

## Gender and Culture in Psychology

*Gender and Culture in Psychology* introduces new approaches to the psychological study of gender that bring together feminist psychology, sociocultural psychology, discursive psychology, and critical psychology. It presents research and theory that embed human action in social, cultural, and interpersonal contexts. The book provides conceptual tools for thinking about gender, social categorization, human meaning-making, and culture. It also describes a family of interpretative research methods that focus on rich talk and everyday life. It provides a close-in view of how interpretative research proceeds. The latter part of the book showcases innovative projects that investigate topics of concern to feminist scholars and activists: young teens' encounters with heterosexual norms, women and men negotiating household duties and child-care, coercion and violence in heterosexual encounters, the cultural politics of women's weight and eating concerns, psychiatric labeling of psychological suffering, and feminism in psychotherapy.

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# Gender and Culture in Psychology

*Theories and Practices*

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Eva Magnusson and Jeanne Marecek



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## Preface

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We wrote this book to place the psychology of gender in conversation with the knowledge about gender and sexuality produced in other disciplines. In our view, gender is best understood as a social practice that is embedded in culture. This book illustrates how psychologists can make use of this way of understanding gender in theoretical work, in research projects, and in applied work and clinical practice.

We are teachers and researchers in psychology. We also count ourselves as members of local and international communities of gender studies scholars. Over the past forty years, these multidisciplinary communities have offered trenchant analyses of social life and have pioneered innovative methods of inquiry. One of our goals is to bring this work into the purview of psychology. We also have worked as professional psychologists, engaging issues of gender, sexuality, and social justice in our work. This has brought us face to face with the vicissitudes of mundane and institutional power. Another of our goals is to argue that a psychology of gender must attend to power in its many forms.

Our collaboration crosses national boundaries: One of us works in Sweden and the other in the USA. Both of us also have spent a good deal of our professional lives working in countries other than our own. Our collaboration and our experiences in societies outside our own have persuaded us that psychology – whether as discipline, profession, or body of knowledge – is indelibly marked by its cultural surround.

Our ideas have been developed in conversation with colleagues and students in psychology, gender studies, and other disciplines. We thank feminist scholars in psychology and in other fields for work that is both inspired and inspiring, as well as for stimulating conversations. We thank the many critical psychologists, theoretical psychologists, and historians of psychology whose close scrutiny of the discipline has spurred our own scrutiny. Over the years, many psychologists who were not specialists in the psychology of gender have called on us to explain it to them. We thank them for their questions, which have compelled us to clarify

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our thinking. We are especially grateful to our students. Many of the ideas in this book had their origins in conversations about their research projects or in the classroom.

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