

Yet women who are infertile are no fewer women. Ultimately this stream of thought should dissipate “woman”—or any other demographic variable—as a unitary category of analysis. Much behaviour thought to be related to gender might actually be associated with status or power. What is considered feminine is frequently the product of powerlessness and low status. For example, although Carol Gilligan³² linked with gender an emphasis on rationality compared to relatedness in moral decision-making, Rachel Hare-Mustin and Jeanne Maracek reframed Gilligan’s distinction, making status rather than gender the determining factor. Those in higher positions tend to advocate rules and rationality, while those lower in the hierarchy must focus on connection and communal goals to survive. From this perspective, gender is not the sum of individual personality characteristics attributed to males and females, but the product of interactional processes occurring within particular contexts that reflect and reinforce the distribution of resources in society.

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