

# gender a useful category of historical analysis

## Is Gender a Useful Category of Historical Analysis? Unpacking the Complexities

### Introduction:

For decades, historians have grappled with the question: how useful is gender as a category for understanding the past? Is it a lens that reveals crucial insights into power dynamics, social structures, and individual experiences, or is it an overly simplistic framework that risks imposing modern understandings onto complex historical realities? This post delves into this critical debate, exploring the arguments for and against using gender as a primary analytical tool in historical research. We'll examine its strengths and limitations, considering diverse perspectives and highlighting the nuances of applying a gendered lens to different historical contexts. Ultimately, we aim to equip you with a nuanced understanding of this vital methodological discussion.

### The Power of Gender as an Analytical Tool:

One of the primary arguments for employing gender as a historical category centers on its ability to illuminate power imbalances. By analyzing historical events and structures through a gendered lens, we can unveil the ways in which societal norms and expectations have shaped the experiences of men and women differently. This approach exposes the systematic inequalities that have disadvantaged women throughout history, including limited access to education, economic opportunities, and political participation. Studying gender reveals not just the overt acts of discrimination but also the subtle, ingrained biases that shaped daily life. For example, analyzing the seemingly mundane aspects of domestic life—from household labor division to the control of resources—reveals complex power dynamics often invisible through other analytical frameworks. This granular analysis allows for a richer and more comprehensive understanding of historical realities. Moreover, focusing on gender allows us to uncover the diverse experiences within gender categories themselves. The experiences of women, for example, are far from monolithic; class, race, and ethnicity profoundly intersect with gender to shape lived realities.

### Limitations and Criticisms of Gender as a Historical Category:

Despite its undeniable strengths, using gender as a sole analytical tool faces significant criticisms. One major concern is the risk of anachronism – imposing contemporary understandings of gender onto past societies that may have had vastly different concepts of masculinity and femininity. What constitutes "masculine" or "feminine" has shifted dramatically across time and cultures. Applying modern definitions risks misinterpreting historical evidence and constructing narratives that are inaccurate or misleading. Furthermore, an overemphasis on gender can lead to a neglect of other crucial factors shaping historical

experience, such as class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. These intersecting identities interact in complex ways, and reducing historical analysis solely to gender risks creating a simplified and potentially distorted picture. The danger lies in essentializing gender, treating it as a fixed and unchanging characteristic rather than a fluid and socially constructed concept. This essentialist approach can reinforce harmful stereotypes and ignore the diversity of lived experiences within gender categories.

### Beyond Binary: Exploring Gender Beyond the Male/Female Divide:

Traditional gender analysis often relies on a binary framework of male and female. However, contemporary scholarship increasingly emphasizes the limitations of such a binary approach. Many cultures have recognized non-binary gender identities throughout history, and ignoring these diverse experiences limits our understanding of the past. Analyzing historical sources through a more nuanced lens of gender, including transgender, non-binary, and intersex identities, can reveal a richer and more inclusive picture of the past. This requires careful consideration of the historical contexts and the ways in which gender identities were understood and expressed at different times and places.

### Re-evaluating Sources: The Challenges of Historical Evidence:

Historical sources rarely explicitly categorize individuals based on modern gender understandings. This necessitates careful interpretation and a critical approach to the available evidence. Historians must engage in close reading of sources, paying attention to subtle cues and implicit assumptions about gender roles and expectations. This often involves examining a wide range of sources, including legal documents, personal letters, artistic representations, and material culture, to construct a comprehensive picture of gender in the past. The limitations of the available sources must also be acknowledged and addressed transparently in the analysis.

### Conclusion: A Nuanced Approach

In conclusion, while gender remains a powerful tool for historical analysis, its application requires careful consideration and a nuanced approach. The potential for anachronism, the need to account for intersecting identities, and the complexities of historical sources all demand a critical and reflexive engagement with gender as an analytical category. By acknowledging its limitations and employing a multi-faceted approach, historians can use gender analysis to illuminate the past in ways that are both insightful and accurate. A balanced perspective, recognizing the strength of gender as a lens while acknowledging its limitations, is crucial for productive and meaningful historical scholarship.

### Book Outline: "Gender's Shadow: Re-evaluating Gender in Historical Analysis"

Introduction: Defining the debate; outlining the book's scope and methodology.

Chapter 1: The Rise of Gender as a Historical Category: Tracing its development within the field.  
Chapter 2: Gender and Power: Examining power dynamics through a gendered lens (e.g., political participation, economic opportunity).  
Chapter 3: Gender and the Domestic Sphere: Analyzing gender roles within the home and family.  
Chapter 4: Intersections of Gender: Exploring the complexities of gender with race, class, and sexuality.  
Chapter 5: Beyond the Binary: Addressing non-binary gender identities in historical contexts.  
Chapter 6: Interpreting Historical Sources: Strategies for analyzing gender in diverse historical materials.  
Chapter 7: Methodological Debates: Critically examining different approaches to gender in history.  
Conclusion: The ongoing relevance of gender in historical scholarship; future directions.

(Detailed Explanation of each chapter would follow here, expanding on each point outlined above. This would constitute a significant portion of the article, expanding on the arguments and examples provided in the introduction and body.)

#### FAQs:

1. Isn't using gender in historical analysis inherently biased? Yes, there's a risk of bias, but rigorous methodology, acknowledging limitations, and avoiding anachronism can mitigate this.
1. How can we avoid imposing modern gender concepts onto the past? Through careful analysis of historical sources within their context, recognizing the evolution of gender concepts over time.
1. What are some examples of successful gender analyses in history? Studies on women's suffrage, the history of domestic labor, and analyses of gender in specific historical events (e.g., wars).
1. How does class intersect with gender in historical analysis? Class profoundly shapes gender experiences; women of different classes had vastly different opportunities and constraints.
1. How can we incorporate non-binary gender identities into historical studies? By critically examining sources for evidence of diverse gender expressions, even if they weren't labeled as such at the time.

1. Is it ever appropriate to use gender as the sole analytical category? Rarely; intersecting identities must be considered for a comprehensive understanding.
1. What are the ethical considerations of using gender in historical research? Avoiding essentializing gender, respecting the diversity of experiences, and avoiding perpetuating harmful stereotypes.
1. How can historians ensure their gender analyses are inclusive and representative? By actively seeking out diverse sources and perspectives, and being mindful of potential biases.
1. What are the future directions of gender analysis in historical scholarship? Further exploration of non-binary identities, intersectional analysis, and the use of new methodologies (e.g., digital humanities).

#### Related Articles:

1. "Gender and the Public Sphere: A Historical Perspective": Explores the evolving role of women in public life across different historical periods.
2. "The Construction of Masculinity: A Historical Analysis": Examines how ideas of masculinity have changed over time and their impact on men's lives.
3. "Gender and Revolution: Women's Participation in Social Change": Investigates women's roles in revolutionary movements throughout history.
4. "Intersectional Feminism and Historical Analysis": Discusses the importance of considering race, class, and other factors alongside gender.
5. "The History of Gender and Sexuality: A Comparative Approach": Compares gender and sexuality across different cultures and time periods.

6. "Gender and the Family: Historical Perspectives on Domesticity": Analyzes the historical evolution of family structures and gender roles within the family.
7. "Gender and Violence: A Historical Examination of Gender-Based Violence": Explores the history of gender-based violence and its societal consequences.
8. "Gender and the Law: A Historical Overview of Legal Rights and Discrimination": Examines the history of legal frameworks impacting gender equality.
9. "Gender in the Workplace: A Historical Perspective on Occupational Segregation": Analyzes the historical patterns of occupational segregation based on gender.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: Gender and the Politics of History** Joan Wallach Scott, 1999 An interrogation of the uses of gender as a tool for cultural and historical analysis. The revised edition reassesses the book's fundamental topic: the category of gender. In arguing that gender no longer serves to destabilize our understanding of sexual difference, the new preface and new chapter open a critical dialogue with the original book. From publisher description.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: The Question of Gender** Judith Butler, Elizabeth Weed, 2011-07-20 A generation after the publication of Joan W. Scott's influential essay, *Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis*, this volume explores the current uses of the term—and the ongoing influence of Scott's agenda-setting work in history and other disciplines. How has the study of gender, independently or in conjunction with other axes of difference—such as race, class, and sexuality—inflected existing fields of study and created new ones? To what extent has this concept modified or been modified by related paradigms such as women's and queer studies? With what discursive politics does the term engage, and with what effects? In what settings, and through what kinds of operations and transformations, can gender remain a useful category in the 21st century? Leading scholars from history, philosophy, literature, art history, and other fields examine how gender has translated into their own disciplinary perspectives.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: Theory and Method in Women's History** Nancy F. Cott, 1992 This text examines the evolving discussion of theory and method in women's history. The articles span from the first articulation of a framework to be designated women's history, to more recent discussion of the concept of gender in history.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: The Politics of the Veil** Joan Wallach Scott, 2010-08-22 In 2004, the French government instituted a ban on the wearing of conspicuous signs of religious affiliation in public schools. Though the ban applies to everyone, it is aimed at Muslim girls wearing headscarves. Proponents of the law insist it upholds France's values of secular liberalism and regard the headscarf as symbolic of Islam's resistance to modernity. *The Politics of the Veil* is an explosive refutation of this view, one that bears important implications for us all. Joan Wallach Scott, the renowned pioneer of gender studies, argues that the law is symptomatic of France's failure to integrate its former colonial subjects as full citizens. She examines the long history of racism behind the law as well as the ideological barriers thrown up against Muslim assimilation. She emphasizes the conflicting approaches to sexuality that lie at the heart of the debate—how French supporters of the ban view sexual openness as the standard for normalcy, emancipation, and individuality, and the sexual modesty implicit in the headscarf as proof that Muslims can never become fully French. Scott maintains that the law, far from reconciling religious and ethnic differences, only exacerbates them.

She shows how the insistence on homogeneity is no longer feasible for France--or the West in general--and how it creates the very clash of civilizations said to be at the root of these tensions. The Politics of the Veil calls for a new vision of community where common ground is found amid our differences, and where the embracing of diversity--not its suppression--is recognized as the best path to social harmony.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *What is Gender History?* Sonya O. Rose, 2013-04-22 This book provides a short and accessible introduction to the field of gender history, one that has vastly expanded in scope and substance since the mid 1970s. Paying close attention to both classic texts in the field and the latest literature, the author examines the origins and development of the field and elucidates current debates and controversies. She highlights the significance of race, class and ethnicity for how gender affects society, culture and politics as well as delving into histories of masculinity. The author discusses in a clear and straightforward manner the various methods and approaches used by gender historians. Consideration is given to how the study of gender illuminates the histories of revolution, war and nationalism, industrialization and labor relations, politics and citizenship, colonialism and imperialism using as examples research dealing with the histories of a number of areas across the globe. Written by one of the leading scholars in this vibrant field, *What is Gender History?* will be the ideal introduction for students of all levels.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *On the Judgment of History* Joan Wallach Scott, 2020-09-22 In the face of conflict and despair, we often console ourselves by saying that history will be the judge. Today's oppressors may escape being held responsible for their crimes, but the future will condemn them. Those who stand up for progressive values are on the right side of history. As ideas once condemned to the dustbin of history—white supremacy, hypernationalism, even fascism—return to the world, threatening democratic institutions and values, can we still hold out hope that history will render its verdict? Joan Wallach Scott critically examines the belief that history will redeem us, revealing the implicit politics of appeals to the judgment of history. She argues that the notion of a linear, ever-improving direction of history hides the persistence of power structures and hinders the pursuit of alternative futures. This vision of necessary progress perpetuates the assumption that the nation-state is the culmination of history and the ultimate source for rectifying injustice. Scott considers the Nuremberg Tribunal and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which claimed to carry out history's judgment on Nazism and apartheid, and contrasts them with the movement for reparations for slavery in the United States. Advocates for reparations call into question a national history that has long ignored enslavement and its racist legacies. Only by this kind of critical questioning of the place of the nation-state as the final source of history's judgment, this book shows, can we open up room for radically different conceptions of justice.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: Phallacies** Kathleen M. Brian, James W. Trent (Jr.), 2017 *Phallacies: Historical Intersections of Disability and Masculinity* is a collection of essays that focuses on disabled men who negotiate their masculinity as well as their disability. Essays include war-related disabilities, male hysteria, suicide clubs, mercy killings, and portraits of disabled men in literature and popular culture.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *'Am I That Name?'* Denise Riley, 1988-10-28 Writing about changes in the notion of womanhood, Denise Riley examines, in the manner of Foucault, shifting historical constructions of the category of women in relation to other categories central to concepts of personhood: the soul, the mind, the body, nature, the social. Feminist movements, Riley argues, have had no choice but to play out this indeterminacy of women. This is made plain in their oscillations, since the 1790s, between concepts of equality and of difference. To fully recognize the ambiguity of the category of women is, she contends, a necessary condition for an effective feminist political philosophy.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *Women and the Cuban Insurrection* Lorraine Bayard de Volo, 2018-02-01 Using gender analysis and focusing on previously unexamined testimonies of women rebels, political scientist Lorraine Bayard de Volo shatters the prevailing

masculine narrative of the Cuban Revolution. Contrary to the Cuban War story's mythology of an insurrection single-handedly won by bearded guerrillas, Bayard de Volo shows that revolutions are not won and lost only by bullets and battlefield heroics. Focusing on women's multiple forms of participation in the insurrection, especially those that occurred off the battlefield, such as smuggling messages, hiding weapons, and distributing propaganda, Bayard de Volo explores how gender - both masculinity and femininity - were deployed as tactics in the important though largely unexamined battle for the 'hearts and minds' of the Cuban people. Drawing on extensive, rarely-examined archives including interviews and oral histories, this author offers an entirely new interpretation of one of the Cold War's most significant events.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: *The Global and the Intimate*** Geraldine Pratt, Victoria Rosner, 2012 By placing the global and the intimate in near relation, sixteen essays by prominent feminist scholars and authors forge a distinctively feminist approach to questions of transnational relations, economic development, and intercultural exchange. This pairing enables personal modes of writing and engagement with globalization debates and forges a definition of justice keyed to the specificity of time, place, and feeling. Writing from multiple disciplinary and geographical perspectives, the contributors participate in a long-standing feminist tradition of upending spatial hierarchies and making theory out of the practices of everyday life.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: *Parité!*** Joan Wallach Scott, 2007-11-01 France today is in the throes of a crisis about whether to represent social differences within its political system and, if so, how. It is a crisis defined by the rhetoric of a universalism that takes the abstract individual to be the representative not only of citizens but also of the nation. In *Parité!* Joan Wallach Scott shows how the requirement for abstraction has led to the exclusion of women from French politics. During the 1990s, le mouvement pour la parité successfully campaigned for women's inclusion in elective office with an argument that is unprecedented in the annals of feminism. The paritaristes insisted that if the abstract individual were thought of as sexed, then sexual difference would no longer be a relevant consideration in politics. Scott insists that this argument was neither essentialist nor separatist; it was not about women's special qualities or interests. Instead, *parité* was rigorously universalist—and for that reason was both misunderstood and a source of heated debate.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: *Culture, Society and Sexuality*** Richard Guy Parker, Peter Aggleton, 1999 This work offers an introduction to the central debates in sexuality research. Among the issues examined are the social and cultural dimensions of sex, human sexuality and sex research.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: *Conceiving the Future*** Laura L. Lovett, 2009-11-30 Through nostalgic idealizations of motherhood, family, and the home, influential leaders in early twentieth-century America constructed and legitimated a range of reforms that promoted human reproduction. Their pronatalism emerged from a modernist conviction that reproduction and population could be regulated. European countries sought to regulate or encourage reproduction through legislation; America, by contrast, fostered ideological and cultural ideas of pronatalism through what Laura Lovett calls nostalgic modernism, which romanticized agrarianism and promoted scientific racism and eugenics. Lovett looks closely at the ideologies of five influential American figures: Mary Lease's maternalist agenda, Florence Sherbon's eugenic fitter families campaign, George Maxwell's homecroft movement of land reclamation and home building, Theodore Roosevelt's campaign for conservation and country life, and Edward Ross's sociological theory of race suicide and social control. Demonstrating the historical circumstances that linked agrarianism, racism, and pronatalism, Lovett shows how reproductive conformity was manufactured, how it was promoted, and why it was coercive. In addition to contributing to scholarship in American history, gender studies, rural studies, and environmental history, Lovett's study sheds light on the rhetoric of family values that has regained currency in recent years.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: *Selling Sex in the City: A Global History of Prostitution, 1600s-2000s*** , 2017-08-28 *Selling Sex in the City* offers a worldwide analysis of

prostitution since 1600. It analyses more than 20 cities with an important sex industry and compares policies and social trends, coercion and agency, but also prostitutes' working and living conditions.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *Gendering Modern Japanese History* Barbara Molony, Kathleen S. Uno, 2008 In the past quarter-century, gender has emerged as a lively area of inquiry for historians and other scholars. This text looks at the issue in the context of modern Japanese history, considering topics such as sexuality, gender prescriptions and same-sex and heterosexual relations.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *A Guide to Gender-analysis Frameworks* Candida March, Ines A. Smyth, Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay, 1999 This is a single-volume guide to all the main analytical frameworks for gender-sensitive research and planning. It draws on the experience of trainers and practitioners, and includes step-by-step instructions for using the frameworks.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany* Katie Sutton, 2011-04-01 Throughout the Weimar period the so-called "masculinization of woman" was much more than merely an outsider or subcultural phenomenon; it was central to representations of the changing female ideal, and fed into wider debates concerning the health and fertility of the German "race" following the rupture of war. Drawing on recent developments within the history of sexuality, this book sheds new light on representations and discussions of the masculine woman within the Weimar print media from 1918-1933. It traces the connotations and controversies surrounding this figure from her rise to media prominence in the early 1920s until the beginning of the Nazi period, considering questions of race, class, sexuality, and geography. By focusing on styles, bodies and identities that did not conform to societal norms of binary gender or heterosexuality, this book contributes to our understanding of gendered lives and experiences at this pivotal juncture in German history.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *The Gender of History* Bonnie G. Smith, 2000 In a pathbreaking study of the gendering of the practices of history, Bonnie Smith examines the differences in 19th-century approaches to history between male and female perspectives. Smith demonstrates that even today, the practice of history is still propelled by fantasies of power and subjugation.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *Sex and Secularism* Joan Wallach Scott, 2019-11-12 Drawing on a wealth of scholarship by second-wave feminists and historians of religion, race, and colonialism, Scott shows that the gender equality invoked today as a fundamental and enduring principle was not originally associated with the term secularism when it first entered the lexicon in the nineteenth century. In fact, the inequality of the sexes was fundamental to the articulation of the separation of church and state that inaugurated Western modernity. Scott points out that Western nation-states imposed a new order of women's subordination, assigning them to a feminized familial sphere meant to complement the rational masculine realms of politics and economics. It was not until the question of Islam arose in the late twentieth century that gender equality became a primary feature of the discourse of secularism-- Publisher's description

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *Gender in International Relations* J. Ann Tickner, 1992 -- Political Science Quarterly

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *The Invention of Women* Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí, 1997-10 The woman question, this book asserts, is a Western one, and not a proper lens for viewing African society. A work that rethinks gender as a Western construction, *The Invention of Women* offers a new way of understanding both Yoruban and Western cultures. Oyewumi traces the misapplication of Western, body-oriented concepts of gender through the history of gender discourses in Yoruba studies. Her analysis shows the paradoxical nature of two fundamental assumptions of feminist theory: that gender is socially constructed in old Yoruba society, and that social organization was determined by relative age.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *Gender and the Historian* Johanna Alberti, 2014-07-10 Why are most famous historians men? How have women changed the writing of history

over the last decades? What lives and stories have been hidden from history? Until recently history was predominantly the domain of men. That men were the authors of our past meant that in many cases only half of the story was told. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, the picture changed. Women, and indeed some men as well, started to address gender history. Women had been investigated historically before, but never with such intensity, nor such breadth. The impetus for this writing was both political and academic as feminists were determined to explore lives which until then had been disregarded. Gender and the Historian charts the entry and development of this new history, showing how such considerations furthered postmodernism and ultimately reinvigorated the very core of History..

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development** Jane L. Parpart, Patricia Connelly, Eudine Barribeau, 2000 Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development demystifies the theory of gender and development and shows how it plays an important role in everyday life. It explores the evolution of gender and development theory, introduces competing theoretical frameworks, and examines new and emerging debates. The focus is on the implications of theory for policy and practice, and the need to theorize gender and development to create a more egalitarian society. This book is intended for classroom and workshop use in the fields of development studies, development theory, gender and development, and women's studies. Its clear and straightforward prose will be appreciated by undergraduate and seasoned professional, alike. Classroom exercises, study questions, activities, and case studies are included. It is designed for use in both formal and nonformal educational settings.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: The Fantasy of Feminist History** Joan Wallach Scott, 2011-11-11 In The Fantasy of Feminist History, Joan Wallach Scott argues that feminist perspectives on history are enriched by psychoanalytic concepts, particularly fantasy. Tracing the evolution of her thinking about gender over the course of her career, the pioneering historian explains how her search for ways to more forcefully insist on gender as mutable rather than fixed or stable led her to psychoanalytic theory, which posits sexual difference as an insoluble dilemma. Scott suggests that it is the futile struggle to hold meaning in place that makes gender such an interesting historical object, an object that includes not only regimes of truth about sex and sexuality but also fantasies and transgressions that refuse to be regulated or categorized. Fantasy undermines any notion of psychic immutability or fixed identity, infuses rational motives with desire, and contributes to the actions and events that come to be narrated as history. Questioning the standard parameters of historiography and feminist politics, Scott advocates fantasy as a useful, even necessary, concept for feminist historical analysis.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: English and American Studies** Martin Middeke, 2016-08-17 Das ganze Studium der Anglistik und Amerikanistik in einem Band. Ob englische und amerikanische Literatur, Sprachwissenschaft, Literatur- und Kulturtheorie, Fachdidaktik oder die Analyse von Filmen und kulturellen Phänomenen führende Fachvertreter geben in englischer Sprache einen ausführlichen Überblick über alle relevanten Teildisziplinen. BA- und MA-Studierende finden hier die wichtigsten Grundlagen und Wissensgebiete auf einen Blick. Durch die übersichtliche Darstellung und das Sachregister optimal für das systematische Lernen und zum Nachschlagen geeignet.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: Gender Outlaw** Kate Bornstein, 2013-04-15 Gender Outlaw is the work of a woman who has been through some changes--a former heterosexual male, a one-time Scientologist and IBM salesperson, now a lesbian woman writer and actress who makes regular rounds on the TV (so to speak) talk shows. In her book, Bornstein covers the mechanics of her surgery, everything you've always wanted to know about gender (but were too confused to ask) addresses the place and politics of the transgendered and interrogates the questions of those who give the subject little thought, creating questions of her own.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: The Feminism of Uncertainty** Ann Snitow, 2015-08-27 The Feminism of Uncertainty brings together Ann Snitow's passionate, provocative dispatches from forty years on the front lines of feminist activism and thought. In such celebrated

pieces as *A Gender Diary*—which confronts feminism's need to embrace, while dismantling, the category of woman—Snitow is a virtuoso of paradox. Freely mixing genres in vibrant prose, she considers Angela Carter, Doris Lessing, and Dorothy Dinnerstein and offers self-reflexive accounts of her own organizing, writing, and teaching. Her pieces on international activism, sexuality, motherhood, and the waywardness of political memory all engage feminism's impossible contradictions—and its utopian hopes.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *How Sex Changed* Joanne Meyerowitz, 2009-07-01 *How Sex Changed* is a fascinating social, cultural, and medical history of transsexuality in the United States. Joanne Meyerowitz tells a powerful human story about people who had a deep and unshakable desire to transform their bodily sex. In the last century when many challenged the social categories and hierarchies of race, class, and gender, transsexuals questioned biological sex itself, the category that seemed most fundamental and fixed of all. From early twentieth-century sex experiments in Europe, to the saga of Christine Jorgensen, whose sex-change surgery made headlines in 1952, to today's growing transgender movement, Meyerowitz gives us the first serious history of transsexuality. She focuses on the stories of transsexual men and women themselves, as well as a large supporting cast of doctors, scientists, journalists, lawyers, judges, feminists, and gay liberationists, as they debated the big questions of medical ethics, nature versus nurture, self and society, and the scope of human rights. In this story of transsexuality, Meyerowitz shows how new definitions of sex circulated in popular culture, science, medicine, and the law, and she elucidates the tidal shifts in our social, moral, and medical beliefs over the twentieth century, away from sex as an evident biological certainty and toward an understanding of sex as something malleable and complex. *How Sex Changed* is an intimate history that illuminates the very changes that shape our understanding of sex, gender, and sexuality today.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *Coming to Terms* Elizabeth Weed, 2012-10-11 For over a decade, feminist studies have occupied an extraordinary position in the United States. On the one hand, they have contributed to the development of a strong 'identity' politics; on the other, they have been part of the post-structuralist critique of the unified subject - its experience, truth and presence - and of the massive challenge to Western metaphysics and humanism. Along with race and ethnic studies, feminist enquiry has moved beyond the fiction of a unitary feminism to address the differences within the study of difference. The essays in this volume all address feminism's relationships to theory and politics at the level of the criticism and production of knowledge. Readers and students of politics, history, literature, philosophy, sociology and the sciences - anyone with a stake in theory and politics - will benefit from this powerful book.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *Gender Trouble* Judith Butler, 2011-09-22 With intellectual reference points that include Foucault and Freud, Wittig, Kristeva and Irigaray, this is one of the most talked-about scholarly works of the past fifty years and is perhaps the essential work of contemporary feminist thought.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis:** *A History of Gender in America: Essays, Documents, and Articles* Sylvia D. Hoffert, 2009-01 MySearchLab provides students with a complete understanding of the research process so they can complete research projects confidently and efficiently. Students and instructors with an internet connection can visit [www.MySearchLab.com](http://www.MySearchLab.com) and receive immediate access to thousands of full articles from the EBSCO ContentSelect database. In addition, MySearchLab offers extensive content on the research process itself—including tips on how to navigate and maximize time in the campus library, a step-by-step guide on writing a research paper, and instructions on how to finish an academic assignment with endnotes and bibliography. This book summarizes what historians of gender have written and introduces readers to the most recent literature on the history of gender in the United States. Gender Identities in the English Colonies. Masculinity in the North and South. Femininity in the North and South. Gender and Work. Gender and Sport. For anyone who is interested in an in-depth discussion of American Gender Identities, how gender conventions change over time, and what factors have influenced those changes.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: Gender-Critical Feminism** Holly Lawford-Smith, 2022 Includes bibliographical references (pages 265-287) and index.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: Companion to Feminist Studies** Nancy A. Naples, 2021-03-08 A comprehensive overview of feminist scholarship edited by an internationally recognized and leading figure in the field *Companion to Feminist Studies* provides a broad overview of the rich history and the multitude of approaches, theories, concepts, and debates central to this dynamic interdisciplinary field. Comprehensive yet accessible, this edited volume offers expert insights from contributors of diverse academic, national, and activist backgrounds—discussing contemporary research and themes while offering international, postcolonial, and intersectional perspectives on social, political, cultural, and economic institutions, social media, social justice movements, everyday discourse, and more. Organized around three different dimensions of Feminist Studies, the *Companion* begins by exploring ten theoretical frameworks, including feminist epistemologies examining Marxist and Socialist Feminism, the activism of radical feminists, the contributions of Black feminist thought, and interrelated approaches to the fluidity of gender and sexuality. The second section focuses on methodologies and analytical frameworks developed by feminist scholars, including empiricists, economists, ethnographers, cultural analysts, and historiographers. The volume concludes with detailed discussion of the many ways in which pedagogy, political ecology, social justice, globalization, and other areas within Feminist Studies are shaped by feminism in practice. A major contribution to scholarship on both the theoretical foundations and contemporary debates in the field, this volume: Provides an international and interdisciplinary range of the essays of high relevance to scholars, students, and practitioners alike Examines various historical and modern approaches to the analysis of gender and sexual differences Addresses timely issues such as the difference between radical and cultural feminism, the lack of women working as scientists in academia and other research positions, and how activism continues to reformulate feminist approaches Draws insight from the positionality of postcolonial, comparative and transnational feminists Explores how gender, class, and race intersect to shape women's experiences and inform their perspectives *Companion to Feminist Studies* is an essential resource for students and faculty in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Feminist Studies programs, and related disciplines including anthropology, psychology, history, political science, and sociology, and for researchers, scholars, practitioners, policymakers, activists, and advocates working on issues related to gender, sexuality, and social justice.

**gender a useful category of historical analysis: Fighting Chance** Faye E. Dudden, 2014-03-27 The advocates of woman suffrage and black suffrage came to a bitter falling-out in the midst of Reconstruction, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton opposed the 15th Amendment for granting black men the right to vote but not women. How did these two causes, so long allied, come to this? In a lively narrative of insider politics, betrayal, deception, and personal conflict, *Fighting Chance* offers fresh answers to this question and reveals that racism was not the only cause, but that the outcome also depended heavily on money and political maneuver.

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