

## Family and gender relations



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### ABSTRACT

Within academic studies, approaches to the concept of gender present different perspectives of analysis, in the same way, that there is also a huge confusion of understanding of the term within the general population. For this reason, then, I seek to build with a brief contextualization of its historical evolution. Gender and family are complex issues, and traditionally societies have tended to have rigid gender roles in which men played the role of

providers, women as caregivers of the home and children, and the family would be a property result of patriarchy. Faced with a society that imposes conditions that determine what is female or male, I broaden the discussion on psycho-pedagogical development, bringing light to facts that are determinant for children's development, emphasizing the importance of offering an environment that allows children to explore the potentialities regardless of gender expectations that limit learning by classifying the activities of boys and girls bringing impacts to the development of skills, self-confidence, and self-esteem prevent equitable learning opportunities which do not contribute to a balanced society.

**Keywords:** Gender, Family, Patriarchy, Psychopedagogy.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 GENDER: THE BODY OF A CATEGORY OF ANALYSIS

The term *genus* was originally used in the scientific classification of living organisms forming a set of species with morphological and functional characteristics reflecting the existence of common ancestors. Given such a nature of scientific use, the term has been widely associated only with biological aspects, even when referring to humans. Perhaps the fact also derives from the historical seal that biological sex would be completely responsible for determining the abilities, capacities, and competencies of human beings.

The essentialist or biological determinist *perspective* of socio-sexual differences only began to be seriously altered when, in 1949, the work "The Second Sex" was released, written by the existentialist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir. The questioning reached the core of *biological determinism*, which translated into opposition with the aspects of the social construction of individuals, because would the human being be a substance, an object, an essence, or a *being-in-the-world*, that is, a *being of experiential experience*?

The social impact of the book was such that, even without the writer ever having used *the term gender within her work*, a mistake that still reverberates today, several feminist scholars, especially



*North American and European, began to use the term gender as a category of scientific analysis of the sociocultural inequalities historically constructed between women and men.*

However, it was two men who were primarily responsible for establishing the scientific and academic boundaries between *gender* and *sex*.

In the 1950s, the psychologist John Money, who refused to reduce his studies and conclusions to the paradigm of Cartesian dualism, instituted the first distinctions between the notions of *sex and gender* (nature and culture), proposing that "*gender* is produced by the interaction between the bodily, sensory and social aspects, therefore a dimension of eroticism and a historical learning." And in the 1960s, psychologist Robert Stoller, in his studies on transsexuality, distinguished *sex* (the natural element) from *gender* (the psychic and psychological elements). This conceptual paradigm sanitized and desexualized gender.

From then on, *gender spread worldwide as a category of scientific analysis thanks to the renowned works of authors* such as Gayle Rubin, Joan Scott, Heleieth Saffioti, and Judith Butler, branching out different concepts from the deepening of studies, such as social gender roles, gender identity and gender performativity, sexual orientation, gender relations, etc.

Starting from the assumption that *gender* would be the "set of properties attributed socially and culturally constructed concerning the sex of individuals, based on the values of male and female," we will historically problematize the social construction of the family institution and its impact on the teaching-learning process of children.

## 2 BRIEF GENEALOGY OF THE FAMILY INSTITUTION

Before beginning this brief genealogy of the origins of the family institution, I highlight the statements of the English historian Peter N. Stearns in **History of Sexuality**, 2010:

All agricultural societies have become, in a sense, patriarchal—that is, male-dominated (and father-to-son); And a key expression of patriarchy was the impulse to control female sexuality and differentiate patterns by gender.

Having this approach as a warning and perspective of analysis, we now leave for the etymology and genealogy of the family institution.

In its origin, the word "family" does not mean the same institution that we understand today, although it has well-defined parallels. Etymologically *famulus* means "domestic slave," so in his genealogy, **the family** would be "the set of slaves belonging to the same man ."The Roman expression designated a new landed social organism whose owner kept under his power his wife, children, and a certain number of slaves, with the right to life and death over all of them. However, to arrive at this formation of patriarchal value, patrio poder, essentially focused on the institutional concentration of



the social functions of family and private care, as a feminine and public figure, and of male private property, different changes throughout history have occurred.

Among the early modern authors who initiated this genealogy of the family institution are Bachofen, J. F. Mac Lennan, and Morgan. Although Bachofen's studies lacked scientific tools and veracity, he was the first to establish the notion of *heterism* (free love) and *maternal right* (matriarchy) as predecessors of patriarchy through the analysis of Greek literature.

In 1870, the ethnologist and lawyer J. F. Mac Lennan, without sufficient research, established the perception of the first tribes of *endogamous* and *exogamous*, one being the antithesis of the other. His theory in England was received with great devotion, being considered "the first authority" in the foundations of the study of the family.

Immediately in 1971, the anthropologist, ethnologist, and writer Morgan established, from new documents, other points of view on the origins of the family institution due to his studies with the Iroquois Indians. Morgan was the first scholar to introduce a more precise order of family development from the prehistory of mankind, which culminated in the book **The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State**, written by F. Engels in 1884.

F. Engels establishes a direct relationship between the historical development of the family institution with the development of human productive techniques and sexual restrictions, thus being an institution highly influenced by economic structures. For the author, the first human groupings, called *Bands*, are antagonistic to the *family* because the bands constitute almost naturally, where sexual freedom was a common practice. Given the conditions of survival, "the collective consciousness of the gang could not have a greater enemy than the collective consciousness of the family" since this is based on the maintenance of private ownership of goods. Thus, the first mode of "family institution" would arise from the prohibition of the incest taboo, with consanguineousness.

The so-called consanguineous "family" presented as its main characteristic, the classification of conjugal groups by generations, where only ascendants and descendants were excluded from the matrimonial regime; brothers and sisters, cousins and cousins of different generations, at the limit of the family, were all considered brothers and, therefore, husbands and wives since marriage between them was allowed. This formation was replaced by the so-called *Punaluan family*, in which the family organization forbade sexual union between siblings. Here degrees of kinship are indicated, and nephews and nieces, cousins, and cousins are presented. Because the father was unknown, the descent was recognized by a maternal lineage, the so-called *maternal right*. The next model of social organization was conceptualized as *the syndicated family*, with *the extinction of the so-called marriage by groups as the main characteristic*. At this stage, each woman lived with only one man, owing the same fidelity; Marital infidelity was, in turn, only a right of men. The marital bond could be dissolved by both, and the children would continue to belong to the mother. Rules of marriages were emerging



*until non-consanguineous marriages engendered more strengthened species.* Cattle raising and the development of agricultural activities implied the emergence of new wealth, as well as private property, the so-called *enclosures*. Despite this, women are still important members of the community. It was only with the well-known *monogamous family* that the man would gain a much more socially valued position than that of the woman in the family, causing him to be born with the idea of using this advantage to modify for the benefit of his children, the established order of inheritance, abolishing the maternal right.

What characterized this social organization was the fact that several individuals, free and unfree, were to be subjected to paternal power. In this way, to ensure the fidelity of the woman and, consequently, the paternity of the children, she is surrendered, without reserve, to the power of the man.

I return here to Stearns, *in the aforementioned book*, "*for both men and women of the elite group, the importance of having descendants, particularly boys, to ensure the continuity of the family lineage, greatly valued sex for reproduction*" and, to our understanding, consequently also valued the representations and social roles taken as masculine to the detriment of the representations and social roles taken as feminine.

### **3 FAMILY INSTITUTION AND PSYCHOPEDAGOGY: DECONSTRUCTION OR REPRODUCTION OF GENRES?**

In his maximum axiom, Beauvoir states: "One is not born a woman, one becomes," and it seems to us "becoming" a woman (or man) is a human experiential state, socially learned, and that has deep historical roots of restriction, control differentiation of bodies for the maintenance of private ownership of the *means-of-production*, especially within the family institution. Therefore, the maintenance of such distinctions of sexual gender, of female and male, for boys and girls, can be considered a factor of limitation of human capacities since the classification – or better would be to say imposition – of behaviors and competencies by sexual gender, as evidenced by gender studies, designates a limiting learning process both at the psychosexual and socio-affective level, since such differentiations and distinctions in the processes of experimentation of life, present themselves as a violent historical substrate of the development of socially constructed inequalities than as an intrinsic set of innate capacities of women and men. And at the heart of this complex issue, it is clear to understand the emphasis of the commitment exposed by the Brazilian Association of Psychopedagogy concerning the guiding principles of training of the psychopedagogue in Brazil, and should be guided by the "awareness of diversity, respecting the differences of cultural and environmental nature, genders, generational ranges, social classes, religions, of special needs, sexual orientation, among others," prioritizing "actions involving human rights [...] an inclusive and equitable society, with emphasis on



the potentialities of the learning subject" and "appreciation of reflective, critical and transformative thinking".



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