



COLLOQUIA TREVERENSIA

Prof. Felicia Pratto, University of Connecticut (USA)

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Insights about Power from Studying Gender

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Felicia Pratto, PhD., 1988, New York University, is internationally-known for her research on Social Dominance Theory, intergroup relations, and the cultural, social interaction, and cognitive processes that sustain group-based inequality.

Her experiments have demonstrated automatic attention bias to negative information, ethnocentric decision-making under risk, and asymmetric designation of social category features that are not normative (e.g., pointing out someone's being a woman but not being a man).

In addition to a variety of laboratory experimental techniques, she uses international surveys to compare the political-psychological processes in different socio-political contexts.

She is a Professor of Psychological Sciences at the University of Connecticut where she teaches social psychology and research methods to undergraduates and teaches research methods, theories of intergroup relations, social cognition, and social power to PhD students.

Abstract:

For decades, no theories of intergroup relations addressed gender. In this talk I explain why social dominance theory incorporates gender along with other forms of intergroup inequalities to account for why many societies maintain group-based inequality, even when it contradicts their stated values. I then detail that work to describe what domains of power are gendered, and some of the non-obvious consequences of that analysis for men's and women's outcomes. Expanding the gendered power analysis further, I propose a new theory of power dynamics, with power basis theory, an dynamic ecological theory about the relationship between needs and context. The theories are illustrated with comparative studies concerning politics and health, employment discrimination studies, surveys, and dynamic experimental games.