

GENDER ROLE CONSTRUCTION AMONG MEN AND WOMEN OF COLOR

*Marie L. Miville, Lucinda Bratini, Melissa J. Corpus,
and Manuel A. Diaz*

I feel like there's this image that we just have dealt with so much, and that's a part of who we are, but we're supposed to keep going. Like unbreakable. . . . I think there's this real shame of us having to seek mental health services or us feeling like we're not that strong independent Black woman, even though there's some acknowledgment that our life is hard and it's expected to be hard.

My father taught me to be masculine. And he taught me to be a fighter, don't give up. When somebody comes at you, push you, don't take it. Hit 'em back. He taught me to don't care who it is, where he's coming from, how big it is. You hit. And you hit. And you hit.

In the Filipino culture, I think women are strong people in the family. They kind of are the leaders . . . they take care of the household and they make decisions.

These quotes from an African American woman, a Latino man, and a Filipina woman highlight some of the unique challenges that men and women of color face in our society as they begin to develop or construct their sense of themselves and others as gendered beings. This book introduces you to the experiences of more than 60 people of diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds, including African Americans, Latinas/os, and Asians/Asian Americans. These individuals were interviewed about their views of what it means to be a man or woman and the roles their racial-ethnic heritage plays in constructing these meanings. We present stories of poignancy and complexity, as these young

2 Gender Role Construction among Men and Women of Color

people struggled with a number of questions: What does it mean to be a man or a woman today? What messages continue to be taught by families, schools, and the larger society, especially through the media, about the roles we can or should play as men and women? How do we make sense of the often-conflicting images, stories, and lessons that are a part of the current narratives on gender? We live in times of changing expectations regarding how men and women *should* act as well as how they actually *do* act. The themes presented here depict the continuing challenge of how to hold on to traditional cultural beliefs while at the same time seeking more equality, acceptance, and access.

In this chapter, we present some of the current thinking mental health professionals have used to study gender and gender roles. Our review of the literature is not meant to be comprehensive or exhaustive but instead to highlight important theoretical constructs and findings that formed the empirical basis of our interview project. We also describe the research methodology we used in conducting our interviews, constructive grounded theory (CGT), which helped us analyze our data for common themes among our interview participants.

GENDER AND GENDER ROLES

According to Unger (as cited in Suzuki & Ahluwalia, 2003), *gender* refers to the “socially constructed attributions and expectations assigned to individuals on the basis of their biological sex” (p. 120). In other words, when talking about roles men and women may play in their private lives and in the larger society, “It is now widely accepted that gender is a social construction, that sex and gender are distinct, and that gender is something all of us ‘do’” (Lucal, 1999, p. 782). Thus, rather than identifying individuals as male or female and their related behaviors as biologically (or sex) based, scholars today argue that social and cultural conditions, not biology, have much to do with the beliefs, behaviors, and norms that men and women display (Stets & Burke, 2000).

One of the ways we “do” gender is through the enactment of *gender roles*, “behaviors that men and women enact congruent with the socially constructed ideals of masculinity and femininity” (Mahalik, Cournoyer, DeFranc, Cherry, & Napolitano, 1998, p. 247). Gender roles express our respective place or position in

the larger society relative to traditional beliefs of masculinity and femininity and reflect essentialized qualities of appearance, mannerisms, personality traits, and beliefs regarding domestic and work roles. Examples of traits associated with masculinity include action, competition, and instrumentality, whereas femininity incorporates passivity, cooperativeness, and expressiveness (Stets & Burke, 2000). In many cultures, women traditionally have been associated with feminine gender roles (e.g., domestic settings) and men with masculine gender roles (e.g., work settings). However, since the early 20th century, researchers, particularly anthropologists such as Margaret Mead, have found numerous societies and cultures that do not adhere to these kinds of roles. Mead found, for example,

Among the Arapesh, both males and females displayed what we would consider a “feminine” temperament (passive, cooperative and expressive). Among the Mundugamor, both males and females displayed what we would consider a “masculine” temperament (active, competitive and instrumental). Finally, among the Tchambuli, men and women displayed temperaments that were different from each other, but opposite to our own pattern. In that society, men were emotional, and expressive, while women were active and instrumental. (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 3)

Moreover, scholars have pointed out that in many, but not all, societies, gender roles often are imbued with social status and differential access to power and resources, generally resulting in men in the dominant or superior position and women in the submissive or inferior role. The role or process of power, “the ability to do, to act, or to effect” (Collier, 1982, in Jones, 2003, p. 31) and relevant constructs have long been ignored in the field of psychology. Sociologically, power can be understood systemically as “the ability of persons or groups to command compliance from other persons or groups, even in the face of opposition. Power requires resources superior to those controlled by the compliers” (Chavetz, in Jones, 2003, p. 32). A simple example of the continuing power of gender-based social positions today involves the gender wage gap, wherein women in the United States earn \$.77 for every dollar men earn, all other variables being held constant (Institute for Women’s Policy Research, 2011).

4 Gender Role Construction among Men and Women of Color

The past four decades have yielded a great deal of research exploring gender, *gender identity*—“the degree to which persons see themselves as masculine or feminine given what it means to be a man or woman in society” (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 1)—and gender roles. Rigidly held shared beliefs about gender and gender roles (i.e., *gender stereotypes*) have had a negative impact on both men and women, including psychological theory and research conducted in this area.

For example, adolescence has been identified as a key phase of development in which boys and girls construct their initial meanings of what it means to be men and women, respectively. Writing more than a half century ago, Simone de Beauvoir (1949/1989, in Tryon & Winograd, 2003) observed that during this period, and in contrast to their childhood, girls become passive, “waiting for them to have their identity defined for them by the men they marry. Boys, however, make their way actively toward adulthood. Whereas boys are permitted to question and challenge the status quo, girls are expected to define themselves according to it” (p. 185).

Unfortunately, this can result in girls becoming secretive, aspiring “to a dreamy and romantic future” (Tryon & Winograd, 2003, p. 186) à la the fairy princess tales of Disney films; a girl dreams because, as de Beauvoir notes, “she is too much divided against herself to join battle with the world” (p. 186). The end result is that “she neither accepts the role that biology and society have prescribed for her nor does she relinquish it completely” (p. 186).

More recent theories about gender role and gender identity development of girls and women emphasize the importance of social context and the role that power and conflicting expectations play in promoting mental and physical health or distress (Enns, 2004; Jones, 2003). Emphasis in these recent theories is placed on redefining power-based constructions of gender, from a focus on the center or presumably normative views (i.e., male), to marginalized but still influential groups in society, such as those of women and people of color. Feminist psychotherapy, for example, emphasizes the “unequal power between men and women, abuse, and empowerment of women in their individual lives” (Miville & Ferguson, 2006, p. 91). Awareness of the negative impact of *patriarchy*, a system that casts men and women “as opposites in an oppressive gender hierarchy dominated by male control and female coercion and

submission” (p. 91), and *sexism*, negative beliefs about women, have become a primary focus of negotiating healthier gender identities and helping girls and women to lead more empowered lives. The impact of gender-based disparities still can be seen in such varied contexts as the inequitable distribution of domestic labor in the home and career barriers in the workplace (e.g., discriminatory hiring practices, “the glass ceiling,” Heppner, Davidson, & Scott, 2003).

For boys and men, pressures to conform to the masculine gender role can lead to *gender role conflict (GRC)*, “a psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative consequences for the person or others” (O’Neil, 2008, p. 362). GRC occurs when “rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles, learned during socialization . . . result in restriction, devaluation, or violation of others or self” (O’Neil, 1990, p. 25). GRC results from the heavy competition that exists between rigid, inflexible, or restrictive masculine gender roles and situational demands. Further, “the ultimate outcome of GRC is the restriction of a person’s human potential or the restriction of another person’s potential” (O’Neil, 2008, p. 362). In other words, strict adherence to masculine gender roles can lead to psychological problems, including *success, power, and competition issues*; dominating others for the benefit of one’s own gain; *emotional restrictiveness*, blocking out all feelings for fear of being vulnerable and looking “womanly,” which negatively can affect relations with both women and men; and *conflict between work and family relations*, referring to how men experience restrictions in balancing their work, school, and family relations, often resulting in health problems, working too hard, stress and anxiety, and lack of leisure and relaxation (O’Neil, 2008).

In sum, current thinking among mental health professionals and other social scientists emphasizes how gender and gender roles are socialized in young boys and girls rather than being considered inborn, often resulting in mental health struggles related to rigid adherence of these roles. No doubt, as the songs say, one still can “enjoy being a girl” or accept that “boys will be boys,” along with various joys this might give individuals, even their families and communities. Moreover, as some may still believe, adopting gender roles may help the larger society organize critical tasks related to survival (Gilmore, 1990). However, current evidence demonstrates that, in many societies, unquestioned adaptation of these roles, particularly if they

are power-based social constructions, also can lead to anxiety, anger, depression, and even poor physical health because of the negative bifurcations that can result not just between men and women but also within individuals regarding their own intrinsic interests, values, and activities. Further, today's world provides a cacophony of images and messages about how men and women should and do behave that may be difficult for individuals to sift through in order to negotiate a consistent or comprehensible sense of themselves as gendered beings.

RACIAL-ETHNIC CONTEXTS OF GENDER AND GENDER ROLES

So far we have discussed gender issues broadly, emphasizing the larger society without highlighting the more specific roles that race-ethnicity can play as well. As with gender, a power-based social hierarchy based on race-ethnicity has been the hallmark of much of the sociohistory of the United States. Multiple forces instituted through laws and social policy (e.g., slavery, school segregation, forced internment, and anti-immigration laws) have led to strong hostility toward and overt discrimination of many people from a number of diverse racial-ethnic groups, including Black/African Americans, Latinas/os, and Asian/Asian Americans (Sue & Sue, 2008). On a side note, in this book, we use those terms that refer to diverse racial-ethnic groups (e.g., "Black" and "African American" are used interchangeably) that remain in common use, both by government sources and well as by our research participants.

The lives of most if not all individuals from these groups, who are referred to collectively as *people of color*, continue to be marked by the effects of racism and discrimination. First it is critical to define *racism*. We use two definitions. Racism is:

a system of cultural, institutional, and personal values, beliefs, and actions in which individuals or groups are put at a disadvantage based on ethnic or racial characteristics (Tinsley-Jones, 2001, in Miville & Ferguson, 2006, p. 89)

through the exercise of power against a racial group viewed as inferior, by individuals and institutions with the intentional or unintentional support of the entire culture. (J. Jones, in Miville & Ferguson, 2006, p. 89)

In short, racism is “a systemic and dynamic force that disempowers one group by defining them as inferior, thereby affording another group power and superiority. . . . Although racism may be expressed in blatant or overt ways, there are many forms of covert racism as well” (Miville & Ferguson, 2006, p. 89). D. W. Sue and Sue (2008) have outlined some specific consequences that result from institutionalized oppression of this nature (i.e., what they call *ethnocentric monoculturalism*):

- Belief in the superiority of one group, where characteristics of the dominant racial-ethnic group (White Euro-American in the United States) are seen as both desirable and normative (e.g., appearance, behaviors, and values)
- Belief in the inferiority of others, where characteristics of nondominant groups are seen as less desirable, even deviant
- Power of the dominant group to impose its standards on less dominant groups—for example, the access to important resources, such as housing, education, and well-paid positions
- Manifestation in institutions via “programs, policies, practices, structures, and institutions” in society (p. 87)
- The invisible veil, or the assumption of a universally shared view on the “nature of reality and truth” (p. 88)

As can be seen, the forces of racism can have a debilitating impact on the mental and physical functioning of many people. We now address how these issues might apply each to women and men of color.

Women of Color

As noted earlier, discussions of gender and gender roles have historically centered on explications of presumably White gendered experiences (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Reid & Comas-Diaz, 1990; Settles, 2006; Settles, Sellers, & Damas, 2002). An early example of this occurred in the 19th-century women rights’ movement, which focused on liberation from sexist oppression by emphasizing home and family as a “woman’s sphere” (hooks, 1981, p. 47). The critical Seneca Falls Declaration,

8 Gender Role Construction among Men and Women of Color

“the articulated consciousness of women’s rights,” in the mid-1800s primarily focused on the injurious impact of marriage on women because they were robbed of their property rights (Davis, 1983, p. 53). Unfortunately, the declaration completely ignored the problems faced by poor women as well as women of color. Moreover, although some women’s rights activists wisely called for unity between Black Liberation and Women’s Liberation movements in the 19th century, others disagreed, believing “it is more important that women should vote than that the black man should vote” (H. W. Beecher, in Davis, p. 72).

Although Black/African American women and other women of color may experience a similar impact of sexism and patriarchy as White women, patriarchy and sexism do not affect these women in the same way, especially since they typically were excluded from political movements, feminist discourse, and psychological theories regarding women’s rights and overall disempowerment (Baca Zinn, Hondagneu-Sotelo, & Messner, 2004; Espin, 1997). More importantly, women of color often have labored alongside men of their communities. A stark example of these conditions was depicted during the days of slavery when pregnant Black women were forced not only to continue working in the fields but could be the target of flogging for failing to meet the daily quota:

A woman who gives offense in the field, and is large in a family way, is compelled to lie down over a hole made to receive her corpulency, and is flogged with the whip or beat with a paddle which has holes in it; at every stroke comes a blister. One of my sisters was so severely punished in this way, that labor was brought on, and the child was born in the field. (Grandy, 1844, in Davis, 1983, p. 9)

Thus, the myriad experiences of women of color cannot be simply divorced or disassociated from that of men from their racial-ethnic background, given their common struggles for survival in an overtly racist environment. Indeed, Davis (1983) argues that by being able to perform domestic duties for one’s family “which has long been a central expression of the socially conditioned inferiority of women, the Black woman . . . [helped] lay the foundation for some degree of autonomy, both for herself and her men. . . . She was, therefore, essential to the *survival* of the community” (p. 17).

It is important to contextualize the impact of patriarchy and sexism on women of color within a racial-ethnic framework (Miville & Ferguson, 2006). Several scholars have described how numerous gendered racial stereotypes that today abound for women of color (e.g., sexually promiscuous, docile and obedient) reflect systemic means of gaining dominance or control over them (Greene, 1994; Wyatt, 1997). Moreover, these images also have “served the purpose of masking the social reality of sexual exploitation” of women of color (Greene, 1994, in Miville & Ferguson, 2006, p. 91).

Scholars also have described the intersecting impact of cultural values with sexism and patriarchy on women of color. For example, Gil and Vasquez (1996) delineated the “Maria paradox” for Latina women that arises from conflicts between traditional gender roles, or *marianismo* (i.e., the all-sacrificing wife and mother; Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002) and the modern world, where women are expected to achieve and, at times, compete with men. *Marianismo* refers to the roles that women play and is based on the religious persona of the Virgin Mary: girls and women “must be pure, long-suffering, nurturing, . . . pious . . . virtuous and humble, yet spiritually stronger than men” (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002, p. 49). A psychological trap can be laid as Latinas attempt to immerse themselves in traditional cultural norms for women (e.g., not raising their voice in anger) that then can lead to the restriction of life choices and psychological distress, including anxiety and depression (Miville & Ferguson, 2006). Although today many Latinas “report that as a result of acculturation, education, and involvement in relationships, they experience less conflict about not living” according to their racial-ethnic traditions, *marianismo* remains a potent cultural norm according to which many Latinas are socialized (Santiago-Rivera et al., p. 50).

The negative impact of institutionalized racism and sexism also can be turned inward psychologically. Black feminist poet Audre Lorde (1984) poignantly describes the *internalization* of oppression, where an individual comes to adopt the negative institutionalized beliefs about her or his group, for African American women when she asserts, “We are Black women born into a society of entrenched loathing and contempt for whatever is Black and female. We are strong and enduring. We are deeply scarred” (p. 151). Similarly, Hurtado (2003) reflects on the use of Spanish among Latina feminists “as a political

assertion of the value of their heritage and the means to create a feminist discourse directly tied to a [Latina] experience” (p. 8). She refers to the work of Patricia Zavella, who studied the discourse of Latinas who expressed fears of “getting burned” if normative social conventions were transgressed, particularly in the face of repressive religious ideologies that may constrict Latinas’ self-expression and agency.

Another important aspect regarding racial-ethnic contexts of gender and gender roles relates to their potential for being different from the dominant group’s expectations. For example, in Filipino culture, although Filipina American women are expected to be emotional and nurturing, the gender role socialization of Filipina American women is distinctive because they are socialized and recognized as leaders and decision makers within their household. Furthermore, contrary to typical gender role constructions in many Asian communities, women are encouraged to pursue educational attainment and professional development (Pido, 1986). Given the scope of their gender role socialization, Filipina women are commonly viewed as the head of the household (e.g., they manage the household finances, determine which school the children will attend, play the role of disciplinarian of children, and dictate the rules of the household) and are taught to be assertive and independent (Nadal & Corpus, 2012). This is contrary to the more pervasive stereotype that Asian women are submissive, passive, dependent, and subordinate to men (Chinn, 2002).

Similarly, Tafoya (1997) and Garrett and Barret (2003) describe more flexible roles normally present in Native American tribes and nations. For example, Tafoya notes that “most Native communities tend not to classify the world into concrete binary categories of the Western world . . . but rather into categories that range from appropriateness to inappropriateness, depending on the context of the situation” (in Miville & Ferguson, 2006, p. 93). It is the understanding of “the relative nature of opposites (i.e., ‘walking in step’ within the circle) [that] provides a path toward direction and meaning in life” for many Native Americans (Miville & Ferguson, p. 93).

In sum, to better understand how gender and gender roles evolve, scholars today emphasize the role of the social context rather than biology. Regarding how women of color construct their sense of themselves as gendered beings, it is crucial to understand the role that race-ethnicity can play in this

evolution, particularly given the dual impact that sexism and racism may have on their mental and physical health. It is also important to incorporate traditional cultural values, beliefs, and norms when describing the makeup of gender roles within particular racial-ethnic communities. Finally, the conflicts that can arise when traditions meet modernity among women of color can at times lead to mental and physical distress, and further examination is required. We next turn to gender and gender role construction among men of color.

Men of Color

As noted earlier, in many if not most societies, men typically hold a dominant power position relative to women, regarding their social status and what are considered to be their presumably superior native abilities and traits. This remains true for many communities of color, both in the United States and around the world. For example, Chinn (2002) describes how for many Asians and Asian Americans, the social order initiated over 2,500 years ago by the great philosopher Confucius continues to be influential:

His teachings sought to establish stable, reciprocal, ethical but fundamentally nonegalitarian social relationships based on gender, age, and position in society. Confucian ethics defined relationships between ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brother, even those between friends with the goal of establishing a society so just and virtuous it would need no legal system. At the apex of the social hierarchy was the family patriarch. . . . Sons maintained the family lineage, inherited property, worshipped the ancestors, and in turn were worshipped by their descendants. . . . Even as imperial China declined, Confucianism's nonegalitarian ideology gained strength by appropriating Darwin's theory of evolution to justify the low status of women and the lower status of girls. Females were simply biologically inferior and less highly evolved than males. . . . The value of a girl was in marriage to a powerful man. (p. 304)

Many Asian and Asian American parents raise their daughters to be "compliant, feminine, and educated enough to be marriageable" (Chinn, 2002, p. 302), whereas boys are socialized to feel more valued than girls, expecting eventually to be "worshipped by their descendants" (p. 304).

12 Gender Role Construction among Men and Women of Color

However, in the United States, negative stereotypes for men of this racial-ethnic background often reflect more feminine roles and values, and they can be viewed in the larger society as submissive and passive. Media portrayals have largely made Asian American men invisible; if featured at all, they generally have included “waiters, cooks, servants, laundry workers or martial arts experts” (D. Sue, 2001, p. 787). Asian American men also may experience a type of glass ceiling in the workplace due to institutionalized racist practices as well as their culturally different values and communication styles (e.g., talking less frequently). Moreover, given the newly immigrated status of many Asians in the United States, the family structure may be reversed, with women bringing money to the household equally to or in greater amounts than their male relatives (D. Sue, 2001), thereby causing traditional gender roles to founder.

For many Latino/a communities, gender roles as defined by culture and religion continue to hold sway. These roles typically are communicated by the constructs of *marianismo* described earlier and by *machismo*:

Machismo refers to a man’s responsibility to provide for, protect, and defend his family. His loyalty and sense of responsibility to family, friends, and community make him a good man. The Anglo-American definition of *macho* that describes sexism, male-chauvinist behavior is radically different from the original Latino meaning of *machismo* which conveys that notion of “an honorable and responsible man.” (Morales, 1996, in Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002, p. 50)

As Morales (1996) and others (Bacigalupe, 2000) have noted, in the United States, the concept of *machismo* as an ideology has perpetuated generally negative stereotypes of Latino men. Negative stereotypical characteristics of *machismo* include male dominance and chauvinism, bravado, womanizing, aggression, violence, alcoholism, emotional restrictiveness, antisocial behaviors, hypermasculinity and excessive masculinity, focus on individual power, sexual promiscuity, extreme rudeness, less education, and lower affiliation to ethnic identity (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008; Casas, Turner, & de Esparza, 2001; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008). For many Latinos, adhering to such characteristics and practices also can validate their masculinity as Latino men, and such devotion may become central to their sense of masculinity. Moreover, Latino

men who adhere to these characteristics may be placed at great psychological risk, potentially leading to the development of gender role conflicts (O'Neil, 2008) described earlier. Thus, strict adherence of Latino men to a stereotyped form of *machismo* may have negative implications for their psychological well-being.

Alternatively, the construct of *caballerismo* communicates more positive values associated with masculinity among Latinos and can include protecting and providing for the family and less fortunate members of society; being family oriented; having dignity, wisdom, honor, and responsibility; showing bravery; being emotionally connected to others; being affiliated; giving and showing respect to others; having a strong connection to ethnic identity; focusing on intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships; having a higher satisfaction with life, and having pride in raising one's children (Arciniega et al., 2008; Casas et al., 2001; Falicov, 1998; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008; Villereal & Cavazos, 2005). Wester (2008) suggests that these men are likely to consider and define their masculinity through inner qualities (i.e., integrity, honor) rather than outward qualities (i.e., physical strength) that are more associated with *machismo*.

Regarding Black/African American men, it is similarly important to incorporate the influence of African-centered values, such as a holistic view of oneself, the vitality of feelings, and a collective approach to survival in understanding their gender role constructions (Parham, 1993). Moreover, as with African American women, the stark consequences of racism and racial violence must be acknowledged in the lives of Black men and their sense of themselves as gendered beings, potentially resulting in: "(1) problems of aggression and control, (2) cultural alienation or disconnection, (3) self-esteem issues, (4) dependency issues, (5) help-seeking attitudes and behaviors, and (6) racial identity issues" (Caldwell & White, 2001, p. 738). As with women and other men of color, negative images and stereotypes about Black men abound in the larger society, particularly through the media, including "absent father, pimp, drug dealer, player, gangster, [and] academic underachiever. . . . The obvious problem with media definitions of Black masculinity is that they are admittedly distorted and are predicated on a model of cultural deprivation" (Caldwell & White, p. 745). Unfortunately, many of these images may be internalized by young Black boys and men and may be linked with the psychological problems

noted earlier. A number of mental health professionals have developed innovative strategies for combating these issues, many of which involve clients learning responsibility, connecting or dialoguing with members of the community and the extended family as well as learning Africentric values (Parham, 1993; White & Cones, 1999).

Connell (1987, 1995, cited in Miville & Ferguson, 2006) defined the notion of “racialized masculinities” to depict the multiple ways that men of color are marginalized in the larger society, leading to their denigration: “[T]his ‘othering’ of racialized masculinities helps to shore up the material privileges as part of a system that includes gender, as well as racial, class, sexual, and other relations of power” (p. 92). Many men of color may adopt a “cool” or “tough” persona as a means of combating this process. Sometimes this approach can be successful regarding individual survival; however, many families and communities continue to suffer from the lack of positive role models and other mental health struggles that come from restricting emotions and adhering to rigid behavioral standards (Miville & Ferguson, 2006).

In sum, constructions of gender and gender roles by men of color may be understood best within a racial-ethnic framework that includes the impact of various forms of racism on their mental well-being. Moreover, the role of cultural values and norms in specifying what it means to be masculine may be critical to explore further. Finally, as with women of color, the clash between cultural expectations and modern-world achievements (by both men and women) may create circumstances that could either detract from the constructions of positive definitions of manhood or lead to more flexible understandings of how men and women may behave in multiple settings.

CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY METHOD

In this chapter we have presented an overview of the current literature regarding gender and gender role construction among men and women of color. Much of the existing research on this topic is in its nascent stages and typically has attempted to apply constructs and measures that do not take into account

race-ethnicity directly. For example, most instruments measuring masculinity and femininity still utilize lists of adjectives ascribed as one or the other that individuals decide apply to themselves (Stets & Burke, 2000). Given the dearth of racially ethnically oriented frameworks for understanding gender, the current project undertook to explore the meanings of gender and gender role construction among a sample of more than 60 self-identified participants from Black/African American, Latina/o, and Asian/Asian American backgrounds. Given the long-standing history of oppressive forces of racism and sexism, we wanted to study our topic in a manner that incorporated the unique voices and stories of our participants. These individuals were recruited for our study using a variety of strategies, such as flyers, email announcements, personal contacts, and snowballing (i.e., asking participants if they knew others who might be interested in being interviewed). We interviewed individuals for approximately 45 to 90 minutes, using a semi-structured interview protocol (see appendix), and then had the audiotaped interviews professionally transcribed. The transcriptions formed the bases of the data analyses presented in the subsequent chapters, with some minor editing of quotes for readability. Prior to beginning the interviews, all participants completed an informed consent, a demographic data sheet, and two open-ended questions asking their descriptions of the ideal man and ideal woman. Participants were given \$10 for their involvement in the project. The appendix contains demographic information for each participant, categorized by racial/ethnic and gender background (e.g., African American men, African American women, etc.). All participant names used in this book were changed to protect their confidentiality.

We used constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methodology to analyze our findings for common themes among our participants. Because race-ethnicity and the context of social oppression may be important in the constructions of gender and gender roles among men and women of color, we believed this method to be particularly useful for our research. The basic stance of grounded theory (GT) attempts to capture or “see the world as our research participants do—from the inside” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 14). GT is named as such because its purpose “is to produce innovative theory that is ‘grounded’ in the voices of participants and their own understandings of the complexities of their lived experience within their sociocultural context” (Fassinger,

2005, p. 156). Theory that emerges from GT generally is meant to explain processes, actions, interactions, or broad experiences.

As noted earlier, a key aspect of GT techniques is their potential to give voice to marginalized people and communities. In particular, a *constructivist* GT approach is useful in this respect because it is assumed that “neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are a part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10). In other words, CGT researchers do not assume there is a single objective truth or reality for any one group of people but rather multiple social constructions of reality and truth (Fassinger, 2005). A CGT approach presumes that the theory that emerges “offers an *interpretive* portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10).

In GT, theory is derived from a rigorous and complex system of coding in order to make sense of participants’ meanings and actions (Charmaz, 2006). The use of GT requires active engagement in multiple readings of transcripts to systematically code the major themes that emerge. Analysis entails a number of levels of coding and represents “the interplay between researchers and data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 13). Essential components of GT analyses involve “the procedures of making comparisons, asking questions, and sampling based on evolving theoretical concepts” (p. 46).

Researchers’ Worldviews

As authors of this book, we recognize that we bring multiple perspectives to our approach to the topic as well as the ways in which we conducted and analyzed this series of interviews. All of us are people of color, including Latina/o, Asian/Asian American, Black/African American, and multiracial, who were socialized both as members of our respective racial-ethnic groups as well as mental health professionals who place great emphasis on being culturally sensitive and aware in our work. Most of us were trained, or are in training, as professional psychologists with strong beliefs about promoting social justice in the ways we do research and practice in our field. We all received formal training (and most of us now are conducting such training) focusing on the deleterious effects that both

racism and sexism, in addition to other forms of oppression as based on social class, sexual orientation, and so on, have had on many individuals in the United States.

Our interest in this book project emerged from conversations that began when many of us were part of a research team, led by the book editor, Marie L. Miville, that wanted to explore intersections of multiple oppressions, particularly as these related to men and women of color. We engaged in a variety of readings to immerse ourselves in some of the current thinking about how race-ethnicity and gender might affect each other. A key conversation many of us recalled was a discussion of a seemingly simple topic, hair, and how women of color were often criticized by the larger society, as well as within their own communities, for having anything other than (i.e., less than) straight hair that easily flips with one's hand, what has been called "good" hair. This began our research journey that has now been realized in this book project. We are aware that although multiple perspectives are represented here, in the ways in which we shaped our questions, we interacted with our participants, and we analyzed our data, we likely "did" gender in some similar ways that our participants shared with us. The stories, codes/themes, and theoretical model we present here are based on a great deal of effort, beginning with our participants, yet we recognize that as with any qualitative investigation, this work represents our current constructions of gender roles. Nevertheless, we hope our work can deepen the ongoing discourses on ways that individuals negotiate the multiple complex meanings of race-ethnicity and gender throughout their lives.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As we have explained here, we developed an interview project as a way of beginning to establish a theoretical model based on the lived experiences of men and women of color regarding their gender role constructions. By using CGT analyses, we hoped to capture the words and actions of our participants to better understand how they construct meanings about their sense of selves as gendered beings. The next chapter presents the poignant narratives of Black/African American men. As these narratives illustrate, Black men often are bombarded with numerous messages regarding the race-ethnicity and gender

from a variety of sources, often emphasizing negative traits or qualities. At the same time, our participants identify important people in their lives, such as parents and teachers, who provided positive counter narratives to these negative images, particularly through leadership and role modeling.

REFERENCES

- Arciniega, G. M., Anderson, T. C., Tovar-Blank, Z. G., & Tracey, T.J.G. (2008). Towards a fuller conception of machismo: Development of a traditional machismo and caballerismo scale. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 55*(1), 19–33.
- Baca Zinn, M., Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., & Messner, M. A. (2004). Gender through the prism of difference. In M. L. Andersen & P. H. Collins (Eds.), *Race, class, and gender: An anthology*, 5th ed. (pp. 166–174). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.
- Bacigalupe, G. (2000). *El Latino*: Transgressing the macho. In M. T. Flores & G. Carey (Eds.), *Family therapy with Hispanics: Toward appreciating diversity* (pp. 29–57). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Caldwell, L. D., & White, J. L. (2001). African-centered therapeutic and counseling interventions for African American males. In G. R. Brooks & G. E. Good (Eds.), *The new handbook of psychotherapy and counseling with men: A comprehensive guide to setting, problems, and treatment approaches* (Vol. 2, pp. 737–753). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Casas, J. M., Turner, J. A., & de Esparza, C. A. R. (2001). Machismo revisited in a time of crisis: Implications for understanding and counseling Hispanic men. In G. R. Brooks & G. E. Good (Eds.), *The new handbook of psychotherapy and counseling with men: A comprehensive guide to setting, problems, and treatment* (Vol. 2, pp. 754–779). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analyses*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.
- Chinn, P. (2002). Asian and Pacific Islander women scientists and engineers: A narrative exploration of model minority, gender, and racial stereotypes. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 39*, 302–323.
- Davis, A. Y. (1983). *Women, race, and class*. New York, NY: Vintage.
- Enns, C. Z. (2004). *Feminist theories and feminist psychotherapies: Origins, themes, and diversity*, 2nd ed. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
- Espin, O. M. (1997). *Latina realities: Essays on healing, migration, and sexuality*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- Falicov, C. J. (1998). *Latino families in therapy: A guide to multicultural practice*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Fassinger, R. E. (2005). Paradigms, praxis, problems, and promise: Grounded theory in counseling psychology research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 156–166.
- Garrett, M. T., & Barret, B. (2003). Two spirit: Counseling Native American gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 31*, 131–142.
- Gil, R. M., & Vasquez, C. I. (1996). *The Maria paradox: How Latinas can merge Old World traditions with New World self-esteem*. New York, NY: Perigee.
- Gilmore, D. (1990). *Manhood in the making: Cultural concepts of masculinity*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Greene, B. (1994). Lesbian women of color: Triple jeopardy. In L. Comas-Diaz & B. Greene (Eds.), *Women of color: Integrating ethnic and gender identities in psychotherapy* (pp. 389–427). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Heppner, M. J., Davidson, M. M., & Scott, A. B. (2003). The ecology of women's career barriers. In M. Kopala & M. A. Keitel (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling women* (pp. 173–184). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- hooks, b. (1981). *Ain't I a woman: Black women and feminism*. Boston, MA: South End.
- Hurtado, A. (2003). *Voicing Chicana feminisms: Young women speak out on sexuality and identity*. New York: New York University Press.
- Hurtado, A., & Sinha, M. (2008). More than men: Latino masculinities and intersectionality. *Sex Roles, 59*, 337–349.
- Institute for Women's Policy Research. (April 2011). *The gender wage gap: 2010*. Downloaded from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-gender-wage-gap-2010-updated-march-2011>.
- Jones, L. S. (2003). Power and women in the counseling relationship. In M. Kopala & M. A. Keitel (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling women* (pp. 31–39). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.
- Lucal, B. (1999). What it means to be gendered me: Life on the boundaries of a dichotomous gender system. *Gender and Society, 13*, 781–797.
- Mahalik, J. R., Cournoyer, R. L., DeFranc, W., Cherry, M., & Napolitano, J. M. (1998). Men's gender role conflict and use of psychological defenses. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 45*, 247–255.

- Miville, M. L., & Ferguson, A. D. (2006). Intersections of sexism and heterosexism with racism: Therapeutic implications. In M. G. Constantine & D. W. Sue (Eds.), *Racism as a barrier to cultural competence in mental health and educational settings* (pp. 87–106). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Morales, E. (1996). Gender roles among Latino gay and bisexual men: Implications for family and couple relationships. In J. Laird & R. J. Green (Eds.), *Lesbians and gays in couples and families: A handbook for therapists* (pp. 272–297). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Nadal, K., & Corpus, M. (2012). “Tomboys” and “Baklas”: Experiences of lesbian and gay Filipino Americans. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*. No pagination specified. doi: 10.1037/a0030168
- O’Neil, J. M. (1990). Assessing men’s gender role conflict. In D. Moore & F. Leafgren (Eds.), *Problem solving strategies and interventions for men in conflict* (pp. 23–38). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- O’Neil, J. M. (2008). Summarizing 25 years of research on men’s gender role conflict using the Gender Role Conflict Scale: New research paradigms and clinical implications. *Counseling Psychologist, 36*, 358–445.
- O’Neil, J. M., Good, G. E., & Holmes, S. (1995). Fifteen years of theory and research of men’s gender role conflicts: New paradigms for empirical research. In R. F. Levant & W. S. Pollack (Eds.), *A new psychology of men* (pp. 164–206). New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Parham, T. A. (1993). *Psychological storms: The African American struggle for identity*. Chicago, IL: African American Images.
- Pido, A. (1986). *The Pilipinos in America: Macrolmicro dimensions of integration and immigration*. Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies.
- Raffaelli, M., & Ontai, L. L. (2004). Gender socialization in Latino/a families: Results from two retrospective studies. *Sex Roles, 50*, 287–299.
- Reid, P. T., & Comas-Diaz, L. (1990). Gender and ethnicity: Perspectives on dual status. *Sex Roles, 22*, 397–408.
- Santiago-Rivera, A. L., Arredondo, P., & Gallardo-Cooper, M. (2002). *Counseling Latinos and la familia: A practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Settles, I. H. (2006). Use of an intersectional framework to understand Black women’s racial and gender identities. *Sex Roles, 54*, 589–601.
- Settles, I. H., Sellers, R. M., & Damas Jr., A. (2002). One role or two? The function of psychological separation in role conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*, 574–582.

- Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2000). Femininity/masculinity. In E. F. Borgatta & R.J.V. Montgomery (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of sociology*, rev. ed. (pp. 997–1005). New York, NY: Macmillan. Available at <http://wat2146.ucr.edu/Papers/00b.pdf>
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sue, D. (2001). Asian American masculinity and therapy: The concept of masculinity in Asian American males. In G. R. Brooks & G. E. Good (Eds.), *The new handbook of psychotherapy and counseling with men: A comprehensive guide to setting, problems, and treatment approaches* (Vol. 2, pp. 737–753). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2008). *Counseling the culturally different: Theory and practice*, 5th ed. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Suzuki, L. A., & Ahluwalia, M. K. (2003). Gender issues in personality, cognitive, and vocational assessment of women. In M. Kopala & M. A. Keitel (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling women* (pp. 119–130). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tafoya, T. (1997). Native gay and lesbian issues: The two-spirited. In B. Greene (Ed.), *Ethnic and cultural diversity among lesbians and gay men* (pp. 1–10). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tinsley-Jones, H. A. (2001). Racism in our midst: Listening to psychologists of color. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 32, 573–580.
- Tryon, G. S., & Winograd, G. (2003). Developing a health identity. In M. Kopala & M. A. Keitel (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling women* (pp. 185–197). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Villereal, G. L., & Cavazos, A. (2005). Shifting identity: Process of change in identity of aging Mexican-American males. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 32, 33–41.
- Wester, S. R. (2008). Male gender role conflict and multiculturalism: Implications for counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 36, 294–324.
- Wester, S. R., & Vogel, D. L. (2002). Working with the masculine mystique: Male gender role conflict, counseling self-efficacy, and the training of male psychologists. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 33(4), 370–376.
- White, J. L., & Cones, J. H. (1999). *Black man emerging: Facing the past and seizing a future in America*. New York, NY: Freeman.
- Wyatt, G. (1997). *Stolen women: Reclaiming our sexuality, taking back our lives*. New York, NY: Wiley.

