

# Gender roles in america comparing sociology essay

[Sociology](#)



## Human Sexuality

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Gender roles in America comparing past to present. Today we live in a world that frequently stresses the phrase that, " All men are created equal." While this sounds great to hear, further examination concludes that this sadly may never be and is far from realistic. Clearly women have made tremendous strides towards equality in recent decades however; we still live in a society in which the worth of women is measured differently than that of a man. Throughout history and socialization of cultures society learned the proper and improper way of life. There have been many examples of the right way to raise a male and female and the gender roles in which to practice. Culture forms much of what people consider masculine or feminine. In most societies, the " feminine" is usually categorized by delicacy, sensitivity, innocence, sympathy, and who cares for others. The " masculine," however, is characterized by strength, assertiveness, and self-determination. Gender roles are the roles that society assigns to men and women based on their gender. (Boys and Girls) They especially influence relationships between men and women; these roles have been changing in recent decades, and generally have become more flexible. However, traditional gender roles still portray some influence; it used to be expected that men would experiment sexually before marriage, but that women would not. (Akotia 1) Women who went against this expectation were called names and were discussed locally. Years ago another expectation was that women were supposed to get married and stay home to raise a family. It is not an unknown secret that many women are paid considerably less than men for doing the same type of

work. Women and men are allocated to a gender role and we all must act out the masculine or feminine behavior as arranged by our society and our culture. Femininity is usually associated with traits such as emotionality, cautiousness, collaboration, common sense, and fulfillment. Masculinity tends to be associated with traits such as reasonableness, effectiveness, opposition, independence and callousness. (Akotia 1)The society in which we live plays an enormous role in determining the different attitudes and behavior of us all. These differences are shown most strongly in the development of certain gender related social roles and behavior traits. Gender is a socially constructed term, and the development of gender roles often begins as early as childhood. (Werbach 1992) From the moment of birth, a child's world is prepared along gender-related rules. When babies are born, boys wear blue and girls wear pink. There are still toy tools and building blocks for boys and miniature kitchen and cleaning toys for young girls. As well as now a days there are electronic games, girly games are ones that involve animals or taking care of their family or pets while boys are blowing things up or racing cars. If a young male walked into a classroom with a baby doll he would be picked on and called names because boys playing with dolls are not socially correct. (Werbach 1992)Furthering gender roles and its importance two interviews were done to better understand how today's youth describes gender roles and to see if the gender gap still lies among our society. Tyler Reindeau and Emily Jonaitis are both in the teenage group and America's future. A set of questions were asked to the two young teens to obtain a better understand of masculine and feminine ways. Tyler Reindeau is a nineteen-year-old from the San Francisco area in California.

When asked, " Should men wear pink, purple and yellow?" He answered, yes with no hesitation. Showing that the color a person is wearing does not define their gender role in America. " Should girls wear pants instead of dresses?" He exclaimed, yes. He believed both parents in a family could have a career, but the women should be the one to cook and clean. When asked if he would let his new born son have a doll he did not hesitate to say no. He believes the male should make the most money, as well as fix things around the house. Can a man cry? He stated yes, but when asked what makes a man strong, he said fighting. Though he believes that both parents can have a career he still is under the gender roles influence gap. The gender gap places women as the homemaker, and the man to be tough, handy and money maker of the family. Emily Jonaitis is a sixteen-year-old from the Ocala area in Florida. When asked, " Should men wear pink, purple and yellow?" She answered, yes with no hesitation. Similar to Tyler's answer showing that the color a person is wearing does not define their gender role in America. " Should girls wear pants instead of dresses?" she explained that women can wear dresses as well as pants. She believed both parents in a family could have a career, but the women should be the one to cook and clean. When asked if she would let her son have a doll she did not hesitate to say no. She believes the male should make the most money, as well as fix things around the house. Can a man cry? She stated no, and when asked what makes a man strong, she said fighting. Though she believes that both parents can have a career as did Tyler, Emily still is under the gender roles influence gap. The gender gap places women as the homemaker, and the man to be tough, handy and money maker of the family. Many believe that

the social gender gap is not evident in society, but I personally believe it is still apparent. On the other side of that, is the argument that gender is a part of our culture integrated into our being and does in fact give men an edge. Gender roles are a social structure, this structure contains the development and origins of what the human culture shall become and adapt to. This structure is understood and developed among social groups and continues throughout our society, passed among generations. (Werbach 1992) In conclusion, gender equality throughout the years has been a social concern that with time our society will hopefully overcome. Men and female have not always had the same gender equality, and throughout history times have gotten easier. Women decades ago would never be allowed to wear pants. Gender Roles by definition are the social norms that dictate what is socially appropriate and acceptable for the behavior amongst male and females. (Boys and Girls) Maybe, in the near future as a culture we will overcome such a significant gender gap and gender expectations and work untied and harmoniously among one another. Work Cited Akotia, C., & Anum, A. (2012). The Moderating Effects of Age and Education on Gender Differences on Gender Role Perceptions. *Gender & Behaviour*, 10(2), 5022-5043. Beal, Carole R. *Boys and Girls: The Development of Gender Roles*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994. Denmark, Florence, Vita Rabinowitz, and Jeri Sechzer. *Engendering Psychology*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000. Lassonde, K. A., & O'Brien, E. J. (2013). Occupational stereotypes: activation of male bias in a gender-neutral world. *Journal Of Applied Social Psychology*, 43(2), 387-396. doi: 10.1111/j.1559-1816.2013.01008.x Rathus, S. A., Nevid, J. S., & Fichner- Rathus, L. (2011). *Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity* (8th ed. p.

229) Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Werbach, G. B., Grotevant, H. D., & Cooper, C. R. (1992). Patterns of family interaction and adolescent sex role concepts. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence*, 21(5), 609-623. Mothers seem to have the most impact on gender role concept formation in both boys and girls.