

## **GENDER ROLES AND STATUSES**

Division of Labor by Gender. Traditionally, society was structured around gendered divisions of labor and authority. Rural communities were exogamous, patrilocal, and patriarchal, with newly married women subservient in the families of their husbands until they had borne sons. Among the gentry, every detail of household management was prescribed and encoded in laws that addressed even the most intimate details of family life.

A key part of communist ideology was the freeing of women from oppressive norms and structures. Women were trained for and encouraged to take up what was previously male-only labor, such as operating agricultural machinery, working in construction, and laying and maintaining roads. Nurseries and day care centers were established to free women from child rearing. Women's increased participation in medicine, engineering, the sciences, and other fields was supported. "Liberated" to work in public jobs, women often retained the burden of all household work as people held to customary notions of domestic propriety. Also, their equal employment status was not reflected in the workplace, where women faced several forms of discrimination. Nevertheless, in a number of domains, particularly in medicine and education, Soviet women gained authority and status. By the 1980s, one-third of the deputies to the Supreme Soviet were female, and women accounted for over 50 percent of students in higher education.

Much of the hard-earned status of women has eroded. As unemployment grew in the 1990s, the first to be discharged from lifelong positions were women; management jobs in the new commercial sector were reserved for men, and a traditionalist view of work and family reasserted itself throughout society. In part, this was a backlash against the "double burden" of employment and household labor; some women whose husbands had succeeded in the new economy were glad to leave their jobs and take up full-time household and family care.

For women who want or need to work, recent trends toward devaluing women's work have been demoralizing and financially devastating. Some women have become entrepreneurs, although they face gender prejudice in setting up businesses and often are not taken seriously. The percentage of women holding political office has declined, and women's participation in high levels of industry, the sciences, the arts, and the government has shrunk, especially in big cities. Significant numbers of young women have been lured into prostitution, which appears to be the only way to escape poverty for many impoverished women from provincial regions.

The Relative Status of Women and Men. Many people have an inflexible image of gender roles and skills: men cannot cook, clean house, or perform child care, whereas women are bad at driving cars, managing finances, and supervising others. Men are valued for patriarchal and stern leadership, bravery, physical strength, and rationality; women are valued for beauty, intuition, emotional depth, and selfless generosity.

Women are disproportionately represented among the devout, but the priesthood and hierarchy of the Orthodox Church are strictly male. Some new religious groups have women in leadership roles. Women are held in high regard as mothers, and bearers of the most sacred dimensions of the culture. Many people value this conception of femininity and fear that it will be spoiled by feminists. Women's movement activists struggle against this viewpoint.

Gender role theory posits that boys and girls learn the appropriate behavior and attitudes from the family and overall culture they grow up with, and so non-physical gender differences are a product of socialization.

Social role theory proposes that the social structure is the underlying force for the gender differences, and sex-differentiated behavior is driven by the division of labor between two sexes within a society. Division of labor creates gender roles, which in turn, lead to gendered social behavior.

The physical specialization of the sexes is considered to be the distal cause of the gender roles. Men's unique physical advantages in terms of body size and upper body strength provided them an edge over women in those social activities that demanded such physical attributes such as hunting, herding and warfare. On the other hand, women's biological capacity for reproduction and child-bearing is proposed to explain their limited involvement in other social activities. Such divided activity arrangement for the purpose of achieving activity-efficiency led to the division of labor between sexes.

Social role theorists have explicitly stressed that the labor division is not narrowly defined as that between paid employment and domestic activities, rather, is conceptualized to include all activities performed within a society that are necessary for its existence and sustainability.

The characteristics of the activities performed by men and women became people's perceptions and beliefs of the dispositional attributes of men or women themselves. Division of labor led to gender roles, or gender stereotype. Ultimately, people expect men and women who occupy certain position to behave according to these attributes.

These socially constructed gender roles are considered to be hierarchical and characterized as a male-advantaged gender hierarchy. The activities men involved in were often those that provided them with more access to or control of resources and decision making power, rendering men not only superior dispositional attributes via correspondence bias (Gilbert, 1998), but also higher status and authority as society progressed. The particular pattern of the labor division within a certain society is a dynamic process and determined by its specific economical and cultural characteristics.

For instance, in an industrial economy, the emphasis on physical strength in social activities becomes less compared with that in a less advanced economy. In a low birth rate society, women will be less confined to reproductive activities and thus more likely to be involved in a wide range of social activities. The beliefs that people hold about the sexes are derived from observations of the role performances of men and women and thus reflect the sexual division of labor and gender hierarchy of the society.

The consequences of gender roles and stereotypes are sex-typed social behavior because roles and stereotypes are both socially shared descriptive norms and prescriptive norms. Gender roles provide guides to normative behaviors that are typical, ought-to-be and thus “likely effective” for each sex within certain social context. Gender roles also depict ideal, should-be, and thus desirable behaviors for men and women who are occupying a particular position or involving in certain social activities. Put in another way, men and women, as social beings, strive to belong and seek for approval by complying and conforming to the social and cultural norms within their society. The conformity to social norms not only shapes the pattern, but also maintains the very existence of sex-typed social behavior.

This perspective proposes that gender difference is socially constructed. Social constructionism of gender moves away from socialization as the origin of gender differences; people do not merely internalize gender roles as they grow up but they respond to changing norms in society. Children learn to categorize themselves by gender very early on in life. A part of this is learning how to display and perform gendered identities as masculine or feminine. Boys learn to manipulate their physical and social environment through physical strength or other skills, while girls learn to present themselves as objects to be viewed. Children monitor their own and others’ gendered behavior. Gender-segregated children’s activities create the appearance that gender differences in behavior reflect an essential nature of male and female behavior.

Judith Butler, in works such as *Gender Trouble* and *Undoing Gender*, contends that being female is not «natural» and that it appears natural only through repeated performances of gender; these performances in turn, reproduce and define the traditional categories of sex and/or gender. A social constructionist view looks beyond categories and examines the intersections of multiple identities, the blurring of the boundaries of essentialist categories. This is especially true with regards to categories of male and female that are typically viewed by others as binary and opposites of each other. By deconstructing categories of gender, the value placed on masculine traits and behaviors disappears. However, the elimination of categories makes it difficult to make any comparisons between the genders or to argue and fight against male domination.

A person's gender role is composed of several elements and can be expressed through clothing, behaviour, choice of work, personal relationships and other factors. These elements are not concrete and have evolved through time (for example women's trousers).

Traditionally only feminine and masculine gender roles existed, however, over time many different acceptable male or female gender roles have emerged. An individual can either identify themselves with a subculture or social group which results in them having diverse gender roles.

According to sociology research, traditional feminine gender roles have become less relevant in Western society since industrialization started. For example, the cliché that women do not follow a career is obsolete in many Western societies. On the other hand, the media sometimes portrays women who adopt an extremely classical role as a subculture.

Women take on many roles that were traditionally reserved for men, as well as behaviors and fashions, which may cause pressure on many men to be more masculine and thus confined within an even smaller gender role, while other men react against this pressure.

Stereotypes create expectations regarding emotional expression and emotional reaction. Many studies find that emotional stereotypes and the display of emotions «correspond to actual gender differences in experiencing emotion and expression».

Stereotypes generally dictate how and by whom and when it is socially acceptable to display an emotion. Reacting in a stereotype-consistent manner may result in social approval while reacting in a stereotype-inconsistent manner could result in disapproval. It should be noted that what is socially acceptable varies substantially over time and between local cultures and subcultures:

- women are more emotionally expressive;
- women are more emotionally responsive;
- women are more empathetic;
- women are more sensitive to others' feelings;
- women are more obsessed with having children;
- women express their feelings without constraint, except for the emotion of anger;
- women pay more attention to body language;
- women express more love, fear, and sadness;
- women laugh, gaze, and smile more;
- men are more obsessed with sex;
- men are overwhelmed by women's expressions of emotion;
- men express more anger;
- men are stoic;
- men show emotion to communicate dominance.

In summary, social role theory treats differing distributions of women and men into roles as the primary origin of sex-differentiated social behavior, their impact on behavior is mediated by psychological and social processes including developmental and socialization processes, as well as by processes involved in social interaction (e.g., expectancy confirmation) and self-regulation.

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## **THE WORLD OF TEENAGERS**

The success is closely connected with responsibility of the person. A successful person stripped of all worldly possessions might temporarily be without a home, but he or she would never be "homeless". A successful person knows how the world works and has a set of important skills and knowledge that are intrinsically valuable. A successful person is able to use that knowledge to become successful again. As you search for success in your own life, you can strive toward improving these attributes and making them work for you.

You can create a high-level vision of any space that you occupy. This vision allows you to evaluate yourself as well as those around you. It allows you to analyze and, in many cases, truly understand the problems you face. It allows you to become much more strategic in your thinking. Many people never get to the point where they even realize this fact of life. That deficit limits them throughout their lives. Once you