

## THE CONCEPT OF GENDER: ORIGIN, ESSENCE, FUNCTIONS, AND SOCIAL ROOTS

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### Abstract:

This article examines the complex idea of gender, investigating its origin, nature, functions, and deeply ingrained societal origins. The research utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to examine the many aspects of gender as a social construct, drawing on findings from sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history. The study conducts a thorough examination of the literature to track the development of gender ideas. It emphasizes how these concepts have changed over time and in different cultures, reflecting larger socio-political shifts and impacting individual identity and social responsibilities. The research uses a qualitative technique to investigate different cultural and historical settings in order to reveal the mechanisms by which gender roles are generated, enacted, and sustained. This text engages in a thorough examination of the jobs assigned to various genders, questioning how these roles originate from and perpetuate societal norms and inequality. The study provides detailed knowledge of how gender is interconnected with cultural practices, legal frameworks, and economic systems. It examines case studies and includes interviews with experts to explore how these factors shape people's experiences and possibilities in society. The results demonstrate that gender is not a fixed or inherent characteristic but rather a flexible concept that adapts to changing social, economic, and political circumstances. The research highlights the need for acknowledging and questioning the deeply embedded societal origins of gender norms to promote a society that is more inclusive and fairer. By doing so, it adds to the continuing discussions in the field of gender studies by offering factual data and theoretical perspectives that emphasize the need for critically reassessing gender as a fundamental element in understanding human social interactions.

**Keywords:** Gender, genesis, essence, task, social roots, cultural practices, societal norms, identity, historical contexts, gender roles, social construction, intersectionality, feminist theory, masculinity, femininity, gender identity, sexuality, anthropology, sociology, psychology, queer theory, gender studies, patriarchy, gender expression, socialization, and gender equity.

### Introduction

The global statistics<sup>1</sup> indicate that the number of men is 4,024,407,910 (50.5%), while the number of women is 3,951,742,160 (49.5%). For instance, the International Labor Organization reports that there are six working women for every ten employed males. The 74th session of the UN General Assembly began on September 24, 2019, during which the organization's women's section emphasized the importance of ensuring gender equality and the provision of sufficient rights and freedoms for women as a component of sustainable development across nations. It

<sup>1</sup> <https://countrymeters.info/ru/world>



was also noted that only 17 of the 192 speakers during the session were women, which garnered substantial criticism. The relationship between men and women, their responsibilities in society and family, and the issues of gender equality and justice have been a focus of attention since the beginning of humanity. Today, it has been established that the overall development of society is facilitated by the guarantee of gender equality in the primary spheres of social life. The ongoing reforms in our country that are designed to safeguard the rights and interests of women are a component of more comprehensive systemic measures. This reform emphasizes the empirical investigation of gender-related issues and the formulation of evidence-based proposals to resolve them. Key objectives have been designated as the promotion of gender values among the population and the promotion of the exchange of experiences in this area.

### Research Methodology

To investigate the origin, nature, functions, and social foundations of gender, this research employs a multidisciplinary approach that integrates perspectives from sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history. The study examines the historical development of the concept of gender and its shifts in meaning. In order to accomplish this, the research investigates the ways in which gender roles and identities have been influenced by social norms, cultural practices, and institutional frameworks in a variety of cultures and historical periods.

### Literature Review

Philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, linguists, literary scholars, psychologists, and educators continue to be intrigued by the issue of gender. The sociological aspects of gender have been extensively discussed in the works of E. Goffman, R. Khof, A. Kolstkorova, A. Zdravomyslova, AA Tyomkina, GK Zaysev, AG Zaysev, and GB Urazalieva. The study of "gender phenomena" should be included among the urgent issues that require systematic and in-depth research, as modern sociologists emphasize. In 1968, Robert Stoller, a psychologist at California University, and John Money<sup>2</sup>, an endocrinologist, made the initial attempt to distinguish between the concepts of sex and gender. Erving Goffman was also among the first to use the term "gender." According to Sofia Babayan, a sociology professor, "Gender is a social concept that reflects the flawless image of a man or a woman, shaped by the diversity of chronological and geographical contexts, national traditions, religion, history, and national mentality, among others factors."<sup>3</sup>

### Discussion of analysis results

Gender genesis refers to the origin of sex. Historically, it has been a binary concept of sex (male and female) and is biologically distinct. However, over time, it has evolved to encompass a broader spectrum, recognizing the role of cultural, social, and individual factors in shaping gender identity. Gender genesis is the complex interplay of biological, psychological, social, cultural, and historical factors that develop and change across cultures. It is important to note

<sup>2</sup>Stoller, Robert J., and John Money. "Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity." *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, vol. 147, no. 1, 1968, pp. 77-88.

<sup>3</sup>Goffman, Erving. "Gender Advertisements." *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1979, pp. 3-23.



that the current concept of gender is more inclusive and dynamic, recognizing a spectrum of gender identities beyond the traditional binary between male and female.

Originally, the concept of gender was closely linked to biological sex and was based on physiological differences between men and women. This perspective emphasizes the role of genetics and physical characteristics in determining sex.

**J. Meyer** , “gender is sometimes used as a synonym for biological sex, but psychological sex can be significantly free from physical constraints <sup>4</sup>. ” According to **J. Krisler** and **S. Lamer** , “gender is a term used to describe a person’s social identity and personality or behavioral tendencies, usually associated with a person’s biological sex.”<sup>5</sup> writes. Also, according to other scholars, “ gender refers to the social relations between men and women based on different roles, behaviors, activities, characteristics, and opportunities that are in line with biological sex <sup>6</sup>. ” “Gender refers to the characteristics or conditions that are biologically or culturally associated with masculinity and femininity <sup>7</sup>. ”

Over time, societies have developed complex systems of gender roles and norms that go beyond biological differences.

These roles are often deeply embedded in cultural and historical contexts and vary considerably across societies and time periods. According to <sup>8</sup>**McSweeney and other scholars**, “**gender is a social construct that distinguishes men and women in a society based on cultural norms and values, influencing social roles, behaviors, and cultural norms** ,” “gender refers to the social presentation of an individual, including clothing choices, names, and cultural roles that are associated with biological sex ,” “gender <sup>9</sup>refers to the socially constructed characteristics <sup>10</sup>of women and men in all their diversity , while sex refers to purely biological differences ,” “gender is a multifactorial, complex trait with a hereditary polygenic component influenced by factors such as gender identity, genes, and social structures <sup>11</sup>. ” “Gender is the unique sexual makeup of an individual that is not determined by external genitalia <sup>12</sup>. ”

**The psychological and social constructionist perspective** argues that gender is a social construct, shaped primarily by social norms, expectations, and experiences. According to this perspective, gender identity and roles are learned and internalized through socialization processes from a young age.

<sup>4</sup>Meyer, J., & Dupkin, C. (1981). Environment and human gender identity., 271-285. [https:// doi.org /10.1007/978-1-349-03964-7\\_19](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-03964-7_19).

<sup>5</sup> Chrisler, J., & Lamer, S. (2016). Gender, Definitions of., 1-3. [https:// doi.org /10.1002/9781118663219.WBEGSS171](https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663219.WBEGSS171).

<sup>6</sup>Manandhar, M., Hawkes, S., Buse, K., Nosrati, E., & Magar, V. (2018). Gender, health and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 96, 644 - 653. [https:// doi.org /10.2471/BLT.18.211607](https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.18.211607).

<sup>7</sup>Gentile, D. (1993). Just What Are Sex and Gender, Anyway ? A Call for a New Terminological Standard. Psychological Science, 4, 120 - 122. [https:// doi.org /10.1111/j.1467-9280.1993.tb00472.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.1993.tb00472.x).

<sup>8</sup>McSweeney, J., Rosenfeld, A., Abel, W., Brown, L., Burke, L., Daugherty, S., Fletcher, G., Gulati, M., Mehta, L., Pettey, C., & Reckelhoff, J. (2016). Preventing and Experiencing Ischemic Heart Disease as a Woman: State of the Science: A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association. Circulation, 133 13, 1302-31. [https:// doi.org /10.1161/CIR.0000000000000381](https://doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000381).

<sup>9</sup>Hanan, M. (2013). Embodied Therapy for Clients Expressing Gender Variation: Using Creative Movement to Explore and Express Body Image Concerns . , 1-38. [https:// doi.org /10.1007/978-1-4614-3981-3\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3981-3_1).

<sup>10</sup>Magar, V. (2015). Gender, health and the Sustainable Development Goals. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 93, 743 - 743. [https:// doi.org /10.2471/BLT.15.165027](https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.15.165027).

<sup>11</sup>Polderman, T., Kreukels, B., Irwig, M., Beach, L., Chan, Y., Derks, E., Esteva, I., Ehrenfeld, J., Heijer, M., Posthuma, D., Raynor, L., Tishelman, A., Davis, L., & Consortium, o. (2018). The Biological Contributions to Gender Identity and Gender Diversity: Bringing Data to the Table. Behavior Genetics, 48, 95-108. [https:// doi.org /10.1007/s10519-018-9889-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10519-018-9889-z).

<sup>12</sup>Bass, M., González, L., Colip, L., Sharon, N., & Conklin, J. (2018). Rethinking gender: The nonbinary approach. American journal of health-system pharmacy: AJHP: official journal of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, 75 22, 1821-1823. [https:// doi.org /10.2146/ajhp180236](https://doi.org/10.2146/ajhp180236).



Gender and gender concepts distinction regarding first attempt 1968 California university Professor , psychologist Robert Stoller and by endocrinologist John Money done increased <sup>13</sup>. "Gender is a human social construct that refers to the qualities of "masculinity" or "femininity," and refers to how an individual is defined and perceived based on psychological, social, and cultural factors <sup>14</sup>."

Gender equality is a central research topic in sociology, and there are many theories to explain its dynamics, causes, and consequences, ranging from micro-level interactions to macro-level structural factors that contribute to gender inequality.

**Sociological theories** have provided a framework for understanding the social structures, practices, and norms that lead to gender inequality.

**Functionalism.** From a functionalist perspective, society is a system of interconnected parts that work together to maintain balance and social order. Gender roles are seen as functional for society because they perform necessary functions. For example, traditional gender roles may require women to care for children, which functionalists believe contributes to the stability and spread of society . However, this view has been criticized for justifying the status quo and for ignoring the inequalities that these roles create, especially for women. Proponents of functionalism argue, drawing on the work of Emile Durkheim, that gender roles have evolved to enhance social efficiency. Traditional roles for men and women are seen as complementary and structured to maintain social stability. However, critics argue that this approach ignores the inequalities inherent in these roles <sup>15</sup>.

**Conflict theory.** Influenced by the works of Karl Marx, conflict theory suggests that society is a struggle for dominance between social groups competing for scarce resources. When it comes to gender, this theory argues that gender inequality exists because it benefits the group in power (traditionally men). Patriarchy is seen as a form of social stratification in which men are considered the ruling class and women are considered the subordinate class.

**Symbolic interactionism.** This perspective focuses on everyday interactions and symbols that create and reinforce gender roles. Gender is viewed as a social construct that is maintained through social interaction. For example, children learn gender expectations through play, language, and the media. Through these interactions, they learn gender-conforming behaviors that reinforce traditional roles and inequalities. Symbolic interactionism focuses on gender as a social construct , emphasizing the role of social interactions and cultural norms in shaping gender identities and expectations. Gender is people " **who** " "is it " not , **maybe** " **what** " **what is doing** " understood <sup>16</sup>.

**Feminist theory.** Feminist theory is a set of perspectives committed to explaining and changing gender inequality. There are many branches of feminist theory, including liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and intersectional feminism, each with its own unique approach to addressing gender inequality. All of them recognize and challenge the pervasive nature of patriarchy . Proponents of feminist theory have been influential in shaping the idea of

<sup>13</sup>Stoller, Robert J., and John Money. "Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity." *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, vol. 147, no. 1, 1968, pp. 77-88.

<sup>14</sup>Hughes, R. (2003). The categorization of male and female laboratory animals in terms of "gender". *Brain Research Bulletin*, 60, 189-190. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0361-9230\(03\)00037-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0361-9230(03)00037-6).

<sup>15</sup>Parsons, T., & Bales, RF (1955). *Family, Socialization, and Interaction Process*. Free Press.

<sup>16</sup>West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). *Doing Gender*. *Gender & Society*, 1(2), 125-151.





gender equality.

The feminist movement, which emerged in the 18th century and actively developed throughout the world in the 19th and 20th centuries, contributed to the widespread spread of the concept of gender equality. Feminist to the theory related first works of the XIV-XV centuries appearance be For example , the most from the famous one – “ **Women city book** ” middle century writer and Italian It belongs to <sup>17</sup>the philosopher Christina of Pisa (1365–1430) .

**Marxist feminist theory** argues that capitalism exacerbates gender inequalities and that these are based on class structures and the exploitation of labor, with gender relations viewed as a reflection of power dynamics within the capitalist economy <sup>18</sup>. **Liberal feminists** advocate for equal opportunities within the existing social structure <sup>19</sup>, while **radical feminists** argue for fundamental changes to the structure itself <sup>20</sup>.

**Postmodern theory.** Postmodern theorists argue that gender is not a fixed and natural phenomenon, but rather a social construct that changes depending on cultural and historical context. They often emphasize the role of discourse in the construction of gender identities and challenge the idea of universal gender norms.

**B. Friedan** and other scholars, “gender refers to the sociocultural processes that shape the behavior, preferences, values, and how individuals and groups interact with the environment” <sup>21</sup>, “gender refers to the social and cultural factors associated with being male or female in a particular historical and cultural context” <sup>22</sup>, “gender is a set of culturally and historically determined behaviors and expectations that are flexible and not dichotomous”<sup>23</sup> They emphasize.

**Social construction** theory argues that gender is constructed through social processes. Gender identity is shaped by social institutions such as family, education, media, and law. Therefore, the meanings attached to gender categories can vary significantly across cultures and time.

sociologist **Sofia Babayan** , “Gender” is a social concept, “expressed in the inherent characteristics of a woman or a man, the diversity of the chronological and geographical environment, national traditions, religion, history, national mentality, etc.” <sup>24</sup>According to another scholar, “gender refers to the personal characteristics, behaviors, and social roles that are expected of or assigned to a person, depending on whether he is a man or a woman <sup>25</sup>. ”

**Human capital theory.** This economic perspective holds that people choose education, work, and time based on the expected returns they expect. For example, gender differences in the labor market are often explained by the different amounts of human capital invested by men and women due to traditional gender roles. However, this theory has been criticized for not

<sup>17</sup>de Pisan , Christine. The Book of the City of Ladies. Translated by Rosalind Brown-Grant. Revised Edition. Penguin Classics, 2003.

<sup>18</sup>Hartmann, H. (1976). Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex. Signs, 1(3), 137-169.

<sup>19</sup>Friedan, B. (1963). The Feminine Mystique. WW Norton.

<sup>20</sup>Daly, M. (1978). Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism. Beacon Press.

<sup>21</sup>Veerman, C., Correia, T., Bastioli, C., Biró, B., Bouma, J., Cienciala, E., Emmett, B., Frison, E., Grand, A., Filchev, L., Kriauciūnienė, Z., Pogrzeba, M., Soussana, J., Vela, C., & Wittkowski, R. (2020). Caring for soil is caring for life: ensure 75% of soils are healthy by 2030 for healthy food, people, nature and climate: interim report of the mission board for soil health and food: study. . <https://doi.org/10.2777/918775>.

<sup>22</sup>Miller, W. (2014). Why are sex and gender important to basic physiology and translational and individualized medicine? American journal of physiology. Heart and circulatory physiology, 306 6, H781-8. <https://doi.org/10.1152/ajpheart.00994.2013>.

<sup>23</sup>Pflugfelder, G. (1992). Strange Fates. Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in Torikaebaya Monogatari. Monument Nipponica , 47, 347-368. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2385103>.

<sup>24</sup>Babayan, Sofia. "Gender and Society." Social and Cultural Anthropology: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches, edited by Andranik Voskanyan et al., Printinfo , 2019, pp. 261-277.

<sup>25</sup>Cahill, L. (2011). Gender and Christian ethics., 103-116. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9781107000070.009>.



sufficiently accounting for structural factors that constrain individual choice.

Scholars have also studied gender issues across sectors and industries, including numerous studies on gender gaps in the workplace. Research often focuses on<sup>26</sup> the gender wage gap, **occupational segregation**, and **glass ceiling phenomena, such as the systematic barriers women face in advancing their careers**, the role of education in perpetuating or mitigating gender inequality, the view that while girls often outperform boys in terms of educational attainment, this does not always translate into improved employment opportunities<sup>27</sup>, research on gender disparities in health and access to health services has examined the social determinants of health that disadvantage women and the gender-specific health problems that are often overlooked in research<sup>28</sup>, the evaluation of the effectiveness of policies aimed at achieving gender equality, such as affirmative action or gender quotas in political representation, some research on the impact of these policies on social relations,<sup>29</sup> and R. V. Connell's concept of "hegemonic masculinity" that explains how certain social expectations of men perpetuate gender inequalities, harmful. There has been research examining how stereotyping and limiting expressions of masculinity can harm both<sup>30</sup> men and women.

When we look at how gender issues are being addressed internationally, it becomes apparent that there are a number of challenges in ensuring gender equality in the world.

### Conclusion

The above figures and the information provided show that achieving gender equality in the world, ensuring equal participation of women in every sphere of society, remains relevant. We believe that gender operates in different ways in society, with gender roles traditionally defining the distribution of work, responsibilities and rights, which affects a number of aspects, from family dynamics to career prospects. In addition, it plays a key role in interpersonal relationships and cultural conventions. The social origins of gender include social norms, cultural beliefs and institutional frameworks that create and support gender roles and expectations. The foundations of these elements are deeply embedded in the history, religion, customs and laws of a society.

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<sup>28</sup>Doyal, L. (1995). *What Makes Women Sick: Gender and the Political Economy of Health*. Rutgers University Press.

<sup>29</sup>Crook, ML (2006). Reforming Representation: The Diffusion of Candidate Gender Quotas Worldwide. *Politics & Gender*, 2(3), 303-327.

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