



**TOGETHER AGAINST
GENDER STEREOTYPES AND
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**
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GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Collection of Abstracts

CCIIR
2025

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Women's Leadership in Diplomacy and International Relations (Historical and Contemporary Concept)

Women's leadership in contemporary international relations reflects the evolution of gender roles in the international political system. Historically, the diplomatic space has been dominated by men, although women have played important, often informal, roles in maintaining peace and building political alliances throughout history.

In the past, women have often performed diplomatic functions, both formally and informally or unofficially. In the historical context, we can distinguish three groups in the activities of women in diplomatic and international relations: 1. Monarchs, regents or co-rulers, 2. Dynastic marriages, which were aimed at political relations between states, and 3. Women engaged in informal diplomatic (soft diplomacy) activities.

1. Regents, monarchs and co-rulers of the king, who used diplomacy to protect the security and geopolitical interests of their state. Such types of queens include Queen Tamar in Georgia - her reign is considered the Golden Age of Georgia in history. Queen Dinar - Queen of Hereti, who restored Christianity in Hereti, modern Saingilo; Catherine de' Medici - Queen of France from 1547 to 1559 as the wife of Henry II - mother of three French kings: Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III. As the king's mother, she intervened in French politics and had a great influence on it. She was regent in 1552, 1560-63 and 1574-75 and ruled the country herself. Elizabeth I - Queen of England and Ireland from the Tudor dynasty. Reigned in 1559-1603. Due to her absence from marriage, she was nicknamed the Virgin Queen. She was also called "Gloriana" and "Good Queen Bess". Victoria - Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from the Hanoverian dynasty in 1837–1901; In Russia, Catherine II - the Russian Empress of German origin, ascended the throne on September 13, 1762,

the reforms she carried out raised Russia to unprecedented heights, ruled Russia for 34 years, and many others.

2. Women in dynastic politics often shaped strategic relations between states through marriage. For example, Queen Gurandukht - the second wife of David IV the Builder, the daughter of the Kivchag chieftain, for whom David divorced his first wife. Mariam Artsruni - the wife of George I and the daughter of the Vaspurakan king Senekerim, mother of Bagrat IV, builder of churches and monasteries; Mariam of Modena - Queen of England and wife of James II, was originally a representative of the ancient Italian family, the Este dynasty.
3. Soft diplomacy – Women who practiced soft diplomacy were distinguished by their charity, cultural initiatives, and public service, developing “soft power” in international relations long before the term was introduced into political science. One of the clearest examples of this in Georgian history is the two diplomats at the court of Queen Tamar, Ms. Khuashak Tsokali and Ms. Kravai Jakeli.

Such roles for women in diplomacy and international relations have been little recognized for centuries, despite the fact that they performed important functions. The above historical examples show that women often participated in peace negotiations, dynastic politics, cultural diplomacy, and in protecting state interests.

Since the 20th century, global changes have broken down various barriers that have allowed women to actively engage in diplomatic activities. The establishment of the United Nations in 1945, the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the fight for gender equality have created important crossroads. Women's participation in modern world politics is steadily increasing.

In the modern era, international law, gender policy, and democratic processes have significantly increased women's participation in foreign policy. Today, women leaders successfully lead states, ministries, and international organizations and implement important political initiatives. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the historical development of women's leadership, modern concepts, and the impact of their activities in global politics. The research is based on historical sources, international documents, modern research, and practical examples.

The aim of the paper is to present the historical and contemporary processes of women's leadership in diplomacy and international relations, analyze gender barriers, successful examples, policy documents, and future trends.

Gender and Mental Health: Gender Differences in Stress, Depression, and Anxiety

The study of the relationship between gender and mental health provides an important lens for understanding how biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors interact to shape individuals' psychological well-being. This paper aims to present a multidimensional analysis of gender differences in stress, depression, and anxiety. Contemporary research consistently indicates that the prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders is higher among women, a pattern associated with hormonal fluctuations, the disproportionate burden of emotional labor, social expectations, and gender-asymmetric stressors. At the same time, women are more likely to seek and utilize social support systems, which may offer a protective effect for mental health; however, under conditions of sustained or intensified pressure, this support does not always yield adequate outcomes.

Among men, patterns of stress expression and the manifestation of mental health disorders exhibit a different profile. Depressive symptoms are often latent, underdiagnosed, and more likely to be expressed through behavioral, aggressive, or substance-related responses. Traditional norms of masculinity, which discourage the expression of emotional vulnerability, contribute to the underrecognition and insufficient treatment of anxiety and depression. The paper also compares structures of social support and access to healthcare services, demonstrating that gendered differences in these domains significantly influence attitudes toward treatment and the likelihood of seeking professional help.

The analysis of our findings suggests that gender differences in mental health are shaped not only by biological factors but also, critically, by social and cultural determinants. Consequently, there is a clear need for the development of gender-sensitive research agendas, policies, and interventions that address the specific needs of both women and men. Such approaches should include early screening strategies, stigma reduction initiatives, more integrated mental health services, and educational efforts aimed at promoting psychological well-being across diverse social contexts.

Gender equality in science and strategic management of universities

Studying the relationship between gender and mental health is an important way to understand how biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors influence individuals' mental well-being. The paper aims to present a multifaceted analysis of gender differences in stress, depression, and anxiety. Currently, existing research indicates that women have a higher prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders, which is due to hormonal changes, increased emotional labor, social expectations, and gender-asymmetric stressors. In addition, women are more likely to rely on social support systems, which sometimes protect mental health, but do not achieve the desired results under high pressure.

Men have a different profile of stress expression and mental disorders: depressive symptoms are often hidden, difficult to diagnose, and may manifest in behavioral, aggressive, or addictive reactions. Traditional masculine norms that limit the expression of emotional vulnerability contribute to undervalued and untreated forms of anxiety and depression. The paper also compares social support structures and access to health services, which have different effects on treatment attitudes and the likelihood of seeking help by gender.

Our research analysis shows that gender differences in mental health are shaped not only by biological, but also by social and cultural factors. Therefore, it is necessary to develop gender-sensitive research, policies, and interventions that adapt to the specific needs of both women and men. This includes early screening strategies, reducing stigma, more integrated mental health services, and education that will help improve psychological well-being in diverse social settings.

Gender and the Teaching Profession

A significant challenge for the modern educational system is preparing teachers free from gender stereotypes, equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to foster an awareness free from gender biases among students.

This article presents research conducted within the teacher preparation programs at Akaki Tsereteli State University. The study aimed to examine future teachers' perspectives on gender, their experiences during their school years, and to identify needs and ways to enhance teacher preparation programs for effectively imparting gender-related knowledge and skills for practical application.

The research involved seven focus groups with students from the university's teacher preparation programs and interviews with lecturers teaching courses such as: Foundations of Multicultural Education, Democratic Education, Curriculum Design Principles, Safe Schools and Conflict Management, Practice-Based Research in Diverse Learning Environments, and Education Policy. Curriculum and course content analysis was also conducted.

The study revealed that while students recognize the importance of gender equality, some still harbor unconscious stereotypes that influence their decision-making. Notably, the focus group discussions played a consciousness-raising role. An essential message emerged during these discussions: a society free from gender stereotypes is more productive, happier, and successful.

Surveys of students, interviews with lecturers, and curriculum analysis highlighted opportunities to strengthen teacher preparation programs:

- Development of specialized courses on gender issues.
- Integration of gender equality principles into pedagogical course topics.
- Inclusion of gender aspects in literacy teaching methodology courses.
- Discussion of gender-sensitive cases in various course contexts.
- Exploration, planning, and implementation of gender research within courses focused on developing research skills.
- Investigation of gender issues in master's theses.

Language and Gender

Unlike biological sex, gender is a social dimension of sex, a kind of sociocultural phenomenon that reflects the peculiarities of being a man or a woman in a given society.

Gender research in linguistics deals with two very important issues. These are:

1) Language and the gender expressed in it. The goal of such an approach is to explain and describe how the existence of people of different sexes is manifested in language; First of all, the principles of naming, vocabulary, and in grammar - the category of gender.

2) speech and the expression of communicative behavior of women and men are discussed, where typical speech strategies and tactics, gender-specific choice of lexical units / phrases, phraseologisms, means of achieving communicative success, the preference for the selection of lexical units, syntactic constructions that appear in the speech characteristics of women and men are highlighted.

Gender in language represents the features characteristic of women's and men's speech. Therefore, gender linguistics studies speech stereotypes characteristic of women and men.

In the West, three main approaches are distinguished in terms of gender studies:

- The essence of the first approach is the interpretation of the social nature of the spoken language of women and men and aims to reveal those linguistic differences that can be explained by the peculiarities of the distribution of social forces in society.
- The second, sociopsycholinguistic approach, specifies the linguistic features of the linguistic behavior of "women" and "men" from a scientific point of view. For scientists working in this direction, statistical indicators and the determination of average parameters are of essential importance. They create a framework for the speech characteristics of women and men for building a psycholinguistic theory.
- Representatives of the third approach generally focus on the cognitive aspect of the difference in gender linguistic behavior.

In gender stereotypes, three types of stereotypes are considered:

- 1) Masculinity-femininity stereotypes - ideas about the qualities of women and men;
- 2) Concepts about the behavior characteristics of women and men;
- 3) Concepts about roles, functions, and activities.

All three aspects are reflected in language.

Gorgadze Natia

Georgian Institute for Public Affairs (GIPA)

Tools that change practice:

Gender equality based on assessment and diagnosis

Gender equality in higher education is increasingly recognized as a prerequisite for institutional effectiveness, academic quality, and research competitiveness. Despite significant progress in student participation, global and national evidence demonstrates persistent structural inequalities in academic careers, leadership positions, and STEM fields. Georgia follows this trend, with women constituting the majority of enrolled students, yet remaining underrepresented in senior academic ranks and high-impact professional and research domains.

The objective of this paper is to identify assessment and diagnostic metrics for gender equality that are grounded in international best practices while remaining feasible and context-sensitive to the institutional, financial, and data realities of Georgian higher education. The study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative indicators, such as representation, career progression, gender pay gaps, leadership participation, and STEM segregation, with qualitative approaches, including gender audits, focus groups, interviews, and analyses of institutional culture.

The analytical ground is composed of gender mainstreaming, feminist institutionalism, and the capability approach frameworks, allowing gender equality to be examined not only through formal participation but also through the lens of real opportunities for academic development and advancement. International instruments such as the EIGE Gender Equality Index, She Figures, UNESCO SAGA, and the GEAR/GEP model inform the proposed metric framework, while its adaptation is guided by the Georgian context, where monitoring systems and standardized data remain limited.

The paper argues that Georgia requires a set of high-impact yet low-cost and operational metrics that integrate both structural and cultural dimensions of inequality and can be embedded within institutional learning and improvement cycles. Such an assessment-based approach offers a practical pathway from evaluation to institutional change, supports evidence-informed policymaking, and strengthens the alignment of Georgian universities with the European Research and Higher Education Area.

Katamadze Davit

Batumi State University

Internal analysis of gender norms among students: a psychological-educational model of consciousness transformation in higher education

The higher education space is an important sociocultural environment where gender norms, stereotypes, and hidden power dynamics shape students' experiences, identities, and professional paths. The aim of the study is to present how the process of internalizing gender norms occurs in students and how psychological and educational interventions can be used to support the transformation of consciousness. The theoretical framework of the work is based on social-cognitive models, gender schema theory, and the concept of the university's "hidden curriculum," which explain how students acquire gender meanings not only through formal instruction but also through social interactions and institutional culture. The presented "model of consciousness transformation" includes three sequential stages: (1) revealing gender norms and identifying undisguised stereotypes; (2) Introspection and critical reflection, both at the level of intrapersonal and group dynamics; (3) Action transformation, which develops gender-sensitive thinking, responsibility and the promotion of equality in the learning process in students. The model is based on small group discussions, case-based learning and tools for assessing the gender climate in the university.

The data obtained indicate that a critical understanding of gender norms among students makes it possible to identify barriers, reduce stereotypes and initiate pro-social changes. The study provides a practical framework for universities that want to create a gender-sensitive environment, and echoes the goal of the conference - to move from awareness-raising to institutional transformation.

Narrative Forms of Gender Subjectivity

(A comparative analysis of Tamta Melashvili's and Elena Ferrante's texts)

Fiction is one of the significant research resources for the identification and analysis of established gender stereotypes, enabling to reveal overt and covert asymmetries. Comparison of texts by Tamta Melashvili and Elena Ferrante, Georgian and Italian writers, and of their narrative forms allowed to identify gender subjectivity. Both authors apply a homodiegetic form of narration whereby an internal monologue manifests both a character's internal world and gendered stance. In both texts, woman's *ego* takes shape in the crucial period of her life.

In *Blackbird Blackbird Blackberry* by Tamta Melashvili, focalization (in G. Genette's conception) is oriented towards a community's subjective perception. A character's physical and emotional transformation is manifested in a narrative discourse demonstrating how a woman's *ego* merges with her gendered normative milieu.

In *The Days of Abandonment* by Elena Ferrante, the main character's internal monologue produces narratives whereby latent emotional pain and phrases rendering self-reflection turn into discourse tokens remaking woman's subjectivity.

The following were identified as a result of the analysis of both texts:

1. stances in gender relationships whereby woman is viewed as an outcome of social expectations and stereotypes;
2. discourse and linguistic forms of self-reflection, internal monologue, means of silencing and fragmentation producing the "inner voice" of woman's emotional pains;
3. gender stance is rendered by focalization and inner vision.

A comparative analysis of Melashvili's and Ferrante's writings demonstrates how a gender subjective experience is transformed into narrative layers. Obviously enough, literature produces valuable empirical and methodological resources for the study of gender awareness.

Gender Inequality in the Context of Children’s Rights

The protection and implementation of children's rights require a thorough understanding of the social, cultural, and institutional factors that shape children’s capabilities and developmental conditions. Among these factors, gender is one of the most essential components, as it influences the norms, expectations, and behavioral standards that structure children’s daily experiences, access to opportunities, and freedom to make decisions. Although international children’s rights instruments - including the Convention on the Rights of the Child- explicitly prohibit gender-based discrimination, stereotypical perceptions and social norms continue to significantly affect the actual realization of children’s rights.

Gender norms directly affect a child's right to education - not only in terms of access, but also the quality of education, motivation, and level of support. Due to socially embedded perceptions, girls are often less encouraged to pursue fields traditionally considered “masculine,” while boys tend to avoid activities and subjects associated with “feminine” interests. As a result, children are not able to fully develop or express their potential, as gendered expectations narrow the range of their interests and hinder their natural development.

Gender asymmetries also restrict children’s right to participation. In many communities, girls’ opinions are perceived as less credible or authoritative, while boys are often discouraged from expressing emotions or interests that fall outside stereotypical masculine norms. Furthermore, gender norms undermine children’s rights to dignity, safety, and protection; gender-based bullying, sexist attitudes, and stigma can seriously harm children’s psychosocial well-being.

It is therefore vital to integrate a gender-sensitive perspective into children’s rights policy planning and educational practice. Such an approach creates the conditions for an environment in which all children- girls and boys alike - can realize their rights freely, equally, and without the constraints imposed by gender stereotypes.

Pirchkhadze Maia, Bukhrashvili Eka

Georgian Technical University

Gender Stereotypes and Leadership Styles in the Georgian Educational Context

This study examines the extent to which gender stereotypes shape leadership styles within the Georgian educational sector. Although multiple factors influence managerial behavior, gendered expectations remain particularly salient, as they frequently determine how leadership roles and responsibilities are interpreted and evaluated. Effective management—conceptualized as an integration of strategic planning and decision-making—requires leadership that values both quantitative and qualitative competencies. Within this framework, gender often functions as a generator of stereotypical assumptions that influence perceptions of leaders' effectiveness and functional performance.

To explore these dynamics, an empirical study was conducted from 1–5 March 2022 involving 76 participants, including teachers from the Italian School in Tbilisi, as well as students and faculty members of Sokhumi State University and the Georgian Technical University. The research design was informed by contemporary approaches to gender mainstreaming, principles of innovative education, and project management methodologies, all of which underscore the importance of inclusive, equality-oriented, and value-based leadership.

The findings indicate that, despite persistent stereotypes, participants largely attribute leadership effectiveness to individual competencies rather than to gender. Female leaders are perceived as excelling in communication and team-process coordination, whereas male leaders are associated with decisiveness and crisis-management capabilities. Both sets of competencies, however, are regarded as equally vital to organizational success. As a result, the Georgian educational landscape increasingly favors a model of complementary leadership and balanced participation.

Nevertheless, the study reveals that gender stereotypes continue to influence leadership opportunities, management styles, and the broader institutional culture of decision-making. The research concludes by emphasizing the need to eliminate entrenched stereotypes, revise institutional policies, and

promote greater awareness in order to cultivate a leadership environment grounded in gender equality within Georgia's educational sphere.

Gender stereotypes among primary school teachers

Gender stereotypes have a significant impact on the teaching and upbringing process, especially at the primary level, where the teacher's behavior, expectations, and teaching style directly affect children's self-perception, self-efficacy, and future behavioral patterns. In Georgia, gender stereotypes are still widely observed in educational practice, which makes the research particularly important and necessary.

The aim of the study was to identify and analyze gender stereotypes among teachers working at the primary level in Georgia in three areas: family roles, school environment and subject expectations, and professional choices and career stereotypes.

The study was conducted on 40 primary school teachers from both public and private schools. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that included a 5-point Likert scale and closed questions.

The results show that gender stereotypes are still strong among teachers in both family and educational and professional spheres. Some of the stereotypes are invisible to teachers, which indicates a culturally entrenched bias.

The study shows that gender stereotypes are still persistent among primary school teachers and influence student assessment, expectations and distribution of activities. It is necessary to strengthen the gender education of teachers and increase awareness of stereotypes in order to create an equal and inclusive learning environment.

Tabatadze Shalva

East European University

Analysis of Gender Discourses in School Textbooks in the Context of Georgia

This study conducted a critical discourse analysis of ten research studies on Georgian school textbooks to address two questions: (1) What specific discourses are identified in textbooks developed under the first, second, and third generations of the National Curriculum? (2) What factors contribute to the development of these discourses within Georgia’s educational system? Using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) developed by Lazar, the study categorized discourses into three domains—power relations, social interaction, and family interaction—comprising eight subcategories: man is superior to woman; woman is secondary; man holds power; woman is powerless; woman is invisible; woman is a passive participant; man is a problem-solver; and woman as housewife and subordinate while man is head of family. Findings reveal persistent traditional gender stereotypes and the formation of “language-free” discourses through the omission and invisibility of women. Despite women’s structural dominance in education, discursive practices continue to reinforce male privilege, indicating that structural power alone is insufficient for transforming power relations. The study contributes theoretically by advancing a framework for textbook analysis and practically by informing policy and practice aimed at gender equality. Future research should compare rationales for gender equality policies in schools between democratic and authoritarian states.



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