

GO Forschung – Gender Aspects in Focus Important Concepts & Introductory Literature

This document explains important terms that are central to the GO Forschung project (p. 1-2). We make no claim to universally valid definitions, but merely provide you with starting points and possible perspectives on these terms. You can find more information in the introductory literature (p. 3-4) or contact the [GO Forschung team](#) if you have any questions.

Some Important Concepts

Gender

A general distinction is made between the biological concept of sex and the socio-cultural concept of *gender*. Depending on the object of investigation, the distinction between these concepts may or may not be appropriate and the interaction(s) of both can also be of particular interest.

Possible Definitions of Gender

„the condition of being a member of a group of people in a society who share **particular qualities or ways of behaving** which that **society associates with being male, female, or another identity**“

Cambridge Dictionary: Gender, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/gender> (last access 18.07.2024).

“Sex is understood to be the invariant, anatomically distinct, and factic aspects of the female body, whereas **gender is the cultural meaning and form that that body acquires, the variable modes of that body's acculturation**. With the distinction intact, it is no longer possible to attribute the values or social functions of women to biological necessity, and neither can we refer meaningfully to natural or unnatural gendered behavior: all gender is, by definition, unnatural.” (p. 35)

Butler, Judith (1986): Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex, in: Yale French Studies 72: pp. 35-49.

“The core of the definition rests on an integral connection between two propositions: gender is a constitutive **element of social relationships** based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of **signifying relationships of power**.” (p. 1067)

Scott, Joan (1986): Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis, in: American Historical Review 91, pp. 1053–1075.

“Another way to say this is that questions about gender can be asked and answered only in **specific contexts**. It is evident from these articles that gender is not a universally applicable concept with fixed parameters or referents; like “class” it is most useful when it points the way to specific investigations of meanings, whether of social relationships or rhetorical proclamations.” (p. 1423)

Scott, Joan (2008): Unanswered Questions, in: The American Historical Review 113,5: pp. 1422-1429.

“In gender studies and gender including research, instead of a simple juxtaposition of 'sex' (as nature) and 'gender' (as culture), the **recognition of the reciprocal interlocking and constitutive forms of somatic, biological, experiential, historical, praxeological, etc. dimensions of gender** is now considered plausible.” (Villa 2019, own translation, p. 31)

Villa, Paula-Irene (2019): Sex – Gender: Ko-Konstitution statt Entgegensetzung: In: Kortendieck, Beate; Riegraf, Birgit; Sabisch, Katja (eds.): Handbuch Interdisziplinäre Geschlechterforschung, Wiesbaden: Springer. pp. 23-33.

Intersectionality and Aspects of Diversity

The term intersectionality goes back to the US jurist Kimberlé Crenshaw. Intersectionality describes “the context-specific and object-related analysis of the interactions of inequality-generating social structures and practices” (own translation, Degele 2019: pp. 341-342) in power relations. In the context of GO Forschung, this means that other aspects of diversity, such as religion, age, social class, race or sexuality, are included in the analysis of gender and that the mutual interactions and those of the associated structures and practices are examined.

“Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It’s not simply that there’s a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ problem there.” (Kimberlé Crenshaw in Columbia Law School 2017)

Literature:

Columbia Law School 2017: Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality, More than Two Decades Later, <https://www.law.columbia.edu/news/archive/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality-more-two-decades-later> (last access 18.07.2024).

Degele, Nina 2019: Intersektionalität: Perspektiven der Geschlechterforschung. In: Kortendieck, Beate; Riegraf, Birgit; Sabisch, Katja (eds.): Handbuch Interdisziplinäre Geschlechterforschung, Wiesbaden: Springer. pp. 341-348).

Gender Relevance Assessment

With the gender relevance assessment, researchers systematically examine whether and how gender is relevant to their research subject and their research method(s). In this way, they ensure that their research does not discriminate against anyone in terms of gender and is geared towards the needs of all people. These questions are important in this context:

1. Does my research concern people?

- If yes, then the inclusion of gender (and sex) in an intersectional perspective is necessary.
- If no, then the following question follows:

2. Does my research or do its findings have an impact on people's daily lives?

- If yes, then the inclusion of gender (and sex) in an intersectional perspective is necessary.
- If no, then sex and/or gender do not seem to play a role.

You can find more information and examples here:

What an analysis scheme for gender relevance assessment can look like:

Tannenbaum, Cara; Ellis, Robert P.; Eyssel, Friederike; Zou, James; Schiebinger, Londa (2019): Sex and gender analysis improves science and engineering, in: Nature 575, p. 137–146, here p. 141.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-1657-6>

More information and other useful links:

DFG – Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft: <https://www.dfg.de/en/basics-topics/developments-within-the-research-system/diversity-dimensions>

Introductory Literature – Short List:

Handbooks on Gender and Gender Studies

Connell, Raewyn (2021): Gender in world perspective. Polity: Cambridge und Medford.

[Overview of gender studies, gender theorists, gender relations and gender politics]

Risman, Barbara J.; Froyum, Carissa M.; Scarborough, William J. (eds.) 2018: Handbook of the Sociology of Gender, Cham: Springer.

[Theory and epistemology, analysis of gender on an individual, interactional and macro level, examples of various social contexts – sexuality, family, relationships, social institutions, feminism]

Handbooks on Intersectionality

Lutz, Helma; Davis, Kathy (eds.) (2023): The Routledge International Handbook of Intersectionality Studies. Routledge: London.

[Contexts of intersectionality, developments, debates and critiques, application in research and activism]

Romero, Mary (ed.) (2023): Research Handbook on Intersectionality. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, US.

[Foundational research, interdisciplinary approaches, intersectionality in applied research, global perspectives]

Literature on why it is beneficial to include gender dimension in research

DFG (ed.): „Relevance of Sex, Gender and Diversity in Research“ of Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) <https://www.dfg.de/en/basics-topics/developments-within-the-research-system/diversity-dimensions> (last access 18.07.2024).

Tannenbaum, Cara; Ellis, Robert P.; Eyssel, Friederike; Zou, James; Schiebinger, Londa (2019): Sex and gender analysis improves science and engineering, in: Nature 575, p. 137–146.

Wullum Nielsen, Mathias; Alegria, Sharla; Börjeson, Love; Etkowitz, Henry; Falk-Krzesinski, Holly J.; Joshi, Aparna; Leahey, Erin; Smith-Doerr, Laurel; Williams Woolley, Anita; Schiebinger; Londa (2017): Gender diversity leads to better science, in: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 114, p. 1740–1742.

Wullum Nielsen, Mathias; Bloch, Carter Walter; Schiebinger, Londa (2018): Making gender diversity work for scientific discovery and innovation, in: Nature Human Behaviour 2, p. 726–734.

Digital Resources and Examples

Schiebinger, Londa, Klinge, Ineke, Paik, Hee Young, Sánchez de Madariaga, Inés, Schraudner, Martina; Stefanick, Marcia (eds.) (2011-2020): Gendered Innovations in Science, Health & Medicine, Engineering, and Environment www.genderedinnovations.stanford.edu (last access 09.07.2024).

Yellow Window (2012): Gender in Research <https://www.yellowwindow.com/genderinresearch> (last access 03.07.2024).

Any questions left? Contact the GO Forschung team: go-forschung@uni-bayreuth.de