

GENDER ROLES AND IDENTITY THROUGH CULTURE

TIME	ACTIVITY
3 minutes	Watch two short videos about gender roles and stereotypes: https://youtu.be/Ulh0DnFUGsk?si=oxAlixWH5eteYDw https://youtu.be/nrZ21nD9I-0?si=MnLq6Q0tZaWMT87e
5 minutes	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have you ever had an experience with gender stereotypes? How did it affect you? - Are gender stereotypes always wrong? Do you think they're harmful?
10 minutes	Work with extract 1, 2 and 4, brainstorm and discuss in pairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have traditional gender norms changed throughout the years in your culture? How? Make a comparison with how gender roles changed in Japan. - Can you recall any major gender role shifts during the human history? - Who takes care of the house and children in your family? Who takes care of the family finances? - Are you happy with the established roles in your home or would you change them?
7 minutes	Read extract 3 about different gender identities. Then I'll show you photos of two historical Indigenous figures and read their stories.
10 minutes	Work in small groups and create your ideal society: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What gender norms would there be, if any? - Would there be any specific roles? - Would the roles depend on someone's gender or on something entirely different? Try to think about the hierarchy.
10 minutes	Watch a video of people from different cultures and their personal gender experience: https://youtu.be/AqEgsHGiK-s?si=ILWqrjwWIPpR_a2A Then final discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are you satisfied with the current gender roles in your culture? If not what would you change?

1 Introduction

Gender refers to the social and cultural roles, behaviours, expectations, and identities society assigns to individuals based on their sex. This also includes the relationships that are expected to be formed between different genders. Gender is a social construct which varies from society to society and can change over time. Gender relates to but isn't the same thing as sex. Sex refers to the biological and physical characteristics that categorize individuals as male or female - this includes attributes such as chromosomes, reproductive organs and hormones. Every individual has their own deeply felt and internal experience of gender, which may correspond to the person's sex, however it doesn't have to.

Source:

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#:~:text=Gender%20refers%20to%20the%20characteristics,and%20can%20change%20over%20time.>

2 Western idea of gender and gender norms

According to the Western gender norms, women are generally expected to dress feminine, be polite and nurturing. Men are generally expected to be strong and bold. Girls are expected to play with dolls and like pink, boys are expected to play with cars and like blue. Women were expected to stay at home and take care of the children whereas men were expected to work. Every society, ethnic group, and culture has their own gender expectations which may differ drastically from each other. Those norms can also change over time. In recent years new gender identities made their way to the Western culture, however there are cultures all over the world where the idea of gender not being binary has a long tradition and was not completely erased by colonization.

Source:

<https://ds.amu.edu.et/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/3403/gender%20roles%20and%20equality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y#page=37>

3 Gender identity in Indigenous communities

Some Indigenous communities in North America use the term "two-spirit" to describe individuals who embody both masculine and feminine qualities, or who have a gender identity which falls outside of the traditional male and female binary. It is often used to reclaim and celebrate the diverse gender roles and

expressions that have existed in Indigenous cultures for centuries. Two-spirit people are seen having a special spiritual and cultural role within their communities. They often were experts in traditional arts - such as pottery making, basket weaving, and the manufacture and decoration of items made from leather. Two-spirit identity was often believed to be the product of a divine intervention in the form of visions or dreams.

Among the Navajo culture there is a specific gender called "nádleehee" - people who are described as "effeminate males" or "male-bodied with a feminine nature". Nádleehí may change their gender expressions from day to day or during different periods of their life so they can fulfill different roles in community and ceremony. Two-spirit males often became weavers, usually women and men's work, as well as healers, which was a male role. By combining these activities, they were often among the wealthier members of the tribe. Two-spirit females engaged in activities such as hunting and warfare, and became leaders in war and even chiefs.

Most Indigenous communities have their own specific terms in their own languages for the gender roles the members of their community fulfill.

Source:

<https://www.ihs.gov/lgbt/health/twospirit/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nádleehi>

Osh-Tisch

Osh-Tisch was a male-bodied person in the Crow community, living their daily life in a feminine role. Osh-Tisch was considered a leader among the Badé. In the 1880s, missionaries attempted "whitemanize" the Crow. Obsessed with "The Code of Religious Offenses," a moral directive that forbade non-Christian spiritual practices, they began persecuting Natives over their dating and marriage traditions, which were often in opposition to the Christian European standard of lifelong heterosexual monogamy. Throughout the 1920s, tribal members who refused to abandon their traditions were penalized or imprisoned and their families' treaty rations were cut or denied.

It wasn't long before Osh-Tisch and other Two Spirits became a target of the code and were imprisoned. But the Crow chiefs and warriors spoke out in support of Two Spirit values. They pushed hard against U.S. federal agents, ultimately gaining the Badés' release.



Osh Tisch and their spouse. (John H. Fouch Retrieve from Montana: The Magazine of Western History Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring, 1994), pp. 2-17 (JSTOR))

Hastiin Klah

Hastiin Klah was a master sand painter, chanter, weaver and healer. Klah was considered a Nádleeahi.

Born in 1867, Klah represented the Bear Mountain area (now Fort Wingate, New Mexico) and was considered exceptional in a multitude of areas. As a youth, Klah had a gift for traditional chants, which often take days to correctly recite. He learned weaving from his mother and sister, and traveled across the U.S. to showcase these skills at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Klah single-handedly saved the Navajo weaving tradition in the face of religious persecution. In 1921, he met heiress Mary Cabot Wheelwright and the two became close friends. Together, they formed the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian in Santa Fe. Klah was integral in the museum's design, implementation and curation; he even blessed its grounds. He passed away before the museum opened in 1937.



Hastiin Klah. (T. Harmon Parkhurst, Image Courtesy of Palace of the Governors Photo Archives, New Mexico History Museum, Santa Fe.)

Source:

Swan-Perkins, S.W. (2018) 5 two-spirit heroes who paved the way for today's native LGBTQ+ community, KQED. Available at: <https://www.kqed.org/arts/13845330/5-two-spirit-heroes-who-paved-the-way-for-todays-native-lgbtq-community> (Accessed: 28 November 2023).

4 History of gender roles in Japan

If we look at the role of men and women in the 1950s, it seems to be very different from what it is now.

We can divide the roles into roughly 2 categories: work and housework, work as a role of men and housework as a role of women. During the 1950s to 1970s, it was a time of high economic growth in Japan, and as a result, many married women quit their jobs because they could still have the same standard or even better standard with their husbands' salary. Because of this, it was seen as

common sense for people in Japan that women stay home and assume the role of housekeeper, as well as taking care of the children, while the men worked.

In the 1980s, the high economic growth came to an end, and this required that women go back to work in order to survive. By the 1990s, the wage at work became lower and lower, and more and more women went back to work to support their husbands.

Now in 2018 compared to the 1950s, the number of women at work has more than doubled. The rate of women who had a job in 2007 was about 60%, and this number rose further to 69.9% in 2018.

As you can see, women's roles have changed over the years. Meanwhile, there doesn't seem to be much of a difference in the role of men over the years. Unlike women, in Japan, they generally keep working without much of a break for childrearing.

Source:

[Gender Roles in Japan: History to Today | Guidable Japan](#)