

Excerpted from the Wikipedia article on Gender - John Perry

(The full article can be accessed at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender>)

(I've removed the footnote references. They can be viewed in the original Wikipedia article. The embedded hyperlinks should still work)

Gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, [masculinity](#) and [femininity](#). Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological [sex](#) (i.e., the state of being male, female, or an [intersex](#) variation), sex-based [social structures](#) (i.e., [gender roles](#)), or [gender identity](#). Most cultures use a [gender binary](#), having two genders ([boys/men](#) and [girls/women](#)); those who exist outside these groups fall under the umbrella term [non-binary or genderqueer](#). Some societies have specific genders besides "man" and "woman", such as the [hijras](#) of [South Asia](#); these are often referred to as [third genders](#) (and [fourth genders](#), etc).

[Sexologist John Money](#) introduced the terminological distinction between [biological sex and gender as a role](#) in 1955. Before his work, it was uncommon to use the word *gender* to refer to anything but [grammatical categories](#). However, Money's meaning of the word did not become widespread until the 1970s, when [feminist theory](#) embraced the concept of a distinction between biological sex and the [social construct of gender](#). Today, the distinction is followed in some contexts, especially the social sciences and documents written by the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO).

In other contexts, including some areas of the social sciences, *gender* includes *sex* or replaces it. For instance, in non-human animal research, *gender* is commonly used to refer to the biological sex of the animals. This [change in the meaning](#) of gender can be traced to the 1980s. In 1993, the US [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) started to use *gender* instead of *sex*. Later, in 2011, the FDA reversed its position and began using *sex* as the biological classification and *gender* as "a person's self representation as male or female, or how that person is responded to by social institutions based on the individual's gender presentation."

The [social sciences](#) have a branch devoted to [gender studies](#). Other sciences, such as [sexology](#) and [neuroscience](#), are also interested in the subject. The social sciences sometimes approach gender as a [social construct](#), and gender studies particularly do, while research in the [natural sciences](#) investigates whether [biological differences](#) in males and females influence the development of gender in humans; both inform debate about how far biological differences influence the formation of gender identity. In some English literature, there is also a trichotomy between biological sex, psychological gender, and social gender role. This framework first appeared in a feminist paper on [transsexualism](#) in 1978.

History of the concept

The concept of gender, in the modern sense, is a recent invention in human history. The ancient world had no basis of understanding gender as it has been understood in the humanities and social sciences for the past few decades. The term *gender* had been associated with grammar for most of history and only started to move towards it being a malleable cultural construct in the 1950s and 1960s.

[Sexologist John Money](#) introduced the terminological distinction between [biological sex and gender as a role](#) in 1955. Before his work, it was uncommon to use the word *gender* to refer to anything but [grammatical categories](#). For example, in a bibliography of 12,000 references on marriage and family from 1900-1964, the term *gender* does not even emerge once. Analysis of more than 30 million academic article titles from 1945–2001 showed that the uses of the term "*gender*", were much rarer than uses of "*sex*", was often used as a grammatical category early in this period. By the end of this period, uses of "*gender*" outnumbered uses of "*sex*" in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. It was in the 1970s that feminist scholars adopted the term *gender* as way of distinguishing “socially constructed” aspects of male–female differences (gender) from “biologically determined” aspects (sex).

In the last two decades of the 20th century, the use of *gender* in academia has increased greatly, outnumbering uses of *sex* in the social sciences. While the spread of the word in science publications can be attributed to

the influence of feminism, its use as a synonym for sex is attributed to the failure to grasp the distinction made in feminist theory, and the distinction has sometimes become blurred with the theory itself; [David Haig](#) stated, "Among the reasons that working scientists have given me for choosing gender rather than sex in biological contexts are desires to signal sympathy with feminist goals, to use a more academic term, or to avoid the connotation of copulation.

In legal cases alleging [discrimination](#), *sex* is usually preferred as the determining factor rather than *gender* as it refers to biology rather than socially constructed [norms](#) which are more open to interpretation and dispute. Julie Greenberg writes that although gender and sex are separate concepts, they are interlinked in that [gender discrimination](#) often results from [stereotypes](#) based on what is expected of members of each sex. In *J.E.B. v. Alabama ex rel. T.B.*, United States Supreme Court Justice [Antonin Scalia](#) wrote:

The word 'gender' has acquired the new and useful connotation of cultural or attitudinal characteristics (as opposed to physical characteristics) distinctive to the sexes. That is to say, gender is to sex as feminine is to female and masculine is to male.

As a social role

Sexologist [John Money](#) coined the term *gender role*, and was the first to use it in print in a scientific trade journal. In a seminal 1955 paper he defined it as "all those things that a person says or does to disclose himself or herself as having the status of boy or man, girl or woman."

The modern academic sense of the word, in the context of social roles of men and women, dates at least back to 1945, and was popularized and developed by the feminist movement from the 1970s onwards (see § Feminism theory and gender studies below), which theorizes that human nature is essentially [epicene](#) and social distinctions based on sex are arbitrarily constructed. In this context, matters pertaining to this theoretical process of [social construction](#) were labelled matters of *gender*.

The popular use of *gender* simply as an alternative to *sex* (as a biological category) is also widespread, although attempts are still made to preserve the distinction. The *American Heritage Dictionary* (2000) uses the following

two sentences to illustrate the difference, noting that the distinction "is useful in principle, but it is by no means widely observed, and considerable variation in usage occurs at all levels."

The effectiveness of the medication appears to depend on the sex (not gender) of the patient.

In peasant societies, gender (not sex) roles are likely to be more clearly defined.

Biological factors and views

See also: [Sexual differentiation](#) and [Sexual differentiation in humans](#)

In most cases, men and women and boys and girls are similar in behavior, with little gender difference, but some gendered behavior is influenced by prenatal and early life androgen exposure. This includes, for example, gender normative play, self-identification with a gender, and tendency to engage in aggressive behavior. Males of most mammals, including humans, exhibit more rough and tumble play behavior, which is influenced by maternal testosterone levels. These levels may also influence sexuality, with non-heterosexual persons exhibiting sex atypical behavior in childhood.

The [biology of gender](#) became the subject of an expanding number of studies over the course of the late 20th century. One of the earliest areas of interest was what became known as "gender identity disorder" (GID) and which is now also described as [gender dysphoria](#). Studies in this, and related areas, inform the following summary of the subject by John Money. He stated:

The term "gender role" appeared in print first in 1955. The term *gender identity* was used in a press release, November 21, 1966, to announce the new clinic for transsexuals at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. It was

disseminated in the media worldwide, and soon entered the vernacular. The definitions of gender and gender identity vary on a doctrinal basis. In popularized and scientifically debased usage, sex is what you are biologically; gender is what you become socially; gender identity is your own sense or conviction of maleness or femaleness; and gender role is the cultural stereotype of what is masculine and feminine. Causality with respect to gender identity disorder is sub-divisible into genetic, prenatal hormonal, postnatal social, and post-pubertal hormonal determinants, but there is, as yet, no comprehensive and detailed theory of causality. Gender coding in the brain is bipolar. In gender identity disorder, there is discordance between the natal sex of one's external genitalia and the brain coding of one's gender as masculine or feminine.

Money refers to attempts to distinguish a difference between biological sex and social gender as "scientifically debased", because of our increased knowledge of a continuum of [dimorphic](#) features (Money's word is "dipolar") that link biological and behavioral differences. These extend from the exclusively biological "genetic" and "prenatal hormonal" differences between men and women, to "postnatal" features, some of which are social, but others have been shown to result from "post-pubertal hormonal" effects.

Although causation from the biological—[genetic](#) and [hormonal](#)—to the behavioral has been broadly demonstrated and accepted, Money is careful to also note that understanding of the causal chains from biology to behavior in sex and gender issues is very far from complete. For example, the existence of a "[gay gene](#)" has not been proven, but such a gene remains an acknowledged possibility.

There are studies concerning women who have a condition called [congenital adrenal hyperplasia](#), which leads to the overproduction of the masculine sex [hormone](#), [androgen](#). These women usually have ordinary female appearances (though nearly all girls with congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) have corrective surgery performed on their genitals). However, despite taking hormone-balancing medication given to them at birth, these females are statistically more likely to be interested in activities traditionally linked to males than female activities. Psychology professor

and CAH researcher Dr. Sheri Berenbaum attributes these differences to an exposure of higher levels of male sex hormones in utero.