

Gender and sex

- **Sex**
 - Biologically rooted; describes our physical bodies whereby distinguish between male and female
 - Characterized as diametrical opposites “opposite sex”
- **Gender**
 - Socially constructed characteristics associated with girls and boys, men and women
 - “Masculine” and “feminine” feelings, attitudes, and behaviours that are typically associated with being male or female

Gender identity

- A person’s identification with (sense of belonging to) a particular sex- biologically, psychologically, and socially

Gender Role

- When you behave according to widely shared expectations about how males or females are supposed to act, you adopt a gender role.

Problematizing sex/gender distinction

- **Intersexed individuals**
 - Born with ambiguous genitalia
 - How do we decide who is male and who is female?
- **Transgender and transsexual individuals**
 - Transgender has been used as an umbrella term for those who do not fit into normative constructions of sex and gender
 - Transsexual used to encompass those who undergo sex reassignment (realignment) surgery
- Estimated that between 0.03 and 1.7 percent of people lie somewhere between male and female as traditionally understood

Masculinity and femininity

- Culturally dominant forms of masculinity and femininity
- **Hegemonic masculinity**
 - Idea of masculinity that men are supposed to strive to achieve
 - Derives from Gramsci
 - Requires men to be successful, capable, and reliable
 - Irrevocably tied to heterosexuality
- **Emphasized femininity**
 - Based on women’s compliance with their subordination to men
 - Requires women to be supportive, enthusiastic and sexually attractive
- Disney’s portrayal of masculinity and femininity

Gender theories

- **Essentialism**

- A school of thought that views gender differences as a reflection of biological differences between women and men

- **Social constructionism**

- A school of thought that views gender differences as a reflection of the different social positions occupied by women and men

- **Main criticisms of essentialism**

- 1. Ignores the historical and cultural variability of gender and sexuality
- 2. Tends to generalize from the average, ignoring variations within gender groups
- 3. Little or no direct evidence directly supports the essentials' major claims
- 4. Explanations for gender differences ignore the role of power