

What Is Gender

Gender

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Gender is the range of social, psychological, cultural, and behavioral aspects of being a man (or boy), woman (or girl), or third gender. Although gender often corresponds to sex, a transgender person may identify with a gender other than their sex assigned at birth. Most cultures use a gender binary, in which gender is divided into two categories, and people are considered part of one or the other; those who are outside these groups may fall under the umbrella term non-binary. Some societies have third genders (and fourth genders, etc.) such as the hijras of South Asia and two-spirit persons native to North America. Most scholars agree that gender is a central characteristic for social organization; this may include social constructs (i.e. gender roles) as well as gender expression.

The word has been used as a synonym for sex, and the balance between these usages has shifted over time. In the mid-20th century, a terminological distinction in modern English (known as the sex and gender distinction) between biological sex and gender began to develop in the academic areas of psychology, sociology, sexology, and feminism. Before the mid-20th century, it was uncommon to use the word gender to refer to anything but grammatical categories. In the West, in the 1970s, feminist theory embraced the concept of a distinction between biological sex and the social construct of gender. The distinction between gender and sex is made by most contemporary social scientists in Western countries, behavioral scientists and biologists, many legal systems and government bodies, and intergovernmental agencies such as the WHO. The experiences of intersex people also testify to the complexity of sex and gender; female, male, and other gender identities are experienced across the many divergences of sexual difference.

The social sciences have a branch devoted to gender studies. Other sciences, such as psychology, sociology, sexology, and neuroscience, are interested in the subject. The social sciences sometimes approach gender as a social construct, and gender studies particularly does, while research in the natural sciences investigates whether biological differences in females and males influence the development of gender in humans; both inform the debate about how far biological differences influence the formation of gender identity and gendered behavior. Biopsychosocial approaches to gender include biological, psychological, and social/cultural aspects.

Gender dysphoria

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Gender dysphoria (GD) is the distress a person experiences due to inconsistency between their gender identity—their personal sense of their own gender—and their sex assigned at birth. The term replaced the previous diagnostic label of gender identity disorder (GID) in 2013 with the release of the diagnostic manual DSM-5. The condition was renamed to remove the stigma associated with the term disorder. The International Classification of Diseases uses the term gender incongruence (GI) instead of gender dysphoria, defined as a marked and persistent mismatch between gender identity and assigned gender, regardless of distress or impairment.

Not all transgender people have gender dysphoria. Gender nonconformity is not the same thing as gender dysphoria and does not always lead to dysphoria or distress. In pre-pubertal youth, the diagnoses are gender dysphoria in childhood and gender incongruence of childhood.

The causes of gender incongruence are unknown but a gender identity likely reflects genetic, biological, environmental, and cultural factors.

Diagnosis can be given at any age, although gender dysphoria in children and adolescents may manifest differently than in adults. Complications may include anxiety, depression, and eating disorders. Treatment for gender dysphoria includes social transitioning and often includes hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or gender-affirming surgeries, and psychotherapy.

Some researchers and transgender people argue for the declassification of the condition because they say the diagnosis pathologizes gender variance and reinforces the binary model of gender. However, this declassification could carry implications for healthcare accessibility, as HRT and gender-affirming surgery could be deemed cosmetic by insurance providers, as opposed to medically necessary treatment, thereby affecting coverage.

What Is a Woman?

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What Is a Woman? is a 2022 American documentary film about gender and transgender issues, directed by Justin Folk and presented by conservative political commentator Matt Walsh. The film was released by conservative website The Daily Wire. In the film, Walsh asks various people "What is a woman?" with the goal of showing them that their definition of womanhood is circular. Walsh said he made the film in opposition to gender ideology. It is described in many sources as anti-trans or transphobic. The film was released to subscribers of The Daily Wire on June 1, 2022, coinciding with the start of Pride Month.

The film received mixed reviews. Walsh's approach garnered praise from conservative commentators, while drawing criticism from other sources, including advocates of transgender healthcare. According to transgender activists and others who appeared in the film, Walsh had invited individuals to participate in the film under false pretenses. Walsh's tour to showcase the film at college campuses sparked protests. In June 2023, during the subsequent Pride Month, the film gained further attention when Elon Musk promoted it on Twitter. The title, "What is a woman?", has become a widespread rhetorical question in anti-trans discourse.

Non-binary

or separate third gender, identify with more than one gender or no gender, or have a fluctuating gender identity. Gender identity is separate from sexual

Non-binary or genderqueer gender identities are those that are outside the male/female gender binary. Non-binary identities often fall under the transgender umbrella since non-binary people typically identify with a gender that is different from the sex assigned to them at birth, although some non-binary people do not consider themselves transgender.

Non-binary people may identify as an intermediate or separate third gender, identify with more than one gender or no gender, or have a fluctuating gender identity. Gender identity is separate from sexual or romantic orientation; non-binary people have various sexual orientations.

Non-binary people as a group vary in their gender expressions, and some may reject gender identity altogether. Some non-binary people receive gender-affirming care to reduce the mental distress caused by gender dysphoria, such as gender-affirming surgery or hormone replacement therapy.

Gender-critical feminism

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Gender-critical feminism, also known as trans-exclusionary radical feminism or TERFism, is an ideology or movement that opposes what it refers to as "gender ideology". Gender-critical feminists believe that sex is biological, immutable, and binary, and consider the concepts of gender identity and gender self-identification to be inherently oppressive constructs tied to gender roles. They reject transgender and non-binary identities, and view trans women as men and trans men as women.

Originating as a fringe movement within radical feminism mainly in the United States, trans-exclusionary radical feminism has achieved prominence in the United Kingdom and South Korea, where it has been at the centre of high-profile controversies. It has been linked to promotion of disinformation and to the anti-gender movement. Anti-gender rhetoric has seen increasing circulation in gender-critical feminist discourse since 2016, including use of the term "gender ideology". In several countries, gender-critical feminist groups have formed alliances with right-wing, far-right, and anti-feminist organisations.

Gender-critical feminism has been described as transphobic by feminist and scholarly critics. It is opposed by many feminist, LGBTQ rights, and human rights organizations. The Council of Europe has condemned gender-critical ideology, among other ideologies, and linked it to "virulent attacks on the rights of LGBTI people" in Hungary, Poland, Russia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and other countries. UN Women has described the gender-critical movement, among other movements, as extreme anti-rights movements that employ hate propaganda and disinformation.

Gender neutrality

Gender neutrality (adjective form: gender-neutral), also known as gender-neutralism or the gender neutrality movement, is the idea that policies, language

Gender neutrality (adjective form: gender-neutral), also known as gender-neutralism or the gender neutrality movement, is the idea that policies, language, and other social institutions (social structures or gender roles) should avoid distinguishing roles according to people's sex or gender. This is in order to avoid discrimination arising from the impression that there are social roles for which one gender is more suited than another. The disparity in gender equality throughout history has had a significant impact on many aspects of society, including marketing, toys, education and parenting techniques. In order to increase gender neutrality in recent years, there has been a societal emphasis on utilizing inclusive language and advocating for equality.

Sex–gender distinction

between gender and sex. In most individuals, the various biological determinants of sex are congruent, and sex is consistent with the individual's gender identity

While in ordinary speech, the terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably, in contemporary academic literature, the terms often have distinct meanings, especially when referring to people. Sex generally refers to an organism's assigned biological sex, while gender usually refers to either social roles typically associated with the sex of a person (gender role) or personal identification of one's own gender based on their own personal sense of it (gender identity). Most contemporary social scientists, behavioral scientists and biologists, many legal systems and government bodies and intergovernmental agencies such as the WHO make a distinction between gender and sex. In most individuals, the various biological determinants of sex are congruent, and sex is consistent with the individual's gender identity, but in rare circumstances, an individual's assigned sex and gender do not align, and the person may be transgender.

Though sex and gender have been used interchangeably at least as early as the fourteenth century, this usage was not common by the late 1900s. Issac Madison Bentley defined gender as the "socialized obverse of sex" in 1945. Sexologist John Money popularized this distinction beginning in 1955, but did not invent it. As

Money viewed it, gender and sex are analysed together as a single category including both biological and social elements, but later work by Robert Stoller separated the two, designating sex and gender as biological and cultural categories, respectively. Before the work of Bentley, Money and Stoller, the word gender was only regularly used to refer to grammatical categories.

Gender nonconformity

Gender nonconformity or gender variance is gender expression by an individual whose behavior, mannerisms, and/or appearance does not match masculine or

Gender nonconformity or gender variance is gender expression by an individual whose behavior, mannerisms, and/or appearance does not match masculine or feminine gender norms. A person can be gender-nonconforming regardless of their gender identity, for example, transgender, non-binary, or cisgender. Transgender adults who appear gender-nonconforming after transition are more likely to experience discrimination.

Gender-affirming surgery

Gender-affirming surgery (GAS) is a surgical procedure, or series of procedures, that alters a person's physical appearance and sexual characteristics

Gender-affirming surgery (GAS) is a surgical procedure, or series of procedures, that alters a person's physical appearance and sexual characteristics to resemble those associated with their gender identity. The phrase is most often associated with transgender health care, though many such treatments are also pursued by cisgender individuals. It is also known as sex reassignment surgery (SRS), gender confirmation surgery (GCS), and several other names.

Professional medical organizations have established Standards of Care, which apply before someone can apply for and receive reassignment surgery, including psychological evaluation, and a period of real-life experience living in the desired gender.

Feminization surgeries are surgeries that result in female-looking anatomy, such as vaginoplasty, vulvoplasty and breast augmentation. Masculinization surgeries are those that result in male-looking anatomy, such as phalloplasty and breast reduction.

In addition to gender-affirming surgery, patients may need to follow a lifelong course of masculinizing or feminizing hormone replacement therapy to support the endocrine system.

Sweden became the first country in the world to allow transgender people to change their legal gender after "reassignment surgery" and provide free hormone treatment, in 1972. Singapore followed soon after in 1973, being the first in Asia.

Gender fluidity

Gender fluidity (commonly referred to as genderfluid) is a non-fixed gender identity that shifts over time or depending on the situation. These fluctuations

Gender fluidity (commonly referred to as genderfluid) is a non-fixed gender identity that shifts over time or depending on the situation. These fluctuations can occur at the level of gender identity or gender expression. A genderfluid person may fluctuate among different gender expressions over their lifetime, or express multiple aspects of various gender markers simultaneously. Genderfluid individuals may identify as non-binary, transgender, or cisgender (meaning they identify with the gender associated with their sex assigned at birth).

Gender fluidity is different from gender-questioning, a process in which people explore their gender in order to find their true gender identity and adjust their gender expression accordingly. Gender fluidity continues throughout lives of genderfluid people. Someone who identifies as genderfluid can use any pronouns they choose.

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