

Preface

Women have made courageous strides and faced many trials throughout history. So, too, do these current times reveal new accomplishments and challenges for women throughout the world. With this in mind, it is our pleasure to present our edited book, *Women's Evolving Lives: Global and Psychosocial Perspectives*. With this book, we hope to provide a global overview of women's status, roles, experiences, and attitudes in the context of psychological perspectives on women's social development.

As psychologists, we recognize that underlying the advancement of women are psychological dynamics and social forces that need to be highlighted. This is especially important today, given the new global agenda adopted by the United Nations that includes the goal to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." In keeping with this goal, the 193 nations of the United Nations agreed to: end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls; value unpaid care and domestic work; ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life; ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources; enhance the use of enabling technology; and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

Our book includes chapters on 13 countries that, together, represent a major proportion of the world's women from diverse psychosocial, economic, cultural, and religious conditions. Each country—China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Egypt, Cameroon, South Africa, Italy, France, Brazil, Mexico, Belize, and the United States—was specifically chosen to illuminate the impact of contrasting cultural forces faced by women today.

Each chapter is written by one or more prominent psychologists from different regions of the world. Every chapter describes the experiences and status of women on similar subtopics so that comparisons can be made among the worldwide

commonalities and diversities of female experience. The subtopics in each chapter include women's home life, work life, and political participation; violence against women; physical and psychological health issues; and effects of technology and globalization. Many of the authors have also included topics they feel are especially important in their country right now—for example, the hijab in Iran, HIV/AIDS in Brazil, and political movements in Italy. The author(s) conclude each chapter with predictions of women's future and solutions to improve women's lives. Suggested readings and resources for further study are found at the end of each chapter.

We hope that this book will be of interest to a wide range of readers, in both academic and non-academic settings. Because the book is focused on psychosocial perspectives, certainly psychology professionals of varied disciplines will find this book interesting, but so will colleagues in other fields of study, including women's and gender studies, sociology, anthropology, international studies, and education.

We are deeply appreciative of the authors of the chapters for their excellent contributions and all the dedication and expertise they bring to their work that is reflected in their chapters. We would also like to thank Jennifer Hadley, our editor at Springer Publishing, for her guidance and patience. Also, we thank Brien K. Ashdown and Natalie L. Homa for their help with reviewing; and Abigail A. Camden, Rachel E. Cook, Winnie Jiang, Fatimah Nadimi, and Bethany Paige Sullivan for their assistance with proofreading and formatting.

Most of all, we honor the women who are presented in these chapters who are facing enormous challenges with great bravery, strength, intelligence, and grace. They are changing the world for themselves and for their peers, partners, families, communities, societies, countries, and cultures.

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Women's Evolving Lives

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