



# Nature vs. Nurture- Gender Identity as a social construct

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Gender is typically defined as a social construct but is it true? If yes, then to what extent?

We define gender as a performative social construct that can go beyond the binary boundaries and sex as 'biological,' which is often explained as an independent construct from gender. Here, we explore one of the major problems in the world of Psychology; the Nature vs. Nurture debate and its implications on Gender Identity as a social construct.

Gender identity refers to a person's deeply-felt sense of belonging and inherent sense of nature so they can further decide whether to present themselves as a man, woman, or any other gender. The idea seems quite reasonable, but it has inconsistencies. To understand gender and society much deeper, let us unmask a few of these contradictions.

Gender is defined as 'cultural,' and 'psychological' and lays its roots in historical orientations where sex and gender weren't independent concepts. Sex-linked behaviors were developed and modified over time, and it was the society that termed an action or behavior as particularly "masculine" or "feminine." This also means that society has the power to change what behavior will be termed masculine, feminine, or even androgynous. According to this logic, society defines and alters how gender is perceived and presented by the people who identify themselves as a man or a woman, or any other gender.

People identify to a particular gender due to several reasons; an inherent/invisible sense of belonging or want of different presentation, or them deciding to align themselves with a particular gender because of how they're perceived by society. For example, a male might want to be perceived as a woman or vice versa and act upon it by presenting and aligning themselves to a particular gender. Now we can ask ourselves how gender can be socially constructed and simultaneously inherent to the individual. How can gender be a part of somebody's inherent nature and a product of socialization?

If we talk about gender as an arbitrary creation of society, explaining it as a part of somebody's nature and inherent sense of being is quite complicated. It does not seem possible for gender to simultaneously be a part of someone's inherent sense and be invisible and an arbitrary social creation. Talking about transgenerational impact on sex-linked behavior modifications, the stability of environmental factors across generations can lead to the reproduction of abilities and traits over generations, i.e., people who are raised to be a man or a woman because of their sex assigned at birth are acquainted with stimuli which are assigned to the gender by the society and are more likely to provide stimuli to their future generations in the same nature. For example, a person who is being raised to be a woman will be provided with material and immaterial stimuli which are genderized by society to be more feminine. They are more likely to provide a similar environment to their children consciously or subconsciously.

Gender and sex are concepts explained independently from each other. Gender being defined and altered by society and sex being assigned biologically put them on the opposite ends of the spectrum. Although gender is said to be independent of sex and yet is defined via sex. The capacity to distinguish sex from gender does not make them independent concepts. As mentioned earlier, each gender and terms assigned with them have their historical origins with reference to sex. The concept of a boy or a girl, a man or a

woman, while not described by sex, are nevertheless described with reference to sex. This also follows to the extent that sex assigned at birth contributes to the development of psychological differences between people, and those psychological processes, in turn, play a role in the social meanings that define and alter gender.

All psychological processes are biological processes, but not all biological processes are psychological processes. In turn, sex and gender are two different identities, and another cannot replace one. Gender and sex are both parts of an individual's identity, and even if they cannot exist independently from each other, both of these concepts exist differentiated from each other. One understands their gender through the process of self-identification, and sex is assigned at birth which cannot be changed (without medical procedures). Gender is something a person chooses for themselves, while sex comes genetically at birth.

To end our debate, nature and nurture do not exist independently. Sex is a part of nature, whereas gender is the product of nurture. Biology and culture influence each other; they complete each other. For example, population growth; both biology and culture affect birth and death rates. This is also applied in biocultural relationships as they relate to the construction of gender. No nature is independent of social context; no social organization is independent of biology. People are not fixed entities with fixed natures. To truly understand people, we need to understand them as ever-developing entities with complex and changing relationships between their nature and nurture.

