



SECOND EDITION

Race, Gender, Sexuality, & Social Class

Dimensions of Inequality and Identity

Susan J. Ferguson

EDITOR



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SUSAN J. FERGUSON
Grinnell College

Editor



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**RACE, GENDER, SEXUALITY,
AND SOCIAL CLASS**

SECOND EDITION

*For my daughters, Gillian and Alana,
who have taught me more than any book could.*



SAGE was founded in 1965 by Sara Miller McCune to support the dissemination of usable knowledge by publishing innovative and high-quality research and teaching content. Today, we publish more than 850 journals, including those of more than 300 learned societies, more than 800 new books per year, and a growing range of library products including archives, data, case studies, reports, conference highlights, and video. SAGE remains majority-owned by our founder, and after Sara's lifetime will become owned by a charitable trust that secures our continued independence.

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*Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from
the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education;
they grow there, firm as weeds among rocks.*

Emily Brontë

PREFACE

As I write this preface, I am watching my younger daughter attempt to build a snowperson with the new, wet snow that has fallen. She is struggling, trying to get the three sections to fit on top of each other without collapsing. As a parent, I want to go outside and make suggestions about how it could be done better. Another part of my parenting side knows that a considerable amount of learning requires struggling with the materials at hand until you can make sense of them yourself. I decide to leave her alone to try, and try again, to figure out the best way to get the snow to hold together. Eventually, by late in the afternoon, a wonderful snowperson begins to appear beneath her mittens, and Alana goes in search of something to use as a nose.

This anecdote is a metaphor for how I see my anthologies and student learning. I provide you with much of the material: key writings from significant scholars, larger theoretical frameworks, discussion questions, exercises, and resources for further learning. However, you will need to struggle with this material a bit until the concepts of social inequality and of race, gender, sexuality, and social class make sense to you. The effort you put into studying this material is well worth the energy you expend, because you will have a deeper understanding of your own identities and of more general social inequities. This knowledge also will give you some tools to enact social change in order to lessen injustices in our society.

This anthology, *Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class: Dimensions of Inequality and Identity*, began six years ago when I was asked to design a new reader in this area. I spent two years researching the field, reading hundreds of articles and books and designing and teaching a new course, "Identities and Inequalities," until I came up with the right combination of readings for this text. When I am designing a course for my students at Grinnell College, I want them to read the primary works by the top scholars in the field. Lynn Weber, Patricia Hill Collins, Erik Olin Wright, Joan Acker, Abby Ferber, Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Matthew Desmond, Mustafa Emirbayer, Doug Massey, and Joe Feagin, just to name a few, are all important names in the study of race, gender, and social class. Their writings and the writings of many other eminent scholars make up the readings in this volume.

My review of the literature also revealed that this subject comprises not just one field of scholarship; instead, race, class, and gender studies are informed by multiple areas of analysis, including the studies of social stratification, social inequality, race and ethnicity, gender studies, and intersectionality. Moreover, it is an area of study that keeps evolving over time. For example, social stratification, one of the oldest areas of inquiry in sociology, studies how societies hierarchically sort and rank people based on their social statuses. Social thinkers such as Émile Durkheim,

Karl Marx, and Max Weber were concerned with social differentiation and social stratification in their earliest writings. As time progressed, the field of social stratification morphed into courses on social inequality, a field that studies the inequities of distributing scarce and valuable resources to those different social status groups. Move further forward in time, and the area of race, class, and gender developed to address social inequality not just in terms of social class but also in terms of these other social categories. Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins's classic reader, *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, first published in 1992, responded to this new pedagogical area.

Now, over twenty years later, the field is moving away from discussions of discrete categorical identities toward a more intersectional and nuanced understanding of how social categories work together to create situations of privilege and difference. People are multiply situated and experience their race and ethnicity through the lenses of their social class, gender, and other identities. The experiences of a middle-class African American female are vastly different from those of a white, middle-class male. These differences are not due simply to their race or to their gender but to how their race simultaneously interacts with both their social class and their gender.

This book explores how these differences are shaped and maintained over time. I want students to understand these core sociological concepts of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class and when and why these categories of difference were constructed. I also show how these social categories shape our identities and experiences by providing us with privilege or putting us at a disadvantage. Thus, one purpose of this book is to introduce key concepts and social categories of difference and to establish how these social categories integrate into our lived experiences. Another goal of this anthology is to investigate how these social categories are part of larger social structures and institutions that systemically define and affect social behavior. For example, how are social class and race-ethnicity embedded in the institution of education? How do gender, sexuality, and race-ethnicity affect families? Social categories contribute to relationships of power

in society that can result in discrimination and other forms of social inequality and oppression. This book examines multiple cases that explain why these situations occur and how we can change them.

AUDIENCE FOR RACE, GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND SOCIAL CLASS

This anthology can be used in undergraduate and graduate-level courses on social stratification; social inequality; race and ethnicity; gender and women's studies; and race, class, and gender. It also can be used as a reader in introductory sociology courses. An anthology lends itself to the flexibility of topics and order that a teacher might want to use as a framework for her or his class. While there are many fine collections on race, class, and gender, I incorporate more intersectionality, use more cutting-edge scholarship, and provide an analysis of social inequality at both the micro level of the individual and at the macro level of society. Although in their most recent revisions, other competing books have begun to add readings that address intersectionality, none of these readers is fully integrated. This anthology, on the other hand, takes an intersectional approach to topics as much as possible.

Moreover, many race, class, and gender texts focus only on minority groups or others who are oppressed rather than on those with privilege. Or, they discuss racial diversity by looking only at African Americans. Furthermore, while in general, race and gender tend to be addressed well in a number of anthologies, many of these fall short on discussions of social class. Other differences, such as disability and sexuality, could be better incorporated, as well. *Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class* does not focus on specific racial-ethnic subgroups as an organizing principle but instead arranges its contents around key themes and topic areas, and it includes pieces that investigate whiteness. In addition, this anthology includes readings that examine the middle and upper classes, not just the lower socioeconomic groups. No reader can do it all, but in *Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class*:

Dimensions of Inequality and Identity, many of the shortcomings found elsewhere are addressed.

MAJOR FEATURES OF THE BOOK

The distinguishing characteristics of this book are many. First, this anthology has five major parts that frame the scholarship on social inequality and identity. Each of these parts contains an introductory essay to introduce students to the readings and the important concepts and themes. The first is Part I, "Introduction to Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class: Concepts, History, and Theories of Difference." In addition to defining the critical terms, some readings in Part I provide a historical context for understanding contemporary issues of race, gender, sexuality, and social class. Part II investigates the micro level of identity and is titled "Identities Matter: The Social Construction and Experiences of Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class." This part focuses on identity formation, identities and social interaction, and identity construction and stigma management. Part III, "Social Institutions and the Perpetuation of Inequality," examines six social institutions and how they affect identity and maintain or challenge social inequality. Readings explore current topics in the family, schools, the economy, health care, media, and government. Part IV, "Power and Privilege Unmasked," looks at how power is distributed in society, the theories that explain this distribution, and examples of discrimination. Part V, "Empowerment and Social Change," turns our attention to how individuals, communities, and larger social structures can effect social change.

The 60 readings in this anthology contain some of the most compelling, relevant, and cutting-edge scholarship available. And, as mentioned previously, the list of authors included reads like a *Who's Who* of scholars studying social inequality. The readings focus primarily on the United States, but several make connections to global social inequality. The readings are carefully edited to a length that makes them accessible, but they are not too short for readers to comprehend the issue at hand. Each reading is preceded by a

brief headnote that introduces the author, the context of the reading, and the main points. Please note that each reading retains its endnotes, but all references have been moved to the end of the book.

SPECIAL PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES

This anthology incorporates a number of special pedagogical features that will enable the instructor and the student to get more out of the material. These features include part introductions, headnotes, and discussion questions.

Alternative Table of Contents: To help scholars and teachers organize the diverse readings around particular topics or themes, an alternative table of contents has been provided.

Part Introductions: At the beginning of each of the five parts, I have included an overview essay that introduces the major concepts and themes of that part. This essay also briefly introduces the readings and explains their pertinence.

Headnotes: At the beginning of each reading, I have written a brief headnote that introduces the reading, the author(s), and their affiliations. The headnote also provides a context for the piece and gives information on the source of the reading.

Discussion Questions: Discussion questions appear at the end of each reading to help students review the main points and apply the reading.

ANCILLARIES

Additional ancillary materials further support and enhance the learning goals of this book. These ancillary materials include the following:

Instructor Teaching Site: www.sagepub.com/ferguson

The new, password-protected instructor teaching site provides one integrated source for all instructor materials, including the following key components for each chapter:

Test Bank (Microsoft Word): This Word test bank offers a diverse set of test questions and answers for each chapter of the book. Multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, and essay questions for every chapter help instructors assess students' progress and understanding.

PowerPoint Slides: Chapter-specific slide presentations offer assistance with lecture and review preparation by highlighting essential content, features, and artwork from the book.

Course Syllabi: Sample syllabi—for semester, quarter, and online classes—provide suggested models for instructors to use when creating the syllabi for their courses.

Chapter Exercises and Activities: These lively and stimulating ideas for use in and out of class reinforce active learning. The activities apply to individual or group projects.

Video Links: Carefully selected, web-based video resources feature relevant interviews, lectures, personal stories, inquiries, and other content for use in independent or classroom-based explorations of key topics.

Web Resources: These links to relevant websites direct both instructors and students to additional resources for further research on important chapter topics.

Student Study Site: www.sagepub.com/ferguson

The open-access student study site provides a variety of additional resources to build on the students' understanding of the book content and extend their learning beyond the classroom. The website includes the following:

eFlashcards: These study tools reinforce students' understanding of key terms and concepts that have been outlined in the chapters.

Web Quizzes: Flexible self-quizzes allow students to independently assess their progress in learning course material.

Video Links: Carefully selected, web-based video resources feature relevant interviews, lectures, personal stories, inquiries, and other content for use

in independent or classroom-based explorations of key topics.

Web Resources: These links to relevant websites direct both instructors and students to additional resources for further research on important chapter topics.

Glossary: A glossary is available to help students with the terminology found in the readings.

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Susan J. Ferguson is professor of sociology at Grinnell College, where she has taught for over twenty-two years. Ferguson regularly teaches introduction to sociology courses, and her critically acclaimed anthology, *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology* (McGraw-Hill, 2013), is used in introductory classes around the country. Ferguson also teaches courses on the family and the sociology of health and illness, as well as a new seminar on social inequality and identity. Ferguson has published in all of these areas, including the research collection *Breast Cancer: Society Shapes an Epidemic* (with co-editor Anne Kasper, Palgrave, 2000) and *Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families* (McGraw-Hill, 2011). In addition, Ferguson is general editor for "Contemporary Family Perspectives," which is a series

of research monographs and short texts on the family (SAGE Publications).

Ferguson, who grew up in a working-class family in Colorado, still considers the Rocky Mountains her spiritual home. A first-generation college student, Ferguson was able to attend college with the help of scholarships, work study, and financial loans. She majored in political science and Spanish and completed certificates of study in women's studies and Latin American studies. After working for a large research grant sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development, Ferguson entered graduate school and completed her master's degree in sociology at Colorado State University and her Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Her areas of study are gender, family, women's health, and pedagogy, but her primary enthusiasm is teaching.

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