Research on Humanities and Social Sciences
ISSN (Paper)2224-5766 ISSN (Online)2225-0484 (Online)
Vol.4, No.25, 2014

The Conception of 'Sex' and 'Gender' as Background to Inequities Faced by Women

Ekundayo B. Babatunde and Babatunde E. Durowaiye
Department of Sociology, Landmark University
Omu-Aran, Kwara state, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper takes a social constructionist perspective to explain how dominant constructions of 'sex' and 'gender' built upon deeply embedded substructure of gender differences and the expected roles of women in the public sphere and in private domain in nearly all societies. The paper aims at exploring the argument that sex, like gender, is a socially constructed concept. It examines the construction of sex and gender from various perspectives including the feminist perspectives and those opposing arguments from the biological determinist point of view. Next, the paper discusses an aspect of the normative construction of sex/gender as proposed by the post-structuralist school of thought and finally examines some cultural implications of the conventional understanding of sex. The paper concludes that sex is strongly influenced by social factors, ideas and other socio-cultural contexts including the norms, values and beliefs embedded in different societies, along with some traditional practices.

1.0 Introduction

Why are women disadvantaged compared to men? What are the structures in our societies that influence the position of women within the public sphere and private domain? Has inequities been reduced in recent years? What difference, if any? Is it useful to talk about femininity in African context? These and many more questions pervade the empirical and non-empirical literature of women and generate debates among recent scholars working in the fields of gender, sexuality, politics, health issues and other social discourses on women position in nearly all societies and particularly in African society.

This paper is not an attempt to provide answers to the above questions or aim at reflecting on the various barriers or social problems faced by women. For in doing so, one would only be adding to the stream of frustrations that women continue to voice. Rather what appeared significant to this paper is the background to the problem. That is, what led to the inequities or how society reinforces the frustrations raised by women and those who advocate for women? Therefore, in the following paragraphs, this paper examines the construction of sex/gender in more detail, by reviewing the various social constructionist theorists particularly the feminist perspectives and those opposing arguments from the biological determinist point of view.

2.0 Sex and gender as socially and culturally constructed

In the field of social science, 'sex' has remained an essentially contested term. Generally, it is used as part of everyday language to identify maleness or femaleness, depending on an individual's biological features. It can also be used to describe the 'sex act' such as intercourse, oral sex and anal sex.

However, over the past decades, the concept that it denotes has sparked a widespread debate among those in anthropology and sociology, particularly among feminist scholars, who have devoted their attention to analysing and conceptualising it. While some theorists have assumed that sex is fixed by nature and often produces gender (Stoller, 1968; Archer, 1992; Harraway, 1996; Hood-Williams, 1996; Scott, 1999), other theorists, particularly within feminist studies (such as Butler, 1990; Gatens, 1996; Butler, 1999; Antony, 1998; Hird, 2004) have overwhelmingly argued that sex is not determined by biology but is rather produced socially and culturally. For instance, Harraway (1996) conceptualizes sex as inevitable and destined. Similarly for Stoller (1968), sex is a biological foundation that distinguishes males from females. On the other hand, West et al., (1991:14) suggest that sex is a matter of "socially agreed upon biological criteria for classifying persons as females or males", also for Butler (1993:2), it is "the norm by which 'one' becomes viable at all". In the same vein, Hird (2004) disputes the immutable nature often attributed to sex, arguing that it is through social discourse that sexual differences are inscribed on the material body and that sex, like gender, is indeed socially constructed.

Such disparity of views prompts the question of what accounts for the contested understanding of the concept of sex. One explanation emerging from feminist writings is that the conventional understanding of sex often rests on the expected behaviours or assigned roles of men and women in all areas of social life (Sherfey, 1972; Acker, 1990; Lorber, 1994; Holland et al., 1998; Curthoys, 2000). In addition, in nearly all societies, sexually differentiated roles are generally constructed in accordance with the meaning attributed to 'maleness' and 'femaleness'. Such meanings are related to a broad range of concepts: gender, sexual identity, desires or attraction and the cultural understanding of these notions (see Acker, 1992; Connell, 1995; Stone, 2007).

In the same vein, scholars have also written much about the concept of gender to explain its development. According to West et al., (1991:14), gender is "the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category". As de Beauvoir (1973:301) agues "one is not born a woman, but, rather becomes one". Importantly, gender is seen as existing in all societies in a "systematically unequal way" (Curthoys, 2000:24). As this essay discusses shortly, a certain sex is associated with particular gender roles: culturally learned and expected behaviours, traits and attitudes (Connell, 2002). Thus, this essay supports the argument that both sex and gender entail social and cultural processes that determine or differentiate between females' and males' patterns of behaviour as well as their social status (gender roles).

The notion of sex as a characteristic of individuals or as biological category with no social or cultural dimension is a widespread position which has been developed over time. Many theorists including some radical feminists have based their augments on the idea of biological-determinist approach which specifies two sex roles in any cultural context, always in the form of male and female, and gender differences which position men and women as inherently different (Thompson and Geddes, cited in Shields, 1982; Fraser and Nicholson, 1990; Coltrane, 1994). Importantly, biological determinist approach conceptualizes sex-differentiated roles not only as 'naturally given' but also as largely unchangeable (Coltrane, 1994; Brandser, 1996). In this context, biological-determinist theories of sex take certain attributes to arise from individual biological makeup or nature.

By contrast, some feminists (especially those influenced by the post-structuralist theorists) have consistently challenged the premise that sex is determined by biology or innate while at the same time, have also taken issue with the view that sex predetermines gender (Butler, 1990). In the following paragraphs, I will sketch out some important contributions to the theorisations of sex and gender (advocated by the biological-determinist perspective), taking the work of Geddes and Thompson in the late 18th century as a starting point.

Geddes and Thompson (1889 cited in Shields, 1982) conceptualize sex in terms of biological male and female sexes. This led to their view of certain social, psychological and behavioural manifestations of gender identity as resulting from the biological nature of the different sexes, known as the 'metabolic state'. This biological explanation suggests that men are inherently being 'ketabolic' and women as 'anabolic'. These different biological terms describe both sexes with different biological conditions. In this context, the male sex is viewed as naturally endowed with certain gender qualities including assertiveness, independence, confidence, activeness, aggressiveness, enterprise, impersonality and recklessness. On the other hand, the female sex is conceived as inherently constituted to reflect the opposite qualities, such as passivity, submissiveness, emotion, caring, gentleness, warmth, sensitivity, receptiveness, expressiveness and biological economy (Thompson and Geddes, cited in Shields, 1982; Osland et al., 1998).

In terms of division of labour between men and women or social relations within the societal structure, the biological explanations often rely on physiology, psychology and medicine to argue that the differences between men's and women's reproductive systems and capacities mean that women are biologically suited to bearing and raising children and to engaging in household chores, while men are biologically suited to working and providing material support for their families (Connell, 2002). As Pringle (1980:5) puts it, "it may be well that because only women can conceive and bear children, they have developed a greater capacity for nurturing and caring which has then been further enhanced by the traditional division of labour between the sexes". This echoes the earlier discussion of the meanings attributed to sex, which signifies it as the biological foundation of the distinction between male and female (Stoller, 1968), as a destiny, as innate, or as unchangeable biological function (Harraway, 1996).

Another important argument of the determinist perspective is that human society is understood as developing first from the primal division between the sexes, with the inevitable attraction between male and female then becoming an impetus for creation of society. As such, heterosexuality is seen as a natural outcome of this sex difference and of the drive to reproduce the species (Rubin, 1984). Thus, a major consequence of this biological explanation is the construction of heterosexuality as the natural outcome of an evolutionary drive to reproduce, while homosexuality is generally viewed as unnatural, or as a biological aberration from the societal norm (Rubin, 1984; Jackson, 1982; Connell, 1987; 1995).

Biological determinism has attracted a number of criticisms, which tend to challenge the role of biology as critical or given. For instance, a number of feminist and gender theorists have argued that the different sexes are not necessarily biological but merely associated with culturally learnt and expected behaviours, values and attitudes, through the process of socialization (see also Archer, 1992; Butler, 1990; 1993; Hird, 2004). One such challenge is Connell's argument (2002) concerning the role of social institutions including family, religion and other agents of socialization. As Connell argues, if biological differences between the sexes naturally drive individual behaviours in a manner that fosters the survival of the biological beings, why did these social institutions come into play to police and set guidelines for sexual behaviour?

It has further been argued that the biological determinists often ignore the fact that most sex is not in fact reproductive. For example, Weeks (2003) argues that most heterosexual erotic encounters do not lead to

procreation and only some lead to orgasm. One could further observes, throughout history and across cultures, homosexual acts are well documented among men and women. Some activities that could be viewed as sex-related, such as cross-dressing, masturbation and some sexual fetishes for which biological analysis cannot provide their genetic explanations, occur in many or all societies. In Thailand, for example, Toms are masculine-identified women who express their masculinity through the manner in which they dress, by their personalities and by virtue of their sexual attraction (Sinnott, 2008). Conversely, the Hijra in India are biological males who wear women's clothing and are usually referred to by the feminine pronoun 'she'.

As Nanda (1985) reveals, the Hijra category encompasses many kinds of transgendered, sexual or intersex identities and characteristics which in the West might be differentiated by terms such as 'eunuch', 'homosexual', 'transsexual', 'transvestite' and 'hermaphrodite'. According to Nanda (1985), the Hijra undergo castration and renounce male sexual behaviour or desire through this process. Traditionally, they are imbued with ritual powers and may perform at weddings or preside over fertility ceremonies for newborn children and the newly married. As Reddy (2005) further observes, many contemporary Hijra work as prostitutes and within their communities maintain complex systems of sexual classification based on their castration status and the sexual practices in which they engage. This suggests that the concepts of sex and gender are far more complicated than what biological determinist school can purely explain.

3.0 A Post-structuralist Perspective to sex and gender

In the 1980s, the post-structuralist feminist perspective emerged, transforming the understanding of sex and gender (Curthoys, 2000). Adkins (1995) observes that the post-structuralist perspective is based on social interactionism, Foucauldian discourse analysis and psychoanalysis cast new light on the terms 'man', 'woman', 'masculine' and 'feminine'. However, while feminist scholars have based their arguments on women's experience as distinct from men's, post-structuralism questions the binary categories of man and woman, masculinity and femininity, arguing that they are not biological but products of society and history (Gagnon et al., 1973; Foucault, 1980; Plummer, 1995). It is also worth mentioning within the post-structuralist perspective, the distinction between sex and gender collapses, as they are both seen as products of societal norms and values (Curthoys, 2000).

Although there are a number of poststructuralist positions, they share some similarities with respect to their ways of viewing sex as socially constructed. For instance, Foucault discusses issues of sex and sexuality from a historical perspective and emphasizes power relations and its relation with the body. To him, sex is not natural but a cultural construction that is produced with the aim of social regulation and the control of sexuality (Foucault, 1978). From this perspective, Foucault argues that sexuality is not based on natural force but the production of knowledge which is always bound up with historically specific regimes of power, so that every society produces its own 'truths' and social reality (e.g, from which the acceptable or normalized form of sex is assigned).

Thus, sexualities can be constantly produced, changed and modified, and the nature of sexual discourse and experiences changes in accordance with prevailing knowledge in a given society. Fundamental to this perspective on sexuality is Foucault's idea that particularly in western society the beliefs about sexuality which form people's knowledge exist within complex social relations which are organized, hierarchical and constituted through discourses and practices, thus reproducing knowledge. As he further observes, "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (Foucault 1978:100). Moreover, while Foucault argues that knowledge produces power and vice versa, he claims that sexuality is brought under control by the power that is exercised through 'discursive strategies'. However, rather than seeing power as a mode of subjugation of citizens in a given state or a general system of domination, he sees the positive aspect of relations of power as more complex and diffuse, not oppressive acts in themselves but mainly productive of knowledge (Foucault, 1978).

In short, discourses on sex, Foucault argues, are caught up in the field of exercise of power and it is through discourses that discipline and control are primarily achieved through efforts to define (or identify), categorise, classify and establish particular form of 'truth' about sex/sexuality. It is through this process that certain knowledge of sexuality is created and most often produces a 'regime of truths'. The perception within this social constructionist framework is that, culture constructs the rules, beliefs, ideas, values and acceptable norms or behaviours which underlie the discourse and regulation of sexuality (Izugbara, 2004). Thus, one could conclude from Foucault's arguments that every society produces its own social reality or regime of truths –(e.g. the socially acceptable meanings or forms of sex.

Foucault's analysis has influenced recent works within the social constructionist framework, particularly those adopting feminist theories on sexuality (McNay, 1992; Holland et al, 1998). For instance, it has provided feminists with a strong analytical framework for an exploration of influences and different motives that shape and constrain women's experiences of impoverished and controlling practices within the context of certain cultural images of feminine sexuality, his ideas concerning power and sexuality have also attracted a number of criticisms from feminist scholars (Rich, 1980; McNay, 1992; Jackson 1996). One of the major criticisms of the

Foucauldian perspective is that it ignores the unequal power relations between women and men because he treats the human body –'the docile body' – as if the genders were undifferentiated by discourses on sexuality. From this perspective, Foucault's analysis does not give an adequate account of how gender inequality in everyday expressions of power between women and men is constructed and maintained (McNay, 1992) suggest that there is need to consider the different social contexts such as class, age, ethnicity and gender diversities which contribute to women's oppression (Walby, 1990)

Another important limitation identified by feminists is the fact that Foucault seems to accept the boundaries of a normative heterosexuality which is institutional, 'compulsory' and male dominated (Rich, 1980; Jackson, 1990). According to these critics, 'compulsory' heterosexuality is a political institution within which women are made subject to male dominance through the institution of marriage. They argue that the family as the basic social unit is an institution within which women are typically seen as responsible for the satisfaction of their husbands' compelling sexual drive (Kippax, et al., 1990), placing them in need of men as providers of social and economic protection (Rich, 1980, Walby 1990; Jackson1996). Essentially, feminist criticisms shed light on the need to think beyond Foucault's idea, to examine how societal structures and culture are constructed in gender terms, particularly how power relations between women and men are constructed in practice. However, Foucault's view of sexuality as a socially constructed concept and how discourse could be instrumental in reinforcing particular types of knowledge to regulate sexual meanings offer a useful contribution. Such an understanding is essential, as it focuses on the social and cultural systems that shape how sex and sexuality are understood. Adopting a Foucauldian perspective provides ways of thinking of sex that go beyond individual rationality or biological make up to explain the complexities of socio-cultural contexts such as the norms, values, beliefs and practices that regulate individuals' notions of sex, sexuality across different societies.

Another important perspective to be considered is the symbolic interactionist perspective on 'sexual script' and 'sexual conduct' in understanding the social and cultural constructions of sex (Gagnon et al., 1973). In this conception of sex and sexuality, it is argued that sexuality is not a powerful force or immutable in itself. Rather than being naturally fixed or a given ideal to achieve, sexuality like any other social behaviour is seen as subject to "socio-cultural moulding to a degree surpassed by few other forms of human behaviour" (Gagnon et al., 1973:11). Unlike Foucault's approach, which focuses more on the historical context of sexuality and power, interactionist theorists maintain a focus on emotions, thoughts, feelings and imaginings. In their use of the metaphor of the sexual script as a framework for analyzing the social construction of sexuality, their argument encompasses the idea that the sexuality is not regulated from within (or based on instinctual drive) but is rather shaped through encounters with significant others. Within this perspective, they also view sexual scripts as patterns of sexual conduct which are culturally constructed and shaped, a term applied to different forms of behaviour for surviving, such as reproduction (Gagnon et al., 1973). Thus, individuals are positioned as sexual actors with sexual scripts in everyday interactions, from cradle to grave, by learning cultural norms, beliefs and values within the context of various interactions. Interactionists acknowledge that the social and cultural contexts in which individuals interact in turn affect the pattern of their sexual meanings and conduct. Hence, they interpret sexual scripts in analyzing the social construction of sexuality and how it is shaped through encounters with significant others. In other words, a particular pattern of sex which produce sexuality is constructed within a particular culture, subject to change or modification over time, subtly, slowly or dramatically and in specific contexts (Plummer,1982; Laumnan et al., 1995).

Other scholars including Plummer (1982) have also identified with interactionist ideas. However, Plummer (1982) opposes the use of the term 'sexual conduct' within the interactionist analysis. He points out that that the perception of sexual conduct upholds the biological/essentialist notion of 'sexual drive' while calling for further theoretical and empirical arguments on the grounding of the interactionist perspective. Feminists have also criticized the overwhelming emphasis of the interactionist perspective on interaction. For instance, Barrett (1982) argues that female sexuality is not conceived in the process of interaction but through individual orientation, which is fundamentally based on procreation, and the ideology of femininity and masculinity cultures, which are basically gendered.

Overall, the social constructionist, interactionist, Foucauldian and feminists frameworks have all affirmed that sex and gender cannot be assumed to be an essential characteristic that can be understood as strictly biological. Based on their conceptions, the concept of sex in this essay is viewed as always constructed within wider cultural and material resources which cannot be studied outside the realm of the social (Plummer, 2003

The work of Butler has been influenced by the post-structuralist perspective. As Allen (2005) observes, her analysis, which takes a Foucauldian perspective, has significantly contributed to the understanding of sex/gender. Apart from Butler's argument that gender predetermines sex, she also sees gender as socially temporal. As Butler insists, gender is not a "stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow"

(Butler, 1999: 197), but socially instituted, a performatively constituted, active and continuous process and a 'becoming' (Butler, 1990). Following Foucault, Butler argues that both men and women are engendered and that masculinity and femininity are continually constructed and negotiated through regulatory discourses. In this context, the dominant regimes construct rules and discourses which determine what sex, gender and sexuality appear as normal, natural and acceptable, as well as obliging subjects to perform expected actions or to take roles which portray the 'normal' or natural types of sex, gender and sexuality that the discourse specifies (Butler, 1990).

In most feminist terms, the question of defining sex, sexuality and gender is closely connected to socialisation, which begins at the very moment of birth, within the system of regulation and influence exerted by the adults responsible for infants and children (Jackson, 1982). The family, as the basic social unit, encourages gender socialisation in order to ensure that children adapt to society and its normative standards of behaviour. In this process, children learn different cultures according to their socially defined sex roles. At this stage, children start to learn about sexuality as related to reproductive activity, which is presumed to be heterosexual, as well as becoming aware that such activity is different for the two sexes (Jackson, 1982).

In similar vein, Butler (1990) opposes the argument that sex produces gender. For Butler, rather than sex or biology predetermining gender, it is gender that determines sex. In other words, she argues that the very knowledge often used to describe and reinforce sex differences, through medical science or psychology for example, is already gendered by the language used to express ideas about the body.

Butler (1990) further asserts that the sexed body cannot be neatly separated from the gendered body, since they are mutually constituted through sociocultural processes. She also views the biological science which produces this binary construction of male and female as in itself a social construction, while the biological interpretation of gender through language and metaphor is already gendered and distorted with social values (Butler, 1990). Of relevance is Connell's (2002) analysis of the concept of social embodiment, which sees the meaning of 'body' as expanded beyond dominant understandings of the physical form to include what bodies do and how they are socially experienced and understood. Thus, the construction of sex, like that of gender and 'compulsory' heterosexuality, is produced by the regulatory discourses embedded in different societies and cultures.

While Butler's constructionist perspective has been recognised for its contribution to the analysis of the social and cultural processes that influenced the conceptions of sex and gender, some of her basic ideas have been widely criticised. For instance, some feminists have pointed out that Butler pays relatively little attention to the role that female embodiment (that is, the sexed body) plays in the women's oppression (Sally, 1998; Bordo, 1999). As Bordo (1999) argues, gender is not a variable or changes as Butler claims, rather, it is a core aspect of human identity and the body serves as a major part of gender. Similarly, Sally (1998) further pointed out that Butler's view of men and women as individuals rather than groups also denies the general subordination and disadvantaged position of women around the world.

In addition, Butler's idea of sex as identical to gender has been contested by other scholars. For instance, other feminists have focused on the connection of male or female identity to becoming either feminine or masculine (Arcker, 1992). As scholars have argued, gender entails normative assumptions regarding masculine and feminine behaviours (Arcker, 1992). Such conceptions have led to the perception of sex as different from gender (though they are closely interrelated) such that individual sex differences determine one's pattern of gender roles and practices – the expression of oneself through masculine or feminine characteristics and the assigned social status (Acker, 1992; West et al., 1987; Lorber, 1994; Scott 1999; Connell, 2002; Stone, 2007).

From this perspective, gender stands as a relational concept which describes how men and women interact and learn in relation to their socially defined sex roles and exhibit the different identities associated with femininity and masculinity (Connell, 1987; 1995; 2002). In this respect, masculinity is defined in relation to femininity, such that the reality of one depends on the other (Connell, 1995). Thus, gender is constructed to define what constitutes the two identities, as well as what they are not (Connell, 1995).

This approach identifies the importance of the social and cultural aspects, including various forms of interactional processes, in providing an understanding of the concept of sexuality. It also holds that traditional values and cultural practices, such as those related to sexual identities and patterns of sexual practices which have been taken to be natural or inevitable, are in fact ideological structures that emerge and develop over time (Gagnon et al., 1973; Foucault, 1978; 1980; Plummer, 1995; 2002). Having discussed the social and cultural construction of sex/gender, it is important to further identify some obvious implications or problems that emerged from the traditional or biological determinist view of sex.

4.0 Implications of Biological determinist view

Despite the attempts of the post-structuralist analysis of sex, gender and compulsory heterosexuality to nullify the critical role of biological determinism, the effects of such essentialist dichotomies as male and female, men and women, masculine and feminine have continued to be problematic, sustaining social inequalities and disadvantaging women and sometimes men on the basis of their biological sex (Connell, 1987; 1995). For

example, as Martin (2006) observes, gender stereotyping remains a dominant practice at work, based on the context of power, whereby men hold most of the powerful positions and women are subordinate in the formal authority structure. This shows how deeply cultural stereotypes affect the practice of interpersonal relations between the sexes.

In terms of the division of labour, there is still a widespread supposition that the functional asymmetry of marital roles is biologically inevitable, given that women bear and nurse children, leaving men, who cannot perform this biological function, to specialise in the realm of work. This view, as propounded by Parsons et al. (1955), was once universally regarded as explaining family functioning. In practice, it favoured gender-role specialization and mutual dependence as the keys to functional relationships and marital stability (see also Barnet et al., 2001).

In the area of sexuality or sexual relationships, it is also remarkable that socialization experiences put women at a disadvantage and men at an advantage over them. For example, empirical data gathered in West Africa by the Social Science & Reproductive Health Research Network as reviewed by Izugbara (2004) have shown that some key terms around which the ideal man is constructed in Nigerian cultures are 'strong', 'hard', 'unyielding',' vigorous', 'stout-hearted', 'resolute', 'aggressive', 'active' and 'tough'. The good or ideal woman, on the other hand, is spoken of as 'dutiful', 'submissive', 'quiet', 'fearful', 'humble', 'faithful', 'patient' and 'careful'. Further, empirical data from a group of young men in Eastern Nigeria reveal that they constructed their masculine and dominant identities in accordance with their cultural values and the behaviours expected within their culture (Izugbara, 2005).

Similarly, it has been observed that the dominant understandings of sex/gender in different societies and cultures often reinforce heteronormative practices. For example, empirical study on young people in Western Europe has identified a dominant hetero-normative ideology whereby individuals are socialized to see heterosexual identity as natural and normal (Holland et al., 1998) and women's desire for sexual pleasure and intimacy with men has been identified as a dominant route through which gender imbalance and unequal power relations are reinforced.

Further research has revealed that young people's sexuality and their capacity for sexual negotiations have continued to be shaped by and within specific social and cultural contexts. For instance in the UK context, young men have been reported as operating their sexual practices by mixing traditional with non-traditional values based on their perception of the 'compulsoriness' of heterosexual masculinity (O'Donnell et al., 2000:89). Several empirical studies have affirmed that the biological interpretations of sex have produced the conventional notion of heterosexual masculinity and femininity. As studies have shown, such understanding often shapes and perpetuates gender inequality and subject women to male control in their heterosexual encounters, and the domination of non-heterosexual men by others, while women are not often in a position to negotiate consistently their sexual practices and desires (Connell, 1987; 1995; Allen, 2003; Jackson et al., 2003; Maxwell, 2006).

5.0 Conclusion

As this paper has shown, post-structuralist feminists and theorists within gender and sexuality studies have criticised the biological determinism and also of much theorisations of it; and against this have argued that sex like gender depends on social and cultural factors. Such argument has remained an important strategy for feminism to promote a constructionist approach which takes culture, (not biology) as prime, and which argues that not only can other aspect of society or social relation change but so too can sex and gender.

However, it seems that the constructions of sex/gender following the biological determinist school have been well developed before the feminist and post structuralist theorisations. As a consequence, the biological determinist explanations appeared to have had stronger and profound impact on the generally accepted interpretations of these concepts across different societies today (reference to the section on implications of biological determinism). Despite this however, as Butler's (1990) have suggested it is by 'deconstructing' the way we think about sex/gender that we might move towards a greater equality or atleast *equity* where people will no longer be restricted by virtue of their sexes or by masculine or feminine gender roles.

References

Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. Gender & Society. 4(2): 139-158.

Acker, Joan (1988). Class, Gender and the Relations of distribution. *Signs* ,13: 473-97.

Acker, Joan (1992). From Sex role to Gender Institution. *Contemporary Sociology*, 21(5): 565-569.

Allen, L. (2003). Power talk: Young people negotiating (hetero)sex. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 26(3):235-244.

Antony, L ., (1998).Human Nature and Its Role in Feminist Theory, *in Philosophy in a Feminist Voice*, J. Kourany (ed.), New Haven: Princeton University Press.

Barrett, M. (1982). Female sexuality. In M. Brake (Ed.), *Human Sexual Relations*: *A Reader in Human Sexuality*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Bartky, S. L. (1990). *Feminism and Domination.* London: Routledge.
Bordo, S., (1990). Feminism, Postmodernism, and gender-skeptism. In L.J. Nicholson (Ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism*, 133-156. New York: Routledge.
Butler, Judith (1990). *Gender Trouble.* New York. Routledge.
Butler, Judith (1993). *Bodies that matter.* New York. Routledge.
Butler, Judith (1999). Gender Trouble, London: Routledge, 2nd edition.
Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Curthoys, A. (2000). Gender Studies in Australia: A History. *Australian Feminist Studies.* 15(31): 19-38.
De Beauvoir, S. (1972). *The second Sex*. Harmondsworth: Pengiun.
Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality (Vol. 1: An Introduction).* New York: Pantheon.
Foucault, M. (1980). *The History of Sexuality. (Vol. 3),* New York, Pantheon.
Fraser, N. and Nicholson, L.J. (1990). Social criticism without philosophy: An encounter feminism and postmodernism. In L. J Nicholson (Ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism, 19-38.* New York: Routledge.
Gagnon, J. & Simon, W. (1973). *Sexual conduct: The social sciences and human sexuality.* Chicago: Aldine.
Gatens, M., (1996). *Imaginary Bodies*, London: Routledge.
Hird, M., (2004). *Sex, Gender and Science.* Palgrave: Macmillan.
Holland, J., Ramazanoglu, C., Sharpe, S. & Thomson, R. (1998). *The Male in the Head: Young People, Heterosexuality and Power.* London: Tufnell Press.
Hood-Williams, J., (1996). Goodbye to Sex and Gender, *Sociological Review*, 44 (1):
Izugbara, C. O. (2004). *Patriarchal Ideology and Discourses of Sexuality*. Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre. Retrieved on 14th December, 2010 from http://www.arsrc.org/downloads/uhsss/izugbara.pdf.
Izugbara, C. O. (2005). The socio-cultural context of adolescents' notions of sex and sexuality in rural South-Eastern Nigeria. *Sex Education*, 8(5):600-617.
Jackson, S. (1996). Heterosexuality as a problem for feminist theory. In Adkins, L. L. and Merchant, V. (Eds.), *Sexualising the Social: Power and the organization of sexuality* (pp.102-121). London: Macmillan.
Jackson, S. M. & Cram, F. (2003). Disrupting the sexual double standard: Young women's talk about heterosexuality. *British Journal of Psychology*, 42:113-126.
Kippax, S., Crawford, J., Waldby, C. & Benton, P. (1990). Women negotiating heterosex: Implications for AIDS prevention. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 13(6):533-42.
Laumnann, E. & Gagnon, J. (1995). A sociological perspective on sexual action. In Parker, R. G. and Gagnon J. *Conceiving Sex: Approaches to Sex Research in a Postmodern World*. New York: Routledge.
Lorber, J., (1994). *Paradoxes of gender.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Martin, P. Y. (2006). Practising Gender at Work: Further thoughts on Reflexivity. *Gender, Work and Organisation.* 13(3): 254-276.
Maxwell, C. (2006). Understanding young women's sexual relationship experiences: The nature and role of vulnerability. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9(2):141-58.
McNay, L. (1992). *Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender, and the Self.* London: Polity.
Nanda, S., (1985). The Hijras of India: Cultural and individual dimensions of an institutionalized third gender role. In R. Parker & P. Aggleton (ed.) *Culture, Society and Sexuality: A Reader*, Abingdon: Oxon, Routledge.
O'Donnell, M. & Sharpe, S. (2000). *Uncertain Masculinities – Youth, Ethnicity and Class in Contemporary Britain.* London: Routledge.
Osland, J.S, Sydner, M.M. & Hunter, L (1998).A comparative study of managerial styles among female executives in Nicaragua and Costa Rica. International Studies of Management and Organization. 28(2): 54-73.
Parsons, T., & Bales, R. F. (1955). *Family Socialisation and Interaction Process. Glencoe: IL: Free Press.*
Philips, A. (1992). Democracy and Difference: Some problems for Feminist theory. The Political quarterly, 63(1): 79-90.
Plummer, K. (1982). Symbolic interactionism and sexual conduct: An emergent perspective. In M. Brake (Ed.), *A Reader in Human Sexuality.* London: Penguin.
Plummer, K. (1995). *Telling Sexual Stories: Power, change and social worlds.* London: Routledge.
Reddy, G (2005). *With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra identity in South India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs – Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 5*(4):631-660.
Rubin, G. (1984). Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality. In C. Vance (ed.) *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, pp.267-319. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Scott, Joan W., (1999). Gender and the Politics of History. New York: Columbia University Press.
Sherfey, M. J.(1972). *The Nature and Evolution of Female Sexuality.* Random House: New York.
Shields, Stephanie. A., (1982). The variability Hypothesis: The History of a Biological Model of Sex differences in Intelligence. *Signs.* 7 (4): 769-797.
Sinnot, M., (2008). The romance of the queer: the sexual and gender norms of the Tom and Dee in Thailand in F. Martin, P. Jackson, A. Mclelland and A. Yue (Ed.) *Asia PacifiQueer: Rethinking Gendered and Sexualities.* Illinois, University of Illinois Press.
SSRHRN (2001). Gender socialization and male responsibility in the family: A comparative analysis of three socio-cultural groups in Nigeria. *Annals of the Social Science Academy of Nigeria,* 13:92-108.
Stoller, R. (1968). *Sex and Gender: on the development of masculinity and femininity.* New York: Science House.
Stoller, R. (1985). *The Presentation of Gender.* New Haven. London: Yale University Press.
Stone, A., (2007). *An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy,* Cambridge: Polity Press.
Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Weeks, J., Holland, J. & Waits, M. (Eds.), (2003). *Sexuality and Society: A Reader.* Cambridge : Polity.
West, C. and Don, H. Z. (1987). Doing Gender. *Gender and Society, 1(2):125-51.*

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
http://www.iiste.org

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: http://www.iiste.org/journals/ All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: http://www.iiste.org/book/

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digtial Library , NewJour, Google Scholar