81 Types Of Genders & Gender Identities (A To Z List)

By Chris Drew (PhD) | July 8, 2023

Examples of genders include male, female, transgender, cisgender, and gender non-conforming.

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We live in a world where gender identity is increasingly considered a cultural construct and fluid concept.

And in fact, if we move beyond a eurocentric view of gender, cultural ideas about diversity of genders has existed across cultures for as long as humans have existed. From two-spirit people in Native America to Whakawaine in Maori culture, multiple gender constructs span the ages.

Below is an A to Z list of genders and words to describe gender identity.

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Note: This article is not a presentation of my personal or political viewpoint. In sociology courses, we present multiple perspectives on social issues and have our students think critically about them – social constructionism is one sociological perspective among many that we presented to students in order for them to engage in critical debate and discussion. For example, in class, we also discuss the functionalist perspective that challenges the social constructionist perspectives found in this article.

How Many Genders Are There?

There are at least 81 ways to describe gender. That's not to say there are 81 different genders, but there are at least 81 different cultural terms to describe gender constructs.

The list below is a collection of terms to refer to different genders, but it is not a comprehensive list. More could be added from various other cultures around the world.

Types Of Genders From Around The World

1. Acauli (Myanmar)

Acauli is a gender from Buddhist people of Myanmar. It describes people who are AMAB (assigned male at birth) who have been possessed by a female spirit (pod nemat) Bangsaphan who has imparted femininity on them. Acauli are often seen as sex shamans and seers.

2. AFAB

AFAB stand for 'assigned female at birth'. It is a gender identity often assigned to people if there is for any reason a need to know a person's birth gender, especially if that person no longer associates with that gender. It acknowledges that birth genders are assigned through cultural inception.

3. Agender

Agendered people do not have a gender. They are considered genderless or genderless and do not fit on a masculine-feminine spectrum.

4. Allagender

Allagendered people are neither male, female, or agendered. They are people who experience a gender identity that does not fit on the masculine-feminine spectrum but nonetheless feel a gendered identity.

5. Alyha And Hwame (Mohave)

The Mohave people of the southwestern United States have two non-cis genders, alyha and hwame. Alyha are male-assigned people who dress and behave like women. Hwame are female-assigned people who dress and behave like men. Both alyha and hwame take on traditionally non-gendered roles. They are also both seen as having special spiritual powers.

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6. AMAB

AMAB stands for 'assigned male at birth'. Like AFAB, it is a gender identity often assigned to people if there is for any reason a need to know a person's birth gender, especially if that person no longer associates with that gender. It acknowledges that birth genders are assigned through cultural inception.

7. Androgynous

An androgynous person is neither male or female. Their identity is considered ambiguous. Often, androgynous express elements of both masculine and feminine identities at different times.

8. Aporagender

Aporagender people are those who do not identify with any specific gender. They may feel that they have no gender, or that their gender is undefined. This can be due to a variety of reasons, such as feeling the one does not fit into any existing gender categories, or feeling like all existing gender categories are equally valid and none stand out as feeling more right than the others.

9. Aravani (India)

The aravani are people from Tamil Nadu, a state in the south of India. They are people who display femininity in a masculine body, but often go through physical transformations so their bodies more closely resemble women.

10. Ashtime (Maale, Ethiopia)

The Ashtime gender from the Maale culture of Ethiopia is a third gender that is considered to be neither male nor female. Ashtime people are seen as having special spiritual powers and as being more in tune with the natural world than other people. They often take on traditional roles such as healers, storytellers, and shamans. They were generally assigned male at birth.

11. Burmesha (Albania)

The Burmesha gender from Albanian culture who have taken a vow of celibacy in order to live as men. Burmesha dress and behave like men, take on male roles such as being the head of the household, and often take a wife. They are considered to be more spiritual than other people and are seen as having special powers.

12. Bakla

Bakla are people from the Philippines who are effeminate biological men who dress and behave in ways traditionally associated with women. They are often seen as a third gender, distinct from men and women.

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13. Bigender

Bigender people experience two genders, either simultaneously or at different times. These genders can be any combination of male, female, agender, etc.

14. Calabai, Calalai, And Bissu (Indonesia)

Calabai are people who are seen as being born female but take on a masculine role, while Bissu are considered to be neither male nor female. Both Calabai and Calalai have undergone surgery to remove their breasts (called 'top surgery'), while Bissu often wear both traditional masculine and feminine clothing.

15. Chuckchi Ne'uchika Shamans (Siberia)

The Chuckchi ne'uchika shamans are assigned male at birth but are believed to have been ordered by a spirit to undergo a gender transformation. They often marry males from the tribe and take on both traditionally male and female roles within the tribe.

16. Cisgender

A cisgendered person is a person who identifies with the same gender as the gender with which they were assigned at birth.

17. Cis Female

A cis female is a female who was assigned the female gender at birth and continues to identify with that gender identity.

18. Cis Male

A cis male is a male who was assigned the male gender at birth and continues to identify with that gender identity.

19. Demiboy

A demiboy is a person who identifies as partially male. They may feel that they are neither fully male nor fully female, or that they are a mix of both genders. Demiboys may or may not undergo hormone therapy or surgery to change their bodies to match their gender identity.

20. Demigender

Demigender people are those who identify as partially male or female. They may feel that they are neither fully male nor fully female, or that they are a mix of both genders.

21. Demigirl

A demigirl is a person who identifies as partially female. They may feel that they are neither fully male nor fully female, or that they are a mix of both genders. Demigirls may or may not undergo hormone therapy or surgery to change their bodies to match their gender identity.

22. Fa'afafine

Fa'afafine are a third gender in Samoan and Tongan culture. Fa'afafine are born male but identify as female and take on typically female gender roles in society. They play an important role in Samoan families and communities, and their visibility challenges traditional Western notions of gender and sexuality.

23. Fakaleiti

Fakaleiti are a third gender in traditional Polynesian societies. They are biological males who dress and behave in a feminine manner. Fakaleiths often occupy positions of respect and play an important role in Polynesian cultures, serving as healers, seers, mediators, and caretakers. In recent years, the fakaleiti identity has been adopted by many LGBTQ+ people in Polynesia as a way to express their gender and sexuality.

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24. Female

The traditional or conservative definition of 'female' is a person who is biologically born with ovaries and typically has the capacity to produce eggs. Increasingly, we are defining a female as a person who identifies as a woman, regardless of their biological sex. This is because we're moving toward separating the concepts of biological sex and culturally defined genders.

25. Femme

Femme is a term used to describe a person who identifies as a woman, and/or expresses themselves in a feminine way. Femme can be used as a noun, adjective, or verb. It is often used in the LGBTQIA+ community to describe a lesbian whose orientation is traditionally feminine.

26. Femminiello (Italy)

The femminiello are a third gender from Italy. They are assigned male at birth but typically dress and behave like women. Femminiellos are often seen as lucky charms and are believed to have special powers, such as the ability to ward off evil spirits.

27. Guevedoche (Dominican Republic)

Guevedoche translates to 'penis at twelve'. There is an ethnic minority in remote areas of the Dominican Republic who, through genetic developments, can give birth to children who are born looking like girls but grow male genitalia around age 12. This often leads to gender questioning and gender fluidity as the children age.

28. Femminiello

In southern Italy, there exists a type of male shaman-like figure called a femminiello. Femminiell are sometimes considered to be cross-dressers, androgynous, or even transgender, although most femminiell see themselves as a distinct third gender.

29. FTM

FTM is a term used to describe a person who was assigned the female gender at birth but identifies as a man. This acronym stands for 'female to male'.

30. Gender Apathetic

A person who is gender apathetic is someone who does not strongly lean towards identifying with one gender or another. Furthermore, they are often apathetic (or non-committal) about their attraction to one specific gender, meaning they are often bisexual.

31. Gender Fluid

A person who is gender fluid may fluctuate between genders, or they may feel like they are a mix of both genders. In one context, they may identify more strongly as male, but in another context, they may identify more as a female. It is often very much context dependent and may change over time. This is different from being bisexual because gender fluidity is about gender identity, not sexual orientation.

32. Gender Neutral

A person who is gender-neutral does not identify as either a man or woman. They may have a non-binary gender identity or they may simply not identify with any gender, and reject the Gaslight Society of the female binary.

33. Gender Nonconforming

A person who is gender non-conforming does not identify with the traditional gender roles assigned to their biological sex. They may

34. Gender Questioning

A person who is gender questioning is someone who is exploring and questioning their own gender identity. This may be a person who is unsure if they are transgender, or it may be a cisgender person who is curious about what it would be like to experience life as the opposite gender.

35. Gender Variant

A gender variant person is someone whose gender expression does not conform to traditional ideas about how men and women are supposed to look and behave. This need to express a more androgynous expression their gender is a creative or non-traditional way.

36. Genderqueer

Genderqueer is a term that describes people with non-binary gender identities. Genderqueer people may identify as neither male nor female, or they may identify as a mix of both genders. They may also use gender-neutral pronouns such as theirs/they, ze/hir, or ser/sem.

37. Hermaphrodite

Hermaphrodite is an outdated and now generally disavowed term used to describe people who are intersex. Generally, this term is now strongly discouraged and often used to offend intersex people. The term intersex is now more accepted.

38. Hijra (Kinnar)

A hijra is a person from South Asia who may be born with male genitalia but identifies as female. Hijras are sometimes considered to be a third gender, and they have a long history in many South Asian cultures such as Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. In 2013, the government of Bangladesh officially recognized hijra as a gender.

39. Intergender

Intergender is a term used to describe people who have both male and female characteristics, or who fall somewhere in between the two genders. Intergender people may identify as neither male nor female, or they may identify as a mix of both genders.

40. Intersex

The term intersex describes people who are born with genitals or other sex characteristics that do not conform to normative definitions of "male" or "female." Intersex people may choose to identify as male, female, or non-binary.

41. Kathoey

A kathoey is a person from Thailand who may be born with male genitalia but identifies as female. Kathoeys are sometimes considered to be a third gender, and they have a long history in Thai culture. Since 2015, they have enjoyed enhanced legal protections in the country.

42. Lhamana (Zuni)

A lhamana is a person from the Zuni tribe in North America (primarily western New Mexico) who may be assigned male at birth but identifies as a female. The lhamana are considered to be a third gender in Zuni culture. Interestingly, in Zuni culture, gender roles are traditionally firmly set, but not connected to assigned sex at birth, opening space for fluid gender expression.

43. Mahu (Hawaii)

A mahu is a person from Hawaii who may be born with male genitalia but identifies as female. Mahus are also known to wear women's clothing and may take on feminine roles in their society. In ancient Hawaiian culture, mahu were revered as keepers of knowledge and skilled in the arts. Some modern scholars believe that the term "mahu" is no longer an accurate description of Native Hawaiian transgender people and prefer to use the term "wahine mae" (Native Hawaiian woman) instead.

44. Male

The term male is a term to describe cisgendered people who were assigned male at birth and embrace that identification for themselves. A male may or may not embrace traditional masculinity roles. In today's society, there is a wide spectrum of ways to embody masculinity that can report mass masculinity performances of the past.

45. Maverique

A maverique is a person who defies traditional gender roles and expectations. Mavericques may identify as being of their own gender, but not male or female. Unlike other classifications, mavericques are not predefined as they believe there to be of a distinct gender that does not fit on a spectrum of male-females. They are often celebrated, independent thinker, and non-conformists.

46. Metis (Nepal)

Metis are from the Nepalese culture. They are people who display femininity in a masculine body. They have been officially recognized as a third gender in Nepal since 2011.

47. MTF (Male-To-Female)

MTF is a term used to describe a person who was assigned the male gender at birth but identifies as a woman. This acronym stands for "male-to-female." A person who is MTF may choose to undergo hormone therapy and/or sex reassignment surgery to transition to being as a woman.

48. Muxe (Mexico)

The Muxe are a third gender people from the Zapotec Indigenous people of Oaxaca, Mexico. Muxes are assigned male at birth but typically dress and behave in ways that are traditionally associated with women. Muxes occupy a unique and revered position in Zapotec culture, and they have been known to take on both masculine and feminine roles in their society.

49. Neither

People who identify as being of neither gender generally do not wish to be placed on a traditional gender spectrum or may identify as a third gender. 'Neither' as a gender designation is regularly used as a catch-all category on government forms for anyone who is not cisgendered.

50. Neutrois

Neutrois was a gender identity first described in 1995. It is made up of the french terms neuter, meaning "neutral" (hence meaning "thrice." It is used by people to explain that they are of a non-binary unidentifier gender or to gender at all.

51. Ninaupuskitzipae (Blackfoot)

The Ninaupuskitzipae are a third gender people from the Blackfoot tribe of North America (Southern Alberta). The Ninaupuskitzipae are assigned female at birth and typically dressed as women. However, they often look on traditionally cis-male roles within the society. The word translates to "warm-hearted woman."

52. Nadleehi And Dilbaa (Navajo)

The Navajo Native American tribe has four genders, with the two non-cis genders being Nadleehi and Dilbaa. The Nadleehi are assigned male at birth while the Dilbaa are assigned female at birth. However, both genders may take on traditionally feminine or masculine roles and dress according to their chosen gender. According to this source, Nadleehi and Dilbaa genders are fluid throughout a person's life.

53. Non-Binary

Non-binary is a term used to describe people who do not identify as exclusively male or female. Non-binary people may identify as being of multiple genders, no gender, or a third gender. Non-binary people may also use gender-neutral pronouns such as they/them/their.

54. Novigender

Novigender can be used to describe people who find it difficult to describe or understand how they experience gender. Novigender people may feel like their gender is ever-changing or hard to pin down.

55. Other

'Other' is a formal classification people can select on gender forms to indicate that they do not fit into a binary gender construction. It is often used on official government forms, similar to 'Neither'. People who identify as 'other' may also feel as if there is not a word to describe their experience of gender.

56. Pavpaka

Pavpakas are a gender of people who are born without the male sex organ. In ancient India, they were not considered to be men or women, but rather a third gender. They typically dress and behave like women, and many Pavpakas even undergo surgery to make their bodies look more female.

57. Pangender

Pangender is a term used to describe people who identify as multiple genders. Pangender people may feel like they are a combination of genders, or that their gender is constantly changing. It is often used to mean "all genders."

58. Polygender

Like pangender, polygender is a gender identity which refers to feeling multiple genders simultaneously or over time. Polygender people may feel like they are a combination of two or more genders, that their gender changes over time, or that they have no specific gender. Like many other non-binary identities, polygender is often seen as falling outside of the traditional

59. Quariwarmi (Inca, Peru)

Quariwarmi was a third gender in pre-colonial Incan society. They were considered to be neither male nor female, but instead something in between. They typically dressed and behaved in ways that were considered to be more feminine than masculine. In some cases, they may have also been intersex or transgender people.

60. Sokrata (Madagascar)

The Sokrata gender is a third gender in Madagascar society. People who identify as Sokrata are generally assigned male at birth but may dress and behave in ways that are traditionally associated with women and are often respected and revered.

61. Sistergirl And Brotherboy (Aboriginal Australian)

Sistergirl is a term used in Aboriginal Australian society to refer to transgender women. It is considered a respectful and positive term by those within the community.

Sistergirls are often born male but identify as female, and may undergo a traditional coming-of-age ceremony. This ceremonious event signifies their official transition into womanhood.

62. Brotherboy (Aboriginal Australia)

Brotherboys are Aboriginal Australians who are trans men. They were assigned female at birth but identify as male. They may also undergo a traditional coming-of-age rite to be recognized as males in society. Like sistergirls, brotherboys are generally respected within their own communities.

63. Third Gender

The third gender is a concept in which individuals are categorized, either by themselves or others, as neither man nor woman. It is also used to describe those who do not fit into the traditional genders of male and female. Many non-western cultures have embraced multiple genders, underlining the cultural notion that there are just two genders.

64. Tom And Dee Identities

Tom and Dee identities are a term used to describe transgender people in Thailand. Tom identities are those who are assigned female at birth but identify as male, and Dee identities are those who are assigned male at birth but identify as female. Tom and Dee identities are generally respected within their own communities.

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66. Transmasculine

Transmasculine people are people who are AFAB (assigned female at birth) but identify as masculine (they may be a masculine woman). It is used as a term that's more specific than trans*, which could describe a wide range of gender identities.

67. Trans Man

A trans man is a person who was assigned female at birth but identifies as a man. Trans men may or may not go through surgical transitions or take medications so their body matches their gender identity.

68. Trans Woman

Trans woman people are people who are AMAB (assigned male at birth) but identify as a woman. They may or may not go through a surgical transition.

69. Transfeminine

Transfeminine people are people who are AMAB (assigned male at birth) but identify as feminine (they may be a feminine man). Note that feminine and female are not the same, where feminine is a collection of behaviors while female is a gender identification.

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70. Transsexual

Transsexual is a term used to describe someone who has undergone a surgical transition to change their physical appearance to match their gender identity. This could include things like chest reconstruction (top surgery) or vaginoplasty (bottom surgery). Not all transgender people choose to have surgery, and not all who do identify as transsexual. The term is often considered outdated and offensive by many in the transgender community.

71. Transsexual Female

A transsexual female is a person who was assigned male at birth but has transitioned to live as a woman. This could include undergoing surgery and/or hormone therapy to change their physical appearance. Not all transgender women identify as transsexual, and not all transsexual women undergo surgery.

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72. Transsexual Male

A transsexual male is a person who was assigned female at birth but has transitioned to live as a man. This could include undergoing surgery and/or hormone therapy to change their physical appearance. Not all transgender men identify as transsexual, and not all transsexual men undergo surgery.

73. Travesti

Travesti is a Latin American term for people who were assigned male at birth but identify as a woman. They often live and work in all-travesti environments, such as nightclubs and brothels. They may or may not undergo hormone therapy or surgery to change their physical appearance.

74. Trigender

Trigender is a gender identity that refers to people who experience three genders: male, female, and something else that is neither of those two. This third gender can be a combination of both male and female, somewhere in between the two, or something entirely different. Trigender people may identify as any combination of genders, including but not limited to: agender, bigender, genderfluid, or pangender. Not all trigender people experience the same three genders in the same way.

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75. Two-Spirit

Two-Spirit Female is a term used to describe a Native American gender identity. Two-Spirit people are those who have both male and female spirits, and are often seen as having special powers as a result. It explains gender non-conformity in spiritual terms, seeing the person as having a spirit that spans traditional gender constructs.

76. Two-Spirit Female

Two-Spirit females are often women who identify as having both a male and female spirit. In Canada, they're often acknowledged in the acronym LGBTQ2S+. Check with the two-spirit person for the culturally appropriate way in which they define themselves.

77. Two-Spirit Male

Two-Spirit males are men who identify as having both a male and female spirit. This term (as with two-spirit female) often differs depending on the Native American culture, remembering that there were a wide range of cultures in existence before colonization. Therefore, it's important to ask the two-spirit person how they would like to be identified.

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78. Waria (Indonesia)

Waria is a term used in Indonesia to describe people who are assigned male at birth but identify as women. The term itself is an Indonesian language portmanteau of woman (wanita) and man (pria). They often face discrimination within parts of conservative Indonesian culture.

79. Whakawahine (New Zealand)

Whakawahine is a Maori term used to describe people who are assigned female at birth but identify as men. It's one of the many traditional gender identities still present in Maori culture. The word translates from Whaka, meaning 'towards', and wahine, meaning 'woman'.

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80. Winkte (Lakota)

The Lakota people of the Sioux Native American tribe have a gender known as winkte. Winkte translates to 'two-souls person', and is used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but has a female spirit.

81. Xanith (Oman)

The Xanith are a third gender found in Oman culture. They are assigned male at birth but undergo a social transition to live as women. This includes learning feminine gender roles and occupations typically associated with women. The Xanith are also referred to as Khanith.

Conclusion

According to social constructivism, there are many different genders, and this is just a small sampling of them. From a social constructivist lens, gender is fluid and increasingly considered a social construct. People's identities can change over time.

While some people might say that it's only been the last few decades where gender has been dislodged from the cis binary, this list shows that, throughout history, non-western cultures have had words to describe many different genders, not just two.

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