s movement in the United States occurred in three waves, each punctuated by a series of major social and political events (see Figure 1.1). However, not everyone agrees that the wave metaphor is the best way to describe the progress of the women’s movements. For instance, Linda Nicholson (2010) contends that labeling “waves” in the women’s movement ignores the work and progress made outside of the waves (e.g., in the 1920s–1960s) and fails to acknowledge the diversity of feminists with differing perspectives who contributed to each wave. To this end, some propose that a river metaphor better captures the development of women’s movements over time, since a river—though at times expanding and narrowing—is always flowing (Laughlin et al., 2010). Although we sometimes use the wave terminology in this book, keep in mind that these waves do not represent the unitary voice of all feminists and that much gender activism takes place outside of the “waves.”

Scholars generally agree that the first wave of the women’s movement in the United States began in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848 at the first women’s rights convention. The 68 women and 32 men present at this convention endorsed the goal of attaining
Chapter 1  |  Introducing Sex and Gender  

Figure 1.1 Timeline of Important Events Across the First, Second, and Third “Waves” of the Women’s Movement in the United States

2016 The Defense Department opened all military occupations and positions to women.
2009 The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act was signed into law, making it easier for workers to sue employees for pay discrimination. Lilly Ledbetter, a Goodyear plant supervisor for almost two decades, filed a sex discrimination suit against Goodyear in 1998 for paying her less than her male counterparts. She lost her case in 2007, when the Supreme Court rejected her appeal.

1996 Eve Ensler’s play The Vagina Monologues premiered in New York City.

1993 The Family and Medical Leave Act was signed into law, allowing employees to take job-protected, unpaid leave for qualified family and medical reasons.

1973 The U.S. Supreme Court issued a landmark decision in Roe v. Wade, ruling that a woman’s right to privacy affords her the right to decide whether to terminate a pregnancy.
1972 The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. The ERA, which states that “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex,” was first introduced to Congress in 1923. The ERA died in 1982, when it failed to get the 38 states needed for approval.

1964 Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was signed into law, banning employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
1963 Betty Friedan published The Feminine Mystique, which is often credited for signaling the beginning of the second wave of the U.S. women’s movement.

1961 John F. Kennedy established the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, which documented discrimination against women in the workplace and made recommendations for fair hiring practices, paid maternity leave, and affordable childcare.

1964 Betty Friedan founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) to advocate for equal rights and opportunities for women.

1972 Gloria Steinem and Dorothy Pitman Hughes founded Ms., the first feminist magazine.

1972 Title IX of the Educational Amendments was signed into law, which banned sex discrimination in any federally funded educational program or activity.

1997 The Third Wave Foundation was formed, with its roots in an organization formed by Rebecca Walker in 1992. Third Wave advocates for gender, racial, economic, and social justice and supports young women and transgender youth through grants and leadership development.

1993 The Family and Medical Leave Act was signed into law, allowing employees to take job-protected, unpaid leave for qualified family and medical reasons.

1991 The Violence Against Women Act was signed into law, with the most recent reauthorization in 2013.

1992 Rebecca Walker, credited with naming the third wave of the women’s movement, published an article in Ms. magazine titled “Becoming the Third Wave.”

2013 The Defense Department lifted the ban on female service members in combat roles.

2009 The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act was signed into law, making it easier for workers to sue employees for pay discrimination. Lilly Ledbetter, a Goodyear plant supervisor for almost two decades, filed a sex discrimination suit against Goodyear in 1998 for paying her less than her male counterparts. She lost her case in 2007, when the Supreme Court rejected her appeal.

1996 Eve Ensler’s play The Vagina Monologues premiered in New York City.

1993 The Family and Medical Leave Act was signed into law, allowing employees to take job-protected, unpaid leave for qualified family and medical reasons.

1973 The U.S. Supreme Court issued a landmark decision in Roe v. Wade, ruling that a woman’s right to privacy affords her the right to decide whether to terminate a pregnancy.
1972 The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. The ERA, which states that “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex,” was first introduced to Congress in 1923. The ERA died in 1982, when it failed to get the 38 states needed for approval.

1964 Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was signed into law, banning employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
1963 Betty Friedan published The Feminine Mystique, which is often credited for signaling the beginning of the second wave of the U.S. women’s movement.

1961 John F. Kennedy established the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, which documented discrimination against women in the workplace and made recommendations for fair hiring practices, paid maternity leave, and affordable childcare.

(Continued)
1848 The first women’s rights convention took place in Seneca Falls, NY.

1869 Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).

1916 Nurse Margaret Sanger opened the first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, NY.

1920 The Nineteenth Amendment granting women the right to vote was signed into law.

1916 Jeannette Rankin (R-MT) became the first woman to serve in the U.S. Congress, as a member of the House of Representatives.

1921 Margaret Sanger founded the American Birth Control League, which evolved into Planned Parenthood in 1942.

1961 John F. Kennedy established the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, which documented discrimination against women in the workplace and made recommendations for fair hiring practices, paid maternity leave, and affordable childcare.

1963 The Equal Pay Act was signed into law, making it illegal for employers to pay women less than men for the same job.

1848 The first women’s rights convention took place in Seneca Falls, NY.

1963 The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. The ERA, which states that “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex,” was first introduced to Congress in 1923. The ERA died in 1982, when it failed to get the 38 states needed for approval.

1972 The U.S. Supreme Court issued a landmark decision in Roe v. Wade, ruling that a woman’s right to privacy affords her the right to decide whether to terminate a pregnancy.

1972 The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. The ERA, which states that “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex,” was first introduced to Congress in 1923. The ERA died in 1982, when it failed to get the 38 states needed for approval.

1973 The Family and Medical Leave Act was signed into law, allowing employees to take job-protected, unpaid leave for qualified family and medical reasons.

1972 The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. The ERA, which states that “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex,” was first introduced to Congress in 1923. The ERA died in 1982, when it failed to get the 38 states needed for approval.

1972 The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. The ERA, which states that “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex,” was first introduced to Congress in 1923. The ERA died in 1982, when it failed to get the 38 states needed for approval.

1993 The Family and Medical Leave Act was signed into law, allowing employees to take job-protected, unpaid leave for qualified family and medical reasons.

1996 Eve Ensler’s play The Vagina Monologues premiered in New York City.

1992 Rebecca Walker, credited with naming the third wave of the women’s movement, published an article in Ms. magazine titled “Becoming the Third Wave.”

1994 The Violence Against Women Act was signed into law, with the most recent reauthorization in 2013.

1997 The Third Wave Foundation was formed, with its roots in an organization formed by Rebecca Walker in 1992. Third Wave advocates for gender, racial, economic, and social justice and supports young women and transgender youth through grants and leadership development.

Copyright ©2019 by SAGE Publications, Inc.
This work may not be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means without express written permission of the publisher.
equal treatment of women and men under the law, with a particular emphasis on economic and voting rights for women. At the time, no country in the world granted women the right to vote in elections, and women who pursued higher education routinely faced discrimination. For example, in the late 19th century, Mary Whiton Calkins, who would later become the first female president of the American Psychological Association (APA), was denied a PhD from Harvard, despite having fulfilled the requirements to earn the degree (Rutherford & Granek, 2010). As a result of international suffrage movements, women began gaining the right to vote in many countries around the world, starting in 1893. By the end of the 1970s, only a small number of nations in Africa and the Middle East still denied women voting rights, and in 2015, Saudi Arabia—the last holdout—gave women the right to vote.

Scholars frequently trace the beginning of the second wave of the U.S. women’s movement to Betty Friedan’s publication of *The Feminine Mystique*. In this book, Friedan discussed “the problem that has no name,” by which she meant the dissatisfaction that middle-class (primarily White) women felt in the 1950s and 1960s when their lives were restricted to roles as housewives and mothers. As in the first wave, second-wave activists sought equal rights and opportunities for women, but they expanded their focus to issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, pay equality, and reproductive rights. Gender activism in this era had bearing on the field of psychology in that researchers began including women as research participants and studying topics of relevance to women (e.g., domestic violence and androgyny) that previously went unexamined (Rutherford & Granek, 2010). Furthermore, the field saw the emergence of new journals devoted to sex and gender, such as *Sex Roles* in 1975; new organizations, such as the Society for the Psychology of Women (Division 35 of the APA) in 1973; and new university courses, such as “The Psychology of Women.” To get a sense of some of the rights and freedoms that resulted from the second wave of the women’s movement, see Table 1.3.

In 1992, Rebecca Walker, daughter of writer Alice Walker, published an article in Ms. magazine that is credited with galvanizing what some identify as the third wave of the women’s movement. This article, titled “Becoming the Third Wave,” emphasized intersectionality by simultaneously confronting issues of sex and race. Third-wave feminists reject the idea that all women experience a common oppression, and they are critical of the primarily White, middle-class, second-wave feminists for failing to include diverse women and identities. Specifically, third-wave feminists more often view race, class, sexual orientation, and gender identity as central issues, and they take more global perspectives on sex and gender. In psychology, proponents of the third wave emphasize how diverse experiences (e.g., poverty, racism, and educational barriers) interact to influence women’s health and outcomes (Baumgardner & Richards, 2010). Note, however, that these ideas were not new in the early 1990s, as they appeared in the earlier works of Cherrie Moraga, bell hooks, and Audre Lorde, among others (hooks, 1980; Lorde, 1984; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981). Nonetheless, it was not until the early 1990s that these ideas garnered more widespread attention among feminists.

**Feminisms.** Do you consider yourself a feminist? Why or why not? Though many different types of feminisms exist (see Table 1.4)—and we emphasize this by using the plural feminisms here, rather than the singular feminism—some core issues hold all of them
Table 1.3  **Things That American Women Could Not Do Before the 1970s.**

Consider how much has changed in the past several decades. If you value any of these rights, you can thank a gender activist!

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep a job if pregnant</td>
<td>Women could be fired from their job for being pregnant, until the passage in 1978 of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report workplace sexual harassment</td>
<td>Workplace sexual harassment was not legally recognized until 1977, and it was not until 1980 that it was legally defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run in the Boston Marathon</td>
<td>Women were not allowed to run in this race until 1972.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get a credit card</td>
<td>Women could not apply for credit cards until 1974, under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse to have sex with her husband</td>
<td>Marital rape was not recognized as rape in most states until the mid-1970s. In 1993, it became criminalized in all 50 states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get an easy divorce</td>
<td>Prior to the No Fault Divorce law of 1969, it was very difficult to divorce unless a spouse could prove that the other spouse did something wrong (e.g., adultery).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a legal abortion</td>
<td>Women could not legally seek an abortion in all states until the 1973 Supreme Court decision <em>Roe v. Wade</em>, which stated that a woman’s decision to terminate a pregnancy was protected under the guaranteed right to privacy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4  **Different Types of Feminisms.** Feminisms tend to share the common goal of gender equality, but they also assume various forms that reflect their different emphases and values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminism</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal feminism</td>
<td>Asserts that men and women should be treated equally because they are equal in characteristics and ability. Supports legislation that removes barriers for women and leads to greater opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical feminism</td>
<td>Believes that patriarchy (male control in society and over women) must be dismantled. Seeks to rid society of rigid gender roles and oppression of women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist feminism</td>
<td>Views the gendered division of labor, capitalism, and the value put on men’s work in the public sphere as disadvantaging women. Seeks economic independence for women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Womanism</td>
<td>Calls out the exclusion of women of color from mainstream feminism and recognizes that race, gender, and class intersect to shape experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/difference feminism</td>
<td>Asserts that there are fundamental differences between men and women. Advocates that the qualities of women be as valued and respected as the qualities of men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational feminism</td>
<td>Seeks to alleviate the discrimination and suffering of girls and women across national boundaries. Focuses on issues such as poverty, health, gender violence, and educational access.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People of all sexes to experience social, political, and economic equality. In addition, some question whether feminisms are healthy in their current forms, and their concerns center around three main issues. First, for feminisms to be viable, they need supporters, but fewer and fewer young people identify as feminists. While young people espouse many of the beliefs of feminists (that women and men should have equal rights), they often do not take the next step to identify as feminists (Liss, Crawford, & Popp, 2004; Zucker, 2004). Negative stereotypes about feminists likely contribute to this. For example, in comparison with their nonfeminist counterparts, feminist women are seen as more radical, unattractive, cold, intolerant, and uncooperative, and feminist men are seen as more weak, fragile, emotional, feminine, and likely to be gay (V. N. Anderson, 2009; Rudman, Mescher, & Moss-Racusin, 2012).

**Stop and Think**

Comedian and actress Amy Poehler had this to say about people who support gender equity but do not identify as feminists: “That's like someone being like I don't really believe in cars, but I drive one every day and I love that it gets me places and makes life so much easier and faster and I don't know what I would do without it” (“Amy Poehler,” 2014). What do you think of Amy's point? Is it fair?
Second, to remain relevant, feminisms must be more inclusive of nonbinary and transgender individuals. For instance, the focus on attaining equality “between women and men” reinforces the sex binary and fails to acknowledge the issues confronting those who fall outside this binary. In addition, as noted, many first- and second-wave feminists generally ignored how factors like gender, race, class, and sexual orientation interacted to shape experiences. Similarly, many feminists fail to acknowledge the ways in which rigid and restrictive gender roles negatively impact men. For more on this issue, see “Debate: Are Men Overlooked in Feminist Movements?”

Finally, to remain viable, feminist movements must flexibly adapt to the updated needs and experiences of younger generations. Given their focus on diversity, intersectionality, and globalism, third-wave feminists tend to prioritize issues such as environmental justice, prison reform, the living wage, marginalized people (e.g., women of color and trans people), and reproductive justice (the human right to personal bodily autonomy, parenthood choices, and safe communities in which to raise children). But these issues do not always overlap with the goals of earlier feminists, and tensions sometimes arise between second-wave feminists and younger generations (Baumgardner & Richards, 2010).

Sidebar 1.4: Reproductive Rights or Reproductive Justice?

In 2003, the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective offered the term reproductive justice to add to and build on conversations about reproductive rights (L. Ross, 2011). While reproductive rights often boil down to the issue of women’s access to birth control and safe abortion, SisterSong noted that conditions in marginalized communities, such as environmental dangers and lack of health care access, often restrict women’s reproductive rights and choices on a broader level. In other words, women who live in marginalized communities face restrictions to their reproductive outcomes that go beyond issues of individual choice and birth control. Therefore, advocates of reproductive justice work to make marginalized communities safer and healthier, with increased social support structures so that women will have more autonomy to make healthy reproductive choices and to parent their children in safe environments.

Debate
Are Men Overlooked in Feminist Movements?

Although gender equality seems like a noble ideal, many respond to feminist movements with ambivalence or derision, and stereotypes of feminists tend to be negative (V. N. Anderson, 2009). Why do people often feel uncomfortable labeling themselves feminists? Why do feminist movements often inspire
resentment? Some argue that any movement that challenges the status quo will face resistance, but others argue that feminisms elicit resentment because they ignore a significant component of the human population (i.e., men). Do men’s concerns get left behind in feminist movements? Can men, who generally have more structural power than women do, be disempowered? Throughout this book, we engage readers in intellectual debates to expand on some of the issues that we cover. Here, we consider whether feminist movements overlook men and, if so, whether this is a problem. Let’s examine both sides.

Yes, Feminist Movements Overlook Men

For a social justice movement to be effective, it needs to be inclusive. Equality means respecting everyone’s outcomes, not just those of a particular group. While many feminists intend to promote the rights of women and not to degrade the rights of men, they sometimes cast men as oppressors who stand in opposition to women’s advancement. This can alienate men who might otherwise serve as useful allies.

Feminisms also tend to overlook the ways that men experience mistreatment and exploitation. For instance, by seeking to attain equality between men and women, feminisms ignore inequalities within the sexes (i.e., not all men are similarly privileged). As social psychologist Roy Baumeister (2010) notes, despite being at the top of the social hierarchy, men are also at the bottom. Many men are disempowered: They swell the prisons; they perform much of the riskiest, low-paid work; they experience more violent crime than women; and they pay enormous prices in terms of stress and health. This view of men as expendable gets lost in the feminist emphasis on structural power differences between the sexes.

In short, feminist movements have failed to gain more traction and widespread support because they alienate too much of the population, both by treating men as the problem and by ignoring the ways in which cultures exploit men. To be more viable going forward, feminist movements need to become more inclusive of men and recognize that gendered systems can harm men as well as women.

No, Feminist Movements Do Not Overlook Men

Social justice movements arise when groups that lack power fight against this inequality. Feminisms must necessarily focus on addressing structural inequalities, which traditionally empower men and disempower women. Despite the negative stereotypes, feminists are not against individual men, but they are against the patriarchal power structures that perpetuate inequality. As long as wage gaps exist, as long as so few women hold positions of political and economic power, and as long as women make up the vast majority of victims of sexual assault, feminist movements must remain focused on women’s disempowerment. Men can be allies in this fight, but women must be at the center. That said, feminist movements do help men because both women and men benefit from a more equal, just world.

It is true that traditional gender role norms can negatively impact men. However, men who wish to challenge these gender role norms must organize social change efforts, just as women have led feminist movements. Men’s movements need not be in opposition to women’s movements. In fact, the two can complement each other, as they have largely the same goals of equality. However, because each group faces unique issues, each needs its own voice to address these issues.

What do you think? Do feminist movements overlook men and ignore how rigid gender expectations and structures harm men? Or is the focus on women by women a necessary approach to empower women and gain equality? Which evidence do you find most and least convincing? Why?
Men's Movements

Just like women's movements, men's movements come in many different forms. Here, we consider examples of two very different men's movements, the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) and the Promise Keepers. NOMAS took its current form in 1990 but has roots going back to the first annual Men and Masculinity Conference in Tennessee in 1975 (Cochran, 2010). It is a pro-feminist organization of men and women who seek to enhance the lives of men by combating sexism, racism, and heterosexism and by changing the institutions that create inequality. As NOMAS took shape, a new subfield for the study of men and masculinity emerged in psychology. Scholars who study men and masculinity develop new theories and conduct research about the male gender role, often focusing on destructive aspects of the traditional male gender role for men's physical and psychological health.

Sidebar 1.5: Men Under the Microscope

In the 1970s and 1980s, academic courses and conferences on men's studies began to blossom at U.S. universities. Journals on the topic began emerging in the 1990s, including the *Journal of Men's Studies*, *Men and Masculinities*, and the *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*. In 1997, the Society for the Psychological Study of Men and Masculinity was officially included as Division 51 of the APA (Bosson, Vandello, & Caswell, 2013).

Operating from a different perspective, the Promise Keepers, founded in 1990, is an evangelical Christian men's movement (Bartkowski, 2003). This organization focuses on men's spiritual health and social responsibilities by encouraging men to worship Jesus Christ, fulfill their role as head of the family, and maintain fidelity within the context of heterosexual marriage. The Promise Keepers have enjoyed extraordinary popularity over the years, reaching millions of men through their use of large ministry rallies, books, radio programs, and merchandise, such as caps and bumper stickers. While they included women at their events from 2009 to 2011, they reverted back to an all-male organization in 2012 due to the belief that all-male environments allow men greater freedom to express themselves. Given their emphasis on living a godly life through traditional gender and family arrangements, the Promise Keepers are vocal about promoting men's authority and denouncing same-sex sexuality.

While NOMAS and the Promise Keepers differ in their values and visions of progress, both share the goal of enhancing the lives of men through social change. Note that men's movements, just like feminist movements, conceptualize progress and change in very different ways. Some men's movements seek to reclaim men's power while emphasizing the benefits of traditional gender role ideologies. Others promote feminisms and LGBT inclusiveness, push for fathers' rights, encourage spirituality or religiosity, or promote various forms of masculinity. The main theme that ties together the men's movements is that they explicitly address and create a space for men to examine the role of gender in men's lives. This may be very important, especially in light of the invisibility of...
sex and gender discussed earlier. As noted, members of more privileged groups often do not notice how sex and gender influence their lives (Case et al., 2014). This can create a conundrum for some men: The privilege of not having to think about gender means, simultaneously, that gender goes largely unacknowledged even when it creates problems in men's lives (Kimmel & Messner, 1989). Some men therefore appreciate men's movements for reducing the invisibility of gender in their lives.

**Gay Rights Movements**

The gay rights movements in the United States started to take shape in the 1920s, when Henry Gerber founded the first gay rights organization (see Figure 1.2 for a timeline of milestones). Gay people at the time faced extreme stigmatization and criminal penalties, and Gerber's organization soon crumbled under legal and social antigay pressure. About 30 years later, psychologist Evelyn Hooker (1957) published a groundbreaking study that showed no differences in psychological adjustment between heterosexual and gay male participants. This finding, which contradicted popular beliefs at the time, ultimately led the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from its classification as a psychological disorder in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-II) in 1973. From this point forward, the gay rights movements gained momentum and have remained active ever since. We see evidence of this progress in the area of marriage equality, for example, which culminated in the 2015 Supreme Court ruling that granted same-sex couples the right to marry in all 50 U.S. states.

Over the past several decades, the study of sexual minority issues developed as a productive area of psychological research. For example, the *Journal of Homosexuality* emerged in 1974 and the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues (Division 44 of the APA) began in 1985. As sexual minority researchers expanded their focus to include topics such as relationships, parenting, discrimination, and well-being, the APA updated the *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients* (APA, 2012). Among other things, these guidelines encourage psychotherapists and counselors to remain sensitive to the effects of stigma on the lives of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals and to understand that sexual orientation change efforts (therapies that seek to assist individuals in changing their sexual orientation) are neither effective nor safe.

**The Transgender Movement**

In 1993, a 21-year-old transman named Brandon Teena was beaten, raped, and murdered by two male acquaintances in Nebraska. (His life is the subject of the 1999 film *Boys Don't Cry* starring Hilary Swank.) In 1995, Tyra Hunter, a 24-year-old transwoman, was critically injured in a car accident in Washington, D.C., but was left untreated by paramedics when they discovered that she had male genitals. Tyra later died in the emergency room of D.C. General Hospital (Taylor, 2007). More recently, Joshua Vallum became the first person to be prosecuted and sentenced under a federal hate crime statute for the murder of a transgender individual. In 2015, Vallum murdered Mercedes Williamson, his ex-girlfriend, when his fellow gang members found out she was transgender. Sadly, cases such as these occur frequently, and they illustrate the harsh and brutal treatment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Henry Gerber founded the Society for Human Rights, the first gay rights organization, in Chicago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Harry Hay founded the Mattachine Society, the first national gay rights organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>The American Psychiatric Association listed homosexuality as a &quot;sociopathic personality disturbance&quot; in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-I).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon founded the Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian rights organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>In One, Inc. v. Oleson, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the First Amendment rights of One: The Homosexual Magazine, an LGBT magazine considered obscene by the U.S. Postal Service and the FBI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>The American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality as a disorder from its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-II).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Over 75,000 people participated in the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>The AIDS advocacy group ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) was formed in New York City, with the motto &quot;Silence = Death.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>President Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which defined marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Psychologist Evelyn Hooker published her study, &quot;The Adjustment of the Overt Male Homosexual,&quot; showing no significant differences in psychological adjustment between heterosexual and gay male participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>President Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450, which considered gay people to be security risks and banned them from employment with the federal government or its private contractors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Illinois became the first U.S. state to decriminalize homosexuality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Police raided a gay bar in Greenwich Village called the Stonewall Inn, which led to riots and several days of demonstrations. These riots served as a catalyst for the modern gay rights movement in the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>The American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality as a disorder from its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-II).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Over 75,000 people participated in the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>The AIDS advocacy group ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) was formed in New York City, with the motto &quot;Silence = Death.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>The Department of Defense issued the &quot;Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell&quot; policy, which prevented the military from baring service on the basis of sexual orientation as long as service members did not openly disclose their sexual orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Henry Gerber founded the Society for Human Rights, the first gay rights organization, in Chicago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>The United States Senate voted to repeal Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, making it legal for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people to serve openly in the military.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that people sometimes receive when they do not fit cleanly into the sex and gender binaries. In the face of this treatment, the transgender movement emerged to advance the rights, protections, and visibility of transgender individuals. The movement gained momentum in the past two decades in part due to the Internet, which allows transgender individuals to connect and create supportive communities such as TQ Nation and the Facebook Transgender Alliance. In addition, the spotlight on transgender celebrities, such as Chaz Bono, Caitlyn Jenner, and Laverne Cox, and the popularity of TV shows that include major transgender characters, such as Transparent and Orange is the New Black, increase the visibility of the transgender rights movement.

Another arm of the transgender movement consists of organizations like the Intersex Campaign for Equality (ICE), which advocates for the rights of intersex individuals to physical integrity, self-determination, and legal recognition. ICE criticizes the medical community for defining intersexuality as a disorder and argues that societies should not pathologize those whose bodies do not conform to sex and gender norms (http://oii-usa.org/about).

The efforts of activists in the transgender movement have borne fruit. In 1993, Minnesota became the first state to pass a law banning discrimination against transgender people, and by 2016, 18 states plus the District of Columbia had similar laws (“Know Your Rights,” 2016). In 2008, the APA approved a resolution on Transgender, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression Non-Discrimination (APA, 2008), and 4 years later, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) ruled that Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sex, race, and religion, also protects transgender employees. Finally, in 2013, the American Psychiatric Association updated its diagnostic manual to replace the diagnosis of gender identity disorder with the less stigmatizing gender dysphoria. Now, the condition of being transgender is no longer considered a diagnosable mental illness in itself. Instead, people may meet diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria only if they experience clinical levels of distress arising from a mismatch between their gender identity and the sex that others assign them (APA, 2013).

Sidebar 1.6: What’s in an Acronym?

Throughout this book, we will sometimes use acronyms to refer to sexual minority (e.g., lesbian, gay, and bisexual) and gender identity minority (e.g., transgender and genderqueer) groups and individuals. To avoid confusion, we’ll start by explaining all of the terms that go into the acronym LGBTQIA+, which some use to signify a wide range of sexual and gender minority statuses. LGBTQIA+ means lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (a broad term that refers to a variety of sexual and gender identities), intersex, and asexual. So what does the “+” signify? Despite the number of terms in the LGBTQIA+ acronym, the “+” indicates that even more identities exist, such as questioning (undecided about sexual orientation or gender identity but considering one’s options), two-spirit, pansexual, bigender, and so on. In this book, when we refer specifically to sexual minority groups or individuals, we might use LGB only. If we refer to both sexual and gender identity minority groups, we may use LGBT. When using LGBTQIA+, we intentionally refer to the whole range of possibilities. As you read this book, you may wish to refer back to this chapter for a refresher on terminology when needed.
Where Are We Now?  
Inclusivity and Intersectionality

Each movement discussed in this section has made impressive strides for its constituents. Stepping back and looking at the movements collectively, we see a common pattern in the push for greater inclusivity over time. For example, sexual minority rights movements now include bisexual and asexual people, whereas early organizations did not; third-wave feminists explicitly address the concerns of poor and minority women, whereas many of their predecessors did not. Another commonality involves greater recognition of the need to include and address intersectionality. What implications will these new understandings have as gender activism moves forward? Though difficult to say, it will be exciting to find out.

Stop and Think

Consider the Women's Marches in January 2017. Do you think the Women’s Marches were sufficiently inclusive of different sexes, gender identities, and sexual orientations? Did they sufficiently address issues of intersectionality, diversity, class, and globalism? Did they represent the future of gender activism, or were they just more of the “same old same old”? Why or why not?

About This Book

Given that you have been immersed in a sex- and gender-focused culture since birth, you have likely developed many beliefs and expectations about sex and gender, and you may already feel (and, in fact, actually be) fairly knowledgeable on these topics. Still, we expect and hope that this book will, at times, lead you to question some of your beliefs and reflect on them more carefully. But how will you know whether to trust the information you read throughout this book? To help you consider this question, we provide some background on our approach to writing the book, and we offer a challenge for you to keep in mind while reading. You will also likely find the material in the next chapter (“Studying Sex and Gender”) useful in helping you distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy claims.

Our (Interdisciplinary) Psychological Approach

Since we aim to help you evaluate sex and gender in all their complexity, this book draws on ideas and research findings from psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology, history, epidemiology, and gender studies. Though the primary approaches and methods used in these disciplines vary, there is some degree of commonality. In general, psychologists examine how sex and gender norms shape individual thoughts, feelings, and behavior;
sociologists examine how sex and gender are constructed within specific social and historical contexts; and anthropologists examine the roles of sex and gender in the development of human societies across cultures and time. Similarly, biologists might examine the genetic and physiological factors that contribute to sex-related outcomes at the level of cells and organisms, epidemiologists might study how the incidence of disease and health outcomes differs across sex or sexual orientation within a population, and historians might analyze how meanings of sex and gender have changed across eras. Other fields, such as gender studies, are interdisciplinary by design, drawing on content and methods from multiple disciplines to understand the complexity of gendered identities and social systems.

We are social psychologists, and most of our expertise thus reflects our own educational backgrounds. However, we intentionally draw from a multitude of academic disciplines because we believe that the complexity of sex and gender calls for a mixed-methods approach. In mixed-methods research, researchers incorporate multiple worldviews and methods to develop a better understanding of a topic than can be afforded by a single-worldview, single-method approach (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Because sex and gender do not operate solely on an individual level—the level at which psychologists generally conduct their work—the contents of this book do not cover only the individual level. Instead, we cover the full gamut, from the cellular level to the individual, interpersonal, societal, cross-cultural, and cross-historical levels. When pulling from different disciplines, however, we remain focused on selecting high-quality information. That is, we carefully vet the scholarship described in this book to ensure that it reflects rigorous theories, methods, and analysis by those who conducted it.

**Our Challenge to You: Critical Thinking**

That said, scholars and scientists are humans with their own biases and tendencies toward error. If and when you encounter material in this book that strikes you as imprecise or that challenges your pre-existing beliefs, we hope that you will inspect your own beliefs, as well as the quality of scholarship that produced the material. In other words, we challenge you to engage in critical thinking. What does this mean? According to Carole Wade (2008), critical thinking consists of several mental practices, including asking questions, examining the evidence, evaluating underlying assumptions, avoiding emotional reasoning, and considering other ways of interpreting findings. These are all skills that can be learned and perfected with practice. To get into the habit of thinking critically about the material in this book, you might ask yourself questions and then try to generate answers. For example, when you read our assertion that “biological sex is a social construction,” you might ask yourself these questions:

- What does this mean?
- How does this relate to information that I already have? How is it inconsistent with what I already know (or think I know)?
- What evidence supports this point? What is the quality of this evidence?
• What is another way to view this point? What evidence counters this point? What is the quality of this evidence?

• Why is this point important? How might it apply to my own or someone else's everyday life?

To prompt such thinking, we regularly pose questions (labeled “Stop and Think”) throughout this book that await your evaluation. Considering these questions—and developing the habit of asking and answering your own critical thinking questions—should not only lead to interesting thoughts and conversations, it should also enhance your learning of the material. Cognitive psychologists find that college students’ memory and understanding of course material increases substantially when they think deeply about the meaning of material and connect it to information that is already stored in their long-term memory (Eysenck, 2011).

Subsequently, we list the learning objectives that helped guide us in writing this book. These are the concrete knowledge and skill sets that you should demonstrate upon reading the material in this book. Specifically, you should be able to do the following:

• Critically evaluate current concepts, theories, and research findings in the psychology of sex and gender.

• Examine sex and gender through the lens of psychological science, identify sources of bias, and distinguish between valid and invalid claims.

• Understand the complexity of sex, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and recognize the diversity of gender and sexual orientation identities.

• Analyze how biological forces (nature) and social forces (nurture) interact in complex ways to shape sex assignment, gender development, and gendered outcomes.

• Evaluate how cultural norms, values, and social structures shape the construction, experience, and expression of sex and gender.

• Examine sex and gender through the lenses of status and power, and evaluate how different systems of inequality intersect to shape experiences.

• Apply gender concepts, theories, and research findings to real-world situations and events.

• Demonstrate mastery of the material by engaging in strategies and methods that facilitate deep learning.

Finally, given the pervasiveness of sex and gender, we hope that you will continue to use the concepts, theories, and research findings discussed throughout this textbook to analyze real-world situations and events long after you finish reading the book. The three of us have had a lifelong fascination with the topics of sex and gender, and we hope that you will discover (if you have not already done so) how captivating these topics can be.
CHAPTER SUMMARY

1.1 Explain central terminology in the study of sex and gender.

Understanding basic terminology in the psychology of sex and gender leads to more effective communication in the field. We use the term sex to refer to the categories of being male, female, and intersex and the term gender to refer to the meanings that people give to the different sex categories (e.g., the identities, traits, interests, roles, and attitudes commonly associated with maleness and femaleness). Counter to many gender scholars, we do not view sex as solely biologically determined and gender as solely socioculturally determined because biological and sociocultural factors play important roles in shaping both sex and gender. Although sex is an important category of identity, individuals simultaneously have identities based on other social categories, such as race, class, age, and sexual orientation. An individual’s position across these social categories (e.g., young, gay, Asian, and male) conveys different levels of privilege and discrimination, and intersectionality refers to how different forms of discrimination (e.g., sexism, racism, and heterosexism) interact to shape people’s experiences.

1.2 Evaluate how culture, gender identity, and sexual orientation shape the experience and expression of sex and gender.

Cultures with sex and gender binaries conceptualize sex (male and female) and gender (masculine and feminine) as having only two categories. But sex is not binary in nature, as shown when the biological components of sex (chromosomes, hormones, and anatomy) do not align consistently as male or female in intersex individuals. Some cultures more readily go beyond the binary, recognizing third sex/gender individuals, such as Indian hijras and Native American two-spirit people. In the past decade, more countries around the globe have officially recognized the status of transgender/nonbinary individuals on legal documents, such as birth certificates and passports. Transgender individuals experience a mismatch between their assigned sex at birth and the sex with which they feel a sense of belonging, whereas cisgender individuals experience a match between their assigned sex and gender identity. Both cisgender and transgender individuals can have any sexual orientation, which refers to the tendency to develop romantic and sexual attractions to others based on their sex. Examples of different sexual orientation identities include gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, polysexual, and asexual.

1.3 Evaluate the meaning and relevance of feminisms, gender movements, and systems of power, privilege, and inequality.

All societies are arranged hierarchically, with dominant groups having more access to education, leadership positions, and resources than subordinate groups. Sex and gender shape status hierarchies within societies. In patriarchal societies, men as a group rule the society and control how it operates. While we lack evidence of any true matriarchal societies (in which women control how the society operates), many societies are matrilineal, meaning that family relationships and ancestry are traced through the mother’s line. Across time, group-based imbalances in power and privilege have prompted disempowered groups, such as women and LGBT individuals, to organize and advocate for equal and fair (equitable) treatment. Though great diversity exists within each of these movements, their collective efforts have led to improved outcomes over time. Similarly, although there are many types of feminisms (liberal, radical, womanist, and transnational), they share a common goal of attaining the social, political, and economic equality of women and men. Men’s movements often focus on how gender shapes men’s experiences.

1.4 Demonstrate how to approach the textbook material in “critical thinking mode.”

Although you have already formed many beliefs and expectations about sex and gender, we encourage you to examine them critically as you read this
Critical thinking involves asking questions, examining evidence, evaluating underlying assumptions, avoiding emotional reasoning, and considering other ways of interpreting findings. Because these are skills that improve with practice, we prompt you to engage in critical thinking regularly throughout the book (e.g., in the debates and “Stop and Think” questions). We hope that you will not only become versed in analyzing the main concepts, theories, and research findings in the psychology of gender but that you will be able to use this information to become a more sophisticated thinker about gender-related events in the world around you.

Test Your Knowledge: True or False?

1.1. Life experiences can cause biological differences between women and men. (True: Performing male-typical behaviors can increase women’s testosterone levels, and performing female-typical behaviors can reduce men’s testosterone levels.) [p. 6]

1.2. There are only two biological sexes: male and female. (False: Biology also offers several different types of intersexuality, in which the biological components of sex do not consistently fit the typical male pattern or the typical female pattern.) [p. 7]

1.3. Throughout human history, there is evidence that some societies were true matriarchies in which women ruled the society, controlled how it operated, and held more power than men. (False: There are no known human matriarchies. There are, however, many examples of matrilineal societies.) [p. 16]

1.4. Many people who believe in feminist principles do not identify as feminists. (True: Many people support the principles of feminism but reject the label, perhaps due to negative stereotypes of feminists.) [p. 21]

1.5. The American Psychiatric Association considers transgender identity to be a clinically diagnosable psychological disorder. (False: The most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders no longer considers transgender identity a disorder. People may, however, receive a diagnosis of gender dysphoria if they experience distress about a mismatch between their gender identity and the sex that others assign them.) [p. 27]

Copyright ©2019 by SAGE Publications, Inc. This work may not be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means without express written permission of the publisher.