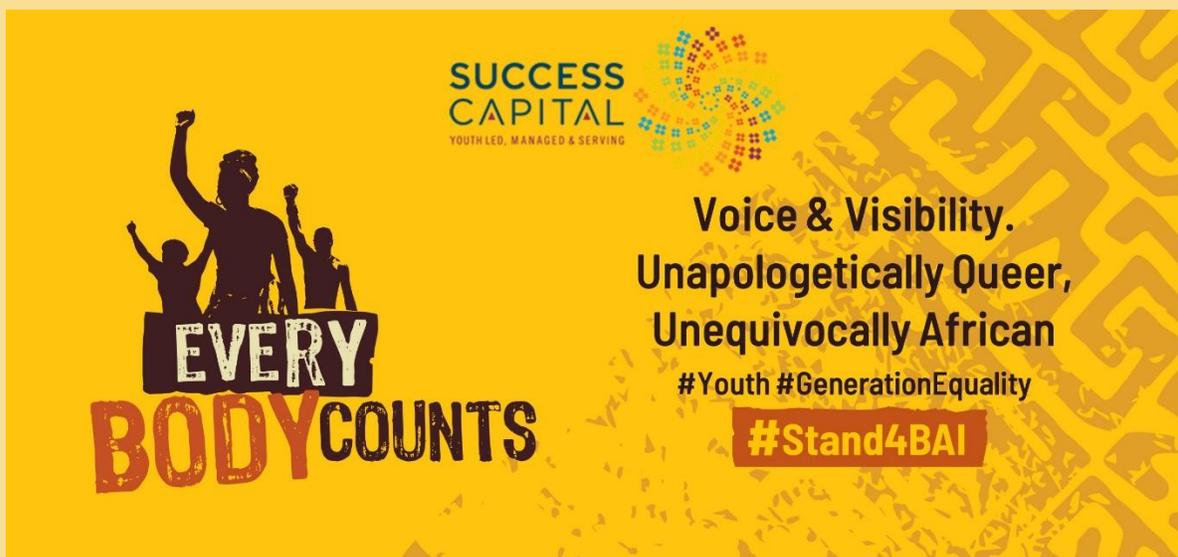


# UNDERSTANDING GENDER

an overview to interrogating  
Bodily Autonomy and  
Integrity for young Batswana



**Success Capital Organisation**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Concepts of Gender</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Overview of Gender Commitments</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Gender Inequality</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Cultural rights, harmful practices, and traditional values</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Gender Analysis</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Feminist Theory</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Gender and Language</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Acknowledgement and Additional Resources</b>	<b>16</b>

## Concepts of Gender

### Gender

Gender refers socially constructed differences between women and men. Physically distinguished by sex at birth. There are two distinct emphasis of the meaning of the concept:<sup>1</sup>

- 1. Feminists such as Butler (1990) believe that the definition of gender should emphasise the cultural meanings of being male or female. This is because no one is born male or female; 'no one becomes a woman unless culturally compelled to become one'.*
- 2. Other Feminist theories argue that gender is a social construct informed by relations between men and women and not individual attributes. Examples include relations by birth such as motherhood or relations through marriage where a man is viewed as the head of the family. <sup>2</sup>*

Mainstream research concludes:

- Gender is both men and women and how they relate with each other in different contexts.*
- Gender is not about sex nor the reproduction of women but about roles.*
- Gender is about looking at how humans interact.*
- Gender is boxes reality into boys and girls or masculinity and femininity.*
- Gender is a social construct because of the expectations of the roles and interaction of the sexes - socially determined rather than natural.*

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<sup>1</sup> Iman A.;Mama, A. and Sow, F. (eds) (1997). *Engendering African Social sciences*, Dacar: CODESRIA Book series

<sup>2</sup> Osteerguard, L. (ed) (1992). *Gender and development: A practical guide*. London: Routledge

## Sex

Sex refers to the biological differences between male and female.

## Gender Analysis

A critical assessment of the power dynamics of women and men carried out to inform responsive policy programmes. It is a tool of analysis and a set of social relations that differentiate men from women.

## Gender mainstreaming

A process for ensuring that both men and women have equal access and control to resources, development, and decision making, at all stages of programming.

## Overview of Gender Commitments

Global commitment to gender equality dates back to 1948 when United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights established that all rights and freedoms will not be limited by gender. Milestones have since been achieved, including:

- *the 1st Women's Conference in Mexico City, 1975,*
- *the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 1979,*
- *the 2nd Women's Conference in Copenhagen, 1980,*
- *the 3rd Women's Conference in Nairobi, 1985,*
- *the 4th Women's Conference in Beijing, 1995.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Ramaseshan, G. (2008). The OP-CEDAW as a Mechanism for Implementing Women's Human Rights: An Analysis of Decisions Nos. 6-10 of the Cedaw Committee under the Communications Procedure of the OP-CEDAW. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, ebi. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1469998>

This further aligned with the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Humans, and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

United Nations resolution 1325 is a milestone that recognised and affirmed women's role in peace, security and post conflict management. Including gender mainstreaming in humanitarian operations and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, the resolution has been taken up by the African Union in a similar manner. African Union Member States have been actively involved notable Women's conferences to help share women's empowerment and gender equality in legal, social, economic and political spheres over the past 30 years. Despite progression, significant efforts are still needed to improve women's rights and development.<sup>4</sup>

At a regional level, overarching instruments include Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; the Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa which incorporates migration, nutrition and family planning; the African Social Policy Framework; the Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health; the African Youth Charter; the African Development Forum on

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<sup>4</sup> Palombo, J. (1994). Gender as a Theme in Self-Narratives. *Journal of Analytic Social Work*, 2(2), 3–24. [https://doi.org/10.1300/j408v02n02\\_02](https://doi.org/10.1300/j408v02n02_02); Gender and Development. (2010). *Gender & Development*, 18(3), ebi. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2010.524432>; The Lancet HIV. (2019). For the HIV epidemic to end so must gender inequality. *The Lancet HIV*, 6(7), e411-ebi. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2352-3018\(19\)30198-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2352-3018(19)30198-5)

Gender, Empowerment and ending Violence Against Women; and the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Programme among others.

At a country level, Botswana affirms gender equality as central to socio-economic, political and cultural development through its National Vision 2036. Following the adoption of the National Policy on Gender and Development in 2015, the National Gender Commission was established in September 2016, to monitor implementation of the policy. To reflect commitment, the country more than double its budget from USD 2.5 million to USD 5.5 million in the 2017-2018 financial year. More recently, a Gender-based Violence Referral System is being implemented to support survivor who report crime.

## **Gender Inequality**

There are several theories on gender inequality. These include biological, psychological, anthropological, sociological, and economic framings. Others include socialist, liberal, and radical feminists. Historical works from Aristotle, Quinas, Bachofen, and Marx explored different aspects of gender relations. Largely binary and often dependent on subordination of one for another. Expanding on male dominance as a praxis to inequality. This conflicted arguments on how equality could then be framed where institutions and systems inherently reconciled power with men.<sup>5</sup>

Others assumed eliminating material inequality would result in eliminating social inequality. This was anchored on economic recognition

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<sup>5</sup> UK Essays. (2009). *Theories Of Gender Inequality*. UKEssays.Com.  
<https://www.ukessays.com/essays/sociology/theories-of-gender-inequality-sociology-essay.php>

and ideological framing of ownership. The contrasts of socialism and capitalism in means of production and wealth. Where socialism would rely on minimal differences despite universal provisions and production. Marxism positioned inequality as a result of private ownership against social classes. Women being inferior in status and how their form of production in family was not considered valuable within economic framing. This sets a backdrop for understanding gender disparities and non-recognition of care work.

### **Family Structure and Household**

Family structures dictated women's role to childbearing and care work. This was further reinforced through financial dependence in or out of marriage. Modern sociological feminist theory criticized conventional family structures and the concept of household. Reducing women to unpaid labour and economic dependence without any autonomy. Other theories are based on the assumption of the feasibility of gender-egalitarian family households.<sup>6</sup>

#### Exercise 1:

- 1) List three professions dominated by women in Botswana
- 2) Why do you think women are attracted to these professions?
- 3) List three roles for women in traditional or cultural events
- 4) Why do you think women are forced into these roles?
- 5) List three ideal women leaders in Africa
- 6) Why do you think these women leaders are ideal?

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<sup>6</sup> Agassi, J. B. (1989). Theories of Gender Equality: *Gender & Society*, 3(2), 160–186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124389003002002>

Have a discussion with your team members or as a class on the answers to the above. Unpack any possible biases and underlying influences to each other's answers.

## **Cultural rights, harmful practices, and traditional values**

Cultural rights vary, but their ultimate purpose remains the same: they allow or encourage citizens the freedom to engage in history, practice and traditions of their interest or identity. Cultural differences often create conflict. Understanding and bridge across differences is a key factor in recognising the importance of different cultures. As a part of human rights standards, cultural rights provide for the right to enjoy them peacefully without any obstacles. A rights-based approach to culture strives for respect, empathy, cooperation, freedom of thought and expression. Many cultures, however, remain largely patriarchal. Where practice, philosophy and principles often place women in submissive and inferior roles. Even where different cultures have conflict; gender disparities are shared elements.

Many harmful norms and practices embedded in culture have often aligned with religious institutions. This history is largely founded on supremacy; where a hierarchy exists and often drives conflicts against different ideologies or dominions in the Western world. African culture historically has elements of supremacy, however a common value of ubuntu recognised that differences can exist in harmony. Where dress code, food and music could both harmonise or polarise different cultural groups. The generational legacies in practices and beliefs are sacred. One of them is in the ability to have a son. This belief was founded on

boy children being presumed heirs to family ownership and procreation. This is common across social and economic classes.

Women who gave birth to girls were considered weak and disgraceful while those who gave birth to boys were celebrated. Women's role in procreation merely limited many to production and not nurturing or recognition within family structures. These roles range from Mauritanian women being force fed to gain weight until they are considered wife material, to child marriage in Sudan. Girls are often used as leverage to increase a family's social standing through marriage. Dowry payments and cultural traditions are considered important. In some instances, these traditions range from men dictating how their wives should dress to wives ending up with reduced life expectancy.

Exercise 2:

- 1) List three professions dominated by women in Botswana
- 2) Why do you think women are attracted to these professions?
- 3) List three roles for women in traditional or cultural events
- 4) Why do you think women are forced into these roles?
- 5) List three ideal women leaders in Africa
- 6) Why do you think these women leaders are ideal?

Have a discussion with your team members or as a class on the answers to the above. Unpack any possible biases and underlying influences to each other's answers.

## Gender Analysis

Gender analysis provides the necessary data improving policies, programmes, and projects. It identifies the differences between and among women and men in society, resources, opportunities,

constraints, and power.<sup>7</sup> It gives context and underlying causes of disparities, leading to addressing them through:

- ensuring that the different needs of women and men are clearly identified and addressed across value chains in policy and programming.<sup>8</sup>
- promoting women's participation and engagement in community, political and economic life.
- acknowledging the historical and social inequalities faced by women.
- considers women's experiences, roles and responsibilities, and access to decision-making.

## Steps

### 1. Research

Review available data.

- Articulate the status of gender equality in its context.
- Use existing literature for better understanding.
- Delineate vulnerabilities beyond gender; economic status, location, age and ethnicity among others.

### 2. Identifying disparities and underlying causes

- Articulate differences between women and men.

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<sup>7</sup> Hochfeld, T., & Bassadien, S. R. (2007). Participation, values, and implementation: three research challenges in developing gender-sensitive indicators. *Gender & Development*, 15(2), 217–230.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13552070701391516>

<sup>8</sup> Rittenhofer, I., & Gatrell, C. (2012). Gender Mainstreaming and Employment in the European Union: A Review and Analysis of Theoretical and Policy Literatures\*. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 14(2), 201–216. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2012.00333.x>

- Review labour and decision making dynamics between men and women
- Review access to resources and benefits
- Review impediments to participation
- Review gendered representation
- Review gendered impact
- Review aggravating vulnerabilities such as disability, socioeconomic standing, age, ethnicity and others

**Exercise 3:**

Think about one organisation you have worked or volunteered with. Perform a Gender Analysis using the steps detailed above. What are your top 3 findings? What are the biggest concerns? How do you think they can best be addressed?

In a similar manner, do the same for your home. Contrast this to when you were younger as a child or adolescent. What shifted or changed since then? Why do you think that change occurred? Use the Gender Analysis to critique and unpack influences, nuances and complexities over time. Group discussions on this will be helpful for shared learning and uncovering different perspectives.

## **Gender Analysis Frameworks**

Frameworks have been developed to address different aspects of gender equality, used for different policy and programme interventions. Notably, the Harvard and Moser frameworks have articulated gendered labour, a critical component of social constructs in gender roles.

#### 4R's

- *articulates gendered patterns in institutions, along with how they should be addressed. This includes a) representation in decision making, b) resources allocated (information, money, time, etc.), c) realia in the causes for representation and resource allocation, and d) realisation in interventions for addressing gender disparities.*

#### Capacities and Vulnerabilities Approach

- *addresses humanitarian and disaster preparedness. It focuses on organizational change. It is defined by three main areas of capacity and vulnerability through gendered investigation: a) motivation and attitude, b) physical and material and c) social and organisational.*

#### Gender Analysis Matrix

- *recognizes the bottom-up approach in community participation in identifying gender disparities in four areas: time, labour, socio-cultural and resources at individual, household, community and societal levels.*

#### Harvard Analytical Framework or Gender Roles Framework

- *aims to understand gender disparities formal economy participation at household and community levels. It articulates roles in a) economic activity, in terms of production, b) access to resources, c) control of resources and d) underlying influences. It does not extend itself to addressing disparities.*

#### Levy or web of institutionalisation

- *expands the Moser framework through four spheres needed for the systematic transformation at institutional levels: a) Beneficiaries: which articulates roles, needs and perspectives; representative structures, active participation and influence, b) Policy: which articulates political commitment, policy, and resources, c) Organisational: which articulates procedures and responsibilities for gender mainstreaming, and staff development, d) Delivery: which articulates methodology, programme implementation, research, theory building.*

#### Moser

- *integrates analysis with planning based on gender roles and needs. It defines two kinds of gender needs: a) women's daily experiences whilst maintaining existing gender relations and b) transformative experiences that change existing gender relations.*
- *It identifies gendered production, and community management, needs assessment at household levels. It also identifies different ways of planning interventions that address gender needs.*

#### Social Relations Approach

- *used for planning that anchors interrelations of and between the household, community, market and country through five concepts: a) development as increasing human well-being, b) social relations, c) institutional analysis, d) institutional gender policies and e) immediate, underlying, and structural causes.*

#### Exercise 4:

Based on the organisation you worked or volunteered with, select one of the above tools and perform an analysis using its elements/concepts/approach. How different are your findings? What emerged differently and is worth noting? Would a different way to address your findings be needed?

Apply the subsequent exercise to your newly selected approach.

In a similar manner, do the same for your home. Contrast this to when you were younger as a child or adolescent. What shifted or changed since then? Why do you think that change occurred? Use the Gender Analysis to critique and unpack influences, nuances and complexities over time. Group discussions on this will be helpful for shared learning and uncovering different perspectives.

## **Feminist Theory**

A core principle of feminist theory is in safeguarding gendered perspectives and experiences in all knowledge production, programming and beneficence.<sup>9</sup> It acknowledges gendered privilege and power across groups with further context of intersecting social factors such as race, ethnicity, class, age, and sexual orientation among others. Notable feminist theories are a) liberal feminism, b) Marxist or socialist

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<sup>9</sup> Errata: Family Reform Movements: Recent Feminism and Its Opposition. (1981). *Feminist Studies*, 7(2), 50–100. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3177517>

feminism, c) multiracial feminism, d) postmodern or poststructuralist feminism, and e) radical feminism.<sup>10</sup>

#### Liberal or mainstream

- *aims for gender equality through legal, political and social reform within liberal democracy. It includes newer sub-theories such as equality feminism, social feminism, equity feminism, difference feminism, third-wave feminism and fourth-wave feminism. One such example is Nordic state feminism belongs to the liberal tradition.*<sup>11</sup>

#### Marxist or socialist

- *Drawn from socialist and Marxist texts to develop theories of social change against class relations and exploitation in capitalist economies. It recognises social systems in private ownership and capitalism that perpetuate gender disparities and oppression.*

#### Postmodern or poststructuralist

- *a mix of post structuralism, postmodernism, and French feminism. It aims to destabilise patriarchal norms embedded in society. It recognises existing differences among women I lieu of essentialism, philosophy, and universal truths.*<sup>12</sup> This is founded

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<sup>10</sup> Kyrölä, K., & Harjunen, H. (2017). Phantom/liminal fat and feminist theories of the body. *Feminist Theory*, 18(2), 99–117.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700117700035>

<sup>11</sup> Jeong-Sook Hahn. (2008). Aleksandra Kollontai and Feminism: From Criticism of Liberal Feminism to Socialist-Radical Feminism. *러시아연구*, 18(2), 287–345. <https://doi.org/10.22414/rusins.2008.18.2.287>

<sup>12</sup> Marecek, J. (2000). Men, Masculinity and Feminism. *Feminism & Psychology*, 10(4), 505–510.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353500010004012>

*on the belief that individual experiences are minimalized as norms may emanate from patriarchal portrayal of women. It promotes multipronged and multidisciplinary discourse, deconstructs research, and contextualises issues. It is credited with illuminating conflicts in society and how language influences gender disparities.*

## Radical

- *recognises structures of supremacy beyond individuals. It understands sources of power AND politics inherent in sexuality, slavery, domination, and submission. Prevailing order is rebuked through intersectional approaches to analysis and practice.*

## Gender and Language

Disciplines include applied linguistics, linguistic anthropology, conversation analysis, cultural studies, feminist media studies, feminist psychology, gender studies, interactional sociolinguistics, linguistics, mediated stylistics, sociolinguistics, and media studies.

There is no singular or authoritative approach to understanding gender. Discursive, post-structural, ethnographic, phenomenological, positivist and experimental approaches can all be used. Often described as 'different, and often competing, theoretical and political assumptions about the way discourse, ideology and gender identity should be conceived and understood'.<sup>13</sup> Related research can be divided into two main areas:

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<sup>13</sup> Editors, T. (2012). Gender and language in African contexts: Working bibliography. *Gender and Language*, 6(1), 13–200.  
<https://doi.org/10.1558/genl.v6i1.131>

1. *a broad and sustained interest in different speech associated with a particular gender; norms and conventions that [re]produce gendered language use in the forms of a variety of speech.*<sup>14</sup>
2. *studies that focus on ways language can produce and maintain sexism and gender bias. These could also be contextual specific in how gender is operationalized, trying to understand how language affects the gender binary.*<sup>15</sup>

These works can be explored from 1975's 'Language and Woman's Place' by Robin Lakoff. This was further developed and expanded by contributions from scholars such as Deborah Tannen, Penelope Eckert, Janet Holmes, Mary Bucholtz, Kira Hall, Deborah Cameron, and Jane Sunderland among others. Most notably, 1995's 'Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self' is often referred to as a central text on language and gender.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Studying Gender and Politics Over Time. (2007). *Politics and Gender*, 3(03), 35–63. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1743923x07000232>

<sup>15</sup> Language and woman's place: text and commentaries. (2005). *Choice Reviews Online*, 42(08), 42–4486. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.42-4486>

<sup>16</sup> Pichler, P. (2005). The handbook of language and gender. *Language in Society*, 34(04), 173–213. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0047404505210229>

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## Gender Identity and Diversity Resources

Gender Expression and Non-Conforming Individuals:

<https://successcapital.africa/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Gender-Expression-and-Non-Conforming.pdf>

Androgyny: <https://successcapital.africa/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Androgyny.pdf>

## Related Resources

Feminist solutions and analyses on and beyond COVID-19:

<https://successcapital.africa/news/feminista/>

Women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights in situations of crisis: [https://successcapital.africa/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Questionnaire\\_SRHRs-crisis\\_EN-Success-Capital-Responses.pdf](https://successcapital.africa/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Questionnaire_SRHRs-crisis_EN-Success-Capital-Responses.pdf)

Basics of LGBTIQ+ in five languages: <https://successcapital.africa/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Success-Capital-Basics-of-LGBT-ALL-TRANSLATIONS-18.01.2021.pdf>

Never to be conflated with sexual orientation or gender identity

Intersex: <https://successcapital.africa/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Intersex.pdf>