



# Gender Lenses

androcentrism, gender polarization, essentialism





# agenda



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# introduction

The Gender Lenses of Androcentrism, Gender Polarization, and Essentialism are three concepts that were introduced by Sandra Bem in her book “**The Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual Inequality**”.

They are used to analyze how gender shapes our social institutions and discourses, and how they reproduce male power and female subordination

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androcentrism

# androcentrism

- the first lens of gender androcentrism or male-centeredness
- the lens that views men as the norm and women as deviant or inferior
- the privileging of the male experience and the “otherizing” of the female experience; that is, male and male experiences are treated as a neutral standard or norm for the culture or the species, and female and female experiences are treated as a sex-specific deviation from that allegedly universal standard

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# gender polarization

# gender polarization

- the second lens is gender polarization or “the ubiquitous organization of social life around the distinction between male and female”
- the lens that divides everything into two mutually exclusive categories based on sex, such as masculine/feminine, rational/emotional, public/private
- this lens polarizes men and women so that we appear to have vast differences in many aspects of life, such as biology, modes of dress, social roles, emotions, and sexual desires

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essentialism



# essentialism

- works to rationalize the other two lenses by claiming that there is a clear biological reason for all the differences between men and women
- the lens that attributes gender differences to innate and immutable biological traits rather than social and cultural factors

# summary

Androcentrism is the lens that views men as the norm and women as deviant or inferior. Gender polarization is the lens that divides everything into two mutually exclusive categories based on sex, such as masculine/feminine, rational/emotional, and public/private. Biological essentialism is the lens that attributes gender differences to innate and immutable biological traits rather than social and cultural factors.

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thank you