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Representations of Feminist Theory and Gender Issues in Introductory-Level Sociology Textbooks

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Representations of Feminist Theory and Gender Issues in
Introductory-Level Sociology Textbooks

by

Jena Amber Zarza

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Sociology

Thesis Committee:
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Abstract

A review of sociological literature reveals a long history of the study of gender, and an increased popularity in the application of feminist theories and ideas to sociological research. As transmitters of the discipline, introductory-level textbooks have been heavily studied over the past quarter-century to assess the accuracy with which they portray the field of sociology. In order to update the literature available on the topic, this study analyzed the current cohort of top-selling, introductory-level sociology textbooks for coverage of feminist theory and gender issues. Each of the ten textbooks was read cover-to-cover and coded for both latent and manifest data using a coding sheet. The researcher found a notable increase in the incidences of both feminist theories and gender issues within the current cohort of textbooks. The specific treatment of each topic varied widely across books, and within each book the topics were presented one-dimensionally and were ghettoized to feminized chapters. Definitions of feminist theory and feminism within the books primarily described liberal feminism and little else, and discussions of both feminist theory and gender were most heavily featured in the gender and family chapters. Generally, the gender issues present in the textbook sample were mostly to do with women, and erased non-binary experiences of gender. Additionally, an intersectional approach to discussions of gender was applied about one-third of the time. This study concludes that the current textbook cohort is still far from the ideal model, and the feminization and marginalization of these topics is likely due to the textbook production cycle and the specific phenomenon of textual isomorphism.

To my loving and supportive parents Joann, Richard, and Kathy; my marvelous sister Sabrina; and my closest friends in this journey Jessie, Akeera, and Zully.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Though over “800,000 sociology textbooks are sold each year to beginning sociology students,” these books are written with a specific group of non-paying consumers in mind (Manza, Sauder, and Wright 2010, p. 272). In order for their books to make it to market, college-level textbook authors must attempt to appease four audiences: the student who buys and reads the book, the instructor who adopts the book, the publisher who promotes and sells the book, and the scholar who threatens to either review or study the book (Roberts 2017). Of these four audiences, the primary influencer is the instructor who has the potential to impact sales by adopting the book for his or her course (Kendall 1999). Textbook drafts are subjected to intense scrutiny from instructors, seen as potential adopters, throughout the writing and review process (1999). Despite constant review, numerous textbooks have proven lacking in their portrayal of the current state of their fields, especially in the case of marginalized topics (Best and Schweingruber 2003). This is because the people reviewing the books, instructors or potential adopters, are not doing so for accuracy.

Surprisingly, the majority of a textbook’s readers do not demand accurate, up-to-date information in the book. In a heavily-studied phenomenon, students come to regard textbooks as the exhaustive, finite sources of knowledge in their given fields (Kuhn 1970). Joel Taxel (1989) argues that textbooks influence what the students actually think or believe in a way that other sources of knowledge do not. Suzanne DeCastell, Allan Luke, and Carmen Luke (1983) suggest a textbook’s inherent power is partly bestowed upon it through the instructor’s authority, while David Olsen (1980) argues that students take textbooks at face value because they are transferred authority via the author. In

either instance, students tend not to question the epistemology of the content of the books, nor do they give much thought as to the accuracy of the content. The habits of instructors, similarly, slow down textbook evolution with demands for standardized look and content (Roberts 2017). One textbook author admits that his innovative textbook writing style and content was reined-in by reviewers (instructors) who demanded “that chapters on the key topics that already fit their syllabi ... be in the book” (2017:39). Publishers perpetuate textbook content that is dated or inaccurate through what Joel Best and David Schweingruber (2003) call textual isomorphism. There is “an every-other-year [revision] cycle” where textbooks scramble to include major trends from other top selling textbooks, like the events of 9/11 or a separate chapter for sexuality, in an effort to make their next edition more socially relevant and appealing to their multiple audiences (2003:98). This seems like the perfect time to assess the accuracy of the content, but the short lifecycle and inclination to copy competitors simply causes all textbooks to look the same (hence the term textual isomorphism), and perpetuate the same outdated information underneath new shiny covers (2003). With three out of the four textbook audiences failing to regularly assess textbooks for content accuracy, scholars have stepped up.

Textbook analyses have been conducted on both formal and informal bases for decades. A review of literature discussing the analysis of textbooks across multiple fields reveals they are out of date with regard to their content (Best and Schweingruber 2003), they under-represent minorities (Wald 1989), they problematically portray poverty (Clawson 2002), they essentialize world religions (Carroll 2017), and they perpetuate gender stereotypes (Frederickson 2004). In introductory-level courses, textbook

misrepresentations or inaccuracies are especially problematic. Students enter the introductory course as novices, and trust their mastery of the material will ensure their understanding of the subject. To students, these textbooks even come to represent the breadth of what is acceptable in that field of study (Wagenaar 2004). The accuracy of introductory-level textbooks is important because they serve as “a window through which one can become acquainted with the essential subject matter of [the] discipline” (Keith and Ender 2004, p.20). These textbooks have the power to not only sway students to either pursue or steer away from careers in that field, but also introduce the tools with which they can conduct fieldwork. For these reasons, Alicia Suarez and Alexandra Balaji argue, “it is crucial that the content [of these textbooks] accurately reflect the discipline” (2007:240). Scholars in the field of sociology have regularly assessed their introductory textbooks for content accuracy and subject coverage of a variety of topics like disability (Taub and Fanflik 2000), race (Wald 1989; Ferree and Hall 1990; Dennick-Brecht 1993; Stone 1996; Ferree and Hall 1996; Hall 2000; Clark and Nunes 2008), terminology (Best and Schweingruber 2003), sexuality (Suarez and Balaji 2007); education (Najafizadeh and Menerick 1992), Hispanic women (Marquez 1994), class (Lucal 1994; Ferree and Hall 1996; Hall 2000), feminist theory (Chafetz 1997), and gender (Hall 1988; Ferree and Hall 1990; Ferree and Hall 1996; Hall 2000; Clark and Nunes 2008). These studies paint a grim picture for the state of marginalized topics in introductory-level sociology textbooks.

The coverage of both feminist theory and gender issues in introductory-level sociology textbooks is notably poor (Ferree and Hall 1990; Marquez 1994; Ferree and Hall 1996; Stone 1996; Hall 1998; Best and Schweingruber 2003; Suarez and Balaji

2007; Bradford 2008). In previous studies, scholars found feminist theories and gender issues missing, misrepresented, or marginalized within the text. In her study of introductory-level sociology textbooks, Stone (1996) used the term *ghettoization* to describe the relegation of a specialized topic to one area of the textbook. She argues that confining a topic to one chapter in a book alienates it from the rest of the text by emphasizing its uniqueness (1996). This alienation of feminist theories and gender issues misrepresents the field of sociology as a whole. In fact, sociologists regularly apply feminist theories and study the influence gender has in social settings through the use of intersectionality. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), *intersectionality* “refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power” (Davis 2008, p. 68). Currently, the Sex and Gender section of the American Sociological Association boasts the highest membership at 1100 members (American Sociological Association 2016a). A review of the cross-membership between Sex and Gender members and the other 51 section topics reveals Sociology of Sexualities; Race, Gender and Class; Family; Organizations, Occupation, and Work; and Medical Sociology to be the top five membership overlaps (American Sociological Association 2016b). This demonstrates that sociologists study gender using an intersectional lens, and apply feminist theories concerned with these topics on a regular basis.

Feminist theories and studies of gender issues have saturated the field of Sociology. It is the principle purpose of introductory-level textbooks to provide an overview of the field. It is therefore important that these textbooks include feminist

theories and gender issues in their pages in order to accurately portray the state of the field. For students, the content of introductory-level textbooks dictates the encapsulation of a field of study (Keith and Ender 2004). The field of sociology is inclusive of feminist theories and gender issues, so one would expect introductory-level sociology textbooks to be inclusive of these topics, as well.

In order to evaluate the treatment of feminist theories and gender issues in modern introductory-level sociology textbooks, this study used a mixed methods approach. This content analysis evaluated the entire contents of top-selling textbooks for the treatment of feminist theories and gender issues. This study quantitatively evaluated the amount of space dedicated to and the chapters in which both feminist theories and gender issues were listed. This study also evaluated the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of the presentation of these topics within the texts in a quantitative manner, further outlined in the Methods Chapter. This study assessed the latent messages used to portray feminist theories and gender issues by qualitatively assessing word choice or language, and the accuracy or completeness of definitions. Examples of notable instances of latent messages are provided in the Findings Chapter. According to Ivor Goodson (1994), curricular studies are of importance because the formal curriculum is what legitimates ways in which to practice a particular subject. This study undertook the pertinent task of taking stock of the accuracy of the picture being painted of feminist theories and gender issues in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How are feminist theories treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks?
2. How are gender issues treated in modern, top-selling introductory level sociology textbooks?

In the interest of clarity, a non-exhaustive overview of feminisms, feminist theories, and gender issues is provided in the next chapter.

Chapter Two: Feminist Theory and Gender Issues

The concept of gender has evolved over decades to encompass a broad range of definitions, applications, concerns over inequality, and theoretical solutions to injustices. In an effort to clarify the scope of this study, this chapter provides a historical look at the definitions of sex and gender, an overview of Feminist Theory, and definitions of the Gender Issues with which this project is concerned.

DEFINITIONS OF SEX AND GENDER

Often, sex and gender are conflated and used interchangeably despite representing two separate sets of “socially constructed categories of difference” (Kelly 2016, p. 1). “While the initial distinction between sex and gender suggested that gender follows from sex, that is, the social categories of gender are based on biological sex,” this definition of sex and this relationship between sex and gender have changed over time (2016:1). Sex is a binary system that typically encompasses the categories of male and female, traced back to genitalia, hormones, or brain chemistry (Risman and Davis 2013). This binary system, typically thought of as natural or biological, does not “reflect the actual diversity in bodies, the agency to change the body, or the interaction between biological and social facts that play out on the body” (Kelly 2016, p. 1). Intersex, transgender, and non-binary identities defy the binary sex system and show it is not natural or unalterable. “Intersex diagnoses include a variety of conditions in which bodies deviate from typical male or female alignment of biological characteristics” while “transgender people have gender identities that do not align with the gender they were assigned at birth” (2016:2). The binary concept of sex is therefore socially constructed, as opposed to representative of the true or natural categorization of bodies.

While the concept of sex typically deals with the body, gender is used to describe performances of femininity, masculinity, or androgyny (West and Zimmerman 1987). Candace West and Don Zimmerman (1987) argue that sex and gender are linked through sex categorization. They claim that one's outward gender display allows the social world to file the individual into a sex category, and therefore assume their biological sex (1987). For example, a person displaying their gender with feminine clothing is categorized as a woman and therefore deduced to be a female, despite not having identified themselves as a female with female hormones or genitalia. West and Zimmerman (2009) also argue that gender performances are tied to historically acceptable displays of gender. An example of this is the modern preference of pink for girls, despite a retail clothing trade magazine having explicitly defined pink as a color for boys in the early twentieth century (Author Unknown 1918).

Historically, the study of gender was tied to gender socialization in the fields of family sociology and psychology, but "serious attempts to study sex and gender followed the movement of women into science, and the influence of the second wave of feminism on intellectual questions" (Risman and Davis 2013, p. 736). Researchers like Sandra Bem (1974) saw gender as occurring on linear scales of masculinity and femininity, with the lows and highs of each on either end. Recently, however, there has been a movement away from the scale definition of gender because individuals can exhibit both hyper-masculine and hyper-feminine traits (Risman and Davis 2013). As a representation of one's display or performance, gender is not tied to one's biological sex.

The conceptualization of gender has also changed over time. Gender has been conceptualized as one of many axes of oppression (Lorde 1984; King 1988; Crenshaw

1989; Collins 1990), as a stratification system (Connell 1987; Lorber 1994; Risman 1998; Martin 2004; Risman 2004), and more recently as a social institution (Lorber 1994; Risman 1998; Martin 2004; Risman 2004). Building upon Judith Lorber's (1994) and Patricia Martin's (2004) theories, Barbara Risman argues that gender is "a social structure that has consequences at the individual, interactional, and institutional levels of analysis" (Risman and Davis 2013, p. 743). The social institution of gender impacts the individual through life-long socialization and the internalization of gender roles (2013). Gender impacts stratification at the interactional level where cultural expectations "create a cognitive bias toward privileging men" (Risman and Davis 2013, p. 746). Gender inequality can be seen at the institutional level, where ideologies, access to resources, legal implications, and organizational practices are made with men's needs in mind. For example, Barbara Risman and Georgiann Davis (2013) point out that modern-day work practices are best suited to individuals who do not have to take care of anyone else. Gender has real consequences for individuals at multiple interactional levels, and is a complex structure that goes beyond the distinction of masculine from feminine. This study recorded the definitions each book provided of gender to note whether or not gender was conflated with sex, and to evaluate the breadth and depth of coverage provided for the reader.

OVERVIEW OF FEMINISMS AND FEMINIST THEORIES

Reviews of feminist theories often go hand in hand with discussions of the feminist movement or the politics of feminism. Feminist theories can be generally defined as a "range of theoretical approaches available to contemporary feminist sociologists" (Chafetz 1988, p. 3) that "were developed to explain the reasons for

pervasive gender inequality” pointed out by the feminist movement (Lorber 2012, p. 7).

Because feminist theories arose from the feminist movement, this overview will not only provide definitions of feminist theories, but also discuss feminist movements and categorize the theories they produced.

Definitions

At a foundational level, feminist theories are an “attempt to explain women’s situation, to understand gender asymmetry, or to understand unequal distributions of privilege and power using gender as one element of their analysis” (Kolmar and Bartkowski 2010, p. 3). Janet Saltzman Chafetz argues that feminist theories can be used “to challenge, counteract, or change a status quo that disadvantages or devalues women” (1988:5). Charlotte Bunch (1979) establishes a step-by-step model for feminist theories, claiming they should accurately describe instances of women’s oppression, analyze the origins of that oppression, establish goals for a new reality, and hypothesize what should be done to achieve a new reality. Early on, Chafetz outlined her 3 elements that make a theory feminist, claiming that gender should “comprise ... a central focus or subject matter of the theory,” “gender relations [should be] viewed as a problem,” and “gender relations [should not be] viewed as either natural or immutable” (1988:5). Though feminist theories are those rooted in the oppression of women, criticism of the essentialization of womanhood has further expanded the definition of feminist theory.

To unite a group of people under one term, “woman,” proved to be problematic for some feminist theorists. Second- and third-wave feminists (discussed below) began to identify the uniting concept of womanhood as problematic and exclusionary (Alcoff 1988; Riley 1988; Butler [1990] 2006). In fact, many theorists called for a more

multifaceted approach to feminism, where feminist theories involve people of color and of all genders (Lugones and Spelman 1983; hooks 1989; Butler [1990] 2006). The movement toward including people of color, people of multiple gender expressions, and people of various social statuses was a movement toward intersectionality.

Intersectionality is the approach in which theorists examine more than one master status and evaluate the interplay of the statuses in situations of inequality (Crenshaw 1991).

Feminist theory now aims to describe all oppression, not just patriarchy (hooks 1989).

Chafetz's (1997) newer definition of feminist theory reflects the integration of both types of feminist theory as it relates to sociology:

The term "feminist theory" is used to refer to a myriad of kinds of works, produced by movement activists and scholars in a variety of disciplines; these are not mutually exclusive and include: (a) normative discussions of how societies and relationships ought to be structured, their current inequities, and strategies to achieve equity; (b) critiques of andocentric classical theories, concepts, epistemologies, and assumptions; (c) epistemological discussions of what constitute appropriate forms, subject matters, and techniques of theorizing from a feminist perspective; and (d) explanatory theories of the relationship between gender and various social, cultural, economic, psychological, and political structures and processes. (P. 97)

This study uses Chafetz's definition of feminist theories and will examine theoretical work aimed at explaining oppression not only of women, but also of complex people in situations of inequality.

Three Waves of Feminism

Feminist theories arose from the feminist political movement. Chafetz (1988) argues that all social theory is political because it inherently involves itself with a recommendation on whether or not the social situation at question ought to be or ought not to be changed. Feminist theory, however, is unique in that it comes as a direct result

of three waves in a larger political movement for overall equality. Though each of the three waves of feminism had slightly different goals and solutions for gender equality, the first wave set the standard for a political movement with legal goals. Arguably, this wave of feminism began in 1792, with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and culminated in the early 20th century with the demand for women's legal equality (Dicker 2008). The most memorable goal of first-wave feminists was to give women the right to vote, but other legal rights won were to land ownership, sexual freedom, and educational rights (Lorber 2012). Overall, theories that arose from this movement examined the differences between men and women, and focused more on legal equity.

The second wave of feminism spans the majority of the 20th century, hitting its peak in the 1960s and 1970s. Dicker (2008) notes that Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, published in 1949, kicked off the wave, with momentum quietly building until the 1960s. The second wave of feminism "focus[ed] attention on the continued ways in which women are more socially disadvantaged than men, by analyzing the sexual oppressions women suffer and by proposing interpersonal, as well as political and legal solutions" (Lorber 2012, p. 3). Legal rights were still at the center of this wave, with the focus on job place discrimination, abortion rights, and political representation, but other topics like the social construction of both sex and gender arose from this movement, as well (Lorber 2012). This wave also produced a demand for representation of people of color, people of all genders, and people of all classes (Dicker 2008). The second wave of feminism was more prolific and varied in its goals, and produced the foundation of many feminist theories used today.

The third wave of feminism emerged in the 1990s and was comprised of “younger feminists who grew up with feminism” (Lorber 2012, p. 4). These feminists included men as their allies and often utilized smaller-scale grassroots groups to spread the word of their various causes. “As inheritors of women’s studies curricula in school and a much less gender-segregated social, economic, and political world, [these individuals] rejected[ed] the idea that women are oppressed by men,” and instead attacked the systems of oppression (2012:4). This type of feminism consciously focused on helping historically overlooked groups and aimed to represent multicultural experiences, as well as the experiences of men. Their goals are intersectional in nature, and aim to represent not only people who fall into the gender binary, but also marginalized individuals.

Like other political movements, the three waves of feminism are not mutually exclusive in their agendas, or strictly divided in their timelines. They have given birth to a variety of feminist theories, which do not necessarily fit neatly within just one wave. Feminist theories are therefore not strictly divided between the waves from which they arose, but are instead categorized by their goals. The three categories under which feminist theories are filed are outlined below, along with examples of their application within modern sociology.

Three Categories of Feminist Theory

Feminisms each have explanations for why “women having lesser social status and fewer advantages than men of similar education, class background, religion, racial category, and ethnic group” are treated unequally from their counterparts (Lorber 2012, p. 9-10). Judith Lorber (2012) categorized feminist theories into three groups based on their theories of gender inequality and their proposed solutions to these inequalities. The

three groups labeled Gender Reformist, Gender Resistant, and Gender Rebellious are outlined below.

1. Gender reformist: All gender reformist feminist theories work within the gender binary system to achieve gender equality for both men and women. They “accept the existing gender structure (two classes of people) and work toward erasing the inequalities between the two classes” (Lorber 2012, p. 11). They recognized that the traditional system harms both men and women, and that gender issues are problems faced by both men and women. They aim to increase women’s presence in positions of power. These theories arose from first- and second-wave feminism, with an emphasis on equalizing power between men and women. Examples of theories that fall into the gender reformist category are Marxist feminism, liberal feminism, socialist feminism, and transnational feminism (Lorber 2012). A number of gender reformist theories have been applied to sociological studies. One example is Margaret Polatnik’s (1973) application of Marxist feminist thought to the study of men’s role in childrearing. An example of the application of liberal feminism is Joanna Brewis’ (2004) study of the social lives of professional women in London. Lastly, an example of the application of transnational feminism can be found in Millie Thayer’s (2009) studies of both working-class and middle-class women’s rights movements in Brazil.

2. Gender resistant: Gender resistant feminisms are “feminist theories of inequality [that] coalesce around the concept of patriarchy, a system of interlocked oppression and exploitations of women’s bodies, sexuality, labor, and emotions” (Lorber 2012, p. 7). Resistant feminisms were popularized in the 1980s, and value women’s contributions over those of men. They also value attributes traditionally ascribed to

women, like nurturance, over those traditionally ascribed to men, like violence. These types of feminism “focus on standpoint—the view of the world from where you are located physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially,” and claim, “women-only spaces are needed for refuge, recreation, religious worship, and cultural production” (2012:11-12). These types of theories still work within the gender binary, but look to flip the power dynamic by providing women with spaces of total control (2012). Radical feminism, lesbian feminism, psychoanalytic and cultural feminism, and standpoint feminism are all gender resistant feminisms (2012). An example of the application of standpoint feminism is Cynthia Edmonds-Cady’s (2009) work on understanding the welfare system in the United States. An example of the application of lesbian feminism is Sheila Jeffreys’ (2009) examination of the mail-order bride market.

3. *Gender rebellious*: Unlike the other two categories of feminist theories, gender rebellious feminisms are not interested in working within the gender binary to accomplish their goals (Lorber 2012). Popularized in the 1990s, these theories see the gender binary as the source of inequality between men and women. In fact, they argue that the gender binary hurts men as well as women, and they acknowledge a more inclusive view of gender that goes beyond the binary. They “show how gender is socially constructed and maintained by *doing gender*,” and argue that the solution is to not do gender (2012:12). Gender rebellious feminisms also focus on other aspects of inequality like race and class, and believe that expectations from ascribed master statuses create unique layers of inequality between people of different backgrounds. These types of feminism accept men as both allies and victims of the gender binary, and are inclusive of people along the entire gender scale. They attribute inequalities in daily interactions with people and

institutions to expected gender roles, and believe the remedy is found by eliminating gender and the associated expectations of behavior. Gender rebellious feminism asks both men and women to give up ascribed roles, like being either a breadwinner or a caregiver, and join together to allow equal access to both roles (2012). Social construction feminism, postmodern feminism, queer theory, and third-wave feminism are examples of gender rebellious feminist theories. An example of the application of postmodern feminism is Sandra Bartky's (1998) application of Michel Foucault's panopticon to the social policing of women's bodies. An application of queer theory is found in Judith Butler's ([1990] 2006) critique of the label of "woman" and the juridical power invoked through gendered language.

The above list of feminist theories is far from exhaustive, as is the list of examples from each category. This list does, however, show the diversity of theories found under the label "feminist theory," and the sociological relevance these theories hold in current literature. It is therefore fair to evaluate the degree to which these theories have permeated introductory-level sociology textbooks. Though it is highly unlikely for every type of feminist theory to appear in an introductory-level book, this study aims to determine which theories made it in, and evaluate the treatment of them within the text.

OVERVIEW OF GENDER ISSUES

Gender issues are instances of inequality faced by people of a particular gender group while interacting with the social world. Gender issues are often intersectional, in that they account for the impact other master statuses have on the instance of inequality. As seen above, feminist theories explain the existence of gender inequalities in different ways, but they each aim to correct them. For the purposes of this research project, gender

issues were divided between the following categories based on the social institution with which the interaction occurs: Aging, Culture, Education, Health and Medicine, Language, Marriage, Media, Oppression, Parenting, Poverty, Religion, Romantic Relationships, Sexualities, Socialization, Sports, Technology, The State/Law, Violence, and Work. Gender issues related to these facets of life are instances where differences in power produce a disadvantageous situation for one or more gender. Below are examples from the literature of gender issues within each of the aforementioned categories.

Aging

For reasons related to social patterns, health concerns, or a myriad of unique circumstances, gender often impacts issues to do with aging. An example of the interplay between aging and gender can be seen in Ken Smith and Phyllis Moen's (1988) research that focuses on the mid-life familial role changes faced by women, and their impact to financial security in older age.

Culture

As a salient part of one's social experience, culture can often perpetuate gender norms and stereotypes as natural truths, and thus create instances of gender inequality. Anne Phillips' (2003) research on international defendants in English courts, for example, shows how presentations of cultural norms as explanations for deviant acts are more accepted in women's cases when the cultural explanation falls in line with a popular stereotype.

Education

Often linked with socialization, many interactions people have with education are heavily gendered. In fact, Janet Maw (1998) uses differences in gender role socialization to explain the achievement gap between boys and girls in schools in the United Kingdom.

Health and Medicine

Both in the U.S. and abroad, access to health services and medicine can be limited by gender. Anne Werner and Kristi Malterud (2003) note in their research that women must put extra work into getting their doctors to believe or understand their chronic pain in order to receive proper treatment.

Language

Language often serves a reciprocal role in shaping gender perceptions and reflecting gender patterns. Gendered language patterns often reflect power dynamics within conversations between men and women, a phenomenon studied by Nina Eliasoph (1987).

Marriage

The institution of marriage is a highly gendered realm where instances of gender inequality often surface. An example of this can be seen in Allan Horwitz, Helen White, and Sandra Howell-White's (1996) research on the differing mental health outcomes between men and women upon the dissolution of marriage.

Media

Media outlets like television and magazines often portray gender ideals or stereotypical roles that have different consequences for individuals based on gender. In Malawi, for example, radio commercials problematically perpetuate gender roles and the

gendered division of power by regularly denigrating women and perpetuating their subordination (Chilimampunga 1999).

Oppression

Often conceptualized at the structural or institutional level, large-scale instances of gender oppression are prevalent throughout the world. One example of this is the limited mobility women often face in cities of developed countries, where walkways, street lighting, and public transportation are built with single, able-bodied men in mind (Pardo and Echavarren 2010).

Parenting

The process of socializing children can sometimes give rise to instances of gender oppression, but parents, themselves, are also subject to gender role oppression. An example of a gender issue related to parenting is the stigma faced by stay at home fathers, and the identity crisis and sense of vulnerability they feel going against gender norms (Shirani, Henwood, and Coltart 2012).

Poverty

Poverty on its own results in unequal outcomes, but the interplay of poverty and gender shows that the disadvantages that come from being poor are more likely to be encountered by women. Diana Pearce (1978) identifies the feminization of poverty in her research, and concludes that women represent a disproportionate segment of the people on welfare and of the working poor.

Religion

As heavily tied to ideas of gender socialization, religion can result in unequal opportunities between genders. One example of this can be seen in Kelly Chong's (2006)

research that examines the submission to patriarchal rules faced by South Korean women when converting to evangelicalism.

Romantic Relationships

As one of the many ways gender norms are reinforced, romantic relationships often construct instances of gender inequality. Dana Haynie et al. (2005) found that gender differences in adolescent relationships plays a role in delinquency, where young women in heterosexual relationships are more likely to commit acts of minor deviance than their male, or even single female, counterparts.

Sexualities

One's sexuality does not necessarily align with their sex or gender, and the belief that it should often promotes the oppressive policing of sexuality. Children are often subject to heteronormative examples of love and family in children's books, as found by Elizabeth Rowell (2007) in her study of missing sexualities in picture books.

Socialization

As explained above, gender is a performance, and one must learn to perform gender appropriately. There are many institutions and daily forms of interactions charged with the socialization of children into preferred gender norms, and the way in which these institutions or interactions socialize individuals can have problematic outcomes in relation to gender. In her research on video games and gender socialization, Tracy Dietz (1998) found that video games socialize boys into violent expressions of masculinity, and erase other expressions of masculinity.

Sports

Both at the school level and large-scale entertainment level, sports are highly gendered, and their value is often determined by the individuals likely to participate in that activity. In her research on sport perception, Nathalie Koivula (2001) explains the phenomenon of the feminization or masculinization of a sport. She identifies a series of markers, like risk of injury and level of cooperation, which impact whether or not people having just played a sport identify themselves as having just participated in a masculine, feminine, or gender-neutral activity (2001).

Technology

Both access to and the process of learning how to use technology are often limited by gender in a way that reflects gender values, as opposed to essential truths of the differences between sexes. One example of this is the gap between women expressing interest in technology and the computer science field, and the actual number of women entering the computer science pipeline. In their research on the subject, Sylvia Beyer, Kristina Rynes, and Susan Haller (2004) identify a series of social deterrents that seem to inhibit women from taking computer science courses.

The State/Law

Interactions individuals have with legal entities and the government are also gendered, where statistics show people of each gender fair better or worse than their counterparts, depending on the specific legal situation. In response to unequal legal outcomes the state of Minnesota instituted sentencing guidelines. Barbara Koons-Witt (2002), however, found that women with dependent children were significantly less likely to be imprisoned than other women both before and after the introduction of these

guidelines. She suggests this is due to lingering assumptions about gender and family ideals (2002).

Violence

The interaction a person has with violence as either victim or perpetrator statistically varies with gender and the interaction of other master statuses. Individuals who do not conform to prescribed ways of expressing sex, gender, or sexuality are at increased risk for being victims of violent crimes. Daniela Jauk's (2013) research on the victimization of transgender people argues the pervasive need to recognize trans-aimed violence as a major issue in hate crime violence, and provides an overview of the coping mechanisms employed by these individuals as victims of harassment or physical violence.

Work

The realm of work is a highly gendered area where ideas of acceptable forms of work for each gender are heavily rooted in the arenas of socialization, the economy, culture, and the law. The wage gap is a highly studied area that highlights the interplay of work and gender. In their study on the subject, Mary Guy and Meredith Newman (2004) identify emotional labor as a major factor influencing pay differences between men and women, where women are more likely to seek work that involves emotional labor. They claim that emotional labor is not valued by Western society, and jobs that require emotional labor are likely to pay less, thus resulting in women tending to occupy lower paying jobs.

Each of the aforementioned social realms in which gender issues occur is not limited to instances of oppression against one gender or another. Some gender issues

encountered on a daily basis impact mostly women, some impact mostly men, some impact both men and women, and some impact other gender identities like transgender or non-binary individuals. Further clarification of each type of gender issue is outlined below.

Women's Gender Issues

As the title implies, women's gender issues are instances of inequality faced by women as a homogenous group. This is to say, these are issues faced mainly by women as opposed to a certain class of woman, or both men and women. The group Lorber (2012) calls Women's Feminisms tends to highlight women-centered gender issues. Women's feminisms are ones that see the source of women's oppression as the "patriarchal social system that privileges all men, and oppresses all women, regardless of their social class, racial or ethnic group, or national status" (Lorber 2012, p. 328). Domestic violence experienced by women and unequal pay between men and women are examples of women's gender issues. These types of gender issues focus solely on inequalities faced by women as a whole.

Men's Gender Issues

Men's gender issues are instances of inequality faced by men as a homogenous group. Often related to gender socialization or the policing of sexuality, men's gender issues limit men's access to feminized occupations or social realms (Lorber 2012). Examples of men's gender issues are the stigma faced by men in traditionally feminized professions like nursing or dancing, and the stigma of men engaging in traditionally feminized actions like crying.

Both Men's and Women's Issues

This group of gender issues highlights instances of inequality faced by both men and women. As with women's gender issues, the main source of inequality is the gender binary, but these gender issues highlight instances where both men and women are harmed by this socially constructed system. The group Lorber (2012) calls Gender Feminisms tends to highlight men and women's gender issues. Gender feminisms believe that "the source of inequality [lies] in a gendered social system that privileges some men over most women and some other men" (Lorber 2012, p. 328). An example of a gender issue that impacts both men and women is the gendered segregation of domestic and public spheres of work.

Transgender, Intersex, Genderqueer, and Non-Binary Gender Issues

Gender issues that highlight the normalization of the gender binary and illuminate the experiences of silenced gender performers arise from Postmodern Feminism and Queer Theory. Both theories aim to subvert the gender binary in order to alleviate oppression and shed light on typically marginalized gender experiences, like transgender and genderqueer individuals (Lorber 2012). Examples of these gender issues are sex-segregated public bathrooms and choice of pronoun usage on legal documents.

Intersectional Gender Issues

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) is credited with positing a way in which to highlight the experiences of women that typically fall between the cracks during the simplified studies of race, class, and gender. Known as *intersectionality*, this concept refers to the power dynamics constructed as a result of the interplay of multiple master statuses in interactions with individuals, social structures, and institutions (Davis 2008). Gaining momentum over the last quarter century, this feminist theory has been applied to studies

in multiple fields: public health (Bowleg 2012), psychology (Rosenthal 2016), social work (Murphy 2009), and STEM (Cantor, Mack, McDermott, and Taylor 2014), to name a few. Scholars in the field of sociology have not only applied intersectionality as a theoretical framework, but also actively called for its inclusion in sociological texts. Intersectionality has been conceptualized as a crossroad (Crenshaw 1991), a matrix of domination (Collins [2000] 2009), and axes of difference (Yuval-Davis 2006). Kathy Davis (2008) argues that intersectionality's ambiguity and open-endedness are what make it applicable across broad fields of study and what allowed it to gain popularity since its inception. Many instances of inequality can occur along lines other than gender and are therefore considered intersectional. Intersectional gender issues highlight the interaction that race, class, and other statuses have on gender inequality. Examples of intersectional gender issues are the impediments to legal aid faced by undocumented domestic violence victims, and the higher incarceration rates of men of color.

It is clear that gender issues are vast and varied in their usefulness to label instances of inequality. The above list of gender issues is far from exhaustive, but highlights the many instances of gender inequality sociologists regularly study. With chapters specifically dedicated to gender, it is expected to find a handful of the aforementioned issues in introductory-level textbooks. In order to classify the types of gender issues found in the textbook sample, this study classified each gender issue encountered by the social realm with which it was concerned (category), and the gender it mainly impacted (type of gender issue). It also noted whether or not an intersectional approach, as is common in modern sociological research, was taken with regard to each of the gender issues. This study aimed to evaluate the degree to which gender issues have

permeated each of the textbook chapters in an effort to accurately portray the current gamut of sociological research.

Chapter Three: Review of Literature

A multi-disciplinary approach best accounts for the existing literature on introductory sociology textbooks. Scholars from fields including women's studies, education, social studies, and sociology have all theorized and studied textbooks for their treatments of special topics. To provide a complete picture of the literature available on the study of these textbooks, this chapter will outline the research on curricular studies with regard to textbooks, review content analyses of textbooks, and provide a multi-disciplinary overview of the available arguments for the inclusion of feminist theories and gender issues in textbooks.

Beginning with a broad perspective, then narrowing focus; the presentation of curricular studies below will contain an overview of the textbook production cycle, a discussion of textbooks in the classroom, and a specific explanation of the role textbooks play with regard to introductory courses and their students. The section on the content analyses of textbooks will contain an examination of textbook analyses in other disciplines, a summary of analyses in sociology textbooks, and a presentation of specific findings with regard to feminist theories and gender issues in these texts. Finally, a multi-disciplinary overview of the arguments for the inclusion of feminist theories and gender issues in textbooks will outline specific arguments for the inclusion of these topics in textbooks, a list of existing models for inclusion, multiple explanations for the absence of these topics, and opinions on the implications of their absence.

ROLE OF THE TEXTBOOK

As discussed in Chapter One, there exists a strong and often unbreakable relationship between student and textbook. This relationship is tied to the textbook's role

in transmitting the course curriculum. To best explain this relationship, it is necessary to examine the textbook production cycle, explain textbooks as transmitters of curriculum, and understand the particular role textbooks play in the experiences of introductory-level students.

Textbook Production Cycle

An understanding of textbook content is not complete without an assessment of the route textbooks take to enter students' hands, and a familiarization with the key players in this process (Woodward 1988 and Goodson 1994). The ultimate textbook consumers are students, but their needs play very little into the production process (Roberts 2017). Instructors play the biggest roles, on both the supply and demand side, in dictating the content of textbooks at the college level. Textbooks aren't simply written by their authors, they "are *produced* through a highly bureaucratic process that is unique in scholarly publishing" (Manza et al. 2010, p.289). In the United States, textbook authors are instructors themselves, typically from non-research universities, who are fed an outline of topics to include in their book, along with instructions for the treatment of these topics by their editors (2010). This outline is determined by an analysis of market surveys editors send to a pool of instructors (potential adopters) regarding what they would like to see in an ideal textbook (2010). These ideas are fed by the unique needs of these instructors. Jeff Manza, Michael Sauder, and Nathan Wright note that the majority of these instructors teach at public four-year universities and community colleges, where they "have heavy teaching loads and few incentives to demand updated textbooks that would require different corresponding lectures" (2010:287). Many graduate students and untrained instructors teach large introductory-level courses to lecture halls, and they often

appreciate structured textbooks that align with pre-existing syllabi and PowerPoints given to them by their peers (Ballentine 1988). They also have very little time to dedicate to reviewing new books, causing them to continue picking the same book title as new editions of the text become available (Carlson and Sosnoski 2013). These specific needs, unfortunately, give instructors immense authority over textbook content. Though authors have the freedom to include whichever examples and wording they choose, it is done within the parameters of the approved topic list (informed by instructor feedback), which usually includes requests for out of date information (Manza et al. 2010). Despite knowledge of advancements in the field, textbook authors tend to stick to instructor requests in an effort to formulaically sell books (Roberts 2017).

At the college level, instructors have the ultimate power in deciding which textbooks to adopt. In an interview of textbook publishers, Manza et al. interviewed multiple authors who joked, “textbooks were like dog food, in that the ultimate consumer—the student reader—did not get to choose what they consume” (2010:298). The authors found that heavy reliance on instructor feedback caused out of date ideas to persist in textbooks. “A best-selling textbook can generate hundreds of thousands, and in a few select cases, millions of dollars of revenue each year,” substantially raising the stakes of stylistic experiments (2010:272). Market conditions have resulted in books tending “to cover the same topics in roughly the same order,” otherwise known as textual isomorphism (Best and Schweingruber 2003). If one book makes a change that instructors like, editors force the others to fall in line and make sure this change stays put in future editions. “This editorial lock-in from first edition onward means that existing books are unlikely to significantly alter key components of the book ... once the first

edition is published” (Manza et al. 2010, p. 290). In one example, the adoption of a singular textbook by Broom and Selznick (with multiple editions beginning in 1955 and in use into the 1970s) “played a pivotal role in structuring the presentation of introductory sociology” books through today (2010:277).

Other contributors to textual isomorphism are short publishing cycles and market contraction. New editions of textbooks come out every two to three years, and in an effort to stay relevant, they copy formats and content of the previous cohort’s best sellers (Manza et al. 2010). In one extraordinary example, a textbook author published 81 books (counting originals and new editions) in a 31-year period (Carlson and Sosnoski 2013). This constant cycle of revisions aimed at conformity to best sellers results in textbooks that not only look the same, but also perpetuate the same out-of-date information. Recent years have seen a contraction of the textbook market with small publishers being swallowed up by a set of four or five powerhouses. This caused a disappearance of any diversity that may have existed previously in the marketplace. This is clearly seen with introductory-level sociology textbooks, which used to have a total of 72 books on the market in the 1980s, but now only feature about 30 in any given year. The textbook production process which relies heavily on instructor feedback and which encourages textual isomorphism causes “textbook ideas [to] persist long after they disappear from the disciplinary mainstream” (Manza et al. 2010, p. 300). With short production cycles, a heavy reliance on instructor feedback, and a habit of reproducing what sells, it is no wonder that textbooks have a tendency to lose sight of the field they represent and perpetuate dated information. It is clear to see that periodic assessments of the content of these books is necessary to maintain the integrity of the information relayed to students.

Transmitters of Curriculum

There have been ample and heated debates over formal curriculum in schooling at all levels for as long as there has been a formal education process. The formal curriculum is defined by what is written in syllabi, education plans, or formal curriculum documents (Kelly 1989). This record dictates the content of classroom learning and mastery, and outlines the legitimated topics in that field of learning (Goodson 1994). The secondary written document that outlines the topics of the course is the textbook. Textbooks are the “central tools and central objects of attention in all modern forms of schooling” (Westbury 1990, p. 1). At the undergraduate level, some instructors use one textbook as the sole reading material for the course, while others augment the text with supplemental materials. In either case, instructors give overt instructions for students to master the portions of the text assigned. With this proclamation, textbooks take on the role of embodying the curriculum to be mastered. Eisner documents this phenomenon by noting, “for many students, to know or understand means knowing what the textbook says” (Eisner 1994, p. 69). Apple adds that textbooks define, “through their content *and* form, particular constructions of reality [and] particular ways of selecting and organizing [the] universe of possible knowledge” (2014:49). Textbooks embody the course curriculum, which has important implications for the way students treat these texts.

Michael Apple and Linda Christian-Smith (1991) outline three ways students can potentially respond to a text: dominated, negotiated, and oppositional. Undergraduates seem to exhibit a dominated response to their textbooks, where they take the message at face value (1991). Explanations for why this occurs rest on the authority textbooks either intrinsically or extrinsically possess. Olsen (1980) argues that textbooks are transferred

authority by their authors, while DeCastell et al. (1983) argue this authority is transferred directly from the instructor. Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant argue that textbook authority is partially inherent because “textbook content ... withholds, obscures, and renders unimportant many ideas and areas of knowledge” (1991:97). In either situation, the authority textbooks possess makes them above criticism or dispute, and causes students to believe them as true at face value (Olsen 1980). Thomas Kuhn was one of the first to observe this process, explaining that “students accept [content] on the authority of teacher and text, not because of evidence” (1970:80). The power of these texts is so great that the content of the textbook influences what students actually believe to be true (Taxel 1989). Despite the source, textbooks possess an authority that leaves them above question. Because of this power, textbooks ultimately “help set the canons of truthfulness,” and serve as the ultimate source of knowledge for the student (Apple 2014, p. 49). Students hold textbooks in high repute as infallible transmitters of curricular knowledge, so it is important for scholars to periodically assess their accuracy.

The Role of the Introductory Level Text

The power textbooks possess over students’ classroom experiences is magnified in the case of students enrolled in an introductory-level course. The nature of a survey course is to teach students the breadth of knowledge under the umbrella of that topic of study. In the field of sociology, these introductory courses lay the foundation for the major and non-major, alike, for the way in which they conceptualize the field (Lucal 1994). “The introductory sociology course is probably students’ first exposure to the concepts and concerns of the discipline, and for many students, it is also their last” (Clark and Nunes 2008, p. 227). The introductory course “sets the stage for the sociology major

and, as a survey course, exposes most students to their only experience with sociology” (Wagenaar 2004, p. 3). Betsy Lucal (1994) notes that the way students understand a concept in their introductory course directly impacts the way they conceive of the topic later in their careers, often despite additional training. For sociology students, “the introductory textbook is a window through which one can become acquainted with the essential subject matter of [the] discipline” (Keith and Ender 2004, p. 20). These textbooks are powerful tools in shaping introductory-level students.

In their examination of sociology textbooks, Maxine Zinn and D. Stanley Eitzen (1996a) explore the power of the textbook further and outline four ways in which introductory-level texts directly shape and define the sociological discipline. These textbooks indoctrinate students into the field of sociology by: (1) exploring the role of the sociologist as a social critic, (2) positing diversity as socially constructed, (3) emphasizing people’s roles in shaping their own lives, and (4) providing an understanding, based in diversity, of society as a whole (1996a and 1996b). After understanding the instructor-heavy textbook production cycle, the power textbooks hold in the classroom, and the specific ways in which textbooks shape the minds of introductory students, it is clear to see the need for periodic assessment of these books on their treatment of marginalized topics.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTBOOK

Given the important role textbooks play in the transmission of curriculum, it is not surprising to find a long and rich history of the analysis of their content. Teachers, policy-makers, scholars, and activists have both formally and informally conducted content analyses of textbooks in all fields and levels of education. In the 1940s, curriculum

policy-makers reviewed textbooks for the presence of controversial topics, and the 1970s saw a boom in the analysis of the treatment of marginalized classes in textbooks (Tanner 1999). What follows is a synthesis of analyses of textbooks in the United States across all disciplines, followed by the results of content analyses of sociology textbooks. Finally, an examination of the treatment of feminist theories and gender issues in sociological works concludes the section.

Content Analyses Across Disciplines

In an effort to aid in curriculum reform, there have been multiple assessments of children's and secondary-level textbooks in the United States. In the field of History, a contemporary assessment of children's textbooks found simplistic representations of gender, race, class, and religion (Provenzo, Jr., Shaver, and Bello 2011), while a review of U.S. history textbooks found a markedly biased account of Cold War events (Carlson 1989). An assessment of gender in secondary-level history textbooks found discussions of women ghettoized to stereotypical topic areas, providing a biased representation of their contributions (Commeyras and Alvermann 1996). Similarly, Spike Peterson and Anne Runyan (1999) found that discussions of both men and women had yet to be mainstreamed into the texts of International Relations books. Unfortunately, misrepresentations of special topics within textbooks do not stop at the primary and secondary level.

As a result of content analyses, many scholars have found biased and stereotypical representations within college-level textbooks. An example of problematic representations can be seen in Rosalee Clawson's (2002) analysis of Economy textbooks for the visual representation of poverty. She found that Blacks were disproportionately

represented among the poor, and that Whites were used to illustrate more sympathetic instances of poverty like the Depression Era poor and the Social Security Program. An instance of stereotypical representations in textbooks is found with the study of introductory Accounting textbooks. Wendy Tietz (2007) examined the treatment of men and women within these books and found the representations fortified gender stereotypes and gender role stratification.

With an understanding of the importance and impact textbooks have in the classroom, scholars often assess textbooks for their accurate portrayal of the current state of the field. In her assessment of the degree to which contemporary trends have permeated introductory-level economics books, Susan Feiner (1993) found the books to be behind in their treatment of issues relating to women and minorities. Unfortunately, the inaccurate representation or out-of-date images of a particular field of study is common in textbooks. In a lighthearted analysis of Communications textbook content, Gordon Carlson and James Sosnoski found “vacuous, decontextualized concepts” and “a remarkable number of definitions [to be] out of date,” prompting them to label these textbooks “the living dead” (2013:160). As is clear from the examples from the fields of Accounting, Communications, Economics, History, and International Relations, the content analysis of textbooks holds an important place in the process of evaluating curriculum for accuracy.

Content Analyses in Sociology

The “Sociology of Sociology” is the reflexive study of the discipline in a way that does not blindly accept canons and aims to understand how taken-for-granted methodologies, theories, and facts came to be (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). The study

of sociological textbooks falls well within the realm of the “Sociology of Sociology,” and both the quantitative and qualitative use of content analysis is the method of choice for such endeavors. Content analyses of introductory-level sociology textbooks have highlighted ghettoization of marginalized topics, a call for intersectionality, invisibility of the lesser part of a dichotomous topic, and blatant inaccuracies and misrepresentations of the field.

As defined by Pamela Stone (1996), ghettoization is when a topic is relegated to certain parts of a text, for example under certain chapters, or under limited discussions of certain social realms. Decades of analyses of introductory-level textbooks have found multiple topics of interest relegated to marginalized parts of the book. In her study of 25 textbooks on their coverage of racial and ethnic groups, Stone (1996) found discussions of these individuals relegated to the chapter on race. Suarez and Balaji (2007) encountered similar ghettoization of the topic of sexuality in their mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative, assessment of introductory-level sociology books. On average, each textbook dedicated 5.7 percent of its pages to sexuality, but the majority of this content was housed in either the chapter on sexuality, when one was present, or in medicalized discussions, like that of HIV/AIDS (2007). In an extensive study of Sociology of Family textbooks, Maxine Zinn (1988) found that feminist theories were often featured as sideshows in the books, offering only titillating information to the reader, as opposed to being fully applied and integrated. In a revisit of the same topic, Zinn also found ghettoization with regard to race, where these books “marginalized racial ethnic families as special “cultural” cases” instead of featuring them throughout the book

(1992:477). The message sent when topics are relegated to marginal parts of the book is that they are peripheral to the core or essence of sociology (Hall 1988).

Intersectionality posits experiences of social inequality as a combination of complex interactions of statuses, like race, class, and gender, which creates unique experiences for people of different backgrounds (Crenshaw 1991). This concept has permeated sociological research, so it is surprising to find that introductory-level textbooks have yet to mainstream the topic. Sleeter and Grant (1991) used picture analysis, story-line analysis, and language analysis to assess the intersectional treatment of disability in textbooks. They found that the topics of race, class, gender, and disability were only discussed one or two master statuses at a time in a non-intersectional way (1991). In their examination of sociology textbooks as a whole, Zinn and Eitzen (1996a) found they tend to distort the social world with the use of generalizations and through the homogenization of diversity. In their more narrow examination of introductory-level sociology textbooks, Zinn and Eitzen (1996a) found the intersections of race, class, and gender were ignored. Even as recently as one decade ago, intersectionality failed to appear in introductory textbooks as is evidenced by Adel Noris, Yvette Murphey-Erby, and Anna Zajicek's (2007) findings that the topic of poverty suffered greatly from a lack of an intersectional approach in these books. The missing topic of intersectionality in introductory-level sociology textbooks provides an inaccurate characterization of reality to introductory-level students (Zinn and Eitzen 1996b).

Another pattern that arises from the analysis of sociological textbook content is the invisibility of the marginalized half of a dichotomized group. This phenomenon has been formally documented in textbooks as early as 1975 with Thomas Van Valey's

examination of acceptable methods in introductory-level books. He found that over half of the books he examined only covered qualitative methods, which he posited were easier to explain to students than their quantitative counterparts (Van Valey 1975). In an impressive study of 50 introductory-level sociology textbooks for the treatment of the concept of power, Warren Paap (1981) found mostly one-sided, macro-level explanations of the concept. Lucal (1994) analyzed 15 introductory books to determine the approaches they used in their treatment of social class and found the distributional approach to be the only one applied. Unfortunately, this invisibility does not only apply to abstract ideas, but to marginalized groups of people, as well. In an assessment of the treatment of women's historical contributions to sociology, Mary Jo Deegan (1988) found that the ideas of early female sociologists were rarely documented in textbooks. Sarah Phillips (1991) found similar results with regard to the coverage of homosexual relationships in textbooks, as did Diane Taub and Patricia Fanflik (2000) on the coverage of disability. The invisibility of part of a dichotomous relationship in introductory-level sociology textbooks also expands to conceptual viewpoints. Mehrangiz Najafizadeh and Lewis Mennerick (1992) analyzed the content of chapters on education in 22 textbooks and found that only northern industrialized nations were represented, leaving the educational experiences of students in developing countries invisible. Just last year, Michael Carroll (2017) found that the characterizations of World Religions in introductory-level sociology textbooks reflected solely a Western view of the topic. A one-sided presentation of a topic is far from an accurate representation of the sociological world, so it is problematic when introductory sociology texts do this in their discussion of areas of study.

A recurring pattern identified by the analysis of introductory-level sociology textbook content is the overwhelming amount of blatant inaccuracies within the text. These inaccuracies take the form of omissions, misrepresentations, the inclusion of out-of-date information, or data obtained from nonreproducible studies. Sometimes these inaccuracies are easy to spot, like the distorted and inaccurate depiction of Hispanic women that Stephanie Marquez (1994) found in her study of introductory sociology textbooks. Other times these inaccuracies take a subtler form of incomplete accounts of the field. For example, Alan Wells (1979) found a substantially lower rate of coverage with regard to conflict theory when compared to current journal articles. Another incomplete account was found when James Kelly (1977) assessed introductory textbooks for their treatment of religion and found the work of prominent theorists in the field completely missing from the main text and only featured in bibliographical content. One of the most common ways in which introductory-level sociology textbooks are rendered inaccurate is with their inclusion of dated information. In his study of 11 introductory books for the treatment of income inequality, Wayne Villemez (1980) found they were dated in their theoretical explanations of the subfield. In a similar outmoded fashion, Best and Schweingruber (2003) found that more than half of the glossary terms in introductory textbooks were either out of date or headed out of date. Furthermore, they found a handful of terms that were completely missing from the texts, despite appearing regularly in current sociological journals (2003). As representations of the field, introductory-level sociology textbooks should be accurate in their portrayals of the realm of sociological study. The presence of misleading, outdated, and blatantly inaccurate information should not be tolerated.

As the study of an ever-changing social world, the field of sociology, too, is ever-changing and always growing. As representations of such a fluid field, introductory-level textbooks should accurately reflect the current state of the discipline. Sociologists study a multitude of topics and social phenomenon in an intersectional way. It is problematic that these textbooks have a history of ghettoizing, essentializing, rendering invisible, and misrepresenting these topics of study. Misrepresentations of sociological content in introductory-level textbooks are a misrepresentation of the field of sociology as a whole.

Feminist Theories and Gender Issues in Sociology

In 1985, Ward and Grant examined ten years of published research in sociology journals and found four major themes with regard to the treatments of gender: (1) The omission and underrepresentation of women, (2) the focus on “male” topics, (3) the use of sociological paradigms, models, and methods that fail to accurately portray women’s experiences, and (4) the normalization of the male experience. With the field lacking a representation of women and theory on women, it isn’t surprising that Esther Chow’s (1985) evaluation of introductory-level courses of the same time period resulted in findings that showed the experiences of women of color to be virtually absent. Luckily, the 1980s saw a rise in the use of gender as a topic for empirical and theoretical consideration within sociological journals, and the discipline itself (Roth and Dashper 2016). “This trend has continued and gender theory and analysis remain integral to sociological research, sparking debate, controversy and theoretical advancement,” today (2016:NP12). Introductory-level sociology books should reflect the current state of the discipline, and long since Chow, scholars have assessed these books for their treatment of

special issues in an attempt to evaluate the degree to which they reflect the current state of the discipline.

Some of the most prolific authors on the analysis of introductory-level sociology textbooks are Myra Marx Ferree and Elaine J. Hall. Over the course of a decade the pair assessed introductory sociology books for the treatment of marginalized topics like race, class, and gender, and for the inclusion of an intersectional approach to the explanation of social phenomena. In 1988, Hall evaluated the inclusion of gender in 36 textbooks and found that information on women comprised less than 5 percent of the average book. Her use of indexing revealed that two-thirds of that information occurred in the chapter on gender, and the majority of the remaining discussions were ghettoized to the sections on family and socialization (1988). Hall (1988) was able to identify multiple indicators for finding books with a more inclusive treatment of gender, the most prominent of which were female authorship and having a chapter dedicated to women. In 1990, Ferree and Hall analyzed the images of 33 introductory-level textbooks and found that women only made up 36 percent of the identifiable figures. The team also found an absence of an intersectional approach, where the majority of images of race featured men and the majority of images of women featured white women (1990). In 1996, Ferree and Hall used indexes, scanned pictures, and read large portions of text in 24 introductory sociology textbooks to evaluate the degree to which an intersectional approach was used in the discussion of stratification. The team found that the discussions of the process were highly segregated, with discussions of gender only occurring at the individual level and ghettoized to the chapter on gender (1996). Ferree and Hall encountered textual isomorphism, noting that their comparison of the “eight “best-sellers” to other textbooks

... [yielded] no important differences on dimensions of interest” (1996:936). In 2000, Hall examined the way in which 45 introductory texts “packaged poverty.” She was specifically looking for an intersectional approach to the topic within the textbooks, and, once again, found a series of misrepresentations of gender in the books (2000). She categorized three “problematic strategies” the textbooks used in an attempt at the inclusion of gender and other marginalized statuses: (1) “Homogenizing a group by ignoring the diversity among members of the target group;” (2) Ghettoizing gender, race, or class into separate chapters or example boxes in a way that marks them as separate and treats them as peripheral; (3) the use of context where the text creates “a negative stereotype by locating positive information in contexts that associate the targeted group with stigmatized of topics” (*topical context*) or when the “targeted group is depicted as victims and little or nothing else” (*book context*) (Hall 2000, p. 301-302). Both Ferree and Hall found multiple instances of the misrepresentation of the field of sociology through the ghettoization of gender and lack of an intersectional approach to social phenomena in introductory-level sociology textbooks.

Ferree and Hall’s eye-opening research endeavors sparked revisitations of their studies in later decades. In 2008, Roger Clark and Alex Nunes revisited the study of the raced and gendered images in introductory-level sociology textbooks. Though they found a slight improvement, images of women were still overrepresented in discussions of sexuality, gender, family, and education, and images of men were still overrepresented under the topics of technology and sports. They also noted the absence of feminist theory from most theory chapters, despite its common use in current sociological research (2008). Unfortunately, Clark and Nunes were not the only researchers to document the

inaccuracy of textbooks with regard to gender and feminist theories. In 2013, Jennifer Puentes and Matthew Gougherty assessed the presence of intersectionality in textbooks in a revisit of Ferree and Hall's study from the 1990s. They found very little improvement in the application of the concept across books, and an outright labeling of the term in less than 10 percent of the books reviewed (2013). Across decades the presence of feminist theories and an intersectional representation of gender has enjoyed an upswing in popularity across published sociological research, but studies show it has yet to permeate the introductory-level text.

A multitude of scholars have examined sociological texts for their inclusion and application of feminist theories. Margaret Andersen (1988) examined introductory-level textbooks for the degree to which intersectional approaches to women were used. She found very few inclusions of women of color, noting that the segregation of social life into non-intersectional chapters was likely to blame (1988). In his analysis of the introductory-level textbook, Ben Agger (1989) found an outright absence of feminism from most theory chapters. In the cases where feminist theory was present, he only found what he termed "Girl Scout feminist theory," where a simplistic explanation of liberal feminism was all there was to offer on the topic. He also found that any discussion of feminist theory was only present in the chapters on sex roles, gender, and family, calling "the text's feminism ... domesticated, familial, nonstrident" (1989:367). In a multi-decade assessment of sociology textbooks from three English-speaking nations, Kirsten Harley (2008) found only two books in the sample (both published in 1999) that included feminism or feminist theory in the chapter on theory. Best and Schweingruber (2003) concluded that the simplistic representations of theory within that chapter were

responsible for the absence of feminist theory in their examination of introductory-level textbooks. They noted isomorphism across the texts they examined where the same three categories of structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism comprised the chapter on sociological theory (2003). The absence of feminist theory from books is not limited to introductory-level texts. Jan Thomas and Annis Kukulian (2004) studied sociology theory textbooks and found that overwhelming numbers relegated female sociologists to breakout boxes. The marginalization, absence, and lack of application of feminist theories in sociology textbooks have evidently remained the same in the past 30 years.

As is evidenced by decades of content analyses, most introductory-level sociology textbooks “still have a long way to go in incorporating both gender as a fundamental component in their analyses” and “feminist approaches to understanding the processes, structures, and institutions on which they focus” (Chafetz 1999, p. 620-621).

Introductory-level sociology textbooks ghettoize gender by relegating discussions of the topic to certain content areas within the books. They fail to apply an intersectional approach to the description of the social world and miss opportunities to apply feminist theories to social phenomena throughout the book. These texts also render explanations of the arsenal of tools feminist theories have to offer invisible even within the pages of the chapter on gender. These problematic representations and exclusions of intersectional gender issues and feminist theories cause these textbooks to be inaccurate in their portrayal of the discipline of sociology.

SOCIOLOGICAL RELEVANCE OF FEMINIST THEORIES AND GENDER ISSUES

Sociologists, social scientists, feminist theorists, and scholars in the field of women's studies have argued for a multidimensional description of gender issues and the use of feminist theories in the study of the social world. Scholars have warned of the implications for the lack of coverage of feminist theories and gender issues in textbooks, and have proposed models for their inclusion that can be used either to assess the level of current coverage or express the idealistic version of full inclusion. These same scholars have also theorized explanations as to the absence of gender issues and feminist theories from sociological texts. The remaining portion of the chapter will outline these arguments for inclusion, implications for exclusion, and models for inclusion, as well as go over possible explanations for the absence of gender issues and feminist theories from sociology textbooks.

Arguments for Inclusion

As explained in the previous sections, “new scholarship on women does not automatically get translated into new teaching within the [discipline]” (Andersen 1987, p. 250). Textual records of sociological theory somehow seem uninterested in the inclusion of feminist theory (Alway 1995). The exclusion of discussions of gender from sociology textbooks “leads to distortion and ignorance of their (men's and women's) experiences in society and culture” (Andersen 1987, p. 244). It is unfortunate that feminist theories and gender issues are missing from sociology textbooks because they have a lot to offer the field (Alway 1995). Joan Alway (1995) concisely summed up the advantageous application of feminist theory to sociology stating:

Although feminist theory [began as] a woman-centered perspective, it does not *only* offer explanation of women's situations, experiences and subordination. Nor is it simply the ideology of a social movement.

Feminist theory also offers explanations about how the social world is structured and critiques of how that world has been studied and understood (P. 211).

Feminist theories, in fact, have four points in common with traditional sociological theory: (1) “the effort to theorize more adequately the interrelationships between levels of social reality;” (2) “the treatment of power, resistance and oppression;” (3) the task to “work on effecting a conceptual shift from “either/or” to “both/and” thinking;” and (4) “the effort to establish grounds for assessing knowledge claims that avoid the pitfalls of both objectivism and relativism” (1995:200). Sociologists demand the inclusion of gender issues and feminist theories in their texts. They make arguments for their usefulness, and regularly provide opinions on advantageous applications of feminist theory to existing topics of study.

Sociologists have been studying the category of gender as a master status for virtually as long as the field has been in existence, but the discussion of gender as an achieved status and a recognition of the different experiences between the genders only began in the last 30 to 40 years (Chafetz 1988). Discussions of gender issues have permeated sociological journals, but they have yet to fully integrate into introductory-level textbooks (Roth and Dashper 2016). This has not stopped sociologists and feminist scholars from demanding the inclusion of gender issues in sociological textbooks.

Christine Sleeter, for example, argues that discussions of gender not only need to occur in educational forums, but also specifically calls for a feminist discussion where gender, social class, and race are not additive and are instead discussed as “integrated forms of oppression” (1993:224). Laura Kramer and George Martin, Jr. (1988) agree, arguing that the mainstreaming of gender material, as opposed to token inclusion, strengthens

sociology courses. The inclusion of discussions of gender in sociological textbooks opens the doors to the inclusion of feminist theory because the movement of gender discussions “to the center of the curriculum can produce more representative accounts of society and culture” by allowing students to “see through a more inclusive lens” and reframe the “description, concepts, and theories” concerned with gender (Andersen 1988, p. 123).

Just as there is a call for the inclusion of gender issues in sociology textbooks, so too have sociologists called for the inclusion of feminist theories in these texts. In an opening editorial in the journal of *Theory and Research in Social Education*, Jane Bernard-Powers (1996) echoed her peers by proposing the inclusion of both gender and feminist theory in studies of the social world. A scholar on the sociology of the family, Maxine Baca Zinn (1988), calls for a full-blown integration of feminist theories into textbook discussions of the family. In their interviews of introductory-level sociology textbook authors, Manza et al. (2010) found that even the authors of the textbooks that exclude feminist theories find them of value. The researchers asked 30 textbook authors to rank the most important theoretical perspective for “contemporary sociological research,” and feminist theory came out on top (2010:294). Contemporaries in the field have clearly demanded the inclusion of feminist theories in textbooks.

As explained above, “feminist theories are grappling with issues that are directly relevant to the concerns of sociological theorists” (Alway 1995, p. 225). In an effort to incite the adoption of feminist theories by introductory-level sociology textbooks, sociologists have documented the usefulness these theories have in the field of sociology. According to Chafetz, “the most fundamental contributions of feminist theories have been to demonstrate the thoroughly sociocultural nature of all aspects of the gender

system and the omnirelevance of gender to social life” (1997:116). Andersen (1988) agrees, arguing that feminist theories can offer an intersectional approach within sociology. In their study of textbooks, Rebecca Campbell and Pamela Schram (1995) conclude that missing feminist theories would improve social research, namely qualitative studies, because they ask researchers to acknowledge their biases. Textbook researchers Ferree and Hall (1996) similarly agree that feminist analysis has a lot to offer introductory-level sociology textbooks. They argue that feminist theories have application possibilities in the chapters on gender, race, class, and beyond. Current published research trends have established the usefulness of feminist theories in sociological research, but introductory-level textbooks have yet to follow suit.

Implications for Absence

The same researchers who found discussions of gender and feminist theories missing from sociology textbooks have outlined the implications for their absence from student curriculum. Zinn and Eitzen (1996a) note that textbooks play a role in shaping and defining the sociological discipline for students, and Avon Crismore (1989) argues that the absence of a topic from a textbook has rhetorical implications. While the presence of a theory labels it as useful in research applications, the absence of feminist theories from introductory-level sociology textbooks points to their insignificance to the field (Kuhn 1970). When theories are included within the chapter on theory, their “importance frequently extends well beyond the “theory” chapter, as authors refer to these traditions to guide students through the various substantive topics related later in the books” (Manza et al. 2010, p. 278). Prominent textbook researcher Elaine J. Hall (1988) outlined the most detrimental implications of marginalizing, ghettoizing, and

excluding discussions of gender and feminist theories from introductory sociology textbooks. Hall (1988) points out that professors regularly omit chapters for time, so the omission of discussions of gender and its theories can be easily overlooked if the chapters to which these discussions and theories are relegated do not make the cut. She claims that the ghettoization of the experiences of women sends the erroneous message that “there is sociology, and then there are women” (1988:440). Lastly, Hall (1988) points out that the majority of the discussions of gender outside of the chapter on gender actually take the form of sex-difference statistics void of context. She claims this shallow discussion makes it so “students tend to conclude that these rates reflect differences in human nature or in socialization, and that men and women choose their lifestyles freely without being constrained by larger societal forces” (1988:440). The problematic representation and invisibility of gender issues and feminist theories in introductory sociology texts result in the erasure of part of the field, the delegitimizing of the study of these topics, and the outright perpetuation of an inaccurate account of the sociological discipline.

The way in which introductory textbooks cover issues of gender and feminist theories by ghettoizing them, failing to use an intersectional approach, and leaving them out of the text altogether, results in important parts of the field of sociology to be erased. Andersen (1987) argues that the use of simplistic dichotomies in sociology often erases experiences from view. For example, a discussion of gender that only includes the differences between men and women fails to represent the experiences of Black men, Black women, transgender individuals, and a multitude of other people who do not fit neatly within that one-dimensional binary (1987). Chafetz (1997) also points to the possibility of erasing feminist theories from a survey course on sociology when the topic

is ghettoized to a singular textbook chapter. She claims “this practice (ghettoization) is problematic both because it allows scholars and students to easily skip the topic and because it makes the contributions of feminist theorists appear more narrow and homogeneous than they are” (1997:95). The treatment of gender issues and feminist theories in sociological texts has the unsettling implication of completely erasing them from view.

The lack of space dedicated to gender and feminist theories in textbooks sends a message that these topics are not “of any significance to the sociological theory” (Alway 1995, p. 214). Another implication of the problematic treatment of gender issues and feminist theories in textbooks is that these topics lose their status as legitimate areas of study, and become accessories to legitimized areas of sociology. A dichotomous presentation of gender issues, for example, “legitimate[s] a view of the world for our [*sic*] students which sees men’s experience as central, women’s as peripheral, white experience as the norm, and all the “other” as deviant or exceptional” (Andersen 1988, p. 123). Hall warns of the implications of limiting coverage of women in textbooks by noting, “as measured by the amount of space given to women and women’s issues throughout these textbooks, the message seems clear: there is general sociology, and then there are women” (1988:440). The treatment of gender issues and feminist theories in introductory sociology textbooks results in these topics to be misunderstood or ignored by students. “Not only can segregated information easily be overlooked by students and/or be treated as peripheral in course syllabi and exams, but it also frames the target groups as uniquely separate from mainstream society and fundamental social processes” (Hall 2000, p. 302).

As noted in the discussion of the power of textbooks, students take them at face value. “The omissions, distortions, and misrepresentations in texts [are] thus seen to reflect the social structure,” (Whitty 1985, p. 41) “thereby introducing a beginning student to a field far less rich than the true one” (Villimez 1980, p. 38). The misinformed perceptions and perpetuations of inaccurate pictures of the field impact students of sociology. Suarez and Balaji (2007) warn that subtle rhetorical choices in the way topics are discussed, for example the headings under which they are filed, can impact a student’s perception of the topic. Campbell and Schram (1995) warn of the exclusion of feminist issues from discussions of methodology, claiming that students will practice traditional modes of research, instead. In her call for an intersectional approach in textbooks, Margaret Crocco claims, “silence and/or denial about women of the world in social education produce a climate of ignorance that provides tacit support for perpetuation of conditions that harm women worldwide” (2006:183). Ferree and Hall summed up the implication of the inaccurate portrayal of the field of sociology when they wrote, “without the thorough reconceptualization of society that feminist critics have been urging for some time, the picture of society that informs the discipline will remain both selective and distorted” (1990:530).

The treatment of gender issues as peripheral within introductory-level sociology textbooks is problematic. The ghettoization, misrepresentation, and invisibility of these topics within textbooks are not an accurate reflection of the current field of sociology. Scholars warn of the implications of the treatment of gender issues and feminist theories within textbooks noting the possible erasure of them from a student’s view, the delegitimizing of the topics, and the inaccurate depiction of the field of sociology.

Models for Inclusion

Sociologists actively study issues related to gender and do so with the use of feminist theories. They have argued for the inclusion of these topics within sociological texts, and have warned of the implications of the shoddy coverage of these topics in introductory textbooks. As a result of the lack of integration of gender and feminism in sociological texts a number of scholars have designed models for the integration of gender and theories to do with gender. Lerner, Schuster and Van Dyne, Tetreault, and Clinchy and Zimmerman each developed models applicable to multiple curricular topics. Many of these models are relatively similar, with the shared goal of the full integration of discussions of gender and feminist theory in textbooks. Peggy McIntosh's model has been regularly applied in the multidisciplinary study of textbooks, and has been updated for ease of use on today's texts.

Peggy McIntosh (1983) describes five interactive phases of curricular revision to measure the inclusion of gender and feminist thought in higher education curriculum. Phase one is called *womanless* sociology, where the topics discussed are only from a white male point of view (1983). Phase two is called *women in society*, where women exist in descriptions of social phenomena, but only as exceptions (1983). Phase three is called *women as problem, anomaly, or absence* (1983). This phase is marked by the recognition of the treatment of women as problematic, and usually happens concurrently with Phase two (1983). Phase four is called *women as society*, where women's experiences are accepted as equal to men's (1983). Finally, Phase five is called *lateral consciousness*, which Andersen paraphrases as "a radical transformation" both the minds and work of curriculum writers and decision makers (1987:236). This phase is marked by

the inclusion of every person's unique experiences without use of limiting dichotomous labels. Scholars in multiple fields have applied McIntosh's model to assess the degree to which gender issues and feminist theories have permeated the texts. Andersen (1987) applied this model to her assessment of the degree to which ideas born of women's studies have permeated the arts and humanities, social sciences, and science and technology curriculum. In her study of sociological texts, Andersen (1988) claimed introductory-level textbooks were in the fourth of McIntosh's five phases.

In her assessment of the presence of gendered discussions in introductory-level textbooks, Hall (1988) condensed McIntosh's five-phase model into one containing only three stages. Hall (1988) claims the three stages of gender inclusion into introductory-level sociological textbooks are: (1) *Add women and stir*, where women's issues are portrayed in a way that marginalizes them and attempts to fit them into existing male models. It is also marked by the ghettoization of discussions of women to limited portions of the text (1988). (2) *Women on their terms*, where women's experiences are included fairly in the portions of the text where they are allowed to exist, but the bulk of the mainstream remains unchanged (1988). (3) *Ideal model*, where "theoretical analyses of women's experiences become the basis for a reconceptualization of basic concepts, models, and theories of mainstream sociology" (1988:431-432). According to Hall (1988), introductory-level sociology textbooks currently fall in the second stage with regard to their inclusion of gender issues and feminist theories.

In her assessment of primary and secondary school curriculum, Karen J. Warren (1989) critiques McIntosh's five-phase model, claiming that it essentializes women and completely ignores men. Warren argues an integrative model that truly embodies the

inclusion of feminist thought into the curriculum would “make explicit the connections among women, race, and class and provide a blueprint for how related issues of age, affectional preference, religion, and regionalism affect the” field (1989:48). Warren (1989) proposes a seven-phase model to update McIntosh’s work. In Phase one, the textbooks contain gender-biased, race/ethnic biased, and class-biased examples in their pages (1989). In Phase two, textbooks contain examples of/from women, racial minorities, and poor people sprinkled within certain portions (1989). In Phase three, examples from women, racial minorities, and poor people that challenge traditional examples exist within the text (1989). In Phase four, examples predominately or exclusively of/from women, racial minorities, and poor people exist in the text (1989). In Phase five, examples predominately or exclusively of/from “men *qua* men (including Black men, Hispanic men, Native American men, gay men, poor men, fathers, sons, and husbands)” exist in the text (1989:50). In Phase six, predominately or exclusively gendered examples exist in the text (1989). Finally, in Phase seven, the textbook contains “examples that include us [*sic*] all” (1989:50). A review of literature available on introductory sociology textbooks reveals these books exhibit characteristics of Phases three through five. In the Discussion chapter, this study provides evidence for the current phases in which modern, introductory-level sociology textbooks fall within Hall’s and Warren’s models for inclusion.

Explanations for Absence

Despite calls for their inclusion, negative implications for their exclusion, and the existence of plans for their mainstreaming, gender issues and feminist theories have yet to be allowed to fully integrate into the introductory-level sociology textbook. Feminist

theorists, women's studies scholars, and sociologists have posited theories as to why this may be. Some think it may simply be the nature of feminist theories themselves, while others believe sociology's history of ignoring feminist thought is difficult to overcome. The majority of feminist scholars believe that feminist theories have yet to permeate sociological texts because they argue against the traditional way of "doing sociology." Textbook researchers, however, believe that the structure of the introductory-level sociology textbook is what limits the inclusion of gender issues and feminist theories in these texts.

As explained in the previous chapter, first-wave feminism had its eyes set on political and legal gains for women. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that feminism produced theories that asked people to reevaluate the way in which they understood the social world. Scholars agree that the relatively new introduction of feminist theories to sociology and their political origins contribute to their exclusion from sociology textbooks. Joan Alway (1995) and Jessie Bernard (1987) both agree that feminist thought was slow to permeate sociology because it was viewed as too politicized for a field that prided itself on objectivity. The history of the sociological imagination also hinders the acceptance of rich discussions of gender and feminist theories into the field's textbooks. Bernard notes the stratification of areas of sociological study, claiming that in sociology's infancy, "the study of women was low-status stuff" (1987:207). She claims that the ghost of this folkway still influences the lack of scholarly weight placed on discussions of gender (1987). The rendering of the study of gender and its theories as taboo is likely why textbook researchers have found these topics missing or lacking in sociological texts. Despite increased sociological research on gender, the topic has yet to

fully permeate introductory-level texts. Myra Max Ferree, Shamus Khan, and Shauna Morimoto (2007) posit two processes responsible for this occurrence: gender identification and gender polarization. Gender identification is the gendered division of areas of sociological study where topics like gender and family are seen as part of the female domain and topics like methods and theory are seen as part of the male domain (2007). Gender polarization refers to the problematic fact that feminist research (and research done by women) is likely to be thought of as ‘a women’s issue’ while work done by men is more likely to be considered generally applicable (2007). These two concepts are likely the reasons why textbooks researchers regularly find ghettoization and marginalization of gender issues and feminist theories in introductory-level sociology texts.

Just as some people believe the characteristics inherent to gender issues and feminist theories caused their slowed adoption by sociological texts, some scholars believe characteristics inherent to the field of sociology have blocked these topics from being mainstreamed into the curriculum. Chafetz (1997) claims mainstream sociology is inherently masculine and thus antithetical to feminist concerns. Caroline Ramazanoglu (1989) and Marian Lowe and Margaret Benston (1991) claim feminism has a contested history with scientific fields, like sociology, for its disbelief in true objectivity. In essence, feminist theory challenges the traditional way sociology “is done” (Alway 1995). Traditional sociological paradigms can be rigid, as Chafetz (1988) points out when she argues that the difficulty of theory development within American Sociology is to blame for the underrepresentation of feminist thought in sociological texts. Alway (1995) argues that the inability for feminist theory to fit within existing theoretical categories

results in its exclusion from texts. Judith Stacey and Barrie Thorne (1985) agree, claiming that the invisibility of feminism from sociological texts were caused by the dominance of functionalism and by the traditional use of gender as a variable in quantitative analyses as opposed to a factor in social experience. Traditional sociological frameworks are sometimes rigid. The fact “that feminist theory cannot be subsumed into any one of the familiar paradigms, that it challenges “normal” sociological knowledge,” and that it challenges the scientific concept of objectivity are all “factors inhibiting its recognition” (Alway 1995, p. 216).

As noted earlier in the chapter, textbooks are meticulously constructed publications formulated to bend to the will of the market in the search for profits. Goodson (1994) claims that one cannot study textbooks without first familiarizing oneself with the stakeholders in their production. Scholars have taken Goodson’s advice, and claim that the structure of the typical introductory-level sociology textbook is to blame for the exclusion of discussions of gender and feminist theories from its pages. Agger (1989) aptly compares the issue of misrepresentation in textbooks to the chicken or the egg problem. He argues that hegemonic textbooks indoctrinate students with ideas of legitimate sociology, and they, themselves, become instructors who adopt hegemonic textbooks that fall in line with their interpretations of the field. Best and Schweingruber (2003), on the other hand, claim that the standardized book model that comes as a result of textual isomorphism is the problem. The encouragement of rote memorization results in students who do not think critically about the social world around them, and who take the content of the text for granted (Carlson and Sosnoski 2013). Elaine J. Hall (1988) and Nona Glazer (1987) point to the compartmentalization of the social world into

standardized textbook chapters as a major contributor to the exclusion of gender issues and feminist theories from introductory sociology texts. “Although dividing social life into component parts may be a common practice in introductory texts, it is deeply problematic as a teaching strategy because it makes the experience of [marginalized individuals] invisible” (Hall 1988, p. 126). Feminist theorists, sociologists, and women’s studies scholars agree that the standardized design of introductory sociology textbooks contributes to the marginalization, misrepresentation, and exclusion of gender issues and feminist theories from the texts.

Discussions of issues of gender and thorough coverage of feminist theories belong in introductory-level sociology texts. The field of sociology regularly covers these topics, and scholars, themselves, have called for their inclusion. When gender issues and feminist theories are absent or misrepresented in sociology textbooks, important topics in the field are erased from view and delegitimized in a way that paints an inaccurate picture of the field. There exist many models for the inclusion of gender issues and feminist theories in sociology textbooks, the most prominent of which is McIntosh’s, along with the plans that build upon her work thereafter. Scholars from multiple disciplines provide varied explanations for the absence of gender issues and feminist theories from sociological texts, but the issue of their absence still remains.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on the textual analysis of introductory-level sociology textbooks by providing a mixed methods assessment of the treatment of gender issues and feminist theories within 10 top-selling books. It contributes to the literature by updating previous research on gender issues and feminist theories in introductory-level sociology textbooks (Chow 1985; Ward 1985; Andersen

1988; Hall 1988; Agger 1989; Ferree and Hall 1990; Ferree and Hall 1996; Hall 2000; Best and Schweingruber 2003; Clark and Nunes 2008; Harley 2008; Puentes and Gougherty 2013), and by examining both concepts simultaneously. This study also contributes to the literature by researching the inclusion and application of an intersectional lens throughout the books, and by researching the inclusion of minority gender groups such as transgender and genderqueer individuals. The following chapter outlines the content analysis research method used to address the study's research questions, in addition to providing an explanation of the study procedure and data analysis.

Chapter Four: Methods

Decades of content analyses of introductory-level sociology textbooks show they have improved in their use of sexist language, stereotypical imagery, and inclusion of gender within the text, but these studies also conclude the books still ghettoize discussions of gender and feminist theories to narrow parts of the text, and thus miss opportunities to integrate the topics in an intersectional way (Manza and Van Schyndel 2000). This study assesses the treatment of gender issues and feminist theories in modern best-selling textbooks, specifically, the degree to which these topics have permeated each book as a whole. The following chapter provides an overview of the methodological decisions made in the pursuit of this study. First, the chapter will include a list of research questions the study aims to answer, including additional questions used to operationalize the main research questions. The chapter goes on to describe the data sample and data collection procedure. Finally, an explanation of the measurement instrument, data analysis, and study limitations are provided.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In an effort to take stock of the degree to which feminist theories and gender issues have permeated modern introductory sociology textbooks, this study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) How are feminist theories treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks? (2) How are gender issues treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks? In order to answer the research questions, this study uses a discourse analysis that emphasizes framing and presentation. To operationalize the concepts of framing and presentation, additional

clarification questions were conceived based on previous findings in the literature to correspond to each of the research questions.

1. How are feminist theories treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks?

A. How much space is dedicated to these theories?

B. In which chapters do these theories appear?

C. Which stylistic or rhetorical choices are made when presenting these theories?

2. How are gender issues treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks?

A. How much space is dedicated to gender issues?

B. In which chapters do these issues appear?

C. Which stylistic or rhetorical choices are made when presenting these issues?

In order to answer these research questions, this study employed the use of a mixed methods content analysis that evaluates both the manifest and latent content within the textbooks.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a mixed methods content analysis to evaluate the way in which feminist theories and gender issues were treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks. The use of content analysis stemmed from the inherent need for the evaluation of textbooks as defined by the research questions. Below is a description of content analysis, along with the justification for the use of a mixed methods approach to this research technique.

Content Analysis

In her book on feminist research methods, Shulamit Reinharz (1992) compiles a list of terms used to describe the research technique labeled content analysis: textual analysis, literary criticism, discourse analysis, rhetoric analysis, and deconstruction. For the purposes of this study, the term content analysis is primarily used. Gilbert Shapiro and John Markoff encompass the essence of the often-modified definition of content analysis by explaining it as “any systematic reduction of a flow of text (or other symbols) to a standard set of statistically manipulable symbols representing the presence, the intensity, or the frequency of some characteristics relevant to social science” (1997:30). Kathy Charmaz further clarifies the research technique, explaining that the texts evaluated are ones in which the researcher had no hand in shaping, and are evaluated to discover “certain conventions and ... embedded meanings” ([2006] 2010:35). The evaluation of pre-existing data in the use of content analysis categorizes it as an unobtrusive research tool with the benefits of working with non-reactive data that exists beyond the research (Hesse-Biber 2006). There are five purposes for the use of content analysis: “(a) to describe substance characteristics of message content ... (b) to describe form characteristics of message content, (c) to make inferences to producers of content, (d) to make inferences to audiences of content, (e) to determine the effects of content on the audience” (Nevendorf 2002, p. 52). This study undertook the first two purposes in order to describe the way in which feminist theories and gender issues were treated in introductory-level sociological texts. More specifically, this study undertook what Kimberly Nevendorf would call a descriptive content analysis, where the goal was to “describe a particular message pool in almost archival fashion” (2002:53). The specific

ways in which the content of these textbooks was categorized and analyzed can be found later in the chapter.

As a research technique, content analysis has enjoyed an upswing in popularity across multiple disciplines. Content analysis is viewed “generously as a method for describing and interpreting the written productions of a society or social group” (Marshall and Rossman 2011, p. 161). The technique has been applied to textbook research across the fields of economics (Clawson 2002), psychology (Campbell and Schram 1995), social sciences (Wade 1993; Campbell and Schram 1995; Shapiro and Markoff 1997; Stone 1997), and sociology (Kelly 1977; Tischler 1988; Wong 1991; Manza and Van Schyndel 2000; Hood 2006; Puentes and Gougherty 2013). Content analysis can be used by researchers to “critically interrogat[e] the texts and products that comprise culture ... [and] that push women and other minorities to the peripheries of their culture and social interpretive processes” (Leavy 2007, p. 224). Content analysis has also proven effective in evaluating the topics of gender and feminist theory in texts. Patricia Leavy argues “content analysis can be employed by feminists to examine the presence of feminism in a range of cultural artifacts” (2007:225). Ferree and Hall (1996) used content analysis to evaluate the treatment of gender in introductory sociology textbooks, and sparked follow-up studies on the topic (Manza and Van Schyndel 2000 and Puentes and Gougherty 2013). As suggested by Jack Fraenkel (1987), this study updated portions of previously done research on feminist theories and gender issues in introductory-level sociology textbooks. This study employed the use of content analysis as a research technique, and, as explained below, did so using mixed methods.

Mixed Methods

Mixed methods analysis refers to the use of both quantitative and qualitative research design. In the assessment of the written text, the use of mixed methods analysis refers to the assessment of both the manifest and latent content. Other phrases used to describe this content are formal and informal or overt and hidden. A. V. Kelly (1989) explains that the formal curriculum is the written curriculum while the informal curriculum is the set of “other” messages students receive through text. Though some research aims to evaluate content using only one method, proponents of mixed method content analysis argue a richer and more accurate picture is provided by the triangulation that results from the use of multiple methods (Reinharz 1992).

According to Reinharz, “researchers use quantitative content analysis to identify patterns in authorship, subject matter, methods, and interpretation” (1992:155). Ithiel Pool (1959) explains that qualitative content analysis can be used to assess rhetoric, and Klaus Krippendorff (2004) adds that qualitative discourse analysis examines text for the way in which messages are delivered. “Most content analysis researchers advocate a balanced approach, employing systematic procedures that address both manifest, easily-counted content as well as the hidden meanings behind words and pictures that are more suitable for qualitative analysis” (Wade 1993, p. 247-248). Krippendorff (1980) argues that the specific content analysis of textbooks easily lends itself to the examination of both manifest and latent content. Leavy (2007) claims that feminist content analysis is inherently mixed methods, and Geoff Whitty (1985) argues that a clear understanding of a text is only achievable with the study of both the overt and hidden content.

Mixed methods content analyses have been used in the study of gender and feminist theories (Suarez and Balaji 2007 and Tietz 2007), and this study, based in the

literature, utilized the same research technique. In order to capture the nuanced treatment of feminist theories and gender issues in introductory-level sociology textbooks, this study examined both quantitative and qualitative data within the texts. With regard to both feminist theories and gender issues, this study captured the quantitative measurements of space dedication, chapter relegation, and rhetorical choices made when presenting the theories and issues. This study captured the qualitative data of the treatment of the topics within textbooks by noting the use of language or wording and use of examples, which produced either positive or negative latent messages within the framing of feminist theories and gender issues in the text.

TEXTBOOK SAMPLE

Though content analysis can be used to assess various types of content (television, diaries, radio ads, etc), this study specifically undertook the task of analyzing modern, best-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks (Krippendorff 2004). This research project utilized purposive sampling where specific titles in print were sought out for their representativeness of the population. A thorough description of the sampling strategy and sample population are found below.

Sampling Strategy

The source of data for this research endeavor was modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks. Due to the unique needs of survey courses, it is easy to distinguish introductory-level sociology textbooks from other sociological texts via the title, the classification on the seller's website, or the classification on the publisher's website (Manza et al. 2010). In their evaluation of contemporary introductory-level sociology textbooks, Ferree and Hall "found no important differences

on dimensions of interest” between the eight best sellers and the remaining portion of the 24 book sample (1996:936). A possible explanation for this could be the phenomenon of textual isomorphism identified by Best and Schweingruber (2003), where textbooks copy content of the market’s best sellers. There are currently between thirty and forty introductory-level sociology textbooks on the market (Manza et al. 2010), however it follows from the literature that the top-selling books likely represent similar content to the entire population of books available on the market. For this reason, this study used purposive sampling to collect only the top ten best-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks. A search of the Amazon top-seller’s list for introductory-level sociology textbooks provided the names of the textbooks used in the sample.

Sociology textbooks have predictable production cycles where new editions of introductory-level books are released an average of two to three years apart (Graham 1988). The textbooks on the Amazon top-sellers list were often not the most updated editions of the textbooks available on the market. The textbook production cycle explains this occurrence, where textbook editions that have enjoyed being the most recent version for a full three years have a higher sales count than editions that have only been out for less than one year. For this reason, the newest editions of the titles identified as the top-selling introductory textbooks were used in the sample. Appendix A contains a list of the titles of the textbooks that comprised the sample population.

Sample Description

The ten introductory-level sociology textbooks that were part of the sample for this study were the most recently available editions of the textbooks on the Amazon top-seller’s list in May of 2015, with the exception of two books, whose most recent editions

became available during the sample collection process. The textbooks have publication dates between 2010 and 2017, and are fairly evenly spread across date range. The textbooks ranged in length from 350 to 794 pages, and varied in the number of chapters included from 13 to 24. A quick search of publishers reveals there are two types of introductory-level sociology textbooks available: full-length books and primers (also known as core books or essentials). Full-length books tend to be longer, cover a larger range of topics, and have more chapters while books categorized as primers are pared down texts with fewer chapters. The sample of ten top-selling introductory level sociology textbooks was comprised of more full-length books than primers because “full-length textbooks vastly outstrip primers in terms of sales and use,” (Manza et al. 2010, p. 275). As explained by Manza et al. (2010), the decreased number of introductory-level sociology textbooks available on the market is due to market contraction, where smaller publishing houses have collapsed into larger publishing powerhouses. The sample population of textbooks represented all four of the large publishing houses that dominate the sociology market: Cengage, McGraw Hill, Norton, and Pearson.

PROCEDURE

The researcher read every chapter in each of the ten books in the sample population. Though discussions of feminist theories and gender issues are more likely to happen within certain chapters, the entire textbook was read in order to assess the degree to which these topics had truly permeated the texts. Philip Stone (1997) argues for the reading of the text as a whole in order to present an accurate account of the textbook population. Traditionally, mixed methods research on textbooks utilizes indexing in order to locate pages that should be consulted for qualitative analysis. This study, however,

heeded the advice of Hall (1989) and John Macionis (1989), a textbook researcher and textbook author respectively, in their discussion of indexing. Macionis (1989) explained that indexes are often created by someone other than the author, and are not always accurate enough to be relied upon for textbook research purposes. Hall (1989) agreed that her former reliance on indexes might have limited her research if the indexes utilized were inaccurate. Macionis claimed, “If a book is not to be judged by its cover, neither should it be judged by its index” (1989:421). In order to avoid this issue, the researcher read the textbook as a whole and did not use indexing as a data location method.

In order to assess the treatment of gender issues and feminist theories in modern, introductory-level sociology textbooks, the researcher examined both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the textbook. The qualitative aspects of the research questions were addressed by a close reading of each chapter, and the notation of examples where the use of biased, inaccurate, or particularly problematic explanations existed. The quantitative aspects of the research questions required the formulation of additional sub-questions to clarify the original two research questions. The same three sub-questions were used to operationalize the concept of *treatment* in each of the research questions. These sub-questions were: (1) How much space is dedicated to feminist theories or gender issues? (2) In which chapters do these theories or issues appear? (3) Which stylistic or rhetorical choices are made when presenting these theories or issues? A quantitative analysis of the number of pages that featured feminist theories or gender issues was used to answer the sub-question related to space dedication. The same quantitative record of the number of pages in which each chapter dedicated to each topic was used to record the chapters in which the theories or issues appeared. Additionally,

quantitative data was analyzed to assess the stylistic and rhetorical choices made in the presentation of each topic. The indicators for the stylistic and rhetorical treatment of feminist theories were: header labeling, concept labeling, visual markers, and segregation. With regard to gender issues, the indicators of type, categorization, visual markers, and segregation were analyzed to answer the sub-question related to stylistic and rhetorical choices.

In order to collect the qualitative and quantitative data needed to answer the research questions, the researcher used a coding sheet. The coding sheet was pre-tested on a small portion of the sample population and modified to reduce subjective coding and increase reliability. In order to increase validity, the coding sheet used data indicators stemming from the literature. A more in-depth discussion of the coding sheet can be found below, and a blank copy of the coding sheet is located in Appendix B.

Quantitative Data

Using a coding sheet, the researcher recorded a series of quantitative data that reflected the treatment of gender issues and feminist theories in the textbook sample population. The indicators can be classified into two categories: overview data and instance data. The overview data reflect foundational indicators of the treatment of feminist theories and gender issues at the higher level of the book or chapter. The indicators recorded were the type of book, the definition of each of the topics, and the percentage of pages dedicated to each topic at both the chapter and textbook level. The second set of indicators recorded reflected rhetorical choices made by the author in the framing of both gender issues and feminist theories at the lower level of each instance or appearance of the topics within the text. The researcher coded for the visual presentation

of each topic by noting the use font cues and/or segregation. Additionally, the researcher recorded the label under which feminist theories were presented throughout the text, and recorded the categorization of the gender issues presented within each chapter.

Type of book. On the coding sheet, the researcher identified the textbook as either a full-length textbook or a primer. Primers, also known as core books or essentials, are pared down textbooks that cover fewer topics and have fewer chapters. Primers are aimed at institutions that teach on a 10-week cycle known as the quarter system, but there is still a tendency for instructors from these institutions to use full-length books aimed at 16-week semester system schools (Manza et al. 2010). Because they are used at semester-length and quarter-length institutions, full-length textbooks tend to outsell primers (2010). For this reason, the sample population comprised of best-selling textbooks featured fewer primer-length books than their full-length counterparts.

Topic definition. Reinharz argues that the important tasks of early content analysis were “recognizing that information was missing about particular women and about women in general [and] identifying such exclusions, erasures, and missing information” (1992:162). Numerous textbook studies have found erroneous information on the topics of concern, and have found biased or stereotypical information (Wade 1993). With these facts in mind, this study recorded each textbook’s definition of gender and feminist theories in order to assess whether or not the definitions were present, and their degree of accuracy.

Space dedication. In order to assess the degree to which gender issues and feminist theories have permeated modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks, this study recorded the amount of space dedicated to each topic at both the

chapter and textbook level. The indicator of space dedication was operationalized to reflect the research of Suarez and Balaji (2007) who counted the number of pages containing material related to their topic of study. The researcher therefore recorded the number of pages on which either gender issues or feminist theories and theorists appeared within each chapter. Not every page of a textbook, however, was deemed codeable by the researcher. Tables of contents, transition pages, and the glossary were some of the pages not coded for use in the study. An example of a non-codable page can be seen in *Figure 1* (all figures in Appendix C). The number of pages dedicated to feminist theory and gender issues were tallied and converted to a percentage of codable pages in the textbook. The coder erred on the side of inclusiveness to reflect Suarez and Balaji's (2007) coding style. In addition to noting the amount of space dedicated in the entire textbook to feminist theory and gender issues, the percentage of pages with instances of both was calculated at the chapter level in order to reflect Stone's (1996) measurement of ghettoization, or the relegation of a topic to certain parts or chapters of the text.

Visual presentation. In her second published study of introductory-level sociology textbook content, Hall wrote, "I propose that presentation formats should be studied precisely because they can function either to reinforce or to counteract the substantive content of the written text over which the author presumably has control" (2000:300). In order to answer the portion of the research questions concerned with the rhetorical choices made in the presentation of gender issues and feminist theories in the sample population, this study collected information on the way in which the topics were visually presented to the reader. The indicators of visual presentation were font cues and segregation. Font cues was operationalized to include instances where the font was set

apart from the main text through the use of italics, bolded lettering, font color, or highlighted text. An example of both a gender issue and feminist theory visually called out in the text can be seen in *Figure 2*. Segregation was operationalized to include instances where the concept presented was visually removed from the main text with the use of lines, illustrations, shading, or a different typeface. The two main ways in which authors present ideas outside of the main text are through the use of *breakout boxes*—short ideas in brief, and *sidebars*—slightly longer ideas presented in article form (Institute of Reading Development 2016). The Findings chapter offers a more detailed description of the current trends in text segregation, but an example of a coded portion of segregated text can be seen in *Figure 3*.

Labeling of feminist theories. Textbooks are comprised of considerate text that flags the importance and organizational level of each topic with headings (Institute of Reading Development 2016). As mentioned above, the researcher coded for the presence of feminist theories in each textbook, however an additional level of coding was used to capture the rhetorical choices made in the presentation of the topic. The coder recorded the labeling of feminist theories within the text in two ways. The heading under which the definition of feminist theories was found was recorded because the “heading explicitly signaled to the students the importance of a theoretical tradition” (Manza et al. 2010, p. 279). Also, each time a feminist theory or theorist was mentioned within the text, the researcher recorded whether or not the theory or theorist was labeled as feminist. Krippendorff argues that “content analysis is context sensitive,” therefore the labeling of a theory or theorist as feminist carries rhetorical weight in the eye of the reader (1980:30). To reflect this argument the researcher designed a nested coding schema

where feminist theories that were either labeled or unlabeled, as can be seen in *Figure 4*, were both counted as instances of the presence of feminist theory. In his study of the treatment of religion in introductory-level sociology textbooks, Kelly (1977) argues that the use of bibliographical information to include theorists was not as effective as the use of an in-text allusion. For this reason, only the presence of feminist theories or theorists in the text was recorded, and bibliographic information, which was not always present, was not coded. An example of the use of feminist theory in bibliographical form that was not counted as an occurrence of feminist theory can be seen in *Figure 5*.

Categorization of gender issues. As outlined in the Feminist Theory and Gender Issues Chapter, the current definition of gender identifies people on a scale or continuum, as opposed to a binary. In order to assess the degree to which accurate depictions of gender have permeated the text, this study not only aimed to identify gender issues concerned with men and women, but also with those concerning alternative gender identifications including transgender, genderqueer, intersex, and others. In a review of textbook analysis studies, Rahima Wade (1993) found that over half of the studies reported that textbooks avoided coverage of controversial areas of the topic studied. In order to assess the degree to which all presentations of gender were covered in the textbooks, including controversial ones, the researcher recorded the type of gender issue presented as either to do with men, women, both men and women together, or all alternative gender presentations including, but not limited to, transgender, intersex, and genderqueer.

Though studies have found discussions of gender in multiple parts of sociology textbooks, these studies report these discussions as typically relegated to particular parts

of the text and with reference to gendered topics like family and socialization (Hall 1988; Agger 1989; Clark and Nunes 2008). Hall claims that the relegation of discussions of gender to certain topics portrays the rhetorical message of “general sociology” being separate from discussions of gender (1988:440). In order to record the rhetorical choices made when discussing instances of gender, the researcher recorded the social realm to which these discussions related. The coder loosely used inductive coding by beginning with categories derived from the literature, but remaining flexible in order to expand or collapse existing categories to reflect the coded text. The following categories were used: Oppression, Socialization, Sexualities, Romantic Relationships, Parenting, Marriage, Work, Poverty, The State/Law, Education, Religion, Culture, Health/Medicine, Sports, and Other. During the coding process, the Other category was expanded into the categories of Aging, Media, Technology, Language, and Violence.

Pool (1959) identifies two ways in which to measure the degree to which a concept has permeated a text: intensity and contingency. Intensity refers to the frequency of appearance in the text, while contingency refers to how often that topic appears jointly with another topic of interest. The measurement of intensity was addressed by the calculation of the number of pages on which gender issues appeared within each chapter and the textbook as a whole. The concept of contingency, however, represents a rhetorical choice made by the author. This study measured the contingency with regard to the application of an intersectional approach to gender issues. Besides noting the type and categorization of the gender issues presented in each text, the researcher also noted whether or not the gender issue reflected an intersectional discussion of the topic.

Qualitative Data

This study also addressed the qualitative aspect of assessing how the topics of gender issues and feminist theories were treated in the sample textbook population. This was done by noting both positive and negative latent messages with regard to the topics; like biased examples, partial definitions, or the use of thorough, up to date, definitions. “Many researchers assert that the inclusion of text passages to support their findings” provides a more complete depiction of the research for the reader (Wade 1993, p. 248). For this reason, the researcher noted the page number of examples for inclusion in the explanation of findings on the coding sheet. These examples reflect the gamut of instances of average, exemplary, and problematic discussions of feminist theories and gender issues in the texts examined.

MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

Shapiro and Markoff argue, “at minimum, there must be some rules (as opposed to feelings or intuitions) determining the text that is to be studied and some standard set of coding decisions that are to be applied to all of that text” (1997:3). The use of a standardized tool while coding reduces the chances of coder influence on data collection, and allows for successful study replication (Krippendorff 1980 and Robert 1990). This study employed a coding sheet to ensure that coding decisions were consistent and reliable, and utilized similar coding methods as established studies. Like Ferree and Hall (1990 and 1996) and Suarez and Balaji (2007), this study employed a coding sheet utilized by a human coder in order to capture both quantitative data and qualitative examples within each book. The researcher created the coding sheet and modified it after a series of pre-tests on textbooks from the sample. The two-page coding sheet can be found in Appendix B. The first page of the coding sheet captured the general quantitative

data of the textbook as a whole, while the second sheet captured both quantitative data found at the chapter-level, and page numbers that indicate examples for use in the qualitative assessment. The researcher populated the coding sheet during the reading of each chapter of the textbook.

DATA ANALYSIS

Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed in order to address the research questions. The quantitative data was analyzed using frequencies to calculate descriptive statistics. A description of the percent of pages dedicated to each topic and the frequency of the labeling of feminist theories was examined. Additionally, a calculation of the frequency of the use of visual markers or segregation from the main text with regard to both feminist theories and gender issues was completed. Cross-tabulations of the occurrence of multiple quantitative measures were done. These include the relationship between the gender issue category and the appearance of an intersectional approach. Additionally, a comparison of the type of gender issue found within each category was calculated, as well as a descriptive listing of the percent of coverage in the text. Each of these comparisons and descriptive statistics was compiled into tables.

The qualitative analysis of the textbooks examined the latent messages being portrayed in the framing of feminist theories and gender issues in the sample population. This includes instances where the language or examples used to describe the topics is biased in some way, problematic, or inaccurate. Examples of latent messages within the text were selected to represent instances of exemplary representation, problematic representation of topics, and average representation of each of the topics. These examples

are included in both the upcoming Findings and Discussion chapters using both quotations and images of textbook pages.

Chapter Five: Findings

This study employed a mixed methods content analysis to evaluate the way in which feminist theories and gender issues were treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks. In order to answer the research questions, additional clarification questions were conceived based on previous findings in the literature as a way to operationalize the treatment of each concept.

1. How are feminist theories treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks?

A. How much space is dedicated to these theories?

B. In which chapters do these theories appear?

C. Which stylistic or rhetorical choices are made when presenting these theories?

2. How are gender issues treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks?

A. How much space is dedicated to gender issues?

B. In which chapters do these issues appear?

C. Which stylistic or rhetorical choices are made when presenting these issues?

To gather both quantitative and qualitative information that speaks to the research questions, this study employed the use of a coding sheet. The following chapter describes the information gathered with regard to feminist theories and gender issues by reporting quantitative and qualitative results separately. The quantitative results section will feature the descriptive statistics of each measured marker on the coding sheet, as described in the Methods chapter, and the qualitative results section will feature the main themes found with regard to the rhetoric in each book.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Each of the ten textbooks in the sample was coded for a series of markers to assess the treatment (operationalized as framing and presentation) of feminist theories and gender issues. The following is a description of the quantitative results of the measurement of the manifest content in the sample. There will be an overview of the treatment of feminist theories and gender issues in the sample set as a whole, followed by a lower level breakdown of statistics regarding each marker measured in the treatment of each concept.

The sample as a whole was inclusive of both feminist theories and gender issues in that all ten books featured gender issues outside of the chapter on gender, and featured feminist theories outside of the chapters on theory and gender. Each book dedicated 2 percent or more codable pages to feminist theory, and 13.6 percent or more codable pages to gender issues. The highest recorded percentage of codable pages dedicated by a book to feminist theory was 14.6 percent, and to gender issues was 35.5 percent. *Table 1* lists the percentages of space dedication to each topic within each of the textbooks coded. As can be seen in *Table 1*, there does not exist a correlation between the publisher, publication year, or type of textbook (full length or primer) and the amount of space dedicated to each topic. In fact the sample varied widely, with a range of 12.6 for the percent of codable pages dedicated to feminist theory and 21.9 for the percent of codable pages dedicated to gender issues. The textbook with the highest percentage of codable pages dedicated to feminist theory was *Soc4* by Nijole Benokraitis, and the textbook with the highest percentage of codable pages dedicated to gender issues was *Sociology: The Essentials, 8th Edition* by Margaret Andersen, Howard Taylor, and Kim Logio. Both

textbooks were published by Cengage, and both were primers. The textbook with the lowest percent of pages dedicated to feminist theories was *Sociology: The Core, 11th Edition* by Michael Hughes and Carolyn Kroehler, and the textbook with the lowest percent of pages dedicated to gender issues was *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist, 5th Edition* by Dalton Conley. The Hughes and Kroehler book was a primer published by McGraw Hill, and the Conley book was a full-length book published by Norton.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Textbook Sample.

Publisher	Title	Author(s)	Pub. Year	FL or Primer	Coded Pages	Pgs Feminist Theory	Pgs Gender Issues
Cengage	<i>Sociology: The Essentials, 8th Ed.</i>	Andersen et al.	2014	Primer	369	6.2%	35.5%
	<i>Soc4</i>	Benokraitis	2015	Primer	323	14.6%	31.0%
	<i>Sociology in Our Times, 10th Ed.</i>	Kendall	2014	Full Length	548	6.0%	19.7%
McGraw Hill	<i>Sociology: The Core, 11th Ed.</i>	Hughes and Kroehler	2012	Primer	394	2.0%	19.8%
	<i>Sociology, 13th Ed.</i>	Schaefer	2011	Full Length	381	6.8%	22.6%
Norton	<i>You May Ask Yourself: An Intro. to Thinking Like a Sociologist, 5th Ed.</i>	Conley	2017	Full Length	685	6.6%	13.6%
	<i>Introduction to Sociology, 10th Ed.</i>	Giddens et al.	2016	Full Length	494	5.3%	22.7%
Pearson	<i>THINK Sociology, 2nd Ed.</i>	Carl	2010	Primer	263	9.9%	16.0%
	<i>Sociology: A Down to Earth Approach, 12th Ed.</i>	Henslin	2013	Full Length	617	3.1%	20.8%
	<i>Sociology, 15th Ed.</i>	Macionis	2013	Full Length	622	6.3%	22.2%

Note: Rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

Additionally, the sample set of textbooks was homogenous in that none varied drastically with regard to the standardized inclusion and location of the definitions of feminist theory and gender. Each of textbooks contained a definition of either feminism or feminist theory. Of ten textbooks, eight defined feminist theory, while two defined feminism in their theory chapters. Each of the books organized their explanations of feminist theory or feminism either under their own separate headings, or under conflict theory within the theory chapter. Only one book, *Sociology: A Down to Earth Approach, 12th Edition* by James Henslin, defined feminist theory in the gender chapter, however the concept was mentioned under conflict theory in the theory chapter, and the reader was referred to the Gender Chapter for further explanation of the topic. Each of the textbooks provided modern definitions of gender that did not conflate sex and gender. The completeness and thoroughness of each textbook's definitions of feminist theory, feminism, and gender varied, but each book minimally met the aforementioned descriptions.

Another way in which the sample of textbooks was similar, was that each one took an intersectional approach to multiple topics within a variety of chapters. The degree to which an intersectional approach permeated each textbook varied widely, as will be further discussed below, however each textbook was coded as having discussed a gender issue with an intersectional lens an average of 28.4 times per textbook. Despite some textbooks lacking a formal definition of intersectionality, the concept seems to have at least minimally permeated the textbook sample. Though the textbooks within the sample varied greatly with regard to their coverage of feminist theories, gender issues, and intersectionality, none of the books blatantly ignored the topics or erased them from their

contents, as was the case in previous findings (Hall 2000 and Best and Schweingruber 2003).

Feminist Theories

As mentioned in the Methods chapter, a number of statistical markers were recorded on the coding sheet to measure the framing and presentation of feminist theories, feminism and feminist theorists within the data sample. The following is a description of the statistical findings with regard to the markers of page length, labeling, visual markers, and segregation from the main text. Additionally, the higher-level trend of ghettoization will be discussed. *Table 1* and *Table 2* can be referenced for specific percentages related to each coded marker.

Table 2: Feminist Theories Across Sample.	
Total coded instances of feminist theories, theorists, or concepts (FT).	254
% FT occupied more than one page.	16.5%
% FT labeled as Feminist.	49.2%
% FT visually highlighted.	40.6%
% FT segregated from the main text.	15.7%
Most common way FT segregated.	Breakout Box

Notes: Percentages rounded to the nearest tenth.

Sample of consisted of 4,696 codable pages.

Page length. As shown in *Table 2*, a total of 254 instances of feminist theories, feminist theorists, or feminist concepts were recorded across the ten textbooks in the sample. The 254 instances represent a total of 313 coded pages, however it should be noted that each instance was rounded to the nearest whole page. The overwhelming majority of instances where feminist theories, feminist theorists, or feminist concepts were featured in each textbook were one page or shorter in length. There were, however, 42 coded instances that were two or more pages in length, representing about one-sixth of

the incidences. The highest number of pages on which a singular discussion of feminist theory lasted was five.

Labeling. This study noted whether or not each instance of a feminist theory, a feminist theorist, or a feminist concept was labeled as such. An example of a labeled feminist theory can be seen in *Figure 6*, where West and Zimmerman are labeled as gender theorists. Another example of a labeled feminist theorist can be seen in *Figure 7* where Peggy McIntosh is labeled a feminist scholar. The coder erred on the side of inclusiveness to reflect Suarez and Balaji's (2007) coding style, which included counting the instance of feminist theory as labeled as long as it was done before the author moved onto the next subsection. A careful reading of each textbook in its entirety, as rationalized in the Methods chapter, proved important in some instances where the labeling of a theory or theorist was not done until later in the subsection. An example of this can be seen in *Figure 8*, where Harriet Martineau is not labeled as feminist until more than halfway through the paragraph in the section. A total of 125 instances of feminist theory, representing 49.3 percent, were labeled as feminist. The remaining half (51.7 percent) of instances where a feminist theory, theories, or concept were present in the textbooks remained unlabeled. Many times the unlabeled theories, theorists, or concepts were explained without context to feminism or other theoretical viewpoints, however other times the instances were simply an issue of choosing to frame the instance in a different light. An example of a difference in framing can be seen in *Figure 9* where Arlie Hochschild, a sociologist whose work contributed greatly to the studies of women and gender, is labeled only as a sociologist. Though this labeling is not erroneous, it does not credit her with being a gender scholar. Another example of this can be seen in *Figure 10*,

where Patricia Hill Collins is mislabeled in a similar manner. An example of a feminist concept being framed differently can be found in *Figure 11*, where the feminist practice of applying an intersectional perspective is mislabeled as “intersection theory” in the explanatory paragraph, is not labeled as feminist, and is housed under conflict theory. Many textbooks house feminist theory under conflict theory, however, this book erases the heavy link between feminist theory and the use of intersectionality or an intersectional approach. In a similar way, the feminist concept of “doing gender” is housed under symbolic interaction theory instead of the neighboring header of feminist theory in *Figure 12*. Though this classification is not inaccurate, it erroneously relocates the work of feminist theorists West and Zimmerman (1987) outside the realm of feminist theory.

Visual markers. As explained in the Methods chapter, visual markers are when a feminist theory, theorist, or concept is called out through the use of stylistic elements in the text. This includes highlighted words, bolded font, italicized font, or words of a different size or color. Of the total instances of a coded feminist theory, theorist, or concept, about two-fifths were visually highlighted with the use of one or more of the aforementioned stylistic techniques. An example of a feminist concept that is visually set apart from the main text with the use of a bolded font can be seen in *Figure 13*, where the concept of intersectionality is bolded as a vocabulary word within the text. An example of a visually highlighted feminist theorist can be seen in *Figure 14* where Harriet Martineau is not only labeled a feminist, but also visually called out by the use of a header made up of a larger font that is also a different color from the main text.

Segregation. Hall (2000) found that discussions of gender were often relegated to areas set apart from the text such as sidebars and breakout boxes. Breakout boxes as well as infographics and vignettes were very common throughout the textbooks, and will be discussed in further detail in the qualitative findings section. Feminist theories, theorist, or concepts were set apart from the main text using one of the forms of textual segregation a total of 40 times, representing 15.7 percent of instances. The most common way in which a feminist theory, theorist, or concept was segregated was through the use of a breakout box. An example of a labeled feminist theorist found inside of a breakout box can be seen in *Figure 15* with Judith Stacey's take on traditional families. An example of another form of textual segregation is an infographic, characterized by the use of bright colors and images to portray whittled down, essential information (further discussed in qualitative section). An excellent example of a feminist concept in an infographic can be seen in *Figure 16* where a timeline is used to relay important milestones to explain Third Wave Feminism.

Ghettoization. Hall (1988) and Feree and Hall (1996) found that discussions of gender and its theories were often relegated to the chapters on Gender, and did not permeate the text much beyond that. In order to measure the degree to which discussions of feminist theory had permeated other chapters, this study noted the chapter in which each instance of a feminist theory, theorist, or concept was found. A ranking was created of the top three chapters of each book that contained the highest percent of pages of feminist theories, theorists, and concepts. The chapters on Gender and Theory occupied two of the top three spots in all but one textbook. The Theory chapter in *Soc4* by Benokraitis was ranked as having the highest percentage of pages dedicated to feminist

theory, and the chapter on Gender was ranked in the number four spot. When filtering out the expected chapters of Theory and Gender, the most common to have either the most, second-most, or third-most percent of pages dedicated to feminist theory was Family, followed by Socialization and Class. Other chapters that occupied one of the top three spots in the textbook sample were Methods, Health and Medicine, Culture, Sexuality, and Economy and Religion (a combination chapter, further discussed in the Qualitative section). In this study, the overwhelming majority of discussions of feminist theory were ghettoized to the chapters on Theory and Gender. This study also found that the next most common chapters to have high percentages of pages dedicated to feminist theory, Family and Socialization, were chapters historically linked to the discussion of gender.

Gender Issues

This study employed the use of a coding sheet in order to quantitatively assess the treatment of gender issues in the sample textbooks. The quantitative treatment of gender issues within the textbooks was operationalized by the lower-level markers of page length, visual highlights, segregation, gender type, issue category, and an intersectional approach, as well as the higher-level assessment of the statistical spread across chapters. The following is a description of both the lower-level and higher-level measurements of treatment, where *Table 3*, *Table 4*, and *Table 5* can be referenced for specific percentages related to each coded marker.

Table 3: Gender Issues Across Sample.	
Total coded instances of gender issues (GI) within sample.	957
% GI occupied more than one page.	20.1%
% GI visually highlighted.	45.9%
% GI framed intersectionally.	29.7%
% GI segregated from the main text.	17.1%
Most common way GI segregated.	Breakout Box

Notes: Percentages rounded to the nearest tenth.

Sample consisted of 4,696 codable pages.

Page length. Across the sample of ten textbooks, there were 957 instances of gender issues, accounting for a total of 1,237 coded pages dedicated to gender issues. It should, however, be noted that each instance was rounded to the nearest whole page. As can be seen in *Table 3*, the overwhelming majority, nearly four-fifths, of the gender issues in the sample were one page or shorter in length. Of the 192 gender issues that spanned two or more pages, the longest three incidences spanned seven pages. These occurred in textbooks where a singular gender issue was analyzed from multiple sociological perspectives, therefore spanning the course of much of the chapter.

Visual markers. As explained both in the Feminist Theory section above and in the Methods Chapter, visual markers are when a concept or topic is called out through the use of stylistic elements in the text. This includes highlighted words, bolded font, italicized font, or words of a different size or color. In slightly less than half of the gender issues found in the sample set, visual markers were used to separate the gender issue from the main text. An example of the use of both italicized and bolded font to visually highlight a gender issue can be seen in *Figure 17*, where the concept of pink-collar jobs is discussed in a chapter on social class. Regardless of the stylistic element used, the

majority of gender issues that were visually highlighted were called out for the purpose of visually distinguishing the concept as a vocabulary word for students to learn.

Segregation. Of the 957 gender issues recorded across ten textbooks, 164 (17.1 percent) were segregated from the main text through the use of breakout boxes, infographics, or vignettes. The overwhelming majority of the segregated gender issues were found in breakout boxes. An example of a gender issue found segregated from the main text can be seen in *Figure 18*, where a one-page infographic relays data about unemployment rates. This particular example was coded as relating to both men and women and as representing an intersectional approach because the infographic described the issue in relation to both men and women, as well as with regard to educational attainment, race, and country. The statistical markers of gender type and intersectional approach are further discussed below.

Gender type. This study noted the specific gender to which each gender issue spoke, coded into four categories: Men, Women, Both, and Transgender (abbreviated as Trans+ in *Table 4*). As explained in the Methods chapter, the category of Both represents gender issues pertaining to both men and women, in alignment with the gender binary, while the category of Transgender represents gender issues pertaining to transgender, genderqueer, intersex, and non-binary expressions. Over half, of the coded gender issues, 61.2 percent to be exact, pertained to women or were framed in a way that solely discussed women. The next most common type was Both, where 30.4 percent of the coded gender issues either pertained to men and women or were framed in a way that discussed gender as a binary. Of the coded gender issues, 6.5 percent fell into the Men type as pertaining to men, or being framed in a way that solely discussed men. Finally,

the least common type of gender issue was Transgender, where 1.9 percent of the coded gender issues discussed transgender, genderqueer, intersex, or non-binary individuals. The overwhelming majority of gender issues discussed women by falling into the Women or Both type. Some textbooks deliberately framed gender issues that are typically associated with women with a discussion of their relationship to men instead of, or in addition to, the women discussion. This can be seen in *Figure 19*, where the topic of violence is framed around men and their experiences as victims of violence. An additional breakdown of each gender issue type can be found in the following section on gender issue categories.

Category. As outlined in the Methods chapter, the researcher coded each gender issue for the social issue to which it pertained out of a total of nineteen possible options. As represented in *Table 4*, the most common gender issue category was Work, followed by Socialization, at well over 100 instances each. The least common categories were Language, Technology, and Sports, at 15 or fewer instances each. Within each gender issue category, certain gender issue types were more common than others. As shown by *Table 4*, the categories of Sports, Oppression, Poverty, Work, and The State/Law were framed by a discussion of women over 75 percent of the time. In fact, each gender issue category was framed as either a Women's or Both men's and women's issue a minimum of 67 percent of the time. In the instances of Language, Romantic Relationships, and Technology, these were the only two ways in which the gender issue was framed. The gender issue categories where the issue was framed as to do with Men were Education, Health and Medicine, Sexualities, and Violence over 10 percent of the time. Another interesting finding was that about two-thirds of categories did not frame gender issues

outside of the gender binary, ignoring the Transgender coding. The categories that did contain Transgender gender issues were Culture, Education, Oppression, Religion, Sexualities, Socialization, and the State/Law. Sexualities is the category with the highest proportion of transgender issues, at one-fifth.

Table 4: Overview of Gender Issues Across Sample.						
Category of Gender Issue	Total in Sample	% Framed Under Gender Type				% Framed as Intersectional
		Men	Women	Both ¹	Trans+ ²	
Work	134	4.5%	79.9%	15.7%	0.0%	29.1%
Socialization	110	7.3%	26.4%	61.8%	4.5%	27.3%
Health and Medicine	81	12.4%	58.0%	29.6%	0.0%	25.9%
Violence	79	11.4%	70.9	17.7%	0.0%	39.4%
Parenting	73	5.5%	64.4%	30.1%	0.0%	39.7%
The State/The Law	69	5.8%	78.3%	14.5%	1.4%	30.4%
Oppression	69	0.0%	88.4%	10.1%	1.5%	34.8%
Marriage	66	3.0%	43.9%	53.0%	0.0%	21.2%
Education	49	18.4%	59.2%	20.4%	2.0%	36.7%
Poverty	42	2.4%	85.7%	11.9%	0.0%	50.0%
Sexualities	40	12.5%	5.0%	62.5%	20.0%	12.5%
Media	34	0.0%	73.5%	26.5%	0.0%	8.8%
Religion	23	4.3%	65.2%	26.1%	4.3%	30.4%
Aging	23	4.3%	73.9%	21.7%	0.0%	21.7%
Culture	22	4.5%	36.4%	54.5%	4.5%	45.5%
Romantic Relationships	16	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	18.8%
Sports	15	6.7%	93.3%	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%
Technology	7	0.0%	42.9%	57.1%	0.0%	14.3%
Language	5	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Notes: Percentages rounded to the nearest tenth.

Sample consisted of 4,696 codable pages, with often more than one GI per page.

¹Gender Type coded as pertaining to Both Men and Women in alignment with gender binary.

²Gender Type coded as pertaining to transgender, genderqueer, or other gender categories.

Intersectional approach. In order to measure the degree to which the topic of gender has permeated the textbooks, this study used Pool's (1959) marker of contingency. As explained in the Methods chapter, contingency was operationalized as the frequency with which issues of gender appeared alongside discussions of other master statuses, otherwise known as an intersectional approach. Of the 957 coded gender issues, an intersectional approach was taken 284 times, representing 29.7 percent of instances.

Table 4 provides a breakdown of the proportion of times a particular gender issue category was framed in an intersectional way. The topic of Poverty was framed intersectionally half of the time, the most of all of the categories. Additionally, the categories of Culture, Parenting, Violence, Education, and Oppression were framed in an intersectional way over one-third of the time. On the other end of the spread, the Language category was not framed intersectionally at all. The next lowest categories were Media, Technology, Sports, and Sexualities, which were each coded as intersectional less than 15 percent of the time.

A further breakdown of gender issues that were framed intersectionally shows that the majority of intersectional gender issues (70.1 percent) discussed only women and fell into the Women gender type. An example one such gender issue can be seen in *Figure 20*, where the Hispanic women are discussed under the feminization of poverty topic. Over one quarter (28.5 percent) of the intersectionally framed gender issues fell into the Both gender type, characteristic of a discussion of both men and women. Intersectionally framed gender issues followed a similar breakdown to the total set of gender issues where they were least likely to fall into the Men or Transgender types. The Men gender type represented 6.7 percent of the intersectionally framed gender issues while the Transgender type represented 2.1 percent. *Table 5* provides a detailed breakdown of only the gender issues framed intersectionally across the sample by listing the breakdown across gender category and by gender type. Of these gender issues framed intersectionally, the ones dealing with Sports and Technology discussed Women 100 percent of the time. The category of Romantic Relationships framed intersectional discussions about Both men and women 100 percent of the time. Another finding of note

was that an intersectional discussion of a Transgender issue was only found in the categories of Sexualities, Socialization, and The State/The Law.

Table 5: Intersectionally Framed Gender Issues Across Sample.					
Category of Gender Issue	% Framed Intersectionally	% Breakdown by Gender Type			
		Men	Women	Both ¹	Trans+ ²
Poverty	50.0%	0.0%	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%
Culture	45.5%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Parenting	39.7%	3.5%	65.5%	31.0%	0.0%
Violence	39.4%	6.6%	80.6%	12.9%	0.0%
Education	36.7%	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%	0.0%
Oppression	34.8%	0.0%	87.5%	12.5%	0.0%
The State/Law	30.4%	9.5%	57.1%	28.6%	4.8%
Religion	30.4%	14.3%	71.4%	14.3%	0.0%
Work	29.1%	5.1%	74.4%	20.5%	0.0%
Socialization	27.3%	13.3%	23.3%	50.0%	13.3%
Health and Medicine	25.9%	47.6%	19.1%	33.3%	0.0%
Aging	21.7%	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%
Marriage	21.2%	0.0%	42.9%	57.1%	0.0%
Romantic Relationships	18.8%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Technology	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sports	13.3%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sexualities	12.5%	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%
Media	8.8%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
Language	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Notes: Percentages rounded to the nearest tenth.

Sample consisted of 4696 codable pages, with often more than one GI per page.

¹Gender Type coded as pertaining to Both Men and Women in alignment with gender binary.

²Gender Type coded as pertaining to transgender, genderqueer, or other gender categories.

Ghettoization. In order to measure the degree to which gender issues had permeated chapters outside that of Gender, this study noted the chapter in which each instance of a gender issue was found. A ranking was created of the top three chapters of each book that dedicated the highest percent of pages to gender issues regardless of labeling, visual markers, type, or category. As was expected, the chapter on Gender contained the highest percentages of space dedication to gender issues in nearly all of the books. The only exception to this was *Sociology: The Essentials, 8th Edition* by Andersen et al. which had the highest percent of space dedication in the Sexuality chapter,

immediately followed by the Gender chapter with a difference of one page. When filtering out the Gender chapter, the overwhelming majority of textbooks dedicated the next largest percentage of space to gender issues in their Family chapter. The only exception to this trend was the aforementioned Andersen et al. book, which ranked the Family chapter as the third highest in space dedication to gender issues. This study found that the chapter with the most space dedication to gender issues outside of the Gender chapter was the Family chapter, a chapter historically linked to discussions of gender and listed by Hall (1988) as one of the chapters to which the topic of gender is often ghettoized.

Authorship. During the deliberate analysis of the data in order to answer the research questions using the markers listed above, an incidental finding of interest became evident. As can be seen in *Table 1, Soc4* by Benokraitis was the most inclusive of feminist theory, and also happened to be the second-most inclusive of gender issues. Often textbooks contain blurbs about the author, and it was noted during the coding process that Nijole Benokraitis was prolific in the field of gender studies and often published works primarily concerned with feminist issues. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that the textbook with the second highest rate of inclusion of feminist theory, John J. Carl, had published works on women's issues and other vulnerable populations. Lastly, it was found that Margaret Andersen and Kim Logio, two of the authors of the textbook with the highest inclusion rate of gender issues, had either won awards for feminist lectures or primarily studied gender. Therefore, there seems to be a slight indication that the author's ties to either feminism, gender scholarship, or the study of women may lead to a textbook more inclusive of feminist theory and/or gender issues.

Overall, the textbooks proved to vary greatly with regard to their quantitative markers. This trend of variation also transcended the qualitative results.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

A careful reading of each of the ten textbooks in the sample allowed for the collection of qualitative data with regard to the treatment of gender issues and feminist theories. Upon the analysis of thorough notes collected during the coding process and of pages flagged as exemplary, three major themes became clear. The themes of missed opportunities, “Girl Scout” coverage, and rhetorical choices are explained below, as well as the incidental finding of textual isomorphism.

Textual Isomorphism

As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, some of the quantitative findings listed above indicate isomorphism across the textbook sample. This study found additional ways in which the textbooks were alike, related to rhetorical and stylistic choices made throughout the texts. The analysis of the qualitative data highlighted areas of the textbooks that read identically, namely those of pronoun usage, breakout boxes, and chapter contents.

Pronoun usage. A large number of textbooks regularly used female pronouns throughout their examples, even if the issue being discussed did not directly pertain to gender. One author in particular, Macionis, seemed to have made a point of flipping traditional language order by consistently listing “women and men” as opposed to “men and women.” Some authors, however, made a bigger effort in the inclusion of women’s experiences by featuring the works of female sociologists. One such author was Conely, who featured a female majority in his recurring chapter inclusion of an interview with a

specialist, as seen in *Figure 21*. Caroline Persell et al. claim that “equitable language and imagery can contribute to gender equity,” however this was not the pattern seen across the textbooks (1999:422). Texts varied widely in their inclusiveness of feminist theory and gender issues, and the use of equitable language was seen across the board. Though there was no correlation found between pronoun usage and the degree to which feminist theory and gender issues had permeated each textbook, there definitely existed a trend toward the inclusion of women.

Breakout boxes. In her study of introductory-level sociology textbooks, Hall (2000) noted that many gender issues were sharply segregated into breakout boxes in a way that marked them as different or an exception to the main text. According to the Institute of Reading Development (2016), the two main ways in which content is segregated from the main text in a book is through *breakout boxes*—short ideas in brief, and *sidebars*—slightly longer ideas presented in article form. This study noted a new trend across all textbooks with regard to segregated text. Although the most common way in which concepts were segregated from the main text was with the use of tried and true breakout boxes, other modes of textual segregation have become more common, and the degree of separation from the text has decreased.

In addition to breakout boxes, infographics and vignettes are the new modes of segregating ideas from the main text of a chapter. Vignettes are opening stories, often written in a different font, that begin a chapter and feature a specific example that primes the reader for the upcoming content. Infographics are characterized by the multi-modal delivery of boiled down information in a way that heavily relies on imagery. Each of the common tools for segregating ideas from the main text were coded in this study, and it

was noted that the degree to which the segregated text appears fully separate from the main text has decreased. *Figure 22* depicts a breakout box that is more inviting to the reader. The box technically contains information separate from the main text, but is inviting with an image and a bright background. This is different from the traditional breakout boxes described in earlier studies. Infographics are equally as inviting with colorful imagery and condensed, need-to-know information. Another new feature seems to be a significant increase in the duration of infographics and breakout boxes from those described in previous studies. As opposed to a partial page, a number of breakout boxes and infographics occupied entire pages or multiple pages in the majority of textbooks sampled. The first page of a multi-page infographic can be seen in *Figure 23*, providing bright and inviting coverage of the HIV/AIDS Movement. Overall, textbooks have begun to move away from hard separations from text, and have found ways to make traditional breakout boxes more visually appealing.

Chapter contents. This study noted three main trends with regard to chapter content across the majority of textbooks in the sample. Most textbooks ordered their chapters similarly, recoiled from gender discussions near the Gender chapter, and cloned each other verbatim. All of the textbooks began with discussions of the field of sociology as a whole, with one or two chapters on theory and research methods. They also tended to place the chapters on Race and Gender near each other, and place those chapters in the center of the book. As expected, textbooks tended to fill the pages of the Gender chapter to the brim with discussions of gender. The chapters before and after the Gender chapter, however, tended not to feature many discussions of the topic. For example, both *THINK Soc* by Carl and *Sociology: The Core* by Hughes and Kroehler did not include gender

issues in their Race chapters, which were the chapters immediately preceding their Gender chapters. The most prominent trend this study noted was the direct duplication of large portions of text and of imagery across textbooks distributed by the same publisher. The same Gallup poll on euthanasia appeared in both primers released from Cengage, and a *New Yorker* comic on privilege appeared in multiple textbooks. It appears that each textbook has built their individual contents using the same skeleton in the form of chapter contents. Though each textbook in the sample varied widely in their treatment of the specific topics of gender issues and feminist theories, they contained many structural similarities in the forms of pronoun usage, breakout boxes, and chapter contents.

Missed Opportunities

As explained in the Quantitative results section above, varying amounts of space were dedicated to either gender issues or feminist theory in the coded textbooks, with the highest amount being about one-third. Upon reading each textbook cover to cover, it was evident to the researcher that many topics characterized by discussions of gender often appeared in other textbooks without a discussion of gender. These topics were included across multiple books, but the books that chose to frame the topic without a discussion on gender missed an opportunity to include one of the many ways sociologists study the social world. An example of this phenomenon can be seen in Conley's *You May Ask Yourself*, where the discussion on poverty misses the opportunity to include the feminization of poverty, a common gender issue. Oftentimes, this phenomenon happened at the chapter level, where chapters that contained a substantial amount of space dedicated to either feminist theory or gender issues in one textbook, were ignored in another textbook. An example of this can be found with Hughes and Kroehler's

Sociology: The Core, where they failed to include either gender issues or feminist theory in the chapter on Race. In similar vein, Henslin's *Sociology: A Down to Earth Approach* contains long stretches without the presence of feminist theory, the longest of which is an eight-chapter streak.

Another way in which textbooks missed opportunities to include discussions on gender or feminist theory were with follow through. Many textbooks made deliberate efforts to include gender throughout the texts with the use of recurring headers that called out the topic. Some textbooks, however, used misleading headers that did not deliver on a discussion of gender or feminist theory. For example, Diana Kendall's *Sociology in Our Times* includes a Race, Class, and Gender header under the Religion chapter, but only frames gender in terms of listing the percentage of men and women that are religious. It glosses over the deeper discussion of gender oppression included in other textbooks. In some cases, textbooks failed to follow through completely by providing a blatantly misleading header. Macionis' *Sociology*, for example, included a header called "Thinking About Diversity: Race, Class, and Gender" in nearly all of his textbook chapters. He did not, however, discuss all three topics of race, class and gender each time. The majority of the content under these recurring headers did not include a discussion of gender, despite the header suggesting one would take place. This constitutes a missed opportunity on the part of the author to further integrate gender into his textbook.

Tone setting at the outset of the textbook was another way in which textbooks sometimes did not follow through with their inclusion of feminist theory. As discussed above, almost all of the textbooks defined feminist theory or feminism within their Theory chapter, which is an improvement on Agger's (1989), Harley's (2008), and Clark

and Nunes' (2008) studies of introductory-level textbooks. An example of a textbook that included feminist theory in the Theory chapter, and even did so at the same hierarchical level of other theories, was Conley's *You May Ask Yourself*. The textbook did not fully follow through on the perceived equal framing of feminist theory with other theories. As can be seen in *Figure 24*, the author failed to include feminist theory in the list of vocabulary words in the margin despite raising the other theories to the level of need-to-know information. Another example of a lack of follow through on framing can be seen with Andersen et al.'s *Sociology: The Essentials*, which deliberately states that feminist theory will be included throughout the textbook. Though feminist theory was included throughout the book, it was done so at a rate lower than half of the sample population, hovering near the average amount of coverage. The tone set at the outset of the book seemed exceptionally inclusive, but the delivery fell flat with a missed opportunity to create a textbook with the highest percentage of pages dedicated to feminist theory. Though varied in its manifestation, the theme of missed opportunities presents in both the framing of gender issues and feminist theories throughout the textbooks. Many authors failed to take advantage of opportunities for a deep and inclusive discussion of either feminist theory or gender issues in their books.

"Girl Scout" Coverage

Borrowing from Agger's (1989) language, the theme of "Girl Scout" Coverage refers to the coverage of gender issues and feminist theories in a way that essentializes, ignores, or omits important aspects of each concept. This type of coverage resembles a simplified, cookie-cutter understanding of a concept, devoid of thorough understanding of nuance (Agger 1989). There were four main ways throughout the sample that the

textbooks provided a “Girl Scout” version of the studied topics: essentializing feminist theory, essentializing gender, stacking concepts, and glossing over the transgender experience.

Feminist theory. Agger (1989) first applied the term “Girl Scout” to a type of simplified coverage of feminist theory he found in his assessment of introductory-level sociology textbooks. This study found a similar level of coverage in a large portion of the sample. As will be further discussed below, the exact definitions of feminist theory or feminism varied widely from book to book, however some books provided significantly more superficial explanations of feminist theory. Macionis, for example, defined “Gender-Conflict Theory (or Feminist Theory)” as “the study of society that focuses on inequality and conflict between women and men” (2013:19). This definition of feminist theory glosses over the intricacies of each type of feminist theory and its views on the aforementioned conflict. Another example can be seen in Kendall’s textbook, which defines the “Feminist Approach” as one that “directs attention to women’s experiences and the importance of gender as an element of social structure” (2014:14). This definition is accurate, but does not dive into the diversity within feminist theory. These definitions are much simpler than the one found in Hughes and Kroehler’s (2012) book:

Feminism is not a single theory but an evolving set of theoretical perspectives, including liberal feminism, Marxian feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, radical feminism, and socialist feminism, all of which focus on women’s experiences and on gender inequality and which have had a significant impact on mainstream sociological theory (P. 16).

As in Agger’s (1989) study, this study found that the majority of textbooks in the sample provided simplified definitions of feminist theory that erred on providing an essentialized version of the topic, often characteristic of a liberal feminist definition.

Gender issues. As with the definition to feminist theory, this study found the definitions of gender varied widely between textbooks. The majority of definitions were truncated and shallow, and framed gender in a binary. An example of a lacking definition of gender can be found in Hughes and Koehler's textbook, where they define gender as "a form of social differentiation; it refers to the sociocultural distinction between males and females" (2012:248). Another simplistic example that presents gender along a binary can be seen in Henslin's textbook, where he defines gender as "whatever behaviors and attitudes a group considers proper for its males and females" (2014:289). Neither of these definitions goes on to discuss masculinity and femininity, the existence of more than two genders, or the performative aspect of gender. The authors therefore provided an essentialized version of gender for their readers.

Concept stacking. Four of the textbooks in the sample were primer-length, and thus had as few as thirteen chapters. Some of the full-length textbooks included updated chapter topics like technology and social movements, which were mixed in with traditional chapter topics. Both of these situations resulted in the conundrum of too many topics across too few chapters. This resulted in chapters that combined more than one topic. In an attempt to cover two or more complex topics within one chapter, each author made their own rhetorical choices in the pairing of topics. Examples of drastically different chapter combinations can be seen with Giddens et al.'s chapter entitled Population, Urbanization, and the Environment, juxtaposed with Hughes and Kroehler's chapter entitled Religion, Education, and Medicine. In order to cover two or more complex topics within one chapter, authors often provided rapid-fire, bullet-point style explanations of the issues within each topic. This writing style produced the phenomena

of *stacking*, where an increased number of related topics appear immediately after one another. This manifested itself in this study with the common occurrence of two or more gender issues occurring on one page. Often, a singular page of a chapter with combined topics contained three or more gender issues. An example of this can be seen within the primer-length book *Soc4* by Benokraitis. In the 21-page chapter on Population, Urbanization, and the Environment, half of the gender issues were within a two-page range, and the other half within a three-page range of each other. The theme of stacking was common throughout the textbook sample, as the majority featured chapters with topic combination. This theme is discussed further for its potential implications on the findings in the following chapter.

Transgender experience. The last way in which the textbook sample failed to provide a complete picture of gender was through the erasure of the transgender experience. The majority of textbooks did not discuss gender outside of the gender binary, therefore they did not discuss the experiences of transgender, intersex, genderqueer, or non-binary individuals. The majority of textbooks at least defined the term transgender, but most did not include transgender gender issues outside of the chapter on Gender. The majority of non-binary gender discussions were relegated to the sections on Sexuality and Gender. Additionally, the main instances of non-binary gender discussions occurring in an intersectional way were of the topic of transgender populations abroad. A lack of coverage of gender issues pertaining to individuals outside of the traditional gender binary erased the experiences of these individuals from the textbook sample. The essentialization and omission of large portions of feminist theory

and gender from these textbooks resulted in the transmission of a “Girl Scout” version of each topic to the reader.

Rhetorical Choices

Though some textbooks in the sample were lacking in their coverage of feminist theory and gender issues, many textbooks contained rhetorical choices that resulted in a thorough and well thought out representation of gender issues and feminist theories. These choices made by each author allowed for more complete coverage of each topic. These included header language, revisiting intersectionality, and robust explanations.

Header language. During the coding process, it was easily evident that chapters with headers inclusive of feminist theory and gender were more likely to paint complete pictures of each. Many authors often included headers that labeled the interaction of gender and the particular topic of discussion. An example of this can be seen in *Figure 25*, where the header Race and Gender is featured. Under this header, Hughes and Koehler go on to provide an intersectional approach to their Race chapter. The inclusion of gender in header language can also be seen in *Figure 26*, where Giddens et al. included the header Gender and Religion and went on to provide a discussion of gender in the Religion chapter. Inclusive header language also applied to instances of feminist theory, as can be seen in *Figure 27*, where Schaefer discussed feminist theory in his Education chapter. An example of a particularly inclusive header can be seen in *Figure 28*, where Macionis deliberately provided a rich discussion of feminist theory and gender in his Religion chapter.

Revisiting intersectionality. An intersectional approach was one of the main indicators of inclusion analyzed in this study. Though most textbooks practiced an

intersectional approach to some degree, some books applied the concept in a more thorough manner, and some revisited the concept in areas outside of the feminist theory section. An intersectional approach to a topic of interest can simply be characterized by the discussion of multiple master statuses, and not necessarily include a discussion of gender. Many textbooks that were generally more inclusive of gender issues and feminist theories applied an intersectional approach across the book regularly, even in instances where gender was not discussed. An example of this can be seen in *Figure 29*, where Conely provided an example of a Hmong woman's experience with her child's medical issue that conflicted with religious beliefs. Though this example was not coded for gender because the woman's gender was not a factor in the situation, the example still shared the experience of a religious immigrant family in the Health and Medicine chapter. Some authors revisited the definition of intersectionality outside of the chapter on gender. This can be seen in *Figure 11*, where Andersen et al. provide a definition of intersection perspective, though later mislabeled as intersection theory, in the Race chapter. Overall, textbooks that made an effort to revisit the concept of intersectionality outside of discussions of gender were more likely to be inclusive of gender-based intersectional discussions as whole.

Robust explanations. As discussed above, textbooks often provided different levels of coverage of standardized topics. Some textbooks were more thorough in their coverage of gender issues and feminist theories. The use of robust explanations are where textbooks cover topics in a generalized way and go on to provide additional information that speaks to the complexities or nuances of that topic. Overall, textbooks that were more inclusive of gender issues and feminist theory were more likely to provide thorough

definitions or robust explanations. An example of this can be seen in *Figure 30* where Giddens et al. provided a definition of feminist theory that discussed both the political history of the topic, as well as the modern contribution of an intersectional approach. Another example of the presence of robust explanations to increase understanding can be seen in *Figure 31*, where Macionis included a definition of the term transgender within a discussion of sexuality in order to clarify the distinction between the expression of gender and sexuality. In some cases, the inclusion of feminist theory in a chapter served as a robust explanation in and of itself. Hughes and Kroehler and Macionis included discussions of feminist research methods in their Methods chapter. The inclusion of these discussions further clarified the intricacies of conducting sociological research, and clarified the applicability of each method. Each textbook in the sample contained robust explanations at some point, however the frequency in use of such explanations resulted in vastly different levels of depth of coverage of identical topics across texts. In general, header language, revisiting intersectionality, and robust explanations served as rhetorical choices that resulted in textbooks that provided more complete coverage of gender issues and feminist theories.

Chapter Six: Discussion

As authoritative transmitters of the definitive scope of the sociological imagination, introductory-level sociology textbooks should be periodically reviewed for the accuracy of their portrayal of the field (Khun 1970). Textbook publishing bureaucracy often hinders the rate at which introductory-level textbooks adopt changes to the field (Agger 1989). Feminist theories and issues of gender occupy a significant space in current sociological study, and strong arguments have been made for their inclusion in introductory-level sociology textbooks. Historically, however, coverage of feminist theories and gender issues in these textbooks has been poor (Ferree and Hall 1990; Marquez 1994; Ferree and Hall 1996; Stone 1996; Hall 1998; Best and Schweingruber 2003; Suarez and Balaji 2007; Bradford 2008). In order to determine the current degree of coverage in modern books, this study has employed a mixed methods approach to the review of ten top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks from all four major publishers. This study set out to answer the following questions: (1) How are feminist theories treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level textbooks? (2) How are gender issues treated in modern, top-selling introductory-level textbooks? The previous chapter reported the quantitative and qualitative findings with regard to feminist theory and gender issues, as well as notable findings about the textbooks overall. This chapter will synthesize these findings, contextualize them within the literature, and provide a description of notable texts.

FEMINIST THEORY

This study found a marked improvement in the treatment of Feminist Theory within introductory-level textbooks. The entirety of textbooks in the sample mentioned

feminist theory in their theory chapters, and integrated feminist theory in at least one of other chapters. These results show a huge increase of instances of feminist theory within introductory-level sociology textbooks from the cohorts of books analyzed by Agger (1989), Best and Schweingruber (2003), and Harley (2008). Additionally, the relegation of feminist theory, theorists, and concepts to segregated parts of the text, like breakout boxes, was significantly lower than in the past. This study found that feminist theory was located within a breakout box, vignette, or infographic 15.7 percent of the time, and visually highlighted 40.6 percent of the time. This differs from Zinn's (1988) study where feminist theories were overwhelmingly relegated to sidebars and breakout boxes as exceptions to the rule, and rarely even featured in the main text. This could be due to the phenomenon of textual isomorphism, used by Best and Schweingruber (2003). Textual isomorphism, a result of textbook publishing bureaucracy, is the evolution of textbooks into near-clones due to market competition. Though not as extreme as it may sound, textual isomorphism mostly presents itself through superficial similarities between texts, like layout standardization or the use of similar examples when explaining concepts. Though each textbook varied widely in its application and degree of inclusion of feminist theory, none of the textbooks outright ignored the issue, and each of them made space to include the theory in their Theory chapter. This superficial similarity in the treatment of feminist theory in textbooks indicates that the inclusion of feminist theory in these top-selling introductory-level textbooks was due to isomorphism between texts.

Though there was an improvement in the inclusion of feminist theory within the sample, a number of themes arose in data analysis to show that the cohort of textbooks are still far from ideal. The space dedicated to these theories varied widely between texts,

and they were often ghettoized. Feminist theory was characterized by a lack of follow through within these textbooks, and the robustness of their coverage varied drastically between texts. Half of the textbooks studied sat in the sixth percentile with regard to the percent of codable pages dedicated to feminist theory. The remaining textbooks dropped as low as 2 percent and went as high as 14.6 percent. This huge variation in the amount of space dedicated to feminist theory by each book could be due to either formatting issues or concept stacking. The textbooks sampled came from four different publishers, and were a mix of primers and full-length books. Some publishers used large, bright images to augment the text, while others used images sparingly. Some of the primers coded used a magazine-style layout characterized by slightly larger, san-serif fonts and uncodable knowledge quizzes, while some of the full-length books used smaller, serif fonts alongside small photographs. The page size of the textbooks also varied, with the smallest book being A5 size, and the largest being slightly larger than standard copy paper. In addition to page size, page borders could also have impacted the amount of space dedicated to feminist theory. Some texts were viewed online and did not contain borders, others were received as instructor copies with a border of instructor notes around each page, while the remaining texts lacked a standardized margin. Additionally, some textbooks combined topics into one chapter, which resulted in rapid-fire iterations of gender issues due to space constrictions. The difference in book size, layout, image usage, margins, and chapter content combinations could have all impacted the number of pages each textbook dedicated to feminist theory.

Though the formatting of each textbook varied within the sample, the theme of lack of follow through generally rang true across all books coded. Each author minimally

set the tone for the inclusion of feminist theory throughout the book by placing it in the Theory chapter. Some authors went above and beyond this level of inclusion by outright promising the periodic application of feminist theory, or by sprinkling the concept into some of the chapters. As a general rule, authors did not follow through on this level of commitment to the inclusion of feminist theory throughout the text because they only labeled feminist theories, theorists, and concepts as such half of the time, and they ghettoized the topic into chapters dedicated to gender.

Labeling of feminist theory as such provides context for the reader. With written works, context is especially important, so the labeling of feminist theories, theorists, and concepts was recorded (Krippendorff 1980). This study found that feminist theories, theorist, and concepts were only labeled as such 49.2 percent of the time. In their studies of introductory-level sociology textbooks, Stone (1996) and Agger (1989) found that discussions of gender theories were mostly relegated to the chapters on gender, family, and socialization. Persell (1988), a sociology textbook author, herself, admits that the amount of time dedicated to theory and the choice to carry theory discussions throughout the rest of the text varies largely book to book. This study found similar results where feminist theories were most likely to be found in the Theory, Gender, and Family chapters. This is an issue because the common practice of chapter skipping could possibly erase feminist theory from a student's understanding of sociology, and the ghettoization of feminist theory often leads to its homogenization (Chafetz 1997). Additionally, both Andersen (1988) and Hall (2000) agree that the ghettoization of topics solidifies their place as peripheral to sociology. Ghettoization itself could be a possible explanation for the lack of labeling, where the author does not bother labeling concepts to

do with gender as these feminist theories are in chapters that are characterized by discussions of gender. The general ghettoization of feminist theory to certain chapters could also be due to textual isomorphism. As explained in the previous chapter, the majority of textbooks followed similar chapter topic orders, and tended to cleanse the chapters surrounding the feminist theory binge in the Gender chapter. The pattern of verbatim content copying can also explain the salient pattern of ghettoization, where the ghettoization of feminist theory by one textbook is likely to infect the others when content is transferred over. The trends of labeling issues, chapter ghettoization, and copying of textbook competition all show a lack of commitment to the inclusion of feminist theory by the authors.

Coining the label “Girl Scout” feminism, Agger (1989) found that textbooks often essentialized feminist theory in its pages. He noted that definitions of feminist theory were often condensed down to represent only one type of feminism, specifically gender reformist feminisms that work within the gender binary (Lorber 2012). This study found that the definitions of feminism found within the texts were often “Girl Scout” versions, where gender rebellious theories that operated outside of the binary and feminist theories involving people of color were absent (Lugones and Spelman 1983; Butler [1990] 2006 Lorber 2012). Stacey and Thorne (1985) offer a possible explanation for the use of boiled down versions of feminist theory. They claim that sociology views gender simply as a variable to be factored in as opposed to a factor in the social experience, and therefore theories on gender are rendered invisible. Alway argues that feminist theories are complex and their many types constitute an “absence of a stable, privileged position,” causing them to be ignored (1995:226). She goes on to argue that “feminism’s

fundamental political identity also makes it convenient for sociologist to deal with it primarily as a social movement ... and therefore to treat feminist theory as simply the ideology of a social movement” (1995:215). According to Alway, a “lack of grounding in any of the major sociological paradigms and its questionable status as theory” causes the field of sociology to “neglect and disregard” feminist theory (1995:214). Another explanation for why complete versions of feminist theory do not exist in sociological texts could be due to a lack of necessity. Sandra Acker (1989) argues the existing sociological paradigms have functioned well in illuminating social life, so there is little incentive to change. Another explanation for the use of constricted definitions of feminist theory that is also related to incentive is textual isomorphism. Agger (1989) claims that the application of Girl Scout feminism happens across all books, and thus leaves little incentive to change in a market where changes equate to risks to the bottom line. Whether the explanation is to do with ease of applicability or lack of diversity in the market, the fact remains that modern, introductory-level sociology textbooks still essentialize their definitions and applications of feminist theory.

Despite findings that indicate modern sociology textbooks are more inclusive of feminist theory, the general trends point to a problematic treatment of feminist theory within these books. The ways in which feminist theory are covered by introductory-level sociology textbooks seems to be tied to both the textbook production process, and the selective application of these theories throughout the text.

GENDER ISSUES

As compared to historical findings, modern introductory-level sociology textbooks are much more inclusive of gender issues. This study found that gender issues

were not simply relegated to breakout boxes, but were integrated across the main text, and throughout multiple chapters. Breakout boxes, vignettes, and infographics accounted for only 17.1 percent of the gender issues coded throughout the sample. The inclusion of gender issues in the main text could be a trend in current books as a result of textual isomorphism. Upon further examination of the gender issues integrated into these books, it becomes clear that most of the gender issues included are ones that paint a simplistic picture of gender.

A “Girl Scout” depiction of gender was found across the majority of books, characterized by simplistic definitions of gender, the conflation of gender and women, and the relegation of gender to chapters stereotypically linked to women. Of the seemingly ample instances of gender issues, 91.6 percent had to do with women by either solely discussing women, or discussing both men and women in a gender dichotomy. Of the definitions of gender available across all textbooks in the sample, the majority was simplistic and dichotomized the concept. This study also found that discussions of gender were most likely to happen in the chapters on Gender and Family. This is similar to what Clark and Nunes (2008) found in their study of introductory-level sociology textbooks. Though the increased presence of women’s experiences is a marked improvement from previous studies, the presence of majority women-centered gender issues, the presentation of a dichotomous definition of gender, and the relegation of gendered discussions to chapters stereotypically linked with women cause a conflation of women and gender in a way that is inaccurate (Ward and Grant 1985). Andersen (1987) argues that the use of a gender dichotomy erases a large number of experiences from view. The *add women and stir* response to gender inclusion is a possible explanation for this

finding. Instead of instituting radical changes with regard to the methodological and epistemological approach to sociology, the dominant “response to the criticism that sociology is about men has been to “add women”” (Alway 1995, p. 215). Hall (1988) and Glazer (1987) specifically blame the standardized way in which textbooks are compartmentalized into chapter topics for the ghettoization of gender. Keith Roberts (2017) believes that the standard look and content of textbooks, or textual isomorphism, is to blame for the slow evolution of textbook content. Perhaps a delay in textbook content could be why these books are still portraying gender as a women’s issue, and why they are applying gender to chapters historically relegated to women.

The application of an intersectional approach presented differently across the textbook sample. This study found that the application of intersectionality had yet to saturate many of the textbooks, and the overwhelming majority failed to label the concept. Just less than one-third of the gender issues coded in this study presented an intersectional look at gender issues. These results were similar to ones found in previous textbook studies (Chow 1985; Andersen 1988; Ferree and Hall 1990; Sleeter and Grant 1991; Zinn and Eitzen 1996b). One possible explanation for the inconsistent treatment of gender and intersectionality across the textbook sample could be the textbook production process as explained by Manza et al. (2010). Though textbooks are slow to adopt new formatting styles and approaches to canonized content, successful books that take risks with changes often inspire the adoption of these changes by the competition. Perhaps the inclusion of intersectionality and its application is a concept that is in the initial stages of adoption by some books, and will eventually appear across the entirety of top-sellers.

One of the most notable findings of this study is the erasure of gender experiences that fall beyond the binary. The experiences of transgender, intersex, genderqueer, and non-binary individuals were nearly absent from the sample as a whole. Of the gender issues coded, only 1.9 percent fell into this category, and of the gender issues that took an intersectional approach, only 2.1 percent fell outside of the gender binary. Unfortunately, “textbooks are time-lagged measures of the state of the discipline,” and even though the discipline is in consensus of the non-binary nature of gender, textbooks have yet to catch up. As explained above, this study found a simplistic portrayal of gender across the majority of textbooks where definitions of the concept were binary, and the application of the term was primarily done in reference to women. The simplistic definition of gender provided by most texts could be an explanation for why the experiences of individuals who fall outside of the gender binary were missing from the sample as a whole.

INCIDENTAL FINDINGS

As seen throughout this chapter, the phenomenon of textual isomorphism, a byproduct of the textbook production cycle, has far reaching impacts on the treatment of feminist theory and gender issues in modern, top-selling introductory-level textbooks. The qualitative analysis of these textbooks produced two findings that are likely attributed to textual isomorphism. This study found that textbooks have moved toward female-inclusive language, which had little impact on the topics of primary study, and found a new trend in the treatment of segregated text.

In their study of introductory-level sociology textbooks, Best and Schweingruber (2003) found that the language and example usage in their sample were not biased, however they reported that the books did not include multifaceted portrayals of feminist

theory, and lacked an intersectional approach to gender. This study found similar results where female pronoun usage and the inclusion of women in examples were common, as can be seen in *Figure 32* from Macionis' book. Authors often discussed women in their examples, as seen in *Figure 33* from Carl's book. This level of inclusion is greatly improved from previous findings. In her study, Deegan (1988) found that the ideas of early female sociologists were rarely documented in textbooks, while each of the current books included at least one female sociologist, as can be seen in *Figure 34* where Kendall covered the contributions of Harriet Martineau. In their study of introductory-level textbooks, Thomas and Kukulian (2004) found that female sociologists were primarily relegated to breakout boxes, but this study found their works primarily in the main text, as can be seen in *Figure 35* where Richard Schaefer includes a section on Ida B. Wells in the main text. Like Best and Schweingruber (2003), this study found that the inclusion of female pronouns and female sociologists in the main text had no discernable impact on the treatment of feminist theory and gender issues. It seems that the appearance of these trends across all ten books studied is a result of textual isomorphism, where a superficial change has infected all of the top-selling books.

Another trend spotted in the data analysis process that seems to be due to textual isomorphism is the evolution of segregated text. Traditional sidebars and breakout boxes characterized by a sharp delineation from the main text seem to have been replaced with more integrated and longer breakout boxes, vignettes, and infographics. All of the textbooks sampled featured introductory vignettes that bled into the main text, infographics that were inviting and informative, and breakout boxes that were sometimes more than one page long and less visually deterring. An example of a breakout box that is

indiscernible from the formatting and font of the main text can be seen in *Figure 36*. Hall (1988) argues that the message sent when topics are relegated to the marginal parts of the book (segregated text) is that they are peripheral to the core of sociology. This may no longer be true with the new trend in making segregated text more integrated and visually appealing. These new trends in segregated text were found across all textbooks studied and did not have an impact on the treatment of feminist theory or gender issues. It is possible this is simply a result of textual isomorphism, and is the newest formatting trend to make its way across the new cohort of introductory-level sociology textbooks.

PHASES OF INCLUSION

In their studies on the integration of feminist theories and gender issues into academic works, McIntosh (1983), Hall (1988), and Warren (1989) each came up with models for comparing textbook cohorts to the ideal standard. This section will briefly review this study's findings and discuss the phases in which these books seem to fall.

As *Table 1* shows, the textbooks within the sample varied widely in the number of pages each dedicated to feminist theories and gender issues. From a qualitative point of view, these books each varied in their treatment of the topics of interest. Overall, however, the middle quartiles hovered in similar areas with regard to the coverage of feminist theory and gender issues, at about 6.5 percent and 21 percent respectively. The books also tended to relegate discussions of feminist theory and gender issues to particular chapters, to miss opportunities to apply gender or an intersectional approach, and to provide truncated definitions of each concept. As was discussed throughout this chapter, these results are likely attributed to textual isomorphism in some way. Nevertheless, the majority of the texts provide an infantilized, feminized, and overall

inadequate coverage of feminist theories and gender issues. Within Hall's (1988) three-phase model for the inclusion of gender and gender theory in introductory-level sociology textbooks, it seems that this new cohort of books is in phase two. This phase is called *women on their terms*, where women's experiences are included fairly in the portions of the text where they are allowed to exist, but the bulk of the mainstream remains unchanged (1988). Within Warren's (1989) seven-phase model for the inclusion of gender and feminist theory in higher education texts, this modern cohort of books seems to be in phase three. Phase three is characterized by the existence of examples from women, racial minorities, and poor people that challenge traditional examples (1989). These textbooks have not quite made it into phase four, characterized by the prevalence of examples predominately or exclusively of/from women, racial minorities, and poor people (1989). The following section features notable texts that fell outside of the average books described above.

NOTABLE TEXTBOOKS

As discussed in the Findings Chapter, each textbook dedicated a different amount of space to gender issues and feminist theory, and they each framed the topics of interest in different ways. The average textbook dedicated about 6.5 percent of its pages to feminist theory and 21 percent of its pages to gender issues. This section is dedicated to the textbooks that were either exceptionally inclusive or exclusive of feminist theory and gender issues. The book that was the overall most inclusive of both topics was a primer by Benokraitis called *SOC4*. This book contained the highest percentage of feminist theory and second-highest percentage of gender issues throughout the text. *Figure 37*, a portion of the detailed table of contents from this book, depicts the consistent inclusion of

feminist theory throughout each chapter. A possible explanation for this could be the author's ties to feminist and gender research. The textbook with the highest page percentage dedicated to gender issues was Andersen et al.'s *Sociology: The Essentials*. In the previous chapter, it was theorized that the research and educational backgrounds of two of the authors influenced the degree to which this primer integrated feminist theory.

A book of particular interest is Carl's *THINK Sociology*. This book contained the second-highest percentage of page dedication to feminist theory, but also the second-lowest percentage of page dedication to gender issues. One possible explanation for the low-level of gender inclusion despite a high level of feminist theory inclusion is formatting. This book contained the highest number of chapters amongst the primers, most of which were only 15 pages long. Though most books ghettoized gender to certain chapters, the ghettoization of gender to three or four chapters in the text had a higher impact in this book with shorter chapters, and a lower ratio of inclusive chapters to exclusive chapters. It is likely a similar phenomenon occurred with Henslin's *Sociology: A Down to Earth Approach*. This book dedicated the second-lowest amount of space to feminist theory, and high chapter numbers exacerbated the ghettoization of the topic. The book that dedicated the absolute least amount of space to feminist theory, at 2 percent, was Hughes and Kroehler's *Sociology: The Core*. Though the reason is uncertain, this primer was characterized by hyper-ghettoization, where only three of the chapters featured any mention of feminist theory, theorists, or concepts. Textbook isomorphism as defined by Manza et al. (2010) dictates that the remaining textbooks on the market likely do not look like the ones described above. They are likely similar to Schaefer's and Maconis' books, both titled *Sociology*, that ghettoize the topics of interest, apply the

intersectional approach spottily, and dedicate about 6.5 percent and 21 percent of their pages to feminist theory and gender issues respectively.

This study set out to assess the degree to which feminist theory and gender issues had permeated modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks. The researcher found feminist theories to be included across all texts, but lacking in their application. They were ghettoized, essentialized, and treated very differently across texts. Similarly, gender issues enjoyed a better degree of inclusion than historical studies, but they were also ghettoized, essentialized, feminized, and applied in a way that erased minority gender experiences. Though formatting differences and ease of application may have influenced these topics' treatment across texts, most trends were traceable to the textbook review process, specifically the goal of textual isomorphism. In the next chapter, this study suggests changes that can result in more accurate coverage of both topics studied, discusses limitations of the study, and finally suggests topics for future research.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This study was able to assess the degree to which feminist theories and gender issues permeated top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks, and assess how each topic was framed within each book. With the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study in mind, this chapter provides a set of suggestions to publishers and instructors to improve future textbooks, an overview of the limitations of the study, and list of areas for future research.

SUGGESTIONS FOR KEY PLAYERS

Both a review of the literature on textbook content and the analysis of this study's findings indicate that the textbook publishing process primarily impacts the content of these books, and is one of the primary reasons for the varied way in which each of the top-selling textbooks studied treated gender issues and feminist theory. Heavy reliance on instructor feedback is the main way publishers influence textbook content. This study offers advice grounded within the literature to publishers and instructors on inciting change in the way textbooks treat feminist theory and gender issues.

The first piece of advice is for textbook publishers: allow authors more autonomy over their textbooks. The year 1972 saw the invention of the managed text, where books were sculpted by "a team of designers, professional writers, and others," resulting in authors becoming less involved in the writing process, and more like consultants (Graham 1988, p. 357). Kendall (1999) argues that textbook publishers stifle authors' creativity. As a textbook author herself, she notes that innovation is often shut down as impractical, and homogenization with best sellers is the goal with regard to organization and content (1999). The stifling of this creativity could be erasing new formats that are

better at delivering information. Carlson and Sosnoski, for example, suggest “textbook authors ... bring together visualizations, collaborations, multimedia tools, and knowledge based in ‘living’ workbooks,” an idea that the current standard for formats may preclude (2013:170).

The second piece of advice for textbook publishers is to rely less heavily on instructor feedback. Kendall (1999) claims textual isomorphism is caused by instructor reviews because instructors often review books for adoptability instead of content. Persell (1988) claims that instructors should not be the only ones to review textbooks, and claims that professionals in the field should also review for accuracy. Sheryl Fullerton, a former publisher, admits “the emphasis must be on the content and ideas, not on format and marketing features” (1988:354). The third piece of advice to textbook publishers is to experiment with traditional textbook organization. One marketing feature that this study found throughout the sample was the compartmentalization of chapters into segregated explanations of social institutions. Chow argues (1985) that topics, like gender or intersectionality, should be mainstreamed throughout each chapter to provide more accurate depictions of the social world.

Franklin Graham (1988) challenges instructors to exercise their power as textbook adopters to influence changes, and Stone (1996) calls for instructors to voice their opinions on what should be in the books. A former publisher, Fullerton, pleads, “it is important for academics [instructors] and publishers to communicate, for you to let us know what you need, what you think, why books don’t work in your courses or with students, how phenomena such as theoretical developments or technology are affecting you, how your world and your attitudes are changing” (1988:355). This leads to the first

piece of advice for instructors: rethink and prioritize the textbook review process. Graham (1988) calls for instructors to ignore any ancillaries (bonus content like tests and PowerPoints), to stop thinking of visuals as supportive of the text, and to ignore flashy breakout boxes. Instead, Kendall (1999) argues that textbooks should be carefully reviewed for content, not just ease of adoption. Philip Jackson (1968) argues that teachers prioritize other tasks, and thus leave little time to select *good* textbooks. Schaefer (1988) argues that instructors should never adopt a textbook that they have not thoroughly reviewed, and thus claims instructors should prioritize the textbook review process. The second piece of advice for instructors is to augment problematic texts. “Teachers generally rely on a single textbook and its supplemental teacher’s manual, suggesting that teachers generally do not introduce content of their own choosing into classroom instruction” (Gall 1981, p. 10). As seen in this study, not all textbooks treat feminist theory and gender issues idealistically. If limitations to adopting more inclusive books exist, instructors can augment their books with supplemental course materials. Hall (1988) suggests teachers “can compensate for the inadequacies of a particular textbook with in-class lectures, discussions and activities” (1988:439). Persell (1988) agrees that instructors should integrate additional primary sources into the curriculum. Daniel Tanner argues “no book, no matter how excellent it may be, should serve as the sole source of course of study or should determine the modes of instruction” (1999:136). In fact, Hall (2000) argues that courses should be syllabus driven, where instructors assign segments of each chapter, assign inclusive readers, and create packets for auxiliary information. Overall, both textbook publishers and instructors have the power to influence the quality of content students receive on feminist theory and gender issues.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Though every effort was made to overcome them, this mixed methods content analysis of top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks contains limitations. The first of the four limitations is encountered by the use of content analysis as the research technique. Though content analysis of textbooks is a well-established tradition that has been successfully applied to introductory-level sociology textbooks, it is limited in its application. The analysis of the textbook content, though made with the textbook production cycle in mind, is done out of context with regard to student and instructor usage of the books. Content analysis of textbooks is limited in that it can only provide a description of the current state of the textbooks and infer student response to them, but cannot assess actual student reactions to the books.

The second limitation of the methodological approach to the study can be found with the sample population. Though previous studies have indicated mirror-like similarities between top-selling books and the rest of the introductory-level sociology textbook population, this pattern may not be the case for the current cohort of best sellers on the market. Therefore the transferability of the findings from the sample list to the entire textbook population, though historically proven strong, may be limited. The third limitation, also to do with the sample, is the lack of standardization amongst the books. Though the page counts were converted into percentages to limit the impact of formatting differences, a non-standardized page and margin size may have impacted the accuracy of the coded instances of feminist theory and gender issues across the sample.

The last limitation of the methodological approach taken in this study is with regard to inter-coder reliability. Though a structured and pre-tested coding sheet was used

in the data collection process, the use of only one coder, and therefore a lack of established inter-coder reliability, is a weakness in this study. The limitations of this study make it more difficult to generalize these results to the current introductory-level sociology textbook population as a whole, and impact the internal validity of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study examined the treatment of feminist theory and gender issues in modern, top-selling introductory-level sociology textbooks. In order to better understand how modern textbooks define and apply these topics, further study is needed. The researcher has identified three areas for further study that can broaden the understanding of how and why feminist theory and gender issues are treated less than ideally in these books.

The first suggestion for future research is to expand this study to all modern, introductory-level sociology textbooks available on the market. A study of all books currently available for students in this category would speak to the transferability of the results this study provided of the top-selling books, and could also identify any trends missed by the small sample size of ten books. The secondary part to this suggestion is to include the international textbook market. Philip Altbach (1991) argues that textbooks are produced by international firms, and claims that ignoring books published outside of the United States is to ignore potential books available on the market. Introductory-level sociology textbooks are published in English for the U.S., Canada, U.K., and Australia. Future research could examine international textbooks within the category and note any differences in the treatment of feminist theory and gender issues across these books.

The second suggestion for future research that would add to the understanding of how and why feminist theories and gender issues are included in these textbooks is to study the production cycle. Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) argue that textbooks are not created in a vacuum, and a thorough assessment of the textbook production cycle could point to areas for improvement. This would include more heavily studying the motivations of instructors to rely on problematic texts, and to study the agency authors have in the publication process. The third suggestion for future research on the framing of feminist theory and gender issues in introductory-level sociology textbooks is to study how “audiences construct their own responses to the texts” (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991, p. 14). Taxel (1989) claims that in order to bring the research on textbook content back down to the ground level, one must study the reader’s response to literary works. Jane Hood (2006), for example, noted that students became uncomfortable when instructors disagreed with the textbook in her study on teaching against the text. Further studies on student responses to and instructor assignments of these texts could point to ways that audiences mitigate the sometimes-problematic information within the books, and would augment the current literature on these textbooks.

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Appendix A: Sample List

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Appendix B: Coding Sheet

General Info

Textbook Title	
Author(s)	
Year	
# of Pgs	
# of Chs	
<i>Circle One</i>	Full Length Book <i>or</i> Primer

Space

# Pages Where Gender Issues Appear	
% of Pages Where Gender Issues Appear	
# Pages Where Feminist Theories/Theorists Appear	
% of Pages Where Feminist Theories/Theorists Appear	

Gender

Distinction Between Sex and Gender?	<i>(Circle One)</i> Y/N
Definition of Gender in Text:	

Feminist Theory

Found in Theory Chapter?	<i>(Circle One)</i> Y/N
Under Which Heading?	
Definition of Feminist Theory in Text:	

Chapter Title	
Description of Chapter Content:	

Feminist Theories

(Y/N) answer under Labeled? & Visual Markers?

Page # Where FT Appears	Labeled?	Visual Markers?	Segregated from the main text? (Y/N) w/ brief description

Total # of pages with Feminist Theories/Theorists: _____

% of pages with Feminist Theories/Theorists in this Chapter: _____

Gender Issues

Category: *Oppression, Socialization, Sexualities, Romantic Relationships, Parenting, Marriage, Work, Poverty, The State/Law, Education, Religion, Culture, Health and Medicine, Sports, & Other*

Type: *W=Women's Issue, M=Men's Issue, MW=Men and Women's Issue presented together*

T=Trans/Intersex/Genderqueer/Etc Issue & add I if it is also Intersectional

Visual Markers: (Y/N)

Gender Issue Category and pg#	Type	Visual Markers?	Segregated from the main text? (Y/N) w/ brief description

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Figure 1. Page 10 in *Soc4* by Nijole V. Benokraitis.

The Chore Wars: Supermom Does It All 471

Figure 2. Page 471 in *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist, 5th Edition* by Dalton Conley.

TABLE 1.2 LEADING CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIOLOGY				
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE	FUNCTIONALISM	CONFLICT	FEMINIST	SYMBOLIC INTERACTION
Level of Analysis	Macro	Macro	Macro and Micro	Micro
Key Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society is composed of interrelated, mutually dependent parts. Structures and functions maintain a society's or group's stability, cohesion, and continuity. Dysfunctional activities that threaten a society's or group's survival are controlled or eliminated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life is a continuous struggle between the haves and the have-nots. People compete for limited resources that are controlled by a small number of powerful groups. Society is based on inequality in terms of ethnicity, race, social class, and gender. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women experience widespread inequality in society because, as a group, they have little power. Gender ethnicity, race, age, sexual orientation, and social class—rather than a person's intelligence and ability—explain many of our social interactions and lack of access to resources. Social change is possible only if we change our institutional structures and our day-to-day interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People act on the basis of the meaning they attribute to others. Meaning grows out of the social interaction that we have with others. People continuously reinterpret and reevaluate their knowledge and information in their everyday encounters.
Key Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What holds society together? How does it work? What is the structure of society? What functions does society perform? How do structures and functions contribute to social stability? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are resources distributed in a society? Who benefits when resources are limited? Who loses? How do those in power protect their privileges? When does conflict lead to social change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do men and women experience social situations in the same way? How does our everyday behavior reflect our gender social class, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other factors? How do macro structures (such as the economy and the political system) shape our opportunities? How can we change current structures through social activism? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does social interaction influence our behavior? How do social interactions change across situations and between people? Why does our behavior change because of our beliefs, attitudes, values, and roles? How is "right" and "wrong" behavior defined, interpreted, reinforced, or discouraged?
Example	A college education increases one's job opportunities and income.	Most low-income families can't afford to pay for a college education.	Gender affects decisions about a major and which college to attend.	College students succeed or fail based on their degree of academic engagement.

Figure 3. Page 19 in *Soc4* by Nijole V. Benokraitis.

In Sum: Sociologists acknowledge that biological factors are involved in some human behavior other than reproduction and childbearing (Udry 2000). Alice Rossi, a feminist sociologist and former president of the American Sociological Association, suggested that women are better prepared biologically for "mothering" than are men. Rossi (1977, 1984) said that women are more sensitive to the infant's soft skin and to their nonverbal communications. Perhaps Rossi expressed it best when she said that the issue is not either biology or society. Instead, whatever biological predispositions nature provides are overlaid with culture. A task of sociologists is to discover how social factors modify biology, especially as sociologist Janet Chafetz (1990:30) said, to determine how "different" becomes translated into "unequal."

The sociological perspective—that of social factors in human behavior—dominates this book, and in the Thinking Critically section that follows, we will explore how gender is changing.

Figure 4. Page 292 in *Sociology: A Down to Earth Approach, 12th Edition* by James M. Henslin.

roles. We "do" gender, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously, by adjusting our behavior and our perceptions depending on the sex of the person with whom we're interacting (West and Zimmerman, 2009). Our expression of our sexuality, similarly, isn't inborn but a product of socialization, and what families and other societal groups deem as appropriate and inappropriate behavior (Hubbard, 1990).

Figure 5. Page 177 in *Soc4* by Nijole V. Benokraitis.

one's status as male or female. In their critiques of role theory, gender theorists such as Candace West and Don Zimmerman (1987) have argued that the statuses of boy/girl and man/woman have distinct power and significance that role theory doesn't adequately capture (you can read more about this in Chapter 8 on sex and gender). If we were to put West and Zimmerman's ideas into the language of role theory, we could argue that sex constitutes a master status in our society. We can see how this status fits into larger theories of socialization. From the moment they leave the womb, babies usually wear either pink or blue to designate their sex. There are signs, balloons, greeting cards, and e-cards announcing "It's a boy!" or "It's a girl!" These seemingly silly differences—babies don't care if they wear blue or pink—create a context for

Figure 6. Page 134 in *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist*, 5th Edition by Dalton Conley.

and psychological wage" of whiteness ([1935] 1962:700).

The feminist scholar Peggy McIntosh (1988) became interested in White privilege after noticing that most men would not acknowledge that there were privileges attached to being male—even if they would agree that being female had its disadvantages. Did White people suffer from a similar blind spot regarding their racial privilege? she wondered. Intrigued, McIntosh began to list all the ways in which she benefited from her Whiteness. She soon realized that the list of unspoken advantages was long and significant.

McIntosh found that as a White person, she rarely

Figure 7. Page 243 in *Sociology*, 13th Edition by Richard T. Schaefer.

1-4b Harriet Martineau

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Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), an English author, published several dozen books on a wide range of topics in social science, politics, literature, and history. Her translation and condensation of Auguste Comte's difficult material for popular consumption was largely responsible for the dissemination of Comte's work. "We might say, then, that sociology had parents of both sexes" (Adams and Sydie, 2001: 32). She emphasized the importance of systematic data collection through observation and interviews, and an objective analysis of data to explain events and behavior. She also published the first sociology research methods textbook.

Martineau, a feminist and strong opponent of slavery, denounced many aspects of capitalism as alienating and degrading, and criticized dangerous workplaces that often resulted in injury and death. Martineau promoted improving women's positions in the workforce through education, nondiscriminatory employment, and training programs. She advocated women's admission into medical schools and emphasized issues such as infant care, the rights of the aged, the

Figure 8. Page 8 in *Soc4* by Nijole V. Benokraitis.

Figure 9. Page 168 in *Sociology, 15th Edition* by John J. Macionis.

Figure 10. Page 111 in *Sociology in Our Times, 10th Edition* by Diana Kendall.

Figure 11. Page 240 in *Sociology: The Essentials, 8th Edition* by Margaret L. Andersen, Howard F. Taylor, and Kim A. Logio.

Symbolic interaction theory is less attentive to the economic basis of gender inequality, focusing instead on the immediate realm of social interaction as a site for the ongoing construction of gender as a social relationship. An approach known as **doing gender** (derived from symbolic interaction and its sister perspective, ethnomethodology; see Chapters 2 and 5) interprets gender as something accomplished through the ongoing social interactions people have with one another (West and Fenstermaker 1995; West and Zimmerman 1987). Seen from this framework, people produce gender through the interaction they have with one another and through the interpretations they have of certain actions and appearances. In other words, gender is not something that is an attribute of different people, as functionalists suggest; rather, it is constantly made up and reproduced through social interaction. When you act like a man or act like a woman, you are confirming gender and reproducing the existing social order (Peralta 2002). From this point of view, gender relations would change if large numbers of people behaved differently. This is one reason the theory has been criticized by those with a more macrosociological point of view; they say it ignores the power differences and economic differences that exist based on gender, race, and class. In other words, it does not explain the structural basis of women's oppression (Collins et al. 1995).

Figure 12. Page 273 in *Sociology: The Essentials, 8th Edition* by Margaret L. Andersen, Howard F. Taylor, and Kim A. Logio.

act in different ways, across most life domains. Gender also serves as a social status, since in almost all societies men's roles are valued more than women's roles. Sociologists are interested in explaining how society differentiates between women and men, and how these differences serve as the basis for social inequalities (Chafetz, 1990). Yet sociologists recognize that gender alone does not shape our life experiences. Rather, there are pronounced differences in women's (and men's) lives on the basis of race, social class, age, birth cohort, religion, nation of origin, and even one's marital or parental status (Choo and Ferree, 2010). This recognition that gender intersects with other traits, such as race or social class, to affect our life chances is referred to by sociologists as the study of **intersectionality** (McCall, 2005).

We will first identify core concepts related to sex and gender. Next we will provide an overview of influential sociological and feminist theories that guide our understanding of gender. We will then review cutting-edge research on the ways that gender shapes our lives in the United States and throughout the world. We will conclude by addressing several unanswered and controversial questions about the importance of gender in contemporary society.

Figure 13. Page 222 in *Introduction to Sociology, 10th Edition* by Anthony Giddens, Mitchell Duneier, Richard P. Appelbaum, and Deborah Carr.

Harriet Martineau: Feminist and Methodologist

While Comte was laying the theoretical foundations for sociology in France, the English sociologist Harriet Martineau (1802–1876) was paving the way for the new discipline through her observations of social behavior in the United States and England. Like Comte, she insisted that the study of society represents a separate scientific field. Among her contributions was the first book on the methodology of social research, *How to Observe Manners and Morals*, published in 1838. She also undertook the comparative study of the stratification systems of Europe and the United States. Martineau showed how the basic moral values of the young American nation shaped its key institutional arrangements. Throughout her career Martineau was an ardent defender of women's rights. She showed the similarities between the position of women in Western societies and that of American slaves, and she called for freedom and justice for all in an age in which they were granted only to white males (Deegan, 1991).

Figure 14. Page 9 in *Sociology: The Core, 11th Edition* by Michael Hughes and Carolyn Kroehler.

"Traditional Families Are the Problem"

Judith Stacey (1993) provides an opposing, feminist viewpoint, saying "good riddance" to the traditional family. In her view, the traditional family is more problem than solution: "The family is not here to stay. Nor should we wish it were. On the contrary, I believe that all democratic people, whatever their kinship preferences, should work to hasten its demise" (Stacey, 1990:269).

The main reason for rejecting the traditional family, Stacey explains, is that it perpetuates social inequality. Families play a key role in maintaining the class hierarchy by transferring wealth as well as "cultural capital" from one generation to another. Feminists criticize the traditional family's patriarchal form, which subjects women to their husbands' authority and gives them most of the responsibility for housework and child care. From a gay rights perspective, she adds, a society that values traditional families also denies homosexual men and women equal participation in social life.

Stacey thus applauds the breakdown of the family as social progress. She does not view the family as a necessary social institution but as a political construction that elevates one category of people—affluent white males—above others, including women, homosexuals, and poor people.

Stacey also claims that the concept of the "traditional family" is increasingly irrelevant in a diverse society in which both men and women work for income. What our society needs, Stacey concludes, is not a return to some golden age of the family but political and economic change, including income parity for women, universal health care and child care, programs to reduce unemployment, and expanded sex education in the schools. Such measures ensure that people in diverse family forms receive the respect and dignity they deserve.

Figure 15. Page 533 in *Sociology, 15th Edition* by John J. Macionis.

think sociologically: WHAT ARE THE PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND GENDER INEQUALITY?

Feminist Theory

Feminists study how gender affects the experiences and opportunities of men and women. Although feminists may not always agree about how to achieve gender equality, they do tend to adopt four general beliefs:

- 1 **Increasing equality in work and education.** Year after year, women are earning more professional degrees than men and entering the workforce in large numbers. However, feminists continue fighting for equality in both the workplace and schools against the gender wage gap and the glass ceiling that women commonly face in the workplace.
- 2 **Expanding human choice for outcomes.** In the book *Woman Hating*, feminist Andrea Dworkin comments that "Being female in this world is having been robbed of the potential for human choice by men who love to hate us."⁵¹ Not all feminists agree with Dworkin's suggestion, but virtually all feminists work to create a society in which men

and women have equal opportunities. For example, by expanding enrollment in professional and graduate schools, women have greater opportunities to choose careers they enjoy.

- 3 **Eliminating gender stratification.** Feminism commits itself to assure equal rights, equal opportunity, and equal pay for women. For example, women are now successful Marines, a job that used to be an option for men only.
- 4 **Ending sexual violence.** Feminist theorists believe that male violence against women perpetuates gender inequality in our society.⁵² For example, the "rule of thumb" refers to the alleged British common law that allowed a man to beat his wife with a stick, as long as it was not any larger than the diameter of his thumb. It's important to note that this was never an actual law; however men were allowed to punish their wives corporally.⁵³

Figure 16. Page 201 in *THINK Sociology*, 2nd Edition by John D. Carl.

workers in the service sector, as well as clerks and salespeople whose job responsibilities involve routine, mechanized tasks requiring little skill beyond basic literacy and a brief period of on-the-job training (Gilbert, 2011). Some people in the working class are employed in *pink-collar occupations*—relatively low-paying, nonmanual, semiskilled positions primarily held by women, such as day-care workers, checkout clerks, cashiers, and restaurant servers.

Figure 17. Page 231 in *Sociology in Our Times*, 10th Edition by Diana Kendall.

GLOBALIZATION BY THE NUMBERS

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

More than 201 million people, or nearly 6 percent of the global workforce, are unemployed worldwide, with the highest rates in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Global unemployment continues to disproportionately affect young people, especially young women.

Sources: World Bank 2015, Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015

UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Figure 18. Page 359 in *Introduction to Sociology, 10th Edition* by Anthony Giddens, Mitchell Duneier, Richard P. Appelbaum, and Deborah Carr.

VIOLENCE AGAINST MALES

Male violence is common in some total institutions (see Chapter 4). Between 2009 and 2011, 69 percent of male inmates experienced sexual abuse by other inmates or guards (Beck et al., 2014). In 2012, 53 percent of male service members were sexually assaulted, but only 13 percent filed a report: The perpetrator often held a higher rank; a male who's sexually assaulted is stigmatized as gay, weak, and/or not a real "warrior," and is subsequently treated like an outcast (Brown, 2013; Department of Defense Sexual Assault..., 2013).

You saw earlier that Americans are more accepting of homosexuality, and that more nations are legalizing gay marriage. In contrast, many countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East don't tolerate LGBTs. Gay sex is illegal in 78 nations, including 38 of Africa's 54 countries. Gay men, particularly, may be legally tortured, stoned, imprisoned, or killed ("Deadly Intolerance," 2014; "The Gay Divide," 2014; Pflanz, 2014).

Russia's parliament recently, and unanimously, passed a law that bans LGBT relationships and forbids distributing material on gay rights. Russians are more accepting of extramarital affairs, gambling, and drinking alcohol (a major cause of men's death before age 55) than homosexuality (Council for Global Equality, 2014; Poushter, 2014).

Figure 19. Page 173 in *Soc4* by Nijole V. Benokraitis.

THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY

Much of the growth in poverty is associated with the **feminization of poverty**, an increase in the proportion of the poor who are female. Growing rates of divorce, separation, and single-parent families have placed women at a particular disadvantage, since it is extremely difficult for unskilled or semi-skilled, low-income, poorly educated women to raise children by themselves while also holding down a job that could raise them out of poverty. As a result, in 2013, 31 percent of all single-parent families headed by women were poor, compared with only 6 percent of married couples with children (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor, 2014).

The feminization of poverty is particularly acute among families headed by Hispanic women. Although the rate declined by about a third since its peak in the mid-1980s (it

Figure 20. Page 186 in *Introduction to Sociology, 10th Edition* by Anthony Giddens, Mitchell Duneier, Richard P. Appelbaum, and Deborah Carr.

an alumnus/alumna or otherwise familiar with the institution, you might also be expected to talk about what dorm you lived in, reminisce about a particularly dramatic homecoming game, or gripe about an especially unreasonable professor. If you slip up on any of this information, suspicions will grow, and then people might call to check on your graduation status. Perhaps there are some good reasons not to opt for that \$29.95 degree and to pay the costs of college after all.

On a more serious note, the role of credentialism in our society means that getting in—especially to a wealthy school with plenty of need-based aid available—can make a huge difference for lower-income students.

Figure 21. Page 13 in *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist*, 5th Edition by Dalton Conley.

TREND

SPOTTING

Women as Wage Earners

In 2010, for the first time, women outnumbered men in the U.S. workforce. The historic reversal was caused by long-term changes in women's roles that began four decades ago. In the 2008 recession, massive job losses among men tipped the balance.

This change in the trend reflects the growing importance of women as wage earners, although on average, women still work fewer hours than men. They also hold more part-time jobs than men, and they earn only 77 percent of what men make. And of course, men still dominate the higher-paying executive levels of the workforce.

Women's share of the once heavily male labor force has been growing for nearly a century. Big expansions occurred during the Great Depression, when payrolls were limited, and World War II, when millions of men left their jobs to join the service. In 2008, the boost to women's employment came from a severe economic slowdown that hit hard at male-dominated occupations, such as construction and manufacturing.

Although women's outnumbering of men in the labor force may be temporary—an artifact of the recent recession—their transformation of the U.S. workplace is permanent. There are no signs of a countertrend to their participation in the workforce.

Poverty

Approximately 15 percent of people in the United States live below the poverty line. The federal government estimates that fewer than 37.2 million people are living in poverty. The exact number in the 1990s passed these figures. One of the Census reports that five households has to live on less than \$10,000 a year, from paying the utility bills to buying dinner (Bauman et al. 2009).

One contributor to the high poverty rate has been the loss of jobs. The number of workers employed has declined. The federal government estimates that the minimum wage has fallen over the century from 75 cents an hour in 1968 to 7.25 in 2008 and \$7.25 in 2009.

Figure 22. Page 198 in *Sociology*, 13th Edition by Richard T. Schaefer.

EMERGENCE, COALESCENCE, AND ROUTINIZATION IN THE HIV/AIDS MOVEMENT

In 1981, doctors began to identify a new disease among an otherwise healthy population of homosexual men. They didn't know what was causing the disease's symptoms or how to treat it, but they were able to identify that something was amiss within this subpopulation. Doctors initially called the disease "gay-related immune deficiency" or GRID. As awareness and fear mounted throughout the gay community in New York City, a group of 80 concerned men gathered in the apartment of writer Larry Kramer. They mobilized their social contacts and used the media to sound the alarm. Before long, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared GRID an epidemic, and the gay community further mobilized to promote awareness of the disease and raise money for research. During this early period, the social movement that would later become the AIDS awareness movement in the United States was emerging from a small apartment in New York City.

As rates of infection grew, people rallied together to promote awareness of the disease and spread information about it. In 1981, concerned activists founded the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), around which the movement coalesced. The GMHC established an office on West 22nd Street in New York City and held its first fund-raiser in 1982. It began publishing a newsletter that was distributed to more than 50,000 doctors, hospitals, clinics, and libraries throughout the country. During this period, gay-related immune deficiency was renamed acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, or AIDS. With the establishment of a formal organization, the AIDS awareness

Crowds visit the AIDS Memorial Quilt in Washington, D.C.

movement coalesced into a defined social movement.

The activities of GMHC continued to grow. It funded the first AIDS discrimination lawsuit in 1983 and, two years later, organized the first international AIDS conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The following year, GMHC organized the first AIDS Walk—now an annual fund-raising event throughout the United States. Organizers also created the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt to memorialize individuals who have died from the disease. On December 1, 1988, GMHC promoted the first AIDS Day, and the federal government eventually passed laws to stop AIDS-related discrimination. President Bill Clinton was the first politician to run for national

Figure 23. Page 716 in *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist, 5th Edition* by Dalton Conley.

Female textile workers struggle with a national guardsman during a 1929 strike in Gastonia, North Carolina. How might a conflict theorist interpret labor unrest?

Conflict theory the idea that conflict between competing interests is the basic, animating force of social change and society in general.

Conflict Theory Even though functionalism continues to reappear in many guises, its fundamental assertions have not gone unchallenged. Sociologists such as C. Wright Mills, writing from 1948 through 1962, criticized Parsons and functionalist theory for reinforcing the status quo and the dominant economic system with its class structures and inequalities instead of challenging how such systems evolved and offering alternatives. Functionalism also took a beating in the turbulent 1960s, when its place was usurped by a number of theories frequently subsumed under the label Marxist theory or **conflict theory**. Whereas functionalists painted a picture of social harmony as the well-oiled parts of a societal machine working together (with some friction and the occasional breakdown), conflict theory viewed society from exactly the opposite perspective. Drawing on the ideas of Marx, the theory—as expressed by Ralph Dahrendorf, Lewis Coser, and others—stated

that conflict among competing interests is the basic, animating force of any society. Competition, not consensus, is the essential nature, and this conflict at all levels of analysis (from the individual to the family to the tribe to the nation-state), in turn, drives social change. And such social change occurs only through revolution and war, not evolution or baby steps.

According to conflict theorists, inequality exists as a result of political struggles among different groups (classes) in a particular society. Although functionalists theorize that inequality is a necessary and beneficial aspect of society, conflict theorists argue that it is unfair and exists at the expense of less powerful groups. Thus, functionalism and conflict theory take extreme (if opposing) positions on the fundamental nature of society. Today most sociologists see societies as demonstrating characteristics of both consensus and conflict and believe that social change does result from both revolution and evolution.

Feminist Theory Emerging from the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s, feminist theory shares many ideas with Marxist theory—in particular, the Marxist emphasis on conflict and political reform. Feminism is not one idea but a catchall term for many theories. What they all have in common is an emphasis on women's experiences and a belief that sociology and society in general subordinate women. Feminist theorists emphasize equality between men and women and want to see women's lives and experiences represented in sociological studies. Early feminist theory focused on defining concepts such as sex and gender, and on challenging conventional wisdom by questioning the meanings usually assigned to these concepts. In *Sex, Gender, and Society* (1972), sociologist Ann Oakley argued that much of what we attribute to biological sex differences can be traced to behaviors that are learned and internalized through socialization (see Chapter 8 on gender).

Figure 24. Page 32 in *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist, 5th Edition* by Dalton Conley.

Race and Gender

Race also interacts with gender in status attainment. In a study of women in Memphis, researchers found that white women raised in working-class families received less support and encouragement for educational and career attainment than did white women raised in middle-class families and black women raised in either working- or middle-class families (Higginbotham and Weber, 1992). For example, 86 percent of the black middle-class women said their families supported their going to college, compared to 70 percent of the white middle-class women, 64 percent of the black working-class women, and only 56 percent of the white working-class women.

Figure 25. Page 198 in *Sociology: The Core, 11th Edition* by Michael Hughes and Carolyn Kroehler.

GENDER AND RELIGION

Like other social institutions, churches and denominations have on the whole excluded women from power. The following sections examine some of the interrelations of religion and gender. This is an area in which significant changes are occurring.

RELIGIOUS IMAGES

In Christianity, although Mary, the mother of Jesus, is sometimes treated as having divine qualities, God is “the Father,” a male figure, and Jesus took the human shape of a man. Genesis, the first book of the Bible, teaches that woman was created from a man’s rib. These facts have not gone unnoticed by women’s movements. Over a hundred years ago, Elizabeth Cady Stanton published a series of commentaries on the Scriptures, titled *The Woman’s Bible*. In her view, the deity had created women and men as beings of equal value, and the

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Figure 26. Page 451 in *Introduction to Sociology, 10th Edition* by Anthony Giddens, Mitchell Duneier, Richard P. Appelbaum, and Deborah Carr.

Figure 27. Page 357 in *Sociology, 13th Edition* by Richard T. Schaefer.

Gender and Religion: Feminist Theory

Feminist theory explains that religion and social inequality are also linked through gender because virtually all the world's major religions are patriarchal. For example, the Qur'an (Koran), the sacred text of Islam, gives men social dominance over women by defining gender roles: "Men are in charge of women... Hence good women are obedient... As for those whose rebelliousness you fear, admonish them, banish them from your bed, and scourge them" (Qur'an 4:34, quoted in Kaufman, 1976:163).

Christianity, the major religion of the Western world, also supports patriarchy. Many Christians revere Mary, the mother of Jesus, but the New Testament also includes the following passages:

A man... is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. (1 Corinthians 11:7-9)

As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. (1 Corinthians 14:33-35)

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church... As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. (Ephesians 5:22-24)

Judaism has also traditionally supported patriarchy. Male Orthodox Jews say the following words in daily prayer:

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that I was not born a gentile.
Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that I was not born a slave.
Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that I was not born a woman.

Today, Islam and the Roman Catholic Church ban women from the priesthood, as do about half of Protestant denominations. But a growing number of Protestant religious organizations do ordain

Patriarchy is a characteristic of all the world's major religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Male dominance can be seen in restrictions that limit religious leadership to men and also in regulations that prohibit women from worshipping alongside men.

Figure 28. Page 543 in *Sociology, 15th Edition* by John J. Macionis.

Social Construction of Illness

In fact, what it means to be sick or healthy varies across time and place. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (Fadiman, 1997) is the story of a Hmong immigrant family living in Southern California whose daughter Lia was diagnosed by her Western doctors as having epilepsy. Seizures, the main symptom of epilepsy, were viewed by her family as periods in which her soul was visiting the spirit world, a high honor in Hmong culture, one that carried a risk of failure to reunite body and soul. (It would be kind of like being able to take trips to heaven for Christians.) Author Anne Fadiman tries to give voice to both sides of the story—the doctors blame the parents for non-compliance with the prescribed medication regimen, whereas the parents blame the doctors for the medication's side effects. By examining the clash between modern Western and traditional Hmong culture, this story explores the different meanings of health and illness corresponding to the same phenomenon.

To use another example, alcoholism was not always seen as a disease, as mentioned earlier. Throughout much of history, it was seen as a moral weakness. What is seen as a personality flaw in one person (laziness) may be viewed as a legitimate medical condition in another (chronic fatigue syndrome)

Foua Yang holds a photo of her daughter Lia Lee as a child, before Lia's seizures resulted in a persistent vegetative state. Lia's parents cared for her until her death at age 30 in 2012.

What Does It Mean to Be Sick? 419

Figure 29. Page 419 in *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist, 5th Edition* by Dalton Conley.

that functional analysis attributes to societies certain qualities those societies do not have. Functionalists often wrote as though societies had “needs” and “purposes,” even though these concepts make sense only when applied to individual human beings.

MARXISM AND CLASS CONFLICT

Functionalism and symbolic interactionism are not the only modern theoretical traditions of importance in sociology. A further influential approach is **Marxism**. Marxists, of course, all trace their views back to the writings of Karl Marx, but today there are schools of Marxist thought that take very different theoretical positions.

In all its variations, Marxism differs from non-Marxist traditions of sociology in that its authors view sociology as a combination of sociological analysis and political reform. Marxism is supposed to generate a program of radical political change. Moreover, Marxists lay more emphasis on conflict, class divisions, power, and ideology than do many non-Marxist sociologists, especially those influenced by functionalism. The concept of **power** is of great importance to Marxist sociologists and to sociology in general. Power refers to the capability of individuals or groups to make their own interests count, even when others resist. Power sometimes involves the direct use of force but is almost always accompanied by the development of ideas (**ideologies**), which are used to justify the actions of the powerful. Power,

FEMINISM AND FEMINIST THEORY

Feminist theory is one of the most prominent areas of contemporary sociology. This is a notable development because gender issues are scarcely touched upon in the work of the major figures who established the discipline. The success of feminism’s entry into sociology required a fundamental shift in the discipline’s approach.

Many feminist theorists’ experiences in the women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s influenced their work as sociologists. Like Marxism, feminism links sociological theory and political reform. Many feminist sociologists have been advocates for political and social action to eliminate the inequalities between women and men in both the public and the private spheres.

Feminist sociologists argue that women’s experiences are central to the study of society. Sociology, like most academic disciplines, has presumed a male point of view. Concerned with women’s subordination in society, feminist sociologists highlight gender relations and gender inequality as important determinants of social life in terms of both social interaction and social institutions such as the family, the workplace, and the educational system. Feminist theory emphasizes that gendered patterns and gendered inequalities are socially constructed. (We will cover this point in more detail in Chapter 10.)

Today, feminist sociology focuses on the intersection of gender, race, and class. A feminist approach to the study of

Modern Theoretical Approaches 15

Figure 30. Page 15 in *Introduction to Sociology, 10th Edition* by Anthony Giddens, Mitchell Duneier, Richard P. Appelbaum, and Deborah Carr.

Transgender

As the gay rights movement has gained acceptance for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, there has also been greater tolerance of people who challenge conventional gender patterns. **Transgender** is a broad concept that refers to *appearing or behaving in ways that challenge conventional cultural norms concerning how females and males should look and act*. People in the transgender community do not think of themselves or express their sexuality according to conventional standards. In other words, transgender people disregard conventional ideas about femininity or masculinity in favor of combining feminine and masculine traits or perhaps embodying something entirely different.

Transgender is not a sexual orientation. Transgender people may think of themselves as gay or lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual, asexual, as some combination of these categories, or in entirely different terms.

Researchers estimate that about three in every 1,000 adults in the United States have a transgender identity. This amounts to about 700,000 people (Gates, 2011). It is becoming common to speak about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) population. Because someone

Figure 31. Page 220 in *Sociology, 15th Edition* by John J. Macionis.

high demand for this kind of work (Deutscher, 1999).

In addition, a smaller but increasing number of professional sociologists work as clinical sociologists. These women and men work, much as clinical psychologists do, with the goal of improving the lives of troubled clients. A basic difference is that sociologists focus on difficulties not in the personality but in the individual's web of social relationships.

But sociology is not just for people who want to be sociologists.

People who work in criminal justice—in police departments, probation offices, and corrections facilities—gain the “sociology advantage” by learning which categories of people are most at risk of becoming criminals as well as victims, assessing the effectiveness of various policies and programs at preventing crime, and understanding why people turn to crime in the first place. Similarly, people who work in health care—including doctors, nurses, and technicians—also gain a sociology advantage by learning about patterns of health and illness within the population, as well as how factors such as race, gender, and social class affect human well-being.

Just about every job in today's economy involves working with people. For this reason, studying sociology is good preparation for your future career. In what ways does having “people skills” help police officers perform their job?

Figure 32. Page 13 in *Sociology, 15th Edition* by John J. Macionis.

Developing a Sociological Imagination

One of my students recently lost her job at a nearby automotive factory. She attended classes during the day and worked at a convenience store at night. Being a single mother of two, she had no one to watch her kids while she was at work. Without supervision, her children were falling

behind in school, hanging out on street corners, and getting into trouble. Like many single parents, she had no other options and no idea what else to do.

When we think of kids in trouble, many of us probably blame the parents. But, in this situation, does the blame rest solely on her shoulders? Famous American sociologist C. Wright Mills (1916–1962) would say no. Mills asserted that people must understand how outside forces contribute

Figure 33. Page 5 in *THINK Sociology, 2nd Edition* by John D. Carl.

Harriet Martineau Comte's works were made more accessible for a wide variety of scholars through the efforts of the British sociologist Harriet Martineau (1802–1876). Until recently, Martineau received no recognition in the field of sociology, partly because she was a woman in a male-dominated discipline and society. Not only did she translate and condense Comte's work, but she was also an active sociologist in her own right. Martineau studied the social customs of Britain and the United States and analyzed the consequences of industrialization and capitalism. In *Society in America* (1837), she examined religion, politics, child rearing, slavery, and immigration in the United States, paying special attention to social distinctions based on class, race, and gender. Her works explore the status of women, children, and "sufferers" (persons who are considered to be criminal, mentally ill, handicapped, poor, or alcoholic).

Based on her reading of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792/1797), Martineau advocated racial and gender equality. She was also committed to creating a science of society that would be grounded in empirical observations and widely accessible to people. She argued that sociologists should be impartial in their assessment of society but that it is entirely appropriate to compare the existing state of society with the

● Harriet Martineau

Figure 34. Page 14 in *Sociology in Our Times*, 10th Edition by Diana Kendall.

Some radical feminist theorists, however, view the oppression of women as inevitable in *all* male-dominated societies, whether capitalist, socialist, or communist.

An early example of this perspective (long before the label came into use by sociologists) can be seen in the life and writings of Ida Wells-Barnett (1862–1931). Following her groundbreaking publications in the 1890s on the practice of lynching Black Americans, she became an advocate in the women's rights campaign, especially the struggle to win the vote for women. Like feminist theorists who succeeded her, Wells-Barnett used her analysis of society as a means of resisting oppression. In her case, she researched what it meant to be Black, a woman in the United States, and a Black woman in the United States (Giddings 2008; Wells-Barnett 1970).

Feminist scholarship has broadened our understanding of social behavior by extending the analysis beyond the male point of view. Consider sports, for example. Feminist theorists consider how watching or participating in sports reinforces the roles that men and women play in the larger society:

- Although sports generally promote fitness and health, they may also have an adverse effect on participants' health. Men are more likely to resort to illegal steroid use (among bodybuilders and baseball players, for example); women, to excessive dieting (among gymnasts and figure skaters, for example).
- Gender expectations encourage female athletes to be passive and gentle, qualities that do not support the emphasis on competitiveness in sports. As a result, women find it difficult to enter sports traditionally dominated by men, such as Indy or NASCAR.
- Although professional women athletes' earnings are increasing, they typically trail those of male athletes.

Ida Wells-Barnett explored what it meant to be female and Black in the United States. Her work established her as one of the earliest feminist theorists.

use your sociological *imagination*

You are a sociologist who takes the conflict perspective. How would you interpret the practice of prostitution? How would your view of prostitution differ if you took the functionalist perspective? The feminist perspective?

Figure 35. Page 15 in *Sociology, 13th Edition* by Richard T. Schaefer.

discover sociology in action: WHAT SOCIAL POLICIES HELP CHILDREN GET A BETTER EDUCATION?

Improving Education with School Vouchers

As Jonathan Kozol points out, educational outcomes are often linked to family income and structure. Generally, the poorer a child is, the lower his or her educational attainment will be. Although individual teachers can have a great impact on this situation, entire schools can also take on an active role by ensuring that their students have adequate nutrition and clothing.⁶⁰

In an effort to give children from poorer communities an equal opportunity in education, some schools have introduced a school vouchers policy. Vouchers are essentially cash equivalents that allow parents to select a participating school—private, religious, or public—to send their child. Voucher programs further the economic model of education; performing schools will get more money and thereby thrive, leaving poor schools with fewer students.

This situation can either improve educational outcomes for poor schools or cause the school to close.

Critics of the program claim that instead of pushing students elsewhere, struggling students, teachers, and schools need assistance.⁶¹ Kozol, a critic of the program, also claims that vouchers only work for students with involved parents. Therefore, children who need the most help and attention are stuck in a school with few resources.⁶² At the other end of the spectrum, supporters of the program claim that vouchers help low-income families gain control over education.⁶³

The actual research on the voucher program is rather mixed, some showing marginal effectiveness for students, while others show no effect at all. Belfield and Levin suggest that the proposed link between vouchers and improvement in schools for the poor is difficult to support, because even in areas where

vouchers exist, poor children often don't have the information available to make a good school selection.⁶⁴

ACTIVITIES

1. Research your state's position on the school voucher debate. If the voucher program is implemented, look at test scores from before and after the implementation. Do you think the program is helping struggling students? If the voucher program is not implemented in your state, look at test scores for poor and rich school districts. Do you think the voucher program would be useful? If not, what would be a good alternative?
2. Have a class debate over the pros and cons of the school voucher program.

Figure 36. Page 277 in *THINK Sociology, 2nd Edition* by John D. Carl.

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