Social construction means that our realities are dependent on contingent aspects of our social lives and our society. It explains that had it not been for societal definitions and meanings, our outlook on aspects of live and our society would have been different, and perhaps better. This concept applies to the masculine and feminine identities of gender. When one thinks of the traditional view of gender it is normally based on what the person was born as.

The social construction theory views gender as something that is fluid and on a continuum (Robbins, Chatterjee Canda E, 120-121). It deals with the traditional views of the characteristics of gender identity and how these characteristics are subject to change. The social construction of gender involves the traditional qualities and roles that that define gender identity. It purports that notions of masculinity and femininity are relative and subject to change. In discussing gender identity, we have to understand that the characteristics of masculinity and femininity are determined by social factors rather than biological factors such as sex. It is therefore subject to change.

Beginning at birth, the self-meanings regarding one's gender are formed in social situations, stemming from ongoing interaction with significant others such as parents, peers, and educators (Katz 1986). Traditionally, males were expected to exhibit masculine qualities which differentiated them from females. These qualities include being the breadwinner of the family and ruggedness. Men were made to be adept at the skills of provision and protection, such as empathy problem-solving, assertiveness, staying calm under fire, and providing for others, but lacking the ability to know their own emotional life and to be emotionally empathic with others (Levant 2008). Women on the other hand were trained to show feminine qualities which include being dependent and showing empathy.

From the text, Levant highlights the challenges men are facing in keeping up with the demands of masculinity in this generation. For the past two decades, men of this generation have had the experience of attempting to fulfill the requirements of the traditional masculine mandate in the midst of criticism that has been building to a crescendo (Levant 2008). Nowadays men are asked to demonstrate care in ways that violate the traditional role of what a man is. This results in a loss of self-esteem and uncertainty in what it means to be a man in this generation. Women on the other hand are now stepping out of their traditional roles to become providers.

Today, the concept of superwoman ideal which is the outcome of Women’s Movement in the 1960’s has seen more women stepping out of their traditional roles to join the work force and therefore diminishing the traditional mandate of men being the providers. Not only are more women joining the work force, they are infact surpassing the income salary of their husbands. In a 2012 survey by Time magazine, it was discovered that forty percent of all women in the work force surpassed the income of their husbands. This trend has dealt a big blow to masculinity because many men view career success and the role of the family provider as a defining piece of their masculine identity (Martino and Soriano 2013).

It is for this reason that Levant argued in the text that masculinity has collapsed and therefore proposed a reconstruction of masculinity that will create a balance. It has become increasingly clear that the social construction of masculinity that has been ascendant in the United States for at least –commonly referred to as “traditional masculinity”- has collapsed (Levant 2008). The superwoman ideal is also not left out. As women feel the need to adhere to stereotypical roles in life in addition to roles they choose to take on, the result is significant health issue for women (O’Neil 2006). An example is the eating disorder behavior that is linked to the superwoman ideal (Hart and Kenny 1997).

From the foregoing, a right to same sex marriage can be explained as a right to equality and inclusion of all women. Since marriage is a social creation, the traditional concept of marriage is subject to change and therefore has to change to accommodate same sex marriage. A right to same sex marriage will break down the male dominated society and tradition of marriage.

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