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THE MEANINGS OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

Gender inequality is a major violation of human rights, manifested in unequal opportunities for women and men in various spheres of public life, including political representation and participation in decision-making, economic opportunities and access to resources, family powers and vulnerability to discrimination and violence.

The reasons for the unequal distribution of powers between women and men should be sought in patriarchal norms, which assign to members of different sexes certain social roles and patterns of behavior acceptable to society. In the past, recognizing these issues and promoting gender equality was seen primarily as a «women's issue» and gender programs focused on improving the situation of women. At the same time, the promotion of gender equality is possible only if the worldviews of all citizens change, so in recent decades the need to involve men in promoting gender equality, including active participation in policies to combat and prevent gender-based violence, has become increasingly recognized.

One way to start a discussion about the role of men, their responsibilities and potential in promoting gender equality is to study the culture of masculinity, which identifies and reinforces dominant roles, patterns of behavior and attitudes of men. Applying this approach means recognizing that the process of forming a male identity is under constant pressure from society, which requires that behavior comply with certain guidelines and expectations. Men's socialization begins in early childhood and is influenced by many, including the upbringing and inherited experience of marital relationships in the parental family, school environment and peer relationships, labor market relations, information environment and media. The generally accepted norms of male behavior also determine certain social expectations regarding the character traits, attitudes and lifestyles of modern men, which are not always favorable for their social well-being and quality of life. In particular, aggression and propensity for violence are often perceived by most people as negative aspects of a male masculine identity. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the process of socialization of modern men, examining the features of their behavioral patterns, attitudes and cultural practices associated with the influence of gender norms and stereotypes. The need for this research data is determined by the desire to better understand the processes of formation of male identity, which will find effective channels of advocacy efforts to ensure social change.

Positive community-police relations, which are based on mutual trust, are key to equitable and just policing. Use of force that is perceived as

unfair and biased can quickly undermine relations between the police and the public. In an attempt to understand what psychological factors contribute to police use of force decisions and potentially racially biased use of force application, this study proposed masculinity threat as an important psychological factor that influences police behavior.

Masculinity threat occurs when a man's status as a man is threatened, and threats to masculinity are often associated with increased aggression and dominance as a way of restoring the threatened status. Policing is a male-dominated field, and because most victims of officer use of force are men, the current research examines how threats to male police officers' masculinity, including verbal and physical manifestations of threat, contribute to officer force against civilians.

Masculinities and femininities refer to the social roles, behaviors, and meanings prescribed for men and women in any given society at any one time. As such, they emphasize gender, not biological sex, and the diversity of identities among different groups of women and men. Although we experience gender to be an internal facet of identity, masculinities and femininities are produced within the institutions of society and through our daily interactions.

Much popular discourse assumes that biological sex determines one's gender identity, the experience and expression of masculinity and femininity. Instead of focusing on biological universals, social and behavioral scientists are concerned with the different ways in which biological sex comes to mean different things in different contexts. 'Sex' refers to the biological apparatus, the male and the female – our chromosomal, chemical, anatomical, organization. 'Gender' refers to the meanings that are attached to those differences within a culture. 'Sex' is male and female; 'gender' is masculinity and femininity – what it means to be a man or a woman. While biological sex varies very little, gender varies enormously. Sex is biological; gender is socially constructed. Gender takes shape only within specific social and cultural contexts.

The use of the plural – masculinities and femininities – recognizes the dramatic variation in how different groups define masculinity and femininity, even in the same society at the same time, as well as individual differences. Although social forces operate to create systematic differences between men and women, on average on some dimensions, even these differences between women and men are not as great as the differences among men or among women. The meanings of masculinity and femininity vary over four different dimensions; thus, four different disciplines are involved in understanding gender.

First, masculinity and femininity vary across cultures. Anthropologists have documented the ways that gender varies cross-culturally. Some cultures encourage men to be stoic and to prove masculinity, especially by sexual conquest. Other cultures prescribe a more relaxed definition of masculinity, based on civic participation, emotional responsiveness, and collective provision for the community's needs. Some cultures encourage women to be decisive and

competitive; others insist that women are naturally passive, helpless, and dependent. What it means to be a man in France or among Aboriginal peoples in the Australian outback are so far apart that it belies any notion that gender identity is determined mostly by biological sex differences. The differences between two cultures' version of masculinity or femininity is often greater than the differences between the two genders.

Second, definitions of masculinity and femininity vary considerably in any one country over time. Historians have explored how these definitions have shifted, in response to changes in levels of industrialization and urbanization, position in the larger world geopolitical and economic context, and with the development of new technologies. What it meant to be a woman in seventeenth-century France or in Hellenic Greece is certainly different from what it might mean to be a French or Greek woman today.

Third, definitions of masculinity and femininity change over the course of a person's life. Developmental psychologists have examined how a set of developmental milestones led to difference in our experience and our expression of gender identity. Both chronological age and life-stage require different enactments of gender. In the West, the issues confronting a man about proving himself and feeling successful will change as he ages, as will the social institutions in which he will attempt to enact those experiences. A young single man defines masculinity differently than will a middle-aged father and an elderly grandfather. Similarly, the meanings of femininity are subject to parallel changes, for example, among prepubescent women, women in childbearing years, and postmenopausal women, as they are different for women entering the labor market and those retiring from it.

Finally, the meanings of masculinity and femininity vary considerably within any given society at any one time. At any given moment, several meanings of masculinity and femininity coexist. Simply put, not all American, Brazilian, or Senegalese men and women are the same. Sociologists have explored the ways in which class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, and regional shape gender identity. Each of these axes modifies the others. Imagine, for example, two 'American' men, one, an older, black, gay man in Chicago, the other, a young, white, heterosexual farm boy in Iowa. Wouldn't they have different definitions of masculinity? On the other hand, imagine a 22-year old wealthy Asian-American heterosexual woman in San Francisco and a poor white Irish Catholic lesbian in Boston. Wouldn't their ideas about what it means to be a woman be different? Yet each of these people is deeply affected by the gender norms and power arrangements of their society. If gender varies so significantly across cultures, over historical time, among men and women within any one culture, and over the life course we cannot speak of masculinity or femininity as though they were constant, universal essences, common to all women and to all men.

Thus, gender must be seen as an ever changing fluid assemblage of meanings and behaviors and we must speak of masculinities and femininities. By pluralizing the terms, we acknowledge that masculinity and femininity mean different things to different groups of people at different times.

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ПОНЯТТЯ МАСКУЛІННОСТІ У СВІТІ

Нині гендерна нерівність виступає одним із головних порушень прав та свобод людини, що виявляється в нерівних можливостях жінок і чоловіків у різних сферах суспільного життя. Причини нерівного розподілу повноважень і зобов'язань жінок і чоловіків слід шукати в патріархальних нормах, які закріплюють за представниками різних