

GENDER; FEMININITY; MASCULINITY

The term 'sex' is used to refer to biological differences between male and female. Gender is used for everything that is socially constructed and culturally transmitted. Masculine and feminine are characteristics of men and women, respectively. The major debate in gender studies, sociobiology and sociology, more generally, is between those who believe that these characteristics are indicative of biological natures (essentialists) of men and women, and those who argue that masculine and feminine are ascribed roles, and masculinity and femininity are cultural, shaped by socialization rather than biology (for a fuller introduction, see Mac an Ghaill and Haywood, 2006).

Much of the work around gender issues in popular music has focused on girls and women. It has been forcefully argued that the dominant ideologies and discourses throughout popular music generally privilege males, while at the same time constructing a normative masculinity (though see Hawkins, 2009). There is rather less literature on male gender issues in popular music and the construction of masculinity. The dominance of male-female binaries in popular music's analysis of gender has been challenged by studies of 'queer music', a term appropriated by gays and lesbians. The significance of gender is evident in a number of areas of popular music studies, which can only be briefly alluded to here. I have further addressed several of these topics in the specific entries indicated (in bold).

There is a lack of women in the male-dominated music industry; traditionally, they are largely in stereotypically 'female' roles, for example, press-office personnel. There are few women working in A&R, or as producers, managers, and sound mixers, all spheres that are male-dominated, a situation partly related to technologies as masculinist. The **history** of popular music is largely constructed around male performers and male-dominated genres. While women's contribution to gospel, the blues, and soul are generally recognized, there is a tendency to marginalize their place in the development of rock, metal and dance music. Even when they are credited, their contributions are seen in stereotypical terms: divas, rock chicks (e.g. Suzi Quatro, Janis Joplin), men-pleasing angels (Doris Day), victims (Billie Holiday) or problem personalities (Judy Garland). These narratives have been challenged by popular music histories focused on women, and through reevaluations of phenomena such as **girl groups** and **fandom**. Linked to this, both traditional **musicology** and the popular **music press**

have constructed a male-dominated musical canon, with this challenged by feminist scholars and music critics.

The perceived masculine or feminine nature of particular genres has been identified and debated. For example, pop is generally seen as 'a girls' genre', while hard rock and heavy metal are regarded as primarily male-oriented genres: encoded as signifying masculinity. Even genres which, at least at the level of rhetoric, challenge gender stereotyping, such as indie and punk, demonstrate considerable sexism. Women performers predominate in a cappella and gospel music, and are prominent in folk and country and among singer songwriters. These are socially constructed patterns, reflecting differential expectations and resources, including access to musical knowledge and equipment (see, for example, Whiteley, 1997). There has been considerable discussion of the treatment of gender and sexuality in song lyrics and performance styles, and in music videos, with some genres having a clear misogynist strain; for example, hard rock ('cock rock'), and glam metal.

In relation to audiences and consumption, girl fans and their musical tastes are often denigrated (e.g. pop's teenyboppers), while male fans are validated (especially in legitimating non-mainstream musical styles); record collecting presents itself as a highly gendered practice; and youth subcultures have been historically a male preserve, with girls generally absent, 'invisible', or socially insignificant.

A number of historical and contemporary studies have investigated these topics. In relation to rock, for example, in a classic early investigation, Cohen found that, in the Liverpool rock music scene she studied, women were not simply absent, but were actively excluded. All-male bands tended to preserve the music as their domain, keeping the involvement of wives and girlfriends at a distance. This situation reflects the more restricted social position of women, with greater domestic commitments and less physical freedom; the lack of encouragement given to girls to learn rock instruments and rock sexuality as predominantly masculine. Consequently, there are few women bands in rock, or women instrumentalists, and, most women rock performers are 'packaged as traditional, stereotyped, male images of women' (Cohen, *Rock Culture in Liverpool*, 1991: 203). In the early 1990s, the situation Cohen identified was challenged by the riot grrrl movement. More recent studies of rock genres and scenes, along with populist biographical accounts, show a complex set of influences at work (see indie).

See girl groups; fandom