

# FOUNDATIONS

Chapter 1 Introducing Sex and Gender

Chapter 2 Studying Sex and Gender

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Actress and activist Laverne Cox.

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## Test Your Knowledge: True or False?

- 1.1 Life experiences can cause biological differences between women and men.
- 1.2 There are only two biological sexes: male and female.
- 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.
- 1.4 Many people who believe in feminist principles do not identify as feminists.
- 1.5 The American Psychiatric Association considers transgender identity to be a clinically diagnosable psychological disorder.

## 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  
 Masculinity and Femininity  
 Gender Identity  
 Sexual Orientation  
 Intersectionality

**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

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Why study sex and gender? These topics invite scrutiny because they are, at the same time, both central to the daily lives of most people and near-constant sources of controversy around the world. A few examples will illustrate both progress and pushback regarding sex and gender. In 2014, Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani girl who survived a murder attempt by the Taliban, became the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner for her work advocating for girls' education rights around the world. In 2015, Laverne Cox, an actress, film producer, and transgender activist, became the first openly transgender person to win an Emmy Award for her documentary on trans youth entitled *Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word*. Also 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. Following U.S. President Donald Trump's inauguration in early 2017, people of all sexes worldwide staged the largest collective protest in human history (the "Women's Marches") to advocate for basic human rights for all, regardless of sex, gender, race, class, ability, religion, or sexual orientation (Frostenson, 2017). Later that year, the Me Too movement—founded by Tarana Burke in 2006—went viral worldwide on Twitter. This movement aims to raise awareness of sexual violence and support its survivors, particularly those who are overlooked due to age, race, gender identity, or ability status. In 2017, the Boy Scouts of America opened its doors to transgender children for the first time and in 2019, it allowed girls to join. And the list goes on.

As advocates pursue gender equality, others push back. After the Obama administration changed a long-standing policy to allow transgender people to serve openly in the U.S. military in 2016, the Trump administration reversed the decision and reinstated the ban in 2019 (Sonne & Marimow, 2019). In 2018, corresponding with the rise of right-wing nationalism in Europe, Hungary banned university gender studies programs, Bulgaria banned a United Nations gender equality project in schools, and Italy blocked academic research on classroom bullying based on race, gender, and sexual orientation (Apperly, 2019). Leaders in these countries view gender studies as ideology, not science, and believe it undermines male authority, traditional families, and notions of sex as biological fact. A recent Vatican document written to clarify how Catholic educators should approach sex and gender education echoed these concerns (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2019). While the document calls for more listening and dialogue, it asserts that sex is a biological binary (with only two options, male and female) whose purpose is to ensure procreation. The document also asserts that since men are naturally masculine and women are naturally feminine, any deviations from this are unnatural and destabilize the family. Gender psychologists find these concepts and controversies interesting and important, and we will discuss them further in this chapter and throughout this book.

Sex and gender have the power to shape 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 time, and how do they vary from culture to culture? How do gendered environments shape brain development? How do people of various sexes and gender identities differ? How do sex, gender, race, class, physical ability, 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 (Chrisler & McHugh, 2018). 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 and theories becoming more sophisticated over time. In this book, you will learn about the most central theories and 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. It lays the foundation for future chapters that will go into greater depth and detail.

## SIDEBAR 1.1

### The #MeToo Movement

In 2006, civil rights activist Tarana Burke founded the Me Too movement to foster healing among girls and women of color who survived sexual violence and to organize advocates to decrease sexual violence. After the *New York Times* published a 2017 story about decades of sexual harassment and assault by film producer Harvey Weinstein (Kantor & Twohey, 2017), actress Alyssa Milano urged women to tweet #MeToo if they had experienced sexual harassment or assault. The hashtag went viral, with over 1.7 million people from around the

globe tweeting their #MeToo stories (LaMotte, 2017). Some criticize the Me Too movement for fostering a “guilty until proven innocent” mentality and privileging the experiences of wealthy, educated, White women (White, 2017). Despite this, *Time* magazine named the Me Too silence breakers as its 2017 “Person of the Year” in recognition of the public attention that they brought to sexual harassment and assault. It will be interesting to follow how the movement evolves and what societal changes result.

## 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**

Term	Central Question	Examples
<i>Sex</i>	Which category does an individual occupy?	Male, female, or outside the binary (e.g., intersex)
<i>Gender</i>	What attributes and experiences (traits, interests, roles, attitudes, stereotypes, socialization practices, etc.) are associated with the different sex categories?	Masculine (or male-typed), feminine (or female-typed), androgynous, agendered
<i>Gender identity</i>	How does an individual identify their gender internally?	Boy, girl, man, woman, transgender man (transman), transgender woman (transwoman), agender, genderqueer, nonbinary
<i>Sex–gender correspondence</i>	Does an individual's gender identity match their assigned sex?	Yes (cisgender), no (transgender, agender, nonbinary)
<i>Gender expression</i>	How does an individual express themselves outwardly (via dress, social behavior, etc.)?	Masculine (male-typed), feminine (female-typed), androgynous, nonbinary
<i>Gender roles</i>	What social roles are associated with the different sex categories?	Male-typed (provider/protector), female-typed (caretaker/homemaker), androgynous
<i>Gender traits</i>	What are an individual's personality characteristics?	Masculine (male-typed), feminine (female-typed), androgynous
<i>Gender role attitudes</i>	What do people believe are the proper roles for individuals to occupy based on their sex?	Attitudes fall on a continuum from traditional to egalitarian
<i>Gender stereotypes</i>	What attributes do people associate with members of different sexes and genders?	Women are stereotyped as emotional and kind (communal). Men are stereotyped as decisive and independent (agentic). Transgender people are stereotyped as similar to cisgender people in some ways, but as unique in other ways
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	What are the sexes or genders of others to whom an individual feels romantic and/or sexual attraction?	Straight, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, fluid

## STOP AND THINK

Examine Table 1.1 and consider where you fall on these dimensions of sex and gender. Do you consider yourself feminine, masculine, androgynous, or none of the above? How do you express your gender

outwardly to others? Is gender a salient aspect of your daily life and how you see yourself? Why or why not? Have your gender attributes changed over time? If so, how?

### Sex and Gender

In a classic article, Rhoda Unger (1979) argued that the meaning of the word *sex* was unclear in psychological research because it was overused. *Sex* referred 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. Although it referred to different types of factors, the term *sex* was often interpreted in a biological sense. Thus, differences between men and women were labeled *sex differences* and 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 the sexes, we do not know precisely how much of it stems from biology and how much stems from socialization, cultural norms, and life experience. Take sex differences in physical aggression. On average, boys and men are more physically aggressive than girls and women (Archer, 2019). However, 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 (Kågesten et al., 2016). These two factors interact to 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. 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 the sexes 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 is not straightforward, a topic we will explore more fully in Chapter 3 (“The Nature and Nurture of Sex and Gender”).



**Sex** A term typically used to categorize people as male, female, or intersex.

**Gender** The meanings that people give to the different sex categories. Gender includes broad sets of attributes and experiences (e.g., identities, traits, interests, roles, attitudes, stereotypes, and socialization practices) commonly associated with sex.

To resolve the issue in this book, we follow a convention adopted by Alice Eagly (2013) and use the word **sex** to refer to categories of people based on whether they are male, female, or outside the binary (more on this in a moment). Thus, when we refer to *sex differences*, we usually mean average differences between women and men, as the vast majority of research on sex differences focuses exclusively on people who identify themselves as falling into one of these two categories. In the next section, we will discuss problems with this system of categorizing sex. For now, note that our use of the word “sex” when discussing differences between people does not imply anything about the causes (biological or social) of these differences. 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 sex. For instance, gender roles are social roles (e.g., provider or caretaker) that are typically associated with people based on 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 our use of the term *sex*, our use of the term *gender* implies nothing about the causes of the phenomenon in question.



Soothing a crying infant can cause temporary decreases in men's testosterone levels, which raises this question: Do hormones cause changes in gender-typed behavior, or does gender-typed behavior cause changes in hormones?

Source: © iStockphoto.com/bukharova

## The Sex and Gender Binaries

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 streamline social interactions, organize labor divisions, and modulate social institutions. However, the binary also oversimplifies the complexity of the natural

world. In fact, nature offers a lot of variety when it comes to the biological components of sex (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). In a review of medical studies published between 1955 and 2000, biologist Anne Fausto-Sterling and her colleagues estimated that approximately 1.7% of human infants are born intersex (Blackless et al., 2000). **Intersexuality** is a condition in which the biological components of sex (chromosomes, hormones, and internal and external sex organs) do not consistently fit the typical female or typical male pattern. When we wrote that “sex” refers to categories of people who are male, female, or outside the binary, this is an example of what we meant by “outside the binary.” Intersexuality takes many forms, and you will learn more about these in Chapter 3 (“The Nature and Nurture of Sex and Gender”). For now, an example of intersexuality is an individual who is 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. By extension, the sex binary is also not a fixed, universal reality. Think about how people within a given culture respond when an intersex baby is born. When parents and doctors view intersex babies as anomalies and use surgery to make them fit into the sex binary, this demonstrates the social construction of “biological” sex. That is, people socially agree that there are only two natural sexes, when nature clearly offers more than two. To reflect on this point further, consider the following quote:

The genitals of [intersex 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—does not validly describe the human experience. In fact, the reality of **androgyny** counters the gender binary. Androgyny refers to possessing high levels of both stereotypically masculine (e.g., assertive and independent) and feminine (e.g., warm and gentle) 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, 2005).

The sex and gender binaries are thus oversimplified categorical structures that people often impose on the world. Some cultures do, however, 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* are Native American and Indigenous North American individuals who live outside the sex/gender binary and adopt elements of both the female and male gender roles. In India, *hijras* are a separate caste of people who live as neither men nor women and are considered sacred within Hinduism. In the Western Balkans, *sworn virgins* are biologically female but live as men and can never marry. In Iraq, *mustergil* are women 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 gradually changing. We will return to this idea later in the chapter (see the section “Complexity and Change”).

**Sex binary** The conceptualization of sex as consisting of two opposite and nonoverlapping categories, such as male or female.

**Gender binary** The conceptualization of gender as consisting of two opposite and nonoverlapping categories, such as masculine or feminine.

**Intersexuality** A condition in which the biological components of sex (chromosomes, hormones, and internal and external sex organs) do not consistently fit the typical female or typical male pattern.

**Androgyny** Possession of high levels of both stereotypically male-typed and female-typed traits.

**Nonbinary (or genderqueer)** Describes people who fall outside the sex and gender binaries and identify as neither man nor woman; an umbrella term capturing many forms of identity.

# 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 features of a culture might correlate with the tendency to acknowledge more than two sexes and genders?

## Masculinity

Possession of physical and psychological attributes typically associated with men.

## Femininity

Possession of physical and psychological attributes typically associated with women.

## Masculinity and Femininity

What makes someone masculine, feminine, androgynous, or none of the above? It has been surprisingly difficult for gender researchers to answer these questions. In a groundbreaking article, Anne Constantinople (1973) declared masculinity and femininity to be two of the muddiest concepts in the psychological literature. Despite this, researchers generally agree that **masculinity** is the possession of physical and psychological attributes typically associated with men, and **femininity** is the possession of physical and psychological attributes typically associated with women. As noted, psychological androgyny is the possession of high levels of both masculine and feminine attributes.

## 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, interpersonal relationships), some researchers proclaim androgyny to be “good for your health.” In fact, one large study of over 4,800 White, Black, and **Latinx** youth examined

the correlations between androgyny 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 Latina 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?

**Latinx** A gender-neutral term referring to someone of Latin American heritage.

Before leaving this section, we would like to comment on our use of the term “Latinx” in Sidebar 1.2. This is the gender-inclusive term that we use throughout the book to refer to mixed-sex (female and male), genderqueer, and nonbinary individuals or groups of Latin American descent. This term is not without controversy, as some—particularly older members of the Latinx community—view it as disrespectful

to their traditional Latin culture. At the same time, younger generations—particularly genderqueer Millennials—embrace the term because it allows them to acknowledge their ethnicity and gender identity simultaneously (BELatina, 2019). As with any term of identity, we think it is important for people to use the term that they prefer, but given the focus of this book, we will use the more gender-inclusive term “Latinx” when relevant.

## Gender Identity

**Gender identity** refers to individuals’ psychological experience of their gender and how they identify their gender such as man, woman, nonbinary, or genderqueer. Gender identity often (though not always) involves feeling a basic sense of belongingness to a sex category. Most 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. Conversely, **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 feel internally ungendered and do not associate with a sex category. Others identify as **gender fluid**, meaning that their gender identities shift over time and depend on the situation. For example, gender fluid individuals might shift between identifying as a woman and a man, or they might shift between binary (female vs. male) and nonbinary identities.

**Gender identity**  
Individuals’ psychological experience of their gender and how they identify their gender such as man, woman, nonbinary, or genderqueer.

**Cisgender**  
Describes people who experience a match between their sex assigned at birth and their psychological gender identity.

**Transgender**  
Describes people whose psychological gender identity does not align with their assigned sex at birth.

## SIDEBAR 1.3

### Gender-Neutral Pronouns?

Some transgender, agender, and nonbinary 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 plural pronouns (e.g., *they/them*), while some are indifferent to

pronouns. Because it can be difficult to know which pronouns people prefer—and calling people by the wrong pronouns may be viewed as disrespectful—it is 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) shape 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 whether he also likes sports (a male-typed interest), makes decisions easily (a male-typed trait), or occupies a leadership position (a male-typed role). For some individuals, these attributes do align in a male-typed manner; for others, they do not. Moreover, while people’s gender identity can reflect many different constellations of these gender attributes, Spence argued

**Agender**  
Describes people who feel internally ungendered.

**Gender fluid**  
Describes people whose gender identity shifts or changes flexibly rather than remaining constant.

**Gay** Typically refers to a man who is attracted only (or primarily) to men.

**Lesbian** Refers to a woman who is attracted only (or primarily) to women.

**Bisexual** Typically signifies being attracted to women and men.

**Heterosexual** Signifies being attracted only (or primarily) to persons of the other sex (in a binary, male–female system).

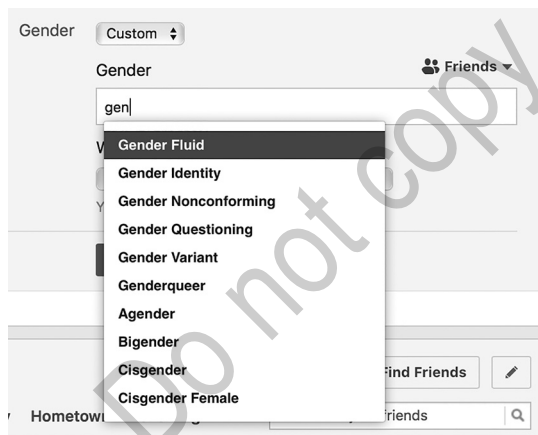
**Pansexual** Signifies being attracted to people of all sexes and gender identities.

that most people develop a sense of belongingness to their assigned sex early in life and maintain this identity throughout life.

While Spence’s (1993) theory acknowledges the multidimensionality of gender, it fails to account for the full spectrum of nonbinary and fluid gender identities that people feel and express. Recognizing the complexity of gender identity, Kay Deaux and Abigail Stewart (2001) caution against viewing gender identity as a single, inflexible identity that emerges early in life and remains stable. 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.

## Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to people’s tendency to develop romantic and sexual attractions to others based on their sex. Note that gender identity is independent of 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**, **pansexual**, and **asexual**. Of course, just as imposing category labels oversimplifies sex and gender, some argue that labeling sexual orientation categories also oversimplifies reality. 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”).



Reflecting the complexity of gender identity, Facebook added over 50 gender identity options in 2014.

## 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 belong not only to a sex or gender identity category but simultaneously to categories of race, class, age, nationality, religion, physical ability, and sexual orientation. It also ignores cultural and historical contexts that give power and privilege to certain groups while disadvantaging others. In contrast, **intersectionality** involves examining how people’s life experiences differ due to the levels of privilege and structural inequality associated with their specific location across various demographic categories (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1991). For example, would young, Black transmen experience the same job opportunities as young, White, cisgender men? Rather than just focusing on how “young men” as a group are impacted by ageism, an intersectional perspective might

focus on how gender identity interacts with racism to shape the opportunities of young, transgender Black men.

Cole (2009) encourages psychologists to adopt a more intersectional approach by taking three important steps. First, researchers should ask who is included in the social categories of the people they study (in order to determine who may be excluded). For example, a researcher who examines access to reproductive health care in a sample of primarily young, educated, White women should consider who is left out and not assume her findings represent all women. Second, Cole challenges researchers to consider the role of structural inequalities in shaping participants' experiences (e.g., how racism impacts homelessness in transgender youth of color). Finally, Cole encourages researchers to look for commonalities in their participants' experiences, despite differences in their identities (e.g., how sexual assault experiences could unite low-income, transwomen of color and wealthy, White, cisgender women). These practices may prompt researchers to view categories such as race and gender within broader contexts of privilege and discrimination, rather than simply viewing them as internal features of individuals. In sum, a nuanced understanding of sex and gender will require psychologists to examine more fully the intersecting identities and social inequalities that shape people's lives. We return to this idea in the upcoming section "Women's Movements and the Rise of Feminisms."

### **Asexual**

Signifies having a lack of desire for sex or sexual partners.

### **Intersectionality**

An approach that examines how social categories (sex, gender, race, class, age, physical ability, sexual orientation), and the advantages and disadvantages associated with them, interact to shape people's life experiences and opportunities.

## **SIDEBAR 1.4**

### **Is Psychology Research WEIRD?**

The vast majority of the research samples in psychology consist of people from majority Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) nations (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). And yet, WEIRD people constitute only 12% of the world's population. Furthermore, WEIRD samples consist mostly of White, American, undergraduate college

students (Arnett, 2008), making them unrepresentative of the racial, ethnic, and class diversity within the United States. This suggests that we should be cautious about generalizing psychological findings to all people in the United States and worldwide. It also indicates a strong need for research on more diverse people.

## **WHAT MAKES SEX AND GENDER SO COMPLICATED?**

As you have likely realized by now, sex and gender are far more complicated than they may appear at first. In this section, we discuss some complexities in how individuals and cultures think about sex and gender, and we examine 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 gradually changing, 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, an intersex condition 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 nonbinary.

Between 2003 and 2011, the Australian government offered the third sex option on passports only for intersex individuals like MacFarlane. From 2011 to 2014, Australia gradually broadened its policies to allow nonbinary 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. 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 nonbinary Australians to do the same (Rawstron, 2014). Now, this third gender is recognized by the Australian census.

Between 2007 and 2015, several other countries (e.g., Bangladesh, Denmark, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, and New Zealand) followed suit and added a third sex/gender option on various official documents (Byrne, 2014; Macarow, 2015). 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). By 2019, nine U.S. states recognized a nonbinary gender status on driver’s licenses (Lang & Sosin, 2019).

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 warmer and more moral than men remains steady across 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 15 years.

**Genital reconstructive surgery** Surgery that alters the appearance, location, or function of genital tissue. People seek genital reconstructive surgery for a wide range of reasons; transgender individuals may seek such surgery to bring the appearance or function of their genitalia into greater alignment with their psychological gender identity.



## SIDEBAR 1.5

### Toddler Fashion Flashback

Sex-typed styles of dress have changed a lot over time. For example, take a look at this image of a famous American. 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 age 6 or 7 years (Paoletti, 2012).



Who is this famous American?

Source: Getty Images / Bettmann / Contributor

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 appearance and dress, occupations, educational and political outcomes, and physical health to our interpretations of basic constructs like colors 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). A quick Internet search for “gender in the news” reveals hundreds of stories about topics such as gender stereotypes (“Gender Stereotypes Banned in British Advertising”; Safronova, 2019), gender and parenting (“Couple Raises Child as Gender-Neutral ‘They-by’”; Ritschel, 2018), and the gender wage gap (“U.S. Women’s Team and U.S. Soccer Agree to Mediate Gender Discrimination Lawsuit,” 2019). 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. While de-emphasizing gender can be positive, sociologist Judith Lorber (1994) argues that we should make gender even more visible in certain situations, as a way of



challenging norms, beliefs, and institutions that 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? 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. It is perhaps not surprising that 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 sexist attitudes among cisgender men and women (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

memberships afford them. What are the pros and cons of this sort of reflection? What are some additional ways 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. As a class exercise, instructors sometimes ask their students to consider which of these experiences are familiar to them.

### Cisgender Privilege

1. You can use public restrooms without fear of verbal abuse, physical intimidation, or arrest.
2. Strangers don't assume they can ask you what your genitals look like and how you have sex.
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.
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.
5. You don't have to fear interactions with police officers due to your gender identity.

### Male Privilege

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

### Heterosexual Privilege

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

Source: Excerpted from McIntosh (1989) and Killerman (2013).

## 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

### Patriarchal

Describes a societal structure in which men/fathers occupy the leadership positions in the society and control how it operates.

### Matriarchal

Describes a societal structure in which women/mothers occupy the leadership positions in the society and control how it operates.



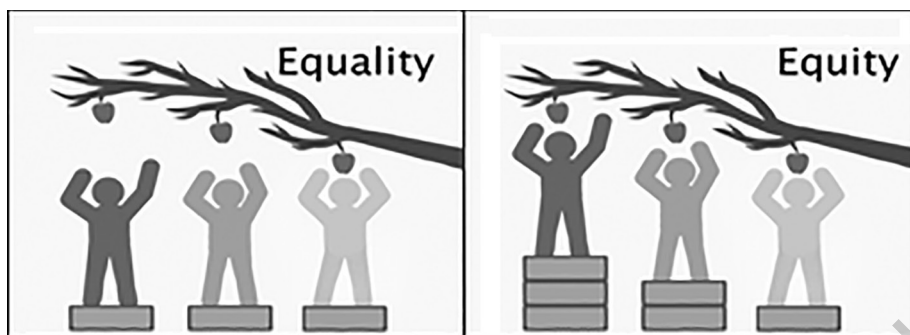
The Navajo of North America are traditionally matrilineal, passing property from mothers to daughters. Here, a Navajo woman and her mother (seated) pose in front of their hogan (traditional dwelling).

Source: © iStockphoto.com/tobkatrina

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. Dominant groups also enjoy more symbolic representation and visibility (in media, art, language, etc.), whereas less privileged groups are less represented and therefore more invisible (Fryberg & Townsend, 2008). For example, the commonly used phrase “women and minorities” tends to imply *White women* and *minority men* and thus leaves out women of color, who exist at the intersection of these two social categories (Bowleg, 2012). This invisibility provides members of less privileged groups with fewer opportunities to imagine their possible selves and tends to decrease their sense of community belongingness (Fryberg & Townsend, 2008).

Though they are not the only factors (as discussed earlier in the context of intersectionality), 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 and North American indigenous societies, including the Navajo, Hopi, Iroquois, and Tlingit, are traditionally matrilineal. Note, however, that being matrilineal does not make a society matriarchal because men still tend to hold more of the political and decision-making power in these societies.

Throughout history, group-based power imbalances have 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 feminist movements, gay rights movements, and the 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



Treating everyone identically (equality) does not always lead to the fairest outcomes. In contrast, equity sometimes requires giving some people more of a boost than others.

**Equality** A principle in which each individual is treated the same, regardless of background.

**Equity** A principle in which each individual is treated fairly, by taking background into account.

**LGBTQ** An acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.”

can be oppressive and harmful to men. We will now examine the progress made by women, **LGBTQ** individuals, and men as a result of political movements.

### Women’s Movements and the Rise of Feminisms

*Women’s Movements.* 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 represented people from a range of sexes, gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, and socioeconomic classes. These marches did not emerge in a vacuum but instead drew on decades of political action and effort by feminists and gender activists.

## 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 (queer is 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), two-spirit, pansexual, nonbinary, 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 **LGBTQ**. 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.

So, what efforts preceded the Women’s Marches? Some suggest 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

**Figure 1.1 Timeline of Important Events Across the First, Second, and Third “Waves” of the Women’s Movement in the U.S.**

First Wave	1848	First women’s rights convention in Seneca Falls, NY.
	1869	National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) formed.
	1913	Ida B. Wells founds The Alpha Suffrage Club, a suffrage organization for Black women.
	1916	Margaret Sanger founds the first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, NY.
	1916	Jeannette Rankin (R-MT) becomes first woman elected to U.S. Congress.
	1920	19th Amendment (granting women’s right to vote) signed into law.
	1921	American Birth Control League founded (becomes Planned Parenthood in 1942).
Second Wave	1961	Eleanor Roosevelt chairs the <i>Presidential Commission on the Status of Women</i> to document workplace gender discrimination.
	1963	Betty Friedan publishes <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> .
	1963	The Equal Pay Act (ensuring equal pay for equal work) signed into law.
	1964	Title VII of the Civil Rights Act signed into law, barring employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
	1964	National Organization for Women (NOW) founded to advocate for equal rights for girls and women.
	1972	Gloria Steinem and Dorothy Pittman Hughes found <i>Ms.</i> magazine.
	1972	The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) passes Congress (but later dies in 1982 when it fails to get the 38 states needed for ratification).
	1972	Title IX of the Educational Amendments signed into law, banning sex discrimination in federally funded educational programs and activities.
	1973	U.S. Supreme Court decides, in <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , that a woman’s right to privacy gives her the right to terminate a pregnancy.
1977	Black lesbian feminists in the Combahee River Collective issue a proclamation to fight oppression based on sex, sexuality, race, and class.	

Third Wave	1992	Rebecca Walker publishes “Becoming the Third Wave” in <i>Ms. Magazine</i> .
	1993	The Family and Medical Leave Act signed into law, allowing unpaid leave for family and medical reasons.
	1994	The Violence Against Women Act signed into law.
	1997	The Third Wave Foundation forms to advocate for gender, racial, economic, and social justice.
	2009	The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act signed into law, making it easier for workers to sue employers for pay discrimination.
	2013	U.S. Defense Department lifts the ban on female service members in combat roles.
	2016	U.S. Defense Department opens all military occupations and positions to women.
	2018	Sharice Davids (D-KS) and Deb Haaland (D-NM) become first indigenous women elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

the wave metaphor is the best way to describe the progress of the women’s movements. 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 apparent wave. To this end, some propose that a river metaphor better captures the development of women’s movements over time, since a river—though it expands and narrows—always flows (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.”

In 1848, 68 women and 32 men met in Seneca Falls, New York, for the country’s first women’s rights convention, which many consider the birthplace of the women’s suffrage movement. While prominent Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass attended the convention, no female Black suffragists were included, which reveals the racism of these early suffrage efforts (McDaneld, 2013). The members of this convention endorsed the goal of attaining 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, with U.S. women gaining voting rights in 1920. By the end of the 1970s, only a





On January 21, 2017, the day after Donald J. Trump was inaugurated, millions of protestors marched in Washington, D.C., and hundreds of other cities throughout the world.

Source: Getty Images / Mario Tama / Staff

when their lives were restricted to roles as housewives and mothers. Activists in this era 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. The gender activism of the 1960s impacted 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” and “Gender, Race, and Class.” Still, activist women of color during this era, such as Angela Davis and Cherríe Moraga, criticized White middle-class feminism for focusing exclusively on gender while ignoring what were, to them, the more pressing issues of race and class (Breines, 2007). To get a sense of some of the rights and freedoms that resulted from this era 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. Drawing on the work of feminists of color from the preceding generation (e.g., Cherríe Moraga, bell hooks, Audre Lorde), feminists of this era reject the idea that all women experience a common oppression, and they criticize White, middle-class, second-wave feminists for failing to include women with diverse identities and backgrounds. Third-wave feminists view race, class, sexual orientation, and gender identity as central issues, and they take more intersectional and global perspectives on sex and gender. In psychology, proponents of the third wave emphasize how diverse experiences (e.g., poverty, racism, educational barriers) interact to influence women’s health and outcomes (Baumgardner & Richards, 2010). Even though these ideas were not new in the early

small number of nations in Africa and the Middle East denied women voting rights and, in 2015, Saudi Arabia—the last holdout—gave women the right to vote.

In 1963, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, which served as an entry point to gender activism for many White women in the second wave of the women’s movement. 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



**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!

Keep a job if pregnant	Women could be fired from their job for being pregnant, until the passage in 1978 of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act.
Report workplace sexual harassment	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.
Run in the Boston Marathon	Women were not allowed to run in this race until 1972.
Get a credit card	Women could not apply for credit cards until 1974, under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act.
Refuse to have sex with her husband	Marital rape was not recognized as rape in most states until the mid-1970s. In 1993, it became criminalized in all 50 states.
Get an easy divorce	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).
Have a legal abortion	Women could not legally seek an abortion in all states until the 1973 Supreme Court decision <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , which stated that a woman's decision to terminate a pregnancy was protected under the guaranteed right to privacy.

1990s, they have gained steady traction and continue to influence gender activism and psychology to this day.

**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 together. For instance, feminists share a common goal of social, political, and economic equality of women and men (Baumgardner & Richards, 2010). However, as mentioned, writer bell hooks (2000) criticizes this narrow and binary emphasis on equality between the sexes because it ignores important factors like race and class. That is, not all men have the same status and opportunities, nor do all women experience similar levels of disadvantage. To address this, hooks (2014) defines feminisms as movements “to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” because this addresses systems of power and oppression rather than individual women and men (p. 1).

#### **Feminisms**

Movements for the social, political, and economic equality of women and men or, according to bell hooks, movements “to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.”

**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.

Liberal feminism	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.
Radical feminism	Believes that patriarchy (male control in society) must be dismantled. Seeks to rid society of rigid gender roles and oppression of women.
Socialist feminism	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.
Black feminism/Womanism	Calls out the exclusion of Black women and other women of color from mainstream feminism and recognizes that race, gender, and class intersect to shape experiences.
Cultural/difference feminism	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.
Third-wave feminism	Focuses on how sex, race, class, gender identity, and sexual orientation interact to shape people's experiences. Includes marginalized people (e.g., women of color and trans people) and promotes sex-positivity, reproductive justice, environmental justice, prison reform, and a living wage.
Transnational feminism	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.

Feminisms and feminist identities have evolved over time in the women's movements, but what is their current status? Have their missions been accomplished? While advances have been made in the United States and other nations, much remains to be done throughout the world for 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, compared with nonfeminists, feminist women are seen as more radical, unattractive, cold, intolerant, and uncooperative, and feminist men are seen as more weak, fragile, emotional, and feminine (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. Note that 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 primarily White first- and second-wave feminists generally ignored how factors like gender, race, class, and sexual orientation interact to shape experiences. Similarly, some feminists fail to acknowledge the ways in which rigid and restrictive gender roles negatively impact men. For more on this issue, see the debate titled “Are Men Overlooked in Feminist Movements?”

Finally, to remain viable, feminisms 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 some second-wave feminists and younger generations (Baumgardner & Richards, 2010). On a more encouraging note, diverse groups that acknowledge and value important group differences can form bonds that enhance their ability to work together toward social change (Greenwood, 2008).

**Reproductive justice** The human right to personal bodily autonomy, parenthood choices, and safe communities in which to raise children.

### SIDEBAR 1.7

#### 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, especially men of color and low-income 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 tend to 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 1.8

### 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 & Masculinities*. 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 movement of almost entirely White men (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 mostly White 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, principles which may remind you of the Vatican document on sex and gender education for Catholics discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

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 LGBTQ 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. 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 second edition of 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 (*Obergefell v. Hodges*) that granted marriage rights to same-sex couples in all 50 U.S. states.

**Figure 1.2 Timeline of Important Events in the Gay Rights Movements in the United States**

1924	First gay rights organization, the Society for Human Rights, founded.
1950	First national gay rights organization, the Mattachine Society, founded.
1952	American Psychiatric Association (APA) lists homosexuality as a “sociopathic personality disturbance” in their diagnostic manual, the DSM-I.
1953	Executive Order 10450 signed by President Eisenhower, banning gay people from employment with the federal government or its contractors.
1955	First lesbian rights organization, the Daughters of Bilitis, founded.
1957	Psychologist Evelyn Hooker publishes study showing no differences in psychological adjustment between heterosexual and gay men.
1958	U.S. Supreme Court decides, in <i>One, Inc. v. Oleson</i> , in favor of an LGBT magazine's free speech.
1962	Illinois becomes first U.S. state to decriminalize homosexuality.
1969	Police raid the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar, leading to riots and demonstrations that catalyze the modern gay rights movement in the U.S.
1973	APA removes homosexuality as a disorder from its diagnostic manual, the DSM-II.
1977	Harvey Milk becomes first openly gay elected official (San Francisco Board of Supervisors).
1978	Harvey Milk is assassinated by Dan White.
1979	Over 75,000 people participate in the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.
1982	Wisconsin is first state to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation.
1987	AIDS advocacy group, ACT UP, forms in New York City.
1988	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention mail an Understanding AIDS brochure to 107 million households in the U.S.
1993	U.S. Department of Defense issues “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” (DADT) policy, allowing closeted service members to remain in the military.
1996	President Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), defining marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman.
2000	Vermont becomes first state to legalize civil unions for same-sex couples.
2004	Massachusetts becomes first state to legalize same-sex marriage.

(Continued)



**Figure 1.2 (Continued)**

2010	Proposition 8, a ballot measure making same-sex marriage illegal in California, is ruled unconstitutional by a federal judge.
2010	U.S. Senate repeals DADT, making it legal for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people to serve openly in the military.
2011	President Obama instructs the Justice Department to stop supporting DOMA.
2015	U.S. Supreme Court, in <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> , decides that the 14th Amendment guarantees same-sex couples the right to marry.
2018	Jared Polis becomes first openly gay man elected as governor (CO).

Adapted from "Milestones in the American Gay Rights Movement" (n.d.)

### Sexual minority

Referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and other nonheterosexual sexual orientations.

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 not effective, safe, or ethical.

### 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 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 Laverne Cox, Caitlyn Jenner, and Asia Kate Dillon, and the popularity of TV shows that include major transgender characters, such as *Transparent*, *Orange Is the New Black*, and *Pose*, 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 practice of performing medically unnecessary genital surgeries on intersex infants, and it advocates for the global recognition of intersexuality as a natural difference rather than a disorder (<https://www.intersexequality.com/mission/>).

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 (American Civil Liberties Union, 2016). In 2008, the APA approved a resolution on *Transgender, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression Non-Discrimination* (Anton, 2009) 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. This ruling was upheld in 2020 when the U.S. Supreme Court decided that Title VII indeed protects employees against discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation (Sponzilli, 2020). 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 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This progress has been met with some backlash, however, which is a pattern commonly seen in social change movements. In 2019, the Trump administration banned the enlistment of transgender individuals in the U.S. military and banned currently enlisted transgender service members from medically transitioning (Sonne & Marimow, 2019).

### 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, and contemporary feminisms more explicitly address the concerns of low-income and minority women. Another commonality involves greater emphasis on intersectionality. What implications will these new understandings have as gender activism moves forward? Though it is difficult to say, it will be interesting to find out.

# STOP AND THINK

In a society as diverse as the United States, it is important to communicate and work with others to solve problems and reach goals, despite differences. As noted in this chapter, tensions between and within groups are common in social

change movements. How are these tensions productive? How are they counterproductive? What specific ideas do you have about how to help diverse people communicate and work together productively?

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

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Given that you have been immersed in a sex- and gender-focused culture since birth, you likely have 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 lead you to question some of your beliefs and reflect on them more carefully. But how can you determine whether the information you read throughout this book—and the information you encounter in your daily life—is trustworthy? 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

We are social psychologists, and most of our expertise thus reflects our own educational backgrounds. However, since we aim to help you evaluate sex and gender in all their complexity, we draw on ideas and research findings from psychology, sociology, women’s and gender studies, anthropology, and biology throughout this book. We intentionally discuss theories and research findings from many academic disciplines because we believe that the complexity of sex and gender calls for a mixed-methods approach. Mixed-methods research incorporates multiple worldviews and methods to yield a better understanding of a topic than can be achieved with a single-worldview, single-method approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Because gender processes do not operate solely on an individual level—the level at which psychologists generally conduct their work—we are careful to examine how sex and gender are constructed within specific social and historical contexts. We also aim to present high-quality information and scholarship that has met rigorous scientific standards, and we invite you to evaluate this evidence carefully.

### Our Challenge to You: Critical Thinking

As you read this book, we challenge you to engage in critical thinking. Scholars and scientists—ourselves included—are humans with their own biases and tendencies toward error. You may encounter material in this book that seems imprecise or that challenges your

pre-existing beliefs, and we hope that you will reflect on this, inspecting your own beliefs and the research presented. We hope that you are even inspired to do your own research, since good critical thinkers continually ask questions and seek answers. According to Carole Wade (2008), critical thinking involves 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, we prompt you to approach the material with a set of questions in mind. 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 what I already know? How is it inconsistent with what I already know?
- What evidence supports this point, and what is the quality of this evidence?
- What evidence counters this point, and what is the quality of this evidence?
- How can I view this point from different perspectives?
- Why is this point important? How might it apply to my own life or to the lives of other people (particularly those who differ from me)?

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 questions—should not only lead to interesting thoughts and conversations, but 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).

Before closing this chapter, 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 your own experiences and to real-world situations and events.
- Use strategies and methods for learning the material that foster nuanced understandings and persistent curiosity.

Finally, given the pervasiveness of sex and gender, we hope that you will continue to use the concepts, theories, and research findings discussed in 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, or outside the binary (e.g., 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 some 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, ability, 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 an *intersectional* approach examines 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, nonoverlapping categories. But sex is not binary in nature, as evident in *intersex* individuals for whom the biological components of sex (chromosomes, hormones, and anatomy) do not align consistently as male or female. Some cultures more readily go beyond the binary, recognizing third-sex and third-

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 and nonbinary individuals on legal documents such as birth certificates and passports. *Transgender* individuals experience a mismatch between their assigned sex at birth and their psychological experience of their gender, whereas *cisgender* individuals experience a match between their assigned sex and gender identity. Both transgender and cisgender individuals can have any *sexual orientation*, which refers to the tendency to develop romantic and sexual attractions to others based on their sex or gender. Examples of different sexual orientation identities include gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, pansexual, and asexual.

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

All human societies are arranged hierarchically, with dominant groups having more access to education, leadership positions, and resources than subordinate groups. Although they are not the only factors, sex and gender shape status hierarchies within societies. In *patriarchal* societies, certain men 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 the sexes. Men's movements 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 book. 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-typed behaviors can increase women's testosterone levels, and performing female-typed behaviors can reduce men's testosterone levels.) [p. 7]

- 1.2. There are only two biological sexes: male and female. (False: Biology offers several different types of intersexuality, in which the biological components of sex do not consistently fit the typical male or the typical female patterns.) [p. 9]
- 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. 18]
- 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. 24]
- 1.5. The American Psychiatric Association considers transgender identity to be a clinically diagnosable psychological disorder. (False: The American Psychiatric Association no longer considers transgender identity a disorder. People may, however, receive a diagnosis of gender dysphoria if they experience clinically significant levels of distress about a mismatch between their gender identity and the sex that others assign them.) [p. 28]

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