Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Alice Eagly

Interviewed by Alexandra Rutherford
Bethesda, MD
March 1, 2008

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AE: Alice Eagly, Interview Participant
AR: Alexandra Rutherford, Interviewer

AR – If you could give your place and date of birth for the record.

AE – Okay. My name is Alice Jo Hendrickson Eagly, and I was born December 25th, 1938.

AR – Okay, well let me start by asking you what may seem like kind of an odd question but everybody has a different answer, so I'm going to start with it - a lot of the people that I've interviewed for this project self-identify as feminist psychologists. Do you self-identify as a feminist psychologist, and if so why, and if not why?

AE – I identify differently depending on the audience. I would identify here, at Division 35 [Society for the Psychology of Women], as a feminist psychologist, and I have a personal identification as a feminist psychologist. However, when I try to disseminate feminist psychology beyond feminist psychologists, I am more circumspect. Not that I'm trying to hide it, but the label can be threatening to people in some audiences. So then I do all the same things, all the same theory, the same empiricism, which is obviously feminist because it's concerned with the equality of women and men, but I don't use the label. I say I'm a social psychologist.

AR – Okay. That's probably an identity that cuts across a lot of groups. Well let me ask you then, it sounds like what you're saying is that you use the term strategically depending on your audience, but that in fact you do personally identify as a feminist.

AE – I do, I do personally identify as a feminist.

AR – And you will bring that obviously into your work as a psychologist.

AE – Right.

AR – But tell me about how your identity as a feminist evolved, how did that develop, how did you become a feminist?

AE – I became a feminist because of the women's movement that started in the late 60s and was a very powerful influence on the culture in the 70s. It just brought all these issues to the fore about women and men, and sameness and difference. And I saw people answering them in various ways, but mainly in terms of the kinds of answers that were based on personal experience and not on science. It seemed like we didn't have much to offer, although many of

the questions being asked were questions that distinctively psychologists should be able to answer, or could potentially answer. So it seemed that in a sense the discipline of psychology owed the social movement that work, and owed the world that work, and so I became part of it.

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AR – One of your first, well the first article that I could discern on your CV that was about sex differences was published in 1969.

AE – True.

AR – Was that the beginning of your integration?

AE – Well it was a bit, although at that point I wasn't thinking all that deeply. I was an attitude researcher at that point, persuasion researcher, and that one project sort of happened to come up. And then I really didn't do a lot until a paper that was published in the *Psychological Bulletin* in 1978.

AR – Okay.

AE – So there was a gap in there. Well maybe there was one other paper, but there was a kind of a gap in there until I sort of got together a bit more, I suppose a way to bring to bear what I knew as a social psychologist with these issues. So there had to be some intellectual growth I would say.

AR – Okay. Well let me ask you to talk a little bit more about your training. You went to Radcliffe, to Harvard, as an undergraduate.

AE – I did.

AR – Between '56 and '60. And I take it you worked with Herb Kelman.

AE – I did.

AR – Can you tell me what your training was like at that point?

AE – Well I was in an interdisciplinary program called social relations, which consisted of sociology, social psychology, clinical psychology, and social anthropology. So it was an interdisciplinary mix that doesn't exist there in that form anymore, but it was very exciting to me because it was so broad and there were a number of scholars involved at that time who were sort of in the late phase of their career, like Gordon Allport and Talcott Parsons, but who were major figures in the social sciences.

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It was very exciting to have courses with them and I thought it was all great. And then I thought, well maybe, because I was a very good student, maybe I could go on with this somehow. I thought that social psychology would be the core, or would be very linking of the various kinds of intellectual endeavour that had interested me, because it is a very broad field and is at least in theory interdisciplinary, at least in principle interdisciplinary. And so that's why I went to the University of Michigan, which then had a social psychology program that was jointly sponsored by psychology and sociology, which ceased to exist a few years after I was in the program, which is an interesting story in and of itself. So it was that intellectual breadth across the social sciences which appealed to me.

AR – And what made you then zero in on psychology?

AE – Well you have to get a job.

AR – Yeah.

AE – Some people in that program went to sociology departments or other kinds of departments in the social sciences, but it seemed psychology at that time was beginning to grow rapidly when I got my PhD and was by far the larger discipline; there were more jobs. So that seemed fine. Social psychology existed in both psychology and sociology, so I thought oh I'll do it in psychology. Little did I know that it would become more narrow over the years within psychology departments, but I didn't know that.

AR – Yeah.

AE – So it seemed to me a reasonable thing to do, to get a job in a psychology department.

AR – Okay, so it was partly a pragmatic decision.

AE – Yeah, right.

AR – Did you have any mentors during your training? People that you would consider mentors now or then?

AE – Well Herb Kelman was definitely a mentor. And then another person I worked with was Melvin Manis at Michigan, and he was an influence. You know there weren't any women, virtually, who were professors. There was one woman at Michigan, Helen Peak, who was a full professor, but it was that period when you had hardly any [female] professors. I had one as an undergraduate at Harvard, and she was an astronomer. And it was a relief that there was a woman, but there were virtually none among the professoriate. There were women in other statuses of course, there were research associates and that sort of thing, women who were often not adequately recognized for the work that they were doing.

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AR – Were you aware of that at the time or is it only in retrospect?

AE – Yes, I was, in sort of a vague way. I mean it was very obvious and the women's movement didn't come out of nothingness, it came out of some awareness. So yeah, there were the beginnings of some stirrings in the mid 60s for sure.

AR – Yeah, yeah. Now did you yourself, as a woman entering a still predominantly male field, did you ever feel disadvantaged because of your gender?

AE – Well the victims usually don't understand it very well, but I think there was disadvantage and advantage in a very mixed sort of way. At the University of Michigan, when I did my graduate work, it wasn't that I was the token woman or something in that program. I think the program was at least 25-35% women at that point in social psychology. So it was a field that integrated women fairly early. The faculty [were] not, of course. And so we were the breakthrough women to get jobs in universities, real jobs, not to be a research associate but to become an assistant professor. And so a number of my colleagues were able to manage that, and women, but then we were of course, depending on the department, but certainly in the ones that I was in, we were one of few. And so you got those kinds of mixed reactions. But I entered fairly benign environments compared to some of the environments some other women happened to hit, in that there was a feeling, particularly as we moved into the 70s, that we were the new wave and that we should be given opportunity. And so sometimes I was given opportunities for sure because I was a woman, ahead of my male colleagues. And then in other fronts there may have been some degree of discrimination, but in how well you could carry out the position given that you were still unusual; there might be some resistance or whatever once you got into the position. So it's a mix.

AR - Okay. I've spoken with a number of women who were trained for their graduate work at Harvard and have described it as a fairly hostile place towards women in this time. Now you did your graduate work at Michigan, but your undergraduate at Harvard. Any sense that that was a particularly difficult place to be as a woman at that time?

AE – Well again it was mixed and in ways that seem kind of dated now. I mean women, my fellow students, used to feel a sense of pride that they were at Harvard and we were among this relatively small group, and then there were all those men. And that we were somehow more elite; actually we got better grades then the men…

{11:27}

AR – Right, right.

AE – And it now sounds very odd but I remember women saying that they were proud to be getting a man's education, you know that we're as good as they are. And so there was that sense, that we were so special and so smart. I myself for the most part experienced rather decent treatment. But there were odd things, like in some freshmen courses, the women all sat, we were seated separately, which was very odd. But that kind of thing sort of went away even in the late 50s, which was when it was. And some male professors said things to us that just assumed that you were going to soon marry and have a lot of children and become a homemaker. They would

sometimes say things like that and there wasn't the feminist context to have a good answer to that. But I remember being taken aback by some of those things, and some of the other women did as well. So I didn't feel it was hostile. I thought we were in general treated quite decently, but the culture was very different.

AR – That's right. Well tell me a little bit about those changes in culture that you then experienced with the rise of the second wave of the women's movement. Can you tell me what involvement you had with that movement, and I'm talking now either within psychology or external to your professional life. Any involvement in second wave feminism?

AE – Well I think my main involvement was the intellectual one within psychology, although I was somewhat involved in the pro-choice movement, reproductive freedom, and that sort of thing in my community from time to time. But the idea was to start this scholarship on gender and to answer the questions. I thought that was my mission; it was my mission. So I didn't find it a problem to do so in terms of getting a hostile reaction particularly, because I also had this other area in which I worked over the years, the study of attitudes.

AR – Yeah.

AE - And I got tenure at a fairly early point, so I didn't have the same kind of threat, oh if I study gender I won't get tenure, or something like that. But there was the advantage of it being new and so interesting to people, and so there was a lot of attention to it. And one thing I liked was that it interested people across the various sub-disciplines of psychology, at the very least.

AR – Right.

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AE – And so it wasn't just that I was only talking to social psychologists who also did attitude research - they're a fine group, but that's a lot narrower. So I liked the breadth of it. And there was the occasional person who might have said 'Why would anybody work in an area like that?' but that was sort of the traditionalists who were sort of mired in the mainstream. And I didn't worry about them because it seemed like there was a lot of attention to the early work that I and others did. So there was an audience, and my theory of academic careers is the buy low/sell high theory that if you do what everybody else is doing right now in the mainstream and it's the most popular thing, it's very hard to stand out at all, because there are a lot of very smart people who are in the field and it's hard among them. But if you do something that's not what everybody else is doing, you've got to pick well, but if you're doing something that they're not doing, then you're more likely to be able to shape an endeavour and have some influence.

AR – Right, get in on the ground floor so to speak.

AE – Yeah. So I think that was important. And I didn't experience a huge struggle about it in the sense that there was a lot of criticism or opposition, or people told me that I can't do that or whatever. And I was in a major psychology department all my career.

AR – Yeah. Well tell me a little bit then about the emergence in your own thinking, because this is kind of getting at the development of your thought in terms of social role theory. How did that kind of take shape in your thinking, because it's been a consistent theme in your career.

AE – Right.

AR – How did that take hold, where did that come from?

AE – Well it came from that intellectual history in the broad interdisciplinary social science for sure because social roles are not such a powerful concept among psychologists, but it is among sociologists, or was; it is not now actually particularly popular, but it was, it had been popular. So it seemed that that's a set of concepts that I developed in social role theory that psychologists needed to have some access to because we were always saying what's the social context, it's the social whatever it is, like sex differences aren't intrinsic and welling up from evolution; it's never been popular among feminist psychologists. But then what is it? Well we can say socialization, or something, you know, but we need an intellectual apparatus to understand what that is that is outside of the person and that becomes part of the person in terms of identities. And so there is that social structure that is organized by social roles. And the obvious point that men and women have differed a lot in terms of their role responsibilities in traditional societies, like division of labor.

{17:56}

AR – Yeah.

AE – And so the idea that that would shape the psyche seemed to me to be really obvious and it was a way to frame it. So then that seemed useful, and so at an early point there was some version of it, and then I have developed it in certain directions over the years from that early insight.

AR – And what have been some of those additions or ways that you have modified it over the years in light of further work or further studies?

AE – Well there are two directions really that are still ongoing that would be regarded as branching out a lot from the early origins. One is the work on the study of leadership that I've been active in for a number of years now, because that's looking at behaviour not in the abstract, the way people traditionally looked at sex differences in terms of having dispositions, but it's looking at behaviour in organizations or where the roles are active. So to understand how social roles shape gender roles and how people take them into their identities, but then it's the question of how they live it out. And of course you could look at the family and other contexts, but a lot of our life is played out in organizations. So it is really moving in that direction, and so for instance, to see how leadership roles would interface with gender roles is important. So a woman in a leadership role, the culture gives her this gender role, and she has an identity as a woman usually, but there's also this leadership role which is defined in the organization. In fact, it might be given a fairly masculine definition depending, but that's often the case, particularly in higher level roles and if they've been mainly occupied by men. And then it's a question of how

that works together and how that would constrain behaviour, how it would constrain reactions to women in those roles, and how it would enhance or inhibit the effectiveness of leaders. So there's that piece of moving out into organizational environments beyond the traditional domain of psychologists. Although there are always those I/O psychologists who do that.

AR – Right.

AE – It isn't as if no psychologists do that. So that's one direction. The other direction is to study the origin of sex differences, and that came about because of the evolutionary psychologists who started speaking about the origins of sex differences, and I felt had the wrong answers, or only very partial answers which they were presenting as kind of the solution or the answer. So I thought well, understanding the more ultimate origins of male and female behaviour is a wonderful question, we shouldn't begrudge them some praise for bringing us the question. But then what's the answer? So there, in my work with Wendy Wood, we've been presenting an alternative theory which is sort of an extension of social role theory, which we call the biosocial extension, which deals with those issues. So it does bring in the sociocultural influences together with the acknowledgement that there are important evolved differences between men and women. And so we are working on that, and that's a weighty endeavour.

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AR – Yeah, well taking on evolutionary psychology is a weighty endeavour, but it sounds like within biosocial theory, you're really focusing on the impact of childbearing and rearing in the case of women, and physical strength in the case of men.

AE – Right.

AR – And trying to figure out how that interacts with the social roles that have become neutral in some way.

AE – Right. We do have a strong emphasis on the sex-typed body. And it has actually had profound implications on what men and women do of course, and how roles are distributed in human history, less now than in earlier points, but it still has a profound influence. And then how that places men and women, or tends to foster, divisions of labor, and then how that is very important to the psychology of women.

AR – Right.

AE – We shouldn't be surprised that there are differences in the psychology as long as we're doing different things, because we have to learn how to do what we do. So that's the effort, to understand that, and not to deny that there would be direct genetic influences on psychological disposition or hormonal mediated. No doubt there is some, but to bring in another set of causal influences, and then to try to understand how they all work together. So not to be just a nurture psychologist, but a nature-nurture psychologist. So yes, that's an extension that still demands a lot of work from us.

AR – Yeah. In some ways it's a hugely integrative project. I mean you really are trying to pay more than lip service to nature and nurture and their interrelation.

AE – Right.

AR – Well let me ask you now, over the years, in my selective reading of your work, over the years you have been critical of the movement that was perhaps more prominent in the early days of second wave feminism to argue that women and men are more same than different. That is to minimize sex differences as a way of furthering a feminist agenda.

AE – Right.

AR – Can you comment on that at this point now? I mean this is a debate that goes I think cyclically always, and there are always proponents of all of these views. What's your assessment at this point of that long-standing kind of debate?

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AE – Right. I think feminism has had both the minimizing and maximizing as other people have said. So there's the minimizing and liberal feminism, that we're all the same and we all have the same opportunities, and we're all equal. But the maximizing is to say that women have special gifts, they have special skills, and women are different and that should be celebrated. So we have both kinds of feminism. And I'm for neither one of those. I'm for accuracy.

AR – Okay.

AE – So I think that's the point of science, to provide answers that are less polemical. I do not believe in similarity because it's good for equality, or good for feminism, or believe in difference because it's good for feminism or good for equality. But I think we should, as scientists who do feminist science, try to give answers to similarity-difference questions, and other questions, but those are questions that a lot of people have been interested in. And then to deal with the implications, to try to work from that ground rather than from a more polemical ground.

AR – How good a job do you think psychologists have been, feminist psychologists I guess, in dealing with those implications? I mean sometimes I think the tendency is, as scientists, to produce as accurate a picture of what's going on as one can, and then to leave the implications for other folks to kind of handle or deal with. So do you think feminist psychologists have been successful in dealing with some of the implications? How have they dealt with them, how have you dealt with them in your own kind of work?

AE – Implications. The first thing is you know, most work by feminist psychologists is not merely the statement of differences and/or similarity, but it is and should be theory, framed in terms of theory; how would we understand any differences.

AR – Right. That's what one would hope.

AE – And that's the social role theory point, you know--don't be amazed that there are some differences until we're all doing the same thing and we're in the same occupations; we don't have a segregated occupation structure or segregated division of labor in the family, so we shouldn't be surprised that there are differences. So they are a product of understandable causal influences. So what are the consequences? Well they tend to replicate the existing social structure. And so part of what one would do then is prescribe ways that the differences (to the extent they would prevent us from getting to where we would like to be as women--toward equality) could be overcome or used if they are seen as advantageous differences. And so we should ask--how might they be played out in a way that helps produce equality?

{28:15}

AR – Right.

AE – So it's both of those kinds of things I think.

AR – And I think in one of the articles of yours, it might have been the science and politics

AE – Oh the science and politics, right.

AR – You actually do some of that. You say given that these differences are replicable, seem to be robust, what do we then do with that to make sure that women's difference isn't de facto viewed as inferiority.

AE – Right.

AR – So you give some examples of what one might do with that information that would help further the status of women.

AE – That was a good one. I don't remember

AR – I think it's this article. So I find that very interesting because I think sometimes we don't do as good a job of that as we should. But the other thing that I wanted to ask you about is to what extent have you - and can feminist psychologists generally - ensure that the prescriptions we give don't always put the onus of responsibility on women, and put some of the responsibility on men, not on individuals but on organizations, that kind of thing.

AE – Right. Well I tend to do that because we have to have all of that if we're to have equality between men and women, which we certainly don't have. And in the book that I've written recently, the one with Linda Carli called *Through the Labyrinth*, we do all of those things.

AR – Oh neat. Can you talk a little bit about the book?

AE – Sure. I mean the idea is first of all to reframe thinking about the problem of women's advancement into leadership roles, [to move] away from what is an outdated and inaccurate metaphor of the glass ceiling, because the glass ceiling I think, as we explain it in the first

chapter, is all wrong for the modern era. There is not a single barrier at a single high level; women fall away at all points in careers at a greater rate than men do, for a whole variety or reasons. And it's not glass, which implies that we can't figure it out; you know we dumbly hit our heads on it as if we couldn't think. But we can think and understand, and the book is all about how to understand. So it's a very bad metaphor and we want to reframe the thinking. Also, we're more positive in that the glass ceiling is a notion that you can't get beyond it, but the labyrinth is the notion of problem solving

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AR – Navigate through it

AE – And there is a way probably, but there may be twists and turns, and you may have to turn back, you may have to pause. So it's a much more progressive metaphor, and in the metaphor and the book, it's not seen as just the problem of women, that there are fewer women at the high places than men, but it is also the problem of the organization, how the context is one that has many challenges that women face that men don't. And then the family as well of course, and women's greater responsibilities as caretakers, is one of the biggest turns in the labyrinth. And that implicates of course men, as do the organizational solutions of course, because men have more power in organizations; they have to be reached. But also in the family, if we're to have greater equality in the workplace, we need greater equality in the family. And that puts pressure on men to take part more in domestic responsibilities and carry them out. So my analysis is very much one that to produce more equality we can't just say women ought to have assertiveness training or something (oh well maybe that's not a bad idea, is one part of it) but it has to be all of those pieces, and that's what we do in the book.

AR –That sounds good. I look forward to reading it. Is it actually out?

AE – It's out, yeah.

AR – Great. And one of the things I noticed, although I don't have a copy of the book, it is obviously intended for a much more general audience?

AE – Yes, it is.

AR – So what motivated you, what made you want to do that? I mean I think it's great.

AE – Well it's in the spirit of giving psychology away. If we keep giving it to ourselves, we don't make as much progress as we would like to as a discipline, or in terms of social action we don't. So the idea was to make it quite strictly evidence based, because that's what we as researchers have to offer, is a research base, but then to make it accessible and friendly and interesting. So it was quite a hard, I found it a very hard task to be frank.

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AR – Yeah, yeah.

AE – And I don't know if we were totally successful, but that was the effort. And to use qualitative material, a lot of it, but not for evidence, only for illustration. Well the principles come more broadly from the research, much of which is quantitative, but then to make it meaningful to people and to understand the implications in daily life and organizations, you need to give them lots of examples. So we did that. And then the publisher is the Harvard Business School Press, and together with the Center for Public Leadership at the Kennedy School, and we thought that made sense because again, we're not trying to reach psychologists particularly, although we would like to also reach them.

AR – Right.

AE – But the business community and the public service communities are phenomenally interested in good leadership. So they want good leadership, and particularly the business community is very receptive to evidence based argumentation because they deal with bottom lines and numbers, and everything, all the time. So if you can approach them from more of an evidence base, they are respectful of that. But I think it's the idea to get it out there so to speak, because if my goal is to produce more equality, that's what needs to happen; you need to help organizations to do that and help individuals to do that.

AR – Right. Well let me segue then into, you've alluded to it in your response, but let me ask you to talk a little bit about method in fact, in terms of your career, because I know meta-analysis became a big part of your approach.

AE – Yeah, it did.

AR – But tell me sort of about method and your views on method and psychology and what you've employed and to what ends, and that kind of thing.

AE – Well I was educated primarily as an experimental social psychologist, so that's a method that I grew up with so to speak, which I think has a lot to recommend it, but I believe in a diversity of methods. I did discover meta-analysis at an early point, it's a good thing; it's part of the buy-low/sell-high. People said what are you doing, putting those studies together?

AR – Yeah.

{36:05}

AE - But I got sort of forced into it in a way because someone else had published a paper that was somewhat critical of that 1978 paper in the *Psychological Bulletin* which was what we now call a narrative review. And [they] published a meta-analysis and I said well that looks better, actually, to answer the questions that I was trying to answer, so then I thought well I have to do this then in order to take part in this conversation. And so then I knew something about the method, and I was interested in comparisons of men and women, and there was all that data out there that had not been deployed and had not been given much theoretical framing at all. So I thought it was an opportunity, but that's not the only method I've used in my career. I've done

other kinds of work in terms of various kinds of experimental studies and correlational studies, and I've recently published a paper using archival method on heroism that was in the *American Psychologist*. So I've used a lot of methods and I've always been on the quantitative side in terms of presenting the data, but that doesn't mean there weren't qualitative materials, but they get coded for instance.

AR – Right, right.

AE – And the distinctions are represented numerically with concerns about reliability and validity. And so I consider myself a quantitative researcher but with a sympathy for qualitative methods in terms of the data gathering. We must have qualitative materials but then I'm actually not friendly to, 'and then let me tell you what was there,' in terms of just one person's insight from that qualitative material. I do find that sometimes a good place to begin but that it doesn't get us that far; but it can be a good place to begin.

AR – Yeah. I don't have firm views on this, but it strikes me that qualitative methods, as you say, provide another way of systematically gathering data that challenges then what to do with that -

AE – What to do with the qualitative materials, and in my work they always get coded by two people with high reliability, but trying to represent the distinctions that you read in them. But it's not really for me to say it's there; I find that quite frankly unconvincing that other people do it because, well knowingly or unknowingly, they're picking things that fit their argument, rather than a more repeatable kind of demonstration where somebody else would read them and they would come up with the same answers. It gives you some faith that that's what's there.

AR – What would you describe as your philosophy of science?

AE – My philosophy of science. My philosophy of science has to do with, it does have a faith in empiricism for sure, but empiricism that uses a whole range of methods because they all have flaws. It has to do with the importance of being part of a scientific community, but then making use of - that's what meta-analysts do; they take the work that's been done in this large community of people and then integrate it. And it's a very important role not to be taken casually because you're taking all that work that people have done and then you're trying to say what it in general adds up to. And so I believe that science is done in communities, and that the communities produce the good answers. We collectively do science, we should use diverse methods, and that we do make progress as we participate in these ways.

{40:55}

AR – Yeah. One of the things that intrigued me about reading, again a selective reading of your work, was, and you can correct me if I'm wrong on this because I'm not a social psychologist by training, so my understanding might be somewhat naïve, but the end result of social role theory strikes me that if and when it would ever be possible to actually achieve gender equality, then sex differences would cease to be that important. That those would also recede, decline, in some ways, within certain parameters, given that women and men will always have different bodies

and the biological things will be fairly immutable. So a) is that an accurate reading of social role theory and the kind of prediction it would make about sex differences, because I'm not sure, but it strikes that that would be. If and when men and women aren't distributed disproportionately in different social roles, then if it's that distribution that's causally related to sex differences, that presumably when those start to shift, when that disproportion starts to subside, then our notion of, our understanding of, our documentation of sex differences would also at least change, if not subside. Is that accurate?

AE – Well yes, in part, in that insofar as the differences are role driven; if the roles are the same, then they should lessen. In fact, we do see that in a lot of data that have been tracked over time in psychology. So for instance self-reports of assertiveness, risk taking in various kinds of paradigms, even mathematical reasoning, there's some convergence. So there is convergence over time in quite a lot of psychological data, but to say that everything would converge would be too strong for me; all sex differences would converge and cease to exist, because we don't know the extent to which some might be genetically or hormonally driven in part. And so I think it's very important to keep an open mind about that. So I like to read those who make those arguments and then look at that in relation to what I would say about the effects of roles. That okay maybe I have an alternate explanation for your effect but then how would we disentangle them? And that's a scientific kind of question; your variable, your theory, versus mine. And so that's what makes it exciting to work on these questions.

AR – Yeah. Well let me ask you, looking at your body of work at this point in your career, what would you assess as your most sort of valuable contribution? Something you feel most proud of or that you would like to be remembered for at this stage? I know you're going to continue to work.

{44:40}

AE – I don't know there's any one. There are several things that I particularly value, and one of them is outside of feminist psychology. It's the book I wrote on attitudes called *The Psychology of Attitudes* that I wrote with Shelly Chaiken. It was published in 1993 and it's been a very successful book, and it was a lot of work, and it was very exciting to work with Shelly; she's a brilliant woman. So I'm proud of that, I'm very happy it's a very successful book. But then in terms of the work on gender, I guess, you know there's no one contribution. I mean I am proud of this book on leadership because it brings together not just my work and Linda's work, but the work of many social scientists on gender issues in relation to leadership. And I think it was a good effort, and then it's not just a disciplinary book; we're trying to influence those outside of psychology. So I'm proud of that effort, but the book is relatively new and it's unclear how successful that's going to be. I know it's sold 7000 copies, and that's something.

AR – Hey, 6,999 more than if it were stuck in a journal somewhere.

AE – Right, right. So we're trying to promote it. And then I think the work having to do with evolutionary issues is potentially very important. It's been very contentious with the evolutionary psychologists. I'm on their list of the people they most dislike for sure. But I think it's potentially important and so that's another stream that I'm developing. And again, it's an

issue of how to get it out there, because actually the evolutionary psychologists have written lots of popular books, and it's out there.

AR – Yeah, they're pretty good at that.

AE – So if there is to be a more inclusive and complex evolutionary psychology, it needs to get out there, beyond the journals. So, as old as I am, if I'm able to work long enough, I would like to do that. And I also want to start a book that would be integrative of essentially the work on social role theory with these extensions. That would be more of a disciplinary book.

AR – Right, but kind of laying it all out, bringing it all together.

AE – Laying it all out, because I first published something in, when was it, 1978 or something. Anyway, a long time ago, and then people cite that a lot. But as I look back, it was a good start, but it was so much just a start. And I think I owe people a work that is more developed, and furthermore, would integrate a lot of the empirical work, not just that I've done, but that lots and lots and lots of people have done. And so that would be like the psychology of attitudes but in this area of gender. And so I have in mind that some of my wonderful collaborators, one in particular, would make that happen with me. So some of what I most value is yet to be done.

AR – Would you have any advice to feminist psychologists working, navigating psychology now, be they social psychologists or whoever, but women who are feminist who are navigating psychology?

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AE – I can't speak much to the practioner side because I've never been one, but on the scientist side, you know to hang in there and work on it. Delve deeply in terms of the intellectual issues and don't close yourself off by thinking only in terms of your favourite theory, or your favourite notion about something– or in other words, feminism is ideological but in science, too much ideology can put on blinders. And so a complaint that you get from other psychologists is that feminist psychologists have blinders on, certainly the evolutionary psychologists say that. Well you know they don't read our work, so they say these things that we never said. You know, it can be very polarized, and that's not good. So we need from our side to be respectful of other psychologists and find out what they're saying, otherwise we segregate our work. And so to study gender, yes, but not to have blinders on and not to allow the work to be segregated; to move out beyond that and to try to influence others.

AR – Right, right. Any suggestions for how one might do that? Is it part of the strategy of not necessarily putting your feminist badge on every time you talk to others?

AE – Well that can scare people so sometimes you may not want to. But if there are issues in, I mean there are issues on all kinds of areas of behaviour. So if you merely work with other feminist psychologists on them, and you feel that *they* out *there* are doing the wrong thing, but you never are on a symposium with them, or you're not in their edited books, or whatever, then there's no dialogue

AR – Right.

AE – So to put yourself out there is important I think.

AR – I have to ask this question because it came up at the executive meeting and I'm so curious as to what you might say. Given your work on leadership, especially with role congruity theory, what is your analysis of the Hilary Clinton phenomenon?

AE – Oh right.

AR – What are your thoughts on that? I'm just so curious.

AE – Well I think Hilary Clinton is a smart woman as everybody acknowledges. But I think on gender issues she is quite aware at some level of something like a role congruity analysis. But the journalists are too. I mean they're on it so to speak that she has problems when she is merely speaking clearly and competently and forcefully about issues. And then people think that she is, what, cold? And too remote? Well a man can do the same thing and not get that particular feedback ordinarily. But then there's the danger on the feminine side, but she's aware – in fact what we recommend, there's a chapter in our book where we have some recommendations to the individual woman – that in many contexts it is the masculine-feminine blend that can work but is hard to manage, hard to do really well. And so she has the advice to add more feminine, womanly, elements, and she's tried to do those things. There was even a cookie recipe once…

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AR – That's right.

AE – But that didn't go well because that was seen as calculating. But the spontaneous welling up of the eyes, I believe it was spontaneous, was actually well received because that added this dimension. And then she was saying that she was finding her voice so to speak, and I think she was referring to the more direct emotional kind of appeal. So she's under pressure to do that in the way that the men are not. And so I think she's got an analysis of this, but as a matter of fact, I mean one of the main points of the labyrinth is that it isn't easy.

AR – Yeah.

AE – So to deliver in a way that people accept and find spontaneous, that sort of blend of the competence plus the warmth, and it's not seen as calculating and it is accepted, that's not easy. I think she's doing it relatively well but she hasn't fallen into a real comfortable mode of doing it I would say. In that kind of a very powerful role, those pressures are the strongest of all and I think it's a nearly impossible task I guess I would have to say.

AR – Yeah.

AE – So I don't criticize her but I think we've, one of the things that I think about her candidacy is that regardless of what happens, and it appears that Barack Obama is gaining ascendancy, the public has had a powerful lesson in gender not being gone from our world. It isn't that everything is the same for a man and a woman, and they've had a powerful lesson. The journalists are on it and they're explaining it to people at one level or another. And so I think that is powerfully educational and we shouldn't regard it as necessarily discouraging; it's discouraging for those who thought maybe there was nothing there and everything is the same for men and women and leadership roles. If anybody ever thought that, now they should have a lesson that that isn't true, observing the differential treatment of the men and women. But it's a powerful lesson and we should thank her for allowing us that lesson. But then also she's taught us that women can do this at that level. She's the first viable candidate and that teaches the public that women can do that and are used to seeing women in powerful roles. So I'm grateful to her for that.

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AR – Yeah, I agree. One of the questions I try and ask of most everyone, because I think it's a feminist question, is given your absolutely prolific career, your heavy involvement in your career and your profession, and the fact that you have a family, how have you managed to balance those things, integrate those things, navigate the demands of an obviously very successful professional career and your family responsibilities?

AE – Right, well of course that isn't easy either. That's part of the labyrinth. I've had a husband who shared a lot and that's very important, and I've stayed married to him. I had two wonderful daughters who weren't problematic. They had good health, good mental health, good physical health, and that's not something that everyone has in terms of their children. And then I worked really hard to be frank. So my family and my career, sort of my life, and I haven't developed in a very serious way outside interests shall we say. So I'm willing to work very hard, you know. You do, if you write a lot, it takes a lot of time, so you have to be willing to do that.

AR – And it's pretty engrossing

AE – Yeah, but I enjoy it. I mean I find that so rewarding, and I love to write. So it isn't as if I think oh my god, I have to work on my writing this evening, I don't want to do it. No, it's like, oh I have a couple of hours, let me do that! So you have to love it, the career part, and then of course you love your family.

AR – Right. Well we've talked quite a bit about your scholarly work, your intellectual contributions, your theoretical contributions, but you've also of course been involved in many different organizations at different levels and so on. And I don't really know what a good question is to ask about that, so I'm going to ask a very general question.

AE – Yeah.

AR – Of that body of work, your work in organizations like Division 35, but I noticed that you're really involved in the Inter-American Society.

AE – Yes, the Inter-American Society.

AR – What of that body, that branch, of your professional life, what have you found most rewarding, most interesting?

AE – Well I was involved in Division 8, the social personality psychology group. And the Midwestern Psychology Association, I was the president, and then this Inter-American society, which is something that few North American psychologists participate in.

AR – Yeah, I don't really know much about it.

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AE – It's the main organization in Latin America for psychologists. And so that has a different, it's not a disciplinary kind of excitement, the universities are so poorly funded and it's such a struggle for the psychologists, but nonetheless they're addressing important issues and do appreciate our participation. So it's just part of the professional life, and opportunities come up and you think well, maybe I have time to do that now, and maybe I don't, so a lot of opportunities I've passed up for sure.

AR – I can imagine. I noticed that you've been, over the years, it sounds like you've been quite involved in the Society for Experimental Social Psychology

AE – Yes.

AR – There's also the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, which a lot of social psychologists are involved in. And being Herb Kelman's student I was kind of curious about how that

AE – Right.

AR – What motivated you?

AE – Well I've always been a member of SPSSI but I've not been involved in the leadership, and I always thought I would at some point but then I haven't because I was doing these other things. So I feel that's an omission. And the Society for Experimental Psychology of course is the sort of inside of social psychology organizations, and I thought it was very important to be there as a feminist, and not to say well that's very mainstream, so I won't do it. No, that's mainstream and that's why I do it.

AR – Oh neat. So it's part of your philosophy of trying to bring feminist psychology beyond

AE – Right, outside of itself.

AR – That's neat. Is there anything I haven't asked you about, about anything, about your career, that you would like to add or speak about?

AE – You've covered a lot. I appreciate it. I don't think of anything at the moment.

AR – Okay, well you can always add to the transcript.

AE – Wonderful.