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SKU: 9780134069715-SOLUTIONS

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Chapter 2: The Social Construction of Gender

Chapter Context

This chapter explores the importance of culture in shaping who we become as women and men. Gender socialization shapes various aspects of our lives, including gender identity, attitudes, and self-concepts. Different theoretical perspectives on the social construction of gender emphasize different dimensions to this process.

Outcome-based Outline

Outcome	**Learning Objectives**	**Interactivity**
Critical Thinking	2.4 Analyze the importance of socialization for a person to establish gender identity	x.x [interactive] (if app)
Knowledge of Discipline	2.3 Review the social construction of gender identity	
	2.5 Summarize society's influences of gender	
Cultural Competence	2.1 Recognize that the link between biology and human life is affected by social and cultural influences	
	2.2 Review how gender roles are not biological and are learned through the process of socialization	

PowerPoint Presentation

Download the PowerPoint Presentation for this chapter here.

Discussion Question Bank

This discussion question bank provides a listing of discussion questions (1-2 per module) which are included for in-class use.

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Module	Discussion Question(s)
2.1 Biology, Culture, and Society	1. Once a child's sex is determined at birth (or in some cases while still in utero) what steps are taken on the part of parents, family, friends, etc., to reinforce the corresponding gender role in the child? How does gender socialization begin at birth? 2. How do cultural beliefs such as religion structure the gender identity and roles of a population? What connects a social factor such as religion to gendered culture?
2.2 Socialization and Gender Identity: An Ongoing Process	1. How is Simone de Beauvoir's book, *The Second Sex,* translatable to the modern era? What concepts and theories apply to contemporary social life? 2. Why are the combination of race and gender important in the study of gender socialization? Why must the study of gender assess both when trying to understand oppression?
2.3 Theoretical Perspectives on the Formation of Gender	1. How can the concept of identification theory be critiqued? Analyze it through the lens of the changing family structure. Are same-sex parents still key for a child's identity? 2. How is gender and "doing gender" reproduced in the way people interact with each other? Consider how gender is perpetrated not just by family socialization, but by peer groups, media, etc.
2.4 Is Socialization Enough?	1. How does research perpetuate gender roles? What aspect of reporting gender in research leaves cause for concern? How do you think research can work against the perpetuation of traditional gender roles? 2. What impact do social institutions have on determining gender roles?
2.5 Chapter Summary: The Social Construction of Gender	1. Describe why the term "opposite sexes" provides a false sense of how gender identity is constructed. 2. Identify how the life course perspective relates to gender socialization. How does gender identity change with time?

Research Assignments

The following research assignments pertain to the main topics and/or themes of the chapter. Please respond by writing a paper consisting of 1000-1500 words.

Symbolic Interaction and Doing Gender

Research West and Zimmerman's original study on "doing gender" as referenced in the chapter. Make a list of the sexual categories that the authors use to define how gender is symbolically presented in day-to-day life. How is one's presentation of gender influenced

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not just by his or her own gender identity but by the culture he or she exists in? Add to your list the contemporary examples of sex categories to help answer this question.

Leaning In

Research the main arguments made in *Lean In* by Sheryl Sandberg and then research critiques of the book. Separate a piece of paper into two columns, one that lists the goals of "leaning in" and one that lists the conflict found with the book. Looking at both lists, how do topics covered in this chapter shape ideas of socialization? Consider the discussions of race, doing gender, and biology versus socialization with your answer.

[Research Assignment]

[Program-specific Feature]

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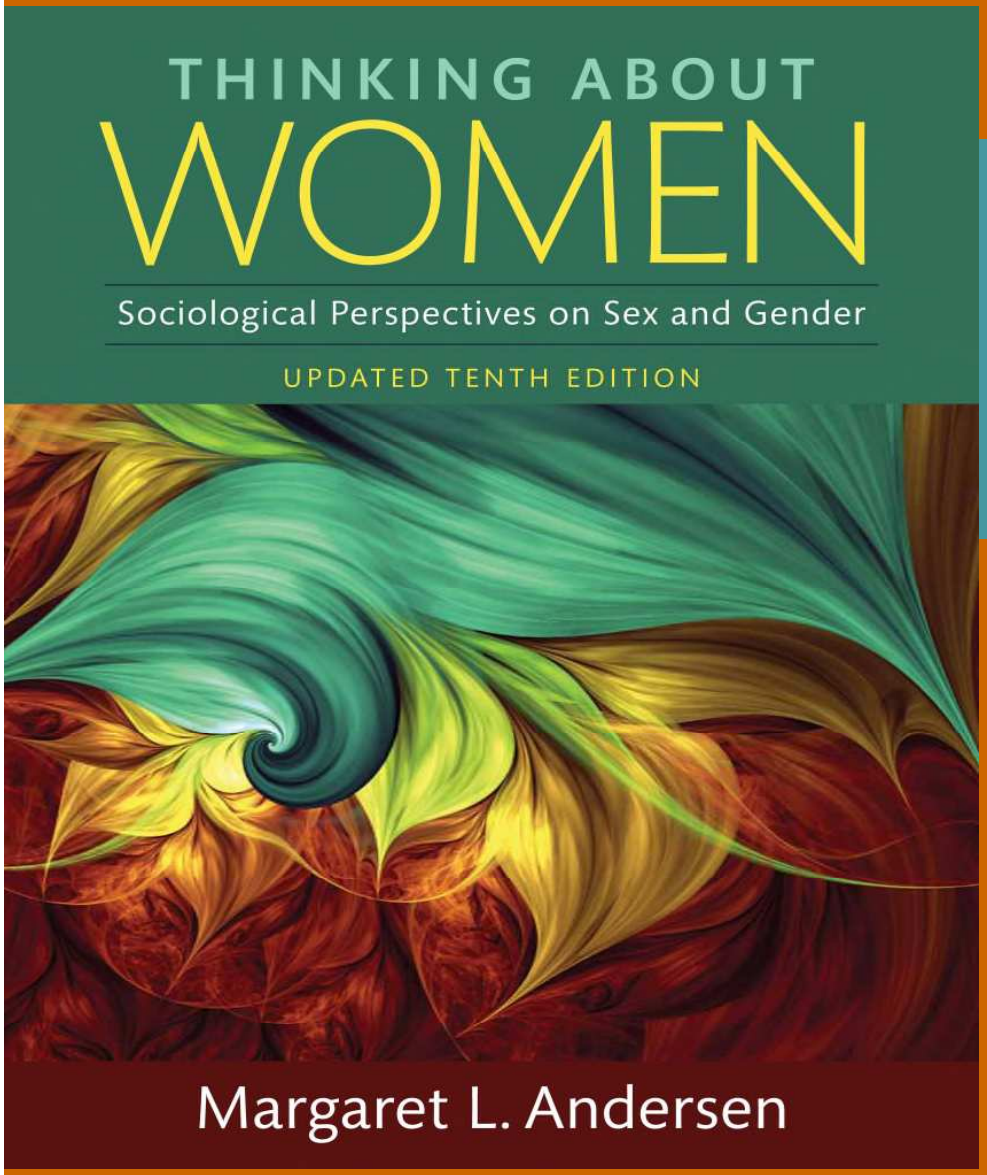

Andersen, 10e Update

Margaret L. Andersen

Chapter 2

The Social Construction of Gender

ALWAYS LEARNING

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Learning Objectives (1 of 2)

2.1 Recognize that the link between biology and human life is affected by social and cultural influences

2.2 Review how gender roles are not biological and are learned through the process of socialization

2.3 Review the social construction of gender identity

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Learning Objectives (2 of 2)

2.4 Analyze the importance of socialization for a person to establish gender identity

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Biology, Culture, and Society

Objective 2.1: Recognize that the link between biology and human life is affected by social and cultural influences

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2.1: Biology, Culture, and Society
(1 of 7)

- Sex and Gender: What's the Difference?
  - Defining sex
  - Defining gender

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2.1: Biology, Culture, and Society
(2 of 7)

- Creating Sex: The Biological Process
  - Sex chromosomes
  - Determining sex

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2.1: Biology, Culture, and Society
(3 of 7)

- Assigning Sex Identities
  - Intersexed persons
  - Sex reassignment
  - Transgender

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2.1: Biology, Culture, and Society
(4 of 7)

- Biological Determinism
  - Biological determinism
  - Critiquing biological determinism

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2.1: Biology, Culture, and Society
(5 of 7)

- What Difference Does Difference Make: Nature? Nurture?
  - Nature vs. nurture
  - Sexually dimorphic traits

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2.1: Biology, Culture, and Society
(6 of 7)

- The Difference Culture Makes
  - Culture
  - Gender and culture
  - Social construction of gender

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2.1: Biology, Culture, and Society
(7 of 7)

- The Institutional Basis of Gender
  - Social institutions
  - Gendered institutions

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Socialization and Gender Identity: An Ongoing Process

Objective 2.2: Review how gender roles are not biological and are learned through the process of socialization

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2.2: Socialization and Gender Identity: An Ongoing Process
(1 of 3)

- Sanctions and Expectations
  - Socialization
  - Gender identity
  - Homophobia as social control

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2.2: Socialization and Gender Identity: An Ongoing Process
(2 of 3)

- Race and Gender Identity
  - Social construction of race and gender
  - Intersecting identity

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2.2: Socialization and Gender Identity: An Ongoing Process (3 of 3)

- Socialization across the Life Course
  - Infancy
  - Children's gender identity

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Theoretical Perspectives on the Formation of Gender

Objective 2.3: Review the social construction of gender identity

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2.3: Theoretical Perspectives on the Formation of Gender
(1 of 5)

- Identification Theory
  - Identification theory defined
  - Object relations theory

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2.3: Theoretical Perspectives on the Formation of Gender
(2 of 5)

- Social Learning Theory
  - Social learning theory
  - Feminist perspectives

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2.3: Theoretical Perspectives on the Formation of Gender
(3 of 5)

- Cognitive-Developmental Theory
  - Cognitive-developmental theory
  - Applications with children

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2.3: Theoretical Perspectives on the Formation of Gender
(4 of 5)

- Symbolic Interaction and “Doing Gender”
  - Theory of symbolic interaction
  - Symbolic interaction and gender
  - Doing Gender

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2.3: Theoretical Perspectives on the Formation of Gender
(5 of 5)

- Comparing Theoretical Perspectives
  - Approaches to gender socialization
  - Social construction of gender

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Is Socialization Enough?

Objective 2.4: Analyze the importance of socialization for a person to establish gender identity

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2.4: Is Socialization Enough?

- Focus on gender roles
- Non-academic socialization

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