

'Construct of Gender' Harmfulness to Humanity Throughout History

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ABSTRACT

Gender equality has been debated since the dawn of civilization. Gender, like race, is determined to separate people based on minor differences. The gender inequality discussed in this paper will revolve around the factors that led to this discrimination. The biological, social, and economic influences suggest that people should take advantage of the differences between genders and have more corporations. Gender norm is a classification for human beings from a biological point of view, but it has been continuously complicated in social practice. Does feminine symbolize the fate of weakness and inability to enter politics? Does masculinity have to be equated with strength and less emotion? Is LGBTQ, which is excluded from the classification, supposed to suffer from ridicule and resistance? Gender inequality is critical for understanding. Society will develop and progress in a harmonious atmosphere by understanding more about gender inequality and taking advantage of gender differences.

Keywords: *Gender norms, Masculinity, Feminine*

1. INTRODUCTION

As soon as a baby was held in hand by a nurse who notified the family members what the baby's sex is, socially constructed "gender" appears, defined by the parents' emotions and language expressions. If you were born in India, your gender would be held against you at different stages of your life. In wealthy families that can afford ultrasound examinations, Indian baby girls may be sentenced to death while still in the abdomen, leading to abortion or abandonment. Even if they were lucky enough to be born, a social environment of discrimination, violence, and prejudice against women in India might prove to be a living hell. The birth of female life in China, however, will be given different social expectations. This poses an interesting dilemma: if biological sexual features define gender, females should be given the same set of social expectations across world cultures. While in reality, we see such standards vary significantly from culture to culture, from society to society. In other words, the circumstances of women in different parts of the world will prove that social expectation is no doubt a crucial factor determining the construct of gender. Gender does not stem from biological sex alone but is shaped by

political, social, and economic climates in which people live and work.

2. SEX AND GENDER

The distinction between sex in biology and gender as a role has been thrown out by sexologist John Money in 1955. [1] Sex is the first characteristic that emerges at the moment a baby is born. Thousands of years ago, sex and gender did have a strong correlation with each other. In "Mammals in General," Biology professor David Carrier observes that "the difference between males and females is often greatest in the structures that are used as weapons." [2] In hunter-gatherer societies, the most significant difference between men and women was upper body strength. While women tend to have a lower proportion of their lean tissue distributed in the upper body, men have strong arms. [3] Therefore, hunting in ancient times was defined as men's activities, and women's reproductive functions determined that they were mostly responsible for gathering fruits and seeds and rearing children. [4] When this definition collides with gender, it leads to the social phenomenon in which women take care of children, and men are the major source of income to support their families. [5] In the ancient economy, physical exercise played a dominant role, and domestic tasks made sure that women and

children were protected and had a better chance at survival. However, male-hunting not only exercised men's strength, but also gradually formed their dominant status at home and political status in society. In the modern society where, manual labor is replaced by technology and mental labor dominates, the construct of gender roles has become obsolete and caused restraints on people's freedom of choices and expressions. The gender consciousness that evolved from ancient times to modern times has also experienced tremendous friction in the process of social, cultural and political changes.

3. WOMEN AND POLITICS

In the past, women have encountered great difficulties to participate in politics because of the outdated concept of the construct of gender defined by the male-dominated society. Women were defined to live and work in the "Women's sphere". [6] Women are confined to endless housework, and their scope of activities is defined as home. They are not allowed to work and be paid which has led to a low rate of women labor force. Don't even think about participating in politics. Around the year 1775, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, the then president of the United States, John Adams, that she hoped that men would remember the ladies when enacting new laws and not hand over unlimited rights to their husbands. John answered that "you women don't need rights." Women's participation in politics was not a popular concept at that time, and was naturally ignored. The president's attitude reflects the thoughts of the majority of people in Adams' time, who were made to believe that a woman's place should only be in her home as a mother and a wife. However, women at that time had no less courage to pursue freedom than a seven-foot man. A series of feminist movement has since then been formed for women's rights in the political world. [7] Women have fought hard for their representation in democratic functions and made great contributions to the political world, against all odds. This timeless truth that women are as capable as men tells us that women could really affect the political world and make a difference. The full and active participation of women is central to building and self-sustaining democracies. [8] Women's sensitivity to not only the intellectual world but also people's everyday life helps to shape the modern, human-centered politics, thereby building a modern democratic country with more nuanced rules. This inspiring story manifests that the construct of gender has put women's capability in check in previous years and stalled the political advancement.

4. TOXIC MASCULINITY

Gender norms, coded in the construct of gender, have a negative impact on inhibiting the self-expression of men just as much as women simultaneously. The

social definition of masculinity and femininity in different cultures restricts the freedom of actions of all genders, not only women. [9] Social psychological pressure exerted on men by the so-called masculine and feminine, which is only classified based on physiological differences, is toxic. "Many men have difficulty expressing emotion due to toxic masculinity." [10] Ingrained thinking and derivative language such as "Boys don't cry" and "Don't cry like a girl" will push men to a rigid edge of thinking that tears of a man are shameful. However, it must be noted that the way to define masculinity and femininity is socially constructed. Analyses revealed that, across countries, gender, self-ascribed gender roles, and gender role attitudes (GRA) were related to behavioral crying responses. The correlation between crying rate and crying responses has a psychological impact on a boy's later behavior. [11] In infancy, without the influence of the social environment, boys and girls get the same crying responses and they cry freely. [12][13] From the page of 11, however, differences in crying proneness and frequency begin to emerge. [14] The psychological and ideological impact on boys from social expectation and definitions of masculinity cannot be denied. [15] For example, both former U.S. President Bush and President Clinton were criticized for showing tearful emotions during public speeches. [9] The construct of gender norms coerces men to behave in certain ways to be integrated into society. Stereotypes based on toxic constructs of gender define those men are considered to be strong and tough mentally and psychologically, or they would be deemed as "weak" or worse, "feminine." Yet, we cannot neglect the fact that humans are social animals and all need emotional outlet. Showing emotions is not a sign of weakness, but instead a signal of hope for comfort and encouragement. [16]

The society's inability to comprehend and accept men's emotions has led to serious consequences. In Ireland, men are four times more likely to take their own lives than women, with the highest suicide rate for men aged 25 to 34 years' old. Research into suicide rates has recognized one reason for taking their own life is often cultural." According to Mental Health America, six million men suffer from depression. [17] The expression rate of two random cases demonstrates that the psychological pressure and thinking damage caused by gender construct to men are unified and could actually cause terrible outcomes.

5. IMPACTS OF INCLUSION OF LGBTQ

What is more, since gender is commonly divided into two categories: male and female, other sexual orientations and identities such as gay, lesbian, transgender, queer, bisexuals, etc. are not accepted in the early stages of human development. LGBTQ was not tolerated by law and culture in the early decades.

Even now, the inclusion of marginalized groups is limited in different countries. However, “Love is love, people are people.” Love should not be restricted by the so-called gender norms. Like the prejudice between men and women, LGBTQ’s life and social restrictions will hinder life and suffer unnecessary discrimination. There will also be relevant effects on the economic side. The discrimination and psychological pressure suffered by this group of people during the education period will accompany their lives and have an impact on their spiritual level. [18] After entering society, work restrictions and social discrimination will limit the

number of LGBTQ in the elite class, but the group could otherwise make even greater contribution to the society. In Fig. 1, we can see that the GDP of California and the northeastern region is significantly higher than that of the central region. The biggest determinant of the GDPs in these two regions is diversity. A similar example in the earliest colonization of the United States which supports this argument is religious diversity. Because these regions are more tolerant of different cultures, religions, and races, these states flourish economically. From Fig.2, we can see that in cities with cultural, economic, and



Fig. 1: US States Renamed for Countries with Similar GDPs (2017)

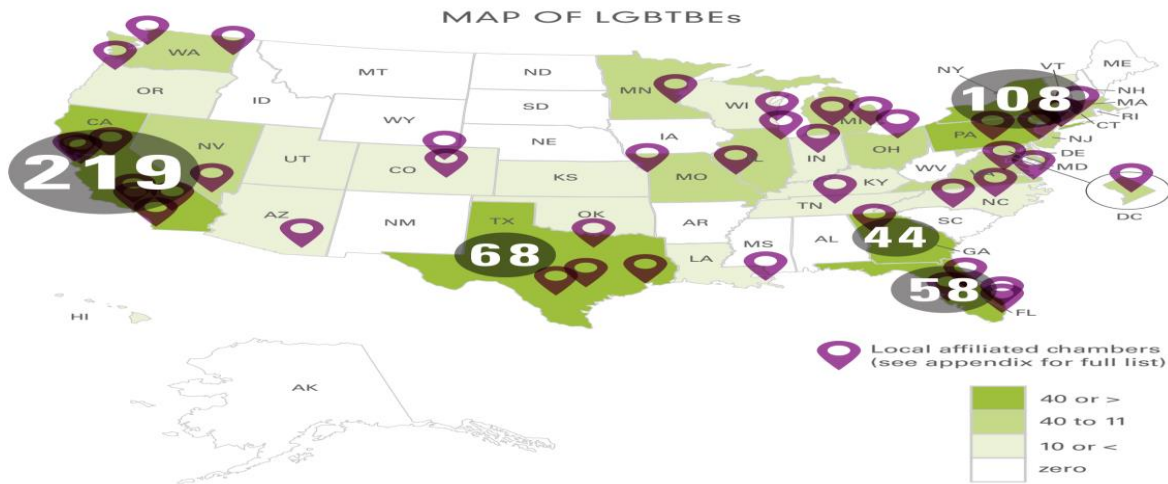


Fig. 2: Map of LGBTBEs of the United States

political diversity such as New York and California, the acceptance of LGBTQ is much higher than that of the central states. This data comparison can help us conclude that LGBTQ inclusion has a great impact on a state’s GDP, and greater inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in emerging economies

is positively associated with a country’s economic development. [19] Under scrutiny, we can arrive at the conclusion that LGBTQ individuals, just like normative “males” and “females,” can all be boiled down to their core: human. They are equally important to the development of the entire society. Diversity and

inclusion can undoubtedly make a country enjoy a more developed economy.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we must understand masculinity and femininity, though not “wrong” categories, are obsolete and incomplete notions that hinder our understanding of human society. Most people used to think of manhood as grounded in masculinity just like most people think of womanhood grounded in femininity. In our modern world, gender identities can be a combination or evolution of both, and we can allow the context of our gender dialogue to reorient how we interact with one another, how we communicate with one another, how we treat each other and how we treat ourselves. Gender is socially constructed, and it affects different groups of people from the thinking mode to the spiritual level. Historical evidence tells us that even women can play an extraordinary role in the workplace: Early history in the United States has proved that politics involving women will be more comprehensive, and more consideration is given to communities that men could not see. Cultural history has proved that men are capable of feeling emotions and should feel more entitled to express them. Because they only have a certain reproductive organ, which will have different impacts on society. People should take advantage of the multifaceted gender expressions and capabilities, rather than impose a layer of restraint on society through it. This set of wrong concepts passed between family lineages, the working environment and the whole society is toxic and harmful. It is our generation’s ambition that one day the society will become more harmonious and loving without the rigid definition of gender norms. If all countries in the Americas, Asia, Australia, Africa or more can be more tolerant of LGBTQ and various manifestations of genders, then our culture, economy and politics will undoubtedly flourish without bounds. Hopefully one day gender no longer defines our limitations, but instead pushes us to break through them.

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