UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE, CHALLENGING INEQUALITY
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CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE, CHALLENGING INEQUALITY

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To our students—past, present, and future
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This book began several years ago as a collection of excerpts from previously published work on diversity. As we amassed a lengthy list of articles and books that we wished to include, it became clear that we either needed to excerpt very brief pieces of each work, or eliminate many contributions that we deemed essential reading on this topic. Our dilemma was made worse by our desire to not only cover major theoretical works, which can rarely be reduced to a two- or three-page excerpt without losing a great deal of critical content, but also include empirical pieces that demonstrate the application of particular theories—theory-in-action pieces, if you will. In the midst of our struggle over these decisions we were attending conferences at which colleagues were presenting provocative and insightful research on the very issues in which we were most interested. Ultimately, we decided to revise the book to include original contributions written specifically for this volume, each examining a specific social problem and focusing on how different groups experience it, the problem’s differential consequences across various groups, the consequences for society as a whole, and potential policy implications or solutions. We identified contributors whose work demonstrates how differences, and inequalities based on differences, are not simply experienced by individuals, but color social relations among groups and reinforce—and are reinforced by—specific institutional arrangements.

Some chapters in this volume are written by well-known sociologists with whose work many readers will already be familiar. But the book also presents newer voices whose cutting-edge work is likely to significantly impact the field. All of the authors are researching topics that are particularly relevant to college students or are likely to be on students’ “radar screens”—for example, unemployment, “hooking up,” racism on campus, safety issues, internet pornography, homelessness, and environmental destruction. While the authors discuss their own research, contextualizing it in the relevant diversity and inequality literatures, their presentations are accessible even to students never before exposed to sociology. Consequently, in the pages that follow students will learn much about the state of the art in a particular sociological focus area—such as, economic sociology, criminology and criminal justice, intimate relationships, media, education, medical sociology, rural sociology—as well as about how the intersecting inequalities of race, gender, social class, sexuality, age, immigration status, and geographic location influence how various problems are socially and politically framed, and how they are differentially experienced.

In short, we gave contributors a rather daunting charge: summarize the extant literature that informs your area of study and show how your research contributes to this knowledge base, while explaining to readers the significance of the interplay of inequalities for understanding and remedying this social problem—and do it all in a highly accessible style and within our specified page limits. We thank our contributors for not laughing at us, or worse, turning away in disbelief, and instead for enthusiastically embracing what we know was a challenging task. Their chapters stand as testimony to their passion for social justice and their desire to communicate this commitment to students who will assume responsibility for our social world in the not-too-distant future.
Preface

We also wish to take this opportunity to thank Jeff Lasser, formerly our editor at Allyn & Bacon and Karen Hanson, now retired from Allyn & Bacon for their support of our decision to redirect this project from its original course and their encouragement over the years to continue forward with it. Their seasoned knowledge of publishing and the sociological marketplace are hugely helpful to authors and editors, but more valued still are their patience and unwavering friendship. It was truly a pleasure to work with both Jeff and Karen on this project and on many others. It has also been a pleasure working with Charlyce Jones-Owen, our new editor at Pearson. Charlyce deftly picked up where Jeff and Karen left off and guided us through the production process. Charlyce enlisted the assistance of several colleagues, who reviewed an earlier version of the manuscript and offered extensive feedback and many helpful suggestions for revisions: Michael Johnson Jr., Washington State University; Stephanie Williams, Northern Arizona University; Cathy Beighey, Aims Community College; Reid Leamaster, Purdue University; Heather Dalmage, Roosevelt University; Kristy Watkins, University of Massachusetts; Glenn Muschert, Miami University; William Velez, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Barbara Vann, Loyola University, Maryland. We and the contributors are grateful to all the reviewers for generously sharing their time and their knowledge.

A final word of thanks to our students—for inspiring us to be life-long learners, for challenging our taken-for-granted assumptions, and for routinely keeping us on our toes.
ABOUT THE EDITORS

Claire M. Renzetti is the Judi Conway Patton Endowed Chair for Studies of Violence Against Women in the Center for Research on Violence Against Women, and Professor and Chair of the Sociology Department at the University of Kentucky. She is editor of the international, interdisciplinary journal, *Violence Against Women*; coeditor with Jeffrey Edleson of the Interpersonal Violence book series for Oxford University Press; and editor of the Gender and Justice book series for University of California Press. She has authored or edited 16 books as well as numerous book chapters and articles in professional journals. Her current research includes studies of the relationship between religiosity and intimate partner violence, and an evaluation of a horticultural therapy program at a shelter for battered women and their children. Dr. Renzetti has held elected and appointed positions on the governing bodies of several national professional organizations, and is a past president of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP). She is the recipient of the Saltzman Award for Contributions to Practice, awarded by the Women and Crime Division of the American Society of Criminology, and of the Lee Founders Award, from the SSSP.

Raquel Kennedy Bergen is Professor of Sociology at Saint Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She received her BS from Saint Joseph’s University in Sociology and her PhD in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author or coauthor of numerous scholarly publications and seven books on violence against women, including *Wife Rape: Understanding the Response of Survivors and Service Providers*; and *Issues in Intimate Violence*. With Claire Renzetti and Jeff Edleson, she edited *Sourcebook on Violence Against Women* and *Violence Against Women: Classic Statements*. She coedited *Violence Against Women: Readings from Social Problems* with Claire Renzetti. She has served as a member of the Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission since 2004 when she was appointed by Governor Edward G. Rendell. She has volunteered as an advocate for battered women and sexual assault survivors for the past 25 years. Her current research continues in the field of violence against women—analyzing how domestic violence and sexual assault programs have implemented changes to the services that they provide to intimate partner sexual assault survivors. She also continues to explore the subject of women’s experiences of sexual and physical violence during pregnancy.