

## **Tamara Kenick**

Communications - Conflict and Diversity Final Paper

### **Overview**

I specifically wanted to talk about the standpoint theory because it is extremely relatable to my personal life as a woman, wife and mother. The standpoint theory is a viewpoint or an attitude towards a particular issue from their own perspective. It is often referred to in feminism, as standpoint theory can show the differences in what women have to live with as opposed to men based on society standards.

### **Theory/Concept**

Sandra Harding and Nancy Hartsock developed The standpoint theory as a 20th century approach on people's gender/race/class perception. It states how the day to day experience alters or influences a person's opinions. Generally standpoint arises when people recognize the value of power that creates different groups within society. Nancy Hartsock works were greatly influenced by the concepts of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a German philosopher who studied the standpoints of the people belonging to various socio-economic classes.

### **Analysis**

Within the reading Gendered Lives by Julia T. Wood, there is a story about some Brazilian towns where mothers would routinely allow their children to die even when simple solutions were available to save them. Also, during the renaissance, parents of all classes would abandon their babies (over 900 a year) at orphanages. This is the theory that maternal instinct is inherent in all women.

In fact, maternal instinct is a modern and western notion that you should be unselfish, always protective and nurturing and give up your own personal interests for your children. This is

extremely harmful to women, as research suggests that mothering is shaped by society and the expectations of cultural standards.

This specifically hit home for me as I remembered my first child and giving birth to him 13 years ago. The expectations for a woman in the United States include you having an instant bond with your child, immediately attaching to him/her in breastfeeding and will taking them home with a feeling of bliss and security. Personally, I found all of those notions to be the exact opposite of what I endured. I was anxiety ridden and scared for my son. I didn't know who this little person was and although I loved him, didn't feel an instant connection or bonding with him. It actually took time as I worked through sleepless nights, helplessness over his crying and anxiety over him not latching on to breastfeed for weeks. No one tells you how difficult it will be, how chaotic you may feel or that you have options to feed your child if breastfeeding isn't working out. I put upon so many expectations of perfection with his birth and infancy that I think I missed out on some of the joy of having a baby.

### **Reflection**

I feel after my first child and the difficulty I had with getting adjusted, prepared me for my second baby tremendously. After realizing things will never go as planned when it comes to children, I went into the birth and the following months with no expectations for perfection. My main goal was for him was to be delivered healthy and to grow up knowing he is always loved.

As I think about how to apply these lessons in my life today, it is a good reminder to stop and reflect on the people around me and people I encounter every day. I think this class has taught me to not judge others so harshly and quickly and to remember to be more empathetic to their viewpoints and situations.

### **References**

Gendered Lives

Communication, Gender and Culture

Julia T. Wood

Gendered Lives story

No Maternal Instinct

Julia T. Wood

Communication Theory

Definition and Introduction

<https://www.communicationtheory.org/the-standpoint-theory/>