Children, Gender, and Issues of Well-Being

4

Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen and Barrie Thorne

4.1 Introduction

"It's a girl!" "It's a boy!" Around the world, one of these two pronouncements often marks the moment when a baby is born. In cultures where girl babies are less valued, the enthusiasm of the calling out varies depending on whether it is a boy or a girl, or whether a newborn is the second girl born to the parents.

Everywhere, however, a choice of either-or is made on the basis of the appearance of the baby's genitals which in 99 % of the cases are easy to classify. This chapter considers ways in which a gender dichotomy indeed may be basic to everyday ways of talking and to the structuring of social institutions and practices. But we will also highlight the many ways in which the gender arrangements and meanings that inflect the lives of children may challenge a dichotomous view. Gender tends to vary in salience when it comes to individual experiences of embodiment and identity, and the meanings of gender are complex and contextual, changing over time. Furthermore, gender has many facets. It is a dimension of bodies and physical reproduction, individual identities and personal experience, and social relations and everyday interaction. Gender is also central to divisions of labor and to the structuring of institutions such as families, schools, markets, and states.

The experiential, embodied, symbolic, social relational, and structural dimensions of gender are deeply entangled with other lines of difference and inequality, such as age (a key concern of this chapter on children and gender), sexuality, social class, nationality, and racialized ethnicity (for an overview of this approach to

H.B. Nielsen (✉)
Centre for Gender Research, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway
e-mail: h.b.nielsen@stk.uio.no

B. Thorne
Departments of Sociology and of Gender and Women's Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA
e-mail: bthorne@berkeley.edu

A. Ben-Arieh et al. (eds.), *Handbook of Child Well-Being*,
DOI 10.1007/978-90-481-9063-8_4,

theorizing gender, see Connell 2009). These entanglements, or articulations, help shape the organization, salience, and meanings of gender, as we will show in considering children's positioning and experiences in different spheres of life – family, work, schooling, relations with peers, and consumption.

After specifying varied dimensions of gender, we will sketch the changing structure of age and gender relations in the history of children in the global North (industrialized, affluent countries in Europe and North America, also including Australia and New Zealand located in the global South). We will then discuss gendered and age-related trends in the amount and type of unpaid work done by contemporary schooled and domesticated children, with patterns centrally shaped by social class. In the global South (Africa, Latin America, Asia), full-time and continual school attendance is in many ways a class privilege; less affluent children do a great deal of paid and unpaid labor, with gendered patterns inflected by necessity, age, and cultural beliefs and practices.

The next major section of this chapter focuses on children's gendered experiences among peers and within schools – a flourishing area of research in Europe and in the USA. We examine girls' and boys' experiences of doing, being, and becoming gender in the contexts of schools and show how changing empirical approaches, theoretical models, and media discourses have helped shape knowledge about children and gender in different periods of time. We place special emphasis on the changes, and also the continuities, in children's gendered behavior over the last 30–40 years. Our discussion of children's gendered play and friendship relations is based primarily on qualitative studies of children of different ages in a range of contexts.

In the last substantive section, we focus on the ways in which global capitalism, especially the circulation of commercialized culture and products designed for children, "tweens," and teens, is altering the gendered contours of young people's experiences in the global North as well as countries in the global South. In the search for markets, designers and corporations have amplified age and gender distinctions. At the same time, global economic restructuring is widening gaps between the rich and poor in global South as well as global North countries, in patterns articulated with age and gender. In this chapter, we devote far more attention to children in industrialized, or "global North," countries than to those living in Africa, Central and South America, the Middle East, and Asia – the "global South," which, in terms of sheer numbers, is the majority world. This skew is due to the limited reach of our knowledge, although we have tried to open up ways of seeing and thinking about gender that would be useful for more fully global exploration of themes related to children and gender. The relation of gender to the patterning of children's well-being, a contrapuntal theme in this chapter, moves through each section and is pulled together in the concluding summary.

4.2 What is Gender? Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

Gender is empirically present in bodily appearance and experiences, as well as in the patterning of social structures, interactions, and identities. Gender is also

a forceful frame of interpretation in our minds. We not only assign gender to people but also to nonhuman things such as colors, nations, ships, bombs, and tornados (Scott 1988). The color pink now tends to be seen as feminine and the color blue as masculine, but this was not always the case. The idea of signaling a child's gender by color arose in the Western world in the late nineteenth century along with the idea that boyhood and girlhood ought to be more clearly distinguished from each other. This was a product of an amplified dichotomous conception of gender that attended processes of modernization. Before the nineteenth century, gender worked primarily as an axis in divisions of labor along with the distribution of power, authority, and privilege. With an enhanced division between public and private life in the nineteenth century and with the rise of modern medical science, the difference between males and females came to be understood as fundamental, dictated by their different biology and inborn psychological capacities (Laqueur 1990; Fausto-Sterling 2000). This also influenced perceptions of children and ideas about how they should be brought up, as we know, for instance, from Rousseau's (1762/1979) writings about Émile and Sophie. This dichotomous gender scheme extended to assumed psychological differences between girls and boys, which parents reinforced by dressing them in different colors. The colors initially chosen to signal a child's gender may, however, seem a bit surprising: in the nineteenth century, experts argued that a pale blue color was perfect for signaling the delicacy and flightiness of little girls, while a fierce red or pink color would suit the strong and determined little boy. As some point in the first decades of the following century, these colors underwent a sex change; pink then came to indicate feminine daintiness and affection, while blue conveyed masculine strength and straightforwardness (Paoletti 2012).

4.2.1 The Gender Scheme: Dichotomy and Hierarchy

What characterizes gender as a frame of interpretation – with many consequences for the lives of children – is the tendency to split and *dichotomize* phenomena into two distinct groups and the tendency to read this dichotomy as a *hierarchy*. Things defined as feminine also tend to be seen as secondary or even inferior to things defined as masculine. When pink and blue changed places, so did the evaluation of the colors and their relative value: it is more valuable to be strong than weak, wiser to be strong-minded than flighty, and more honorable to be straightforward than dainty. As Simone de Beauvoir pointed out in her landmark book from 1949, women are seen as "the second sex" (de Beauvoir 1949/2009). According to de Beauvoir, men are seen as embodying the universal human, the unmarked category of mankind, whereas women make up a special gendered subcategory whose gender explains their deviation from the universal human. As we will later discuss, this way of thinking may continue even in situations where women gain positions of power or where girls exceed boys in educational achievements. Thus, there is no automatic connection between gender as it is present empirically in the world and gender as a frame of interpretation. However, interpretive models of gender interact with gender in the world: if pink is perceived as

a girlish color, many little girls will want to wear that color, and boys to be careful to avoid it, since, due to the effects of hierarchical evaluation, it is more stigmatizing for a boy to wear pink than for a girl to wear blue. In affluent societies, pink and blue outfits and toys have been highly commodified along with dichotomous ways of marketing geared to girls and to boys. This sharp divide constrains possibilities for alternative images and choices. Through processes of this kind, the symbolic gender assigned to color enters into empirical experiences and practices related to gender. It has come to seem natural for little girls to love pink and for little boys to hate it, further reinforcing the mental model we use for interpreting the world. In this way, gender in our heads and gender in the world continually feed into one another.

4.2.2 Gender Attributions and Double Standards

Gender as frame of interpretation – variously referred to as *symbolic* gender, *representations* of gender, or *discourses* of gender – also influences the way we assign gender to people, starting, in the life course, with an initial gender attribution like "It's a girl!" This process may involve double standards, with behaviors interpreted and valued differently according to the gender of the person. When a boy does well in school, it is often considered to be the result of intelligence, whereas if he does poorly, it might be thought that he is lazy or just bored. When a girl does well in school, it is more often seen as the result of her dutifulness and hard work, but if she does poorly, it may be attributed to lack of intelligence (Walkerdine 1990). A number of researchers have found that teachers tend to notice if girls dominate in the classroom, but not if boys dominate (Öhrn 1991). In the USA, the SAT test, used to assess a student's potential for learning and thus an important gateway to higher education, was readjusted to close the gender gap in areas where girls performed better, but not those where boys did better (Dwyer 1996). In Scandinavia, when the problems of girls in schools were debated in the 1980s, the proposed solutions focused on accomplishing changes in individuals, for example, finding ways to strengthen girls' self-confidence. When the problems of boys in schools came in focus 20 years later, the analysis and solutions were framed in a structural way: the school system did not meet the needs of boys and ought, therefore, to be changed (Öhrn 2000).

Such double standards and attributions seldom work on a conscious level; they slide in as taken-for-granted dimensions of ways of thinking about and practicing gender. Unruly girls may get more on our nerves than unruly boys because we assume that boys will be boys, whereas a girl can behave herself if she really wants to (Gordon et al. 2000). Gender attributions also interact with and may be modified by other categories. Connolly (1998) and Ferguson (2000) found that Black boys are not given the same dispensation as White boys to just be "boys"; teachers more quickly interpreted Black boys' behavior as threatening, consequential, and as a sign of their risk of failure. Gender attributions sometimes emerge in the perceptions and practices of parents who consciously want to raise sons and daughters in similar ways (often by mixing the "positive" sides of both gender repertoires such

as instilling self-confidence, independence, friendliness, caring for others) and who think they manage to treat their children in an equal way. But since parents tend to interpret the same behavior in sons and daughters differently, they may end up treating them differently as well. Scandinavian parents, for instance, generally do not embrace negative gender stereotypical behavior, but they are more ready to accept it if it concurs rather than goes against expectations related to the child's gender. Thus, parents may be more likely to worry about a quiet boy than a quiet girl and a physically aggressive girl more than a physically aggressive boy. Hanne Haavind's study (1987) of Norwegian mothers with a boisterous 2-year-old and a shy 4-year-old demonstrates this very neatly: if the 2-year-old was a girl, the parents tried to teach her to leave her sensitive 4-year-old brother alone, but if the 2-year-old was a boy, the quiet 4-year-old sister had to learn to cope with him because that is how boys are. The parents saw their own actions as a response to the particular and unique personalities of their children and were not aware of the pattern of the gendered attributions that came into sight for the researcher when several families were compared.

4.2.3 Gender as Category and Gender as Distribution

One central source of such gender attributions and double standards is that gender as a concept is used to signify two quite different things: a *categorical difference* (either/or) and a *distributional or statistical difference* (more or less of something). Gender stereotyping involves interpreting a gendered pattern of distribution (e.g., in a statistical study finding that boys tend to take up more space on a playground) as a categorical distinction (generalizing that boys take up more space than girls, which obscures the statistical distribution). This ignores variation within each group and overlap between girls and boys. We tend to notice behavior that confirms gender stereotypes, to marginalize as exceptional behavior that deviates from the stereotypes, and to overlook more gender neutral behavior. There is a further complicating issue: gender is multidimensional, and different dimensions do not necessarily co-occur in the experiences and behavior of a single person. A boy or a girl may be "typical" in some respects and "atypical" in others. So what *is* gender if what we see as "masculine" and "feminine" traits can be found in both girls and boys?

The only close-to-dichotomous observable gender trait – often named as the core of biological sex – is genital difference. However, even this assumed dichotomy doesn't hold up, since a small number of babies are born with ambiguous genitals or intersex conditions (Hines 2004; Fausto-Sterling 2000). All other gender dimensions – whether they are biological (hormone levels, secondary sex attributes, brain structure, motor performance), psychological (differences in motivations or cognitive capacities), or behavioral (differences in preferences, and ways of being and behaving) – involve complex variation, not dichotomy. In most cases, the variation within each gender group is bigger than the average difference between the two groups. Even if, on average, boys grow to be taller than girls, some girls end up

taller than some boys. If we understand those tall girls as "masculine" and the shorter boys as "feminine," we are actually imposing cultural stereotypes on biological variation.

Difference in height is one of the largest average gender differences, whereas measured psychological gender differences are all very small. Meta-analyses of the huge amount of research dedicated to measuring psychological gender differences confirm few clear results (Hines 2004). The reasons for this, as noted by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) in the first comprehensive overview of research on psychological gender differences, may be that gender traits are highly situational, that they tend to increase from childhood to adulthood, and that they are very difficult to measure in unbiased ways. It is also largely unknown to what degree measures of psychological gender differences are actually related to the gender differences found in brain structure or whether the measures depend on learning and experience or some mixture of both. Some behavioral differences have been connected to prenatal exposure to androgen, especially play patterns (choice of play mates, rough-and-tumble play), but new research has also made this less conclusive than what was believed to be the case just a few years ago (Hines 2004). Even the biggest gender difference in cognitive skills – that boys perform somewhat better in visual-spatial tasks – seems to have disappeared in Swedish children after the 1980s (Emanuelsson and Svensson 1990).

The whole idea of a one-way causal route from biology to behavior has been questioned by research documenting the remarkable flexibility of the human brain, the contextual contingency of bodily processes, and the ability even of genes to adjust their effects to individual life circumstances. Thus, almost all gender differences are distributional rather than dichotomous or categorical. Most gender traits seem to be socially influenced and changeable over time, and they do not come in neat and one-dimensional packages in the person. This has led gender researchers to conclude that divisions and hierarchies of gender do not *follow* from the difference between women and men. It is rather the opposite: social and discursive practices that maintain a gender split and gender hierarchy *create* the idea of fundamental dichotomous and categorical gender difference and thus also contribute to producing differences socially and psychologically. These assumed fundamental differences then legitimize differential treatment of men and women and help shape subjective experience of different gender identities. Gender is thus constructed as a difference, and empirical variation in its many dimensions becomes reduced to a simple dichotomy (Magnusson and Marecek 2012: 41).

This does not mean that gendered patterns of behavior are a mirage or that the patterns that do exist have no sort of biological basis (even if we do not know exactly what that basis is). The point is that there is no clear or straightforward connection between near-dichotomous dimensions of biological sex and the complex, multidimensional, and context-dependent nature of gender differences. Gendered patterns – with or without a biological basis – inform cultural norms and expectations about what is seen as typically feminine and typically masculine. Statistical gender distributions do not apply at the individual level, and this

means that if a child exhibits behavior typical of his or her gender, it is not possible to decide whether this is connected to a genetic disposition or to the child having learned to tune in to what he or she understands as the right way to mark himself as a boy, or herself as a girl, in this particular context.

4.2.4 Being, Becoming, Doing Gender?

The focus on gender difference – whether categorical or distributional – tends to limit the analysis of gender to being a characteristic of individuals. But gender is also a dimension of social relations created between people and shaped through processes of interaction. We do not necessarily understand more of the dynamics of a classroom or a peer group by knowing about small average differences in cognitive skills and other behaviors. While the individual perspective frames gender as something we "are," the interactional perspective emphasizes gender as something we "do" (West and Zimmerman 1987). Like adults, children use gender, as well as age, as they go about organizing and making sense of shared worlds. Children as young as four have been found to engage in "borderwork," marking boundaries between boys and girls in their interactions with one another (Lloyd and Duveen 1992). Instead of asking how boys and girls are different and how they came to be that way, it has proven fruitful to ask "how do they come together to help create – and sometimes challenge – gender structures and meanings?" (Thorne 1993: 4) This perspective also calls attention to the dynamics of power in social constructions of meaning. Who, in a group of children, decides what is the right way to "do boy" or "do girl" in specific settings? This approach opens toward understanding multiple forms of *femininity and masculinity* (some inflected by dimensions such as social class, age, or racialized-ethnic status) and the hegemonic position a particular type of femininity or masculinity may attain in a given context (Connell 2000).

Gender as doing and gender as difference are not mutually exclusive perspectives; when children learn to "do" gender in their families, in schools, and with peers, they also "become" gender in certain ways, and this will again form their responses to new social situations (Nielsen and Rudberg 1989; Layton 1998). The gendered identities and behaviors that girls and boys bring with them into new settings will have an impact on how they participate in these situations. But their contributions will also be met and evaluated, implicitly or explicitly, by others, and thus never left unchanged. Studies of "being" gendered and "doing" gender could thus be seen as functionally related, revealing different aspects of social processes involved in constructing gendered identity. Studies of individuals cannot give any full account of the collective process of doing gender since something new is accomplished/created in this process. But the reverse is also true: the analysis of collective praxis does not tell us anything about the different motives of the individuals who engage in processes of meaning making, what positions they choose or get pushed into assuming, and what consequences this has for their sense of self over time.

Different theories have emphasized varied aspects of the process of learning gender in age-related ways throughout life: gender as ways of being and relating; gender as a dimension of interaction, play, and negotiation; or gender as norm and process of normalizing. From the 1950s onward, social scientists have variously framed gender as a learned *role*, gender as *power relation*, gender as an outcome of *socialization*, gender as attained cultural or psychological *identity*/*subjectivity*, gender as created in *interaction*, and/or gender as a negotiated *position* in discourse. One axis of disagreement lies in the tension between *socialization* versus *agency*: is gender imposed on the child from the surroundings or do children actively create gender with their peers? Another axis of disagreement concerns *identity* versus *relation*: does gendered interaction have formative consequences for identity and behavior of the person over time or is it something that mostly exists in moments and immediate contexts of interaction? A third axis of disagreement moves between *the practical* versus *the symbolic*: is gender linked to patterns of practice and material structures, to lived life, or should it be understood mainly as negotiated positions in cultural discourses?

We believe that these tensions should not be framed as either/or; we take an eclectic view and seek to combine them. Gender works in a complex matrix of bodies, structures, materialities, symbols, discourse, interaction, practices, identity, desire, and power.

4.3 Children, Family, and Work Around the World

4.3.1 Historical Changes in Gendered Childhoods in the Global North

In Europe and the USA, contemporary childhoods (which, in many ways, now extend through adolescence) are organized around two main institutions: privatized families, which are largely separated from sites of paid work, and schools. This was not always the case. In the eighteenth century – to sketch with a very broad brush – most children grew up in rural, agricultural contexts, contributing to household-based economies according to configurations of custom, necessity, and ability. Boys and girls as young as four or five often began to contribute and to learn how to work by doing relatively simple tasks like collecting firewood and feeding chickens. Girls (and women) typically did more of the tasks related to food processing, cooking, washing, sewing, and infant care; and men and boys did more of the work related to agriculture, mills, and quarries, although every able-bodied person (including young children) might be mobilized to work in the fields at harvest time. Thus, both girls and boys contributed to family labor systems, although in somewhat different ways.

With the transition to industrial production in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, children were recruited to work in textile mills, in part because they could be paid very low wages. In Glasgow, Scotland, in the 1820s, around 35 % of the workforce in mills were under 14, and 48 % were under 16. Statistics

gathered in England and Wales in 1851 showed more boys aged 5–9 were concentrated in agricultural work than in cotton mills; some girls, aged 10–14, worked in cotton mills, but many more were employed as domestic servants (Cunningham 1995). Between 1910 and 1914, Lewis Hine, an American photographer and social reformer, took over 5,000 photographs of children working in factories, meatpacking houses, sweatshops, coalmines, canneries, and cotton fields and mills (Zelizer 1985). In many of the photos of children working at textile machines and in canneries, girls and boys are doing similar jobs; only boys are shown in photos taken in mines.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, across Europe and the USA, the efforts of social reformers and the expansion of states into the regulation of families and childhoods resulted in laws to end child labor and to require children to attend at least a few years of school. Compulsory and publicly funded schools for both girls and boys were introduced during the nineteenth century in most European countries and in some states in the USA (it was not until 1918 that public schooling was provided in all US states and even then with wide disparities in quality related to social class and race (Zelizer 1985)). The removal of lower-income and working-class children – both boys and girls – from onerous forms of paid labor and the spread of compulsory schooling had the effect of muting class divisions in the organization of childhoods. The emphasis on childhood as a time of schooling and play, and a belief that it is inappropriate for children to do paid work, accompanied ideas about "the developing child." This imagery tends to obscure the degree to which the lives of children continued to vary by social class, racialized ethnicity, and gender. This variation has been documented not only by research on child poverty but also on children's continued participation in labor, both in and outside of families.

4.3.2 Children and Work in the Contemporary Global North

Contemporary children in more industrialized countries tend to be depicted as a drain on family resources – economically useless, but emotionally priceless (Zelizer 1985; Miller 2005). This imagery, and children's legal exclusion from paid work (an exclusion that loosens in the teen years, although schooling continues to be compulsory), has made it difficult to notice their varied forms of productive activity, not only in school – which, arguably, is a form of work – but also within families. Patterns of gender differentiation in types and amount of labor are highlighted in research on adults; women, cross-nationally, tend to do much more housework than men, even in families where both are employed full time. But gender differentiation has been a subsidiary theme in surveys of children's contributions to household labor.

Research in Europe and the USA shows that, on average, children of both genders do relatively little housework, especially when compared with the amount of mess they create. In a 1999 US national survey of children's use of time, Hofferth (2009) found that 6–12-year-olds spent an average of 24 minutes a day doing

household chores. Bonke (2010) reports from a 1998 survey that Danish children also did very small amounts of housework, but once they reached school age, girls did more housework than boys, a pattern also found in other studies (Miller 2005). Thus, a gendered "second shift" – with girls, on average, doing more housework than boys, even when both attend school full time – is not limited to adults. In a US study, Goldscheider and White (1991) found that, on average, in white, two-parent families, teenage boys did almost no housework, but teenage girls did a fair amount. In mother-headed, Hispanic and Black households, both daughters and sons contributed more than in white families. Goldscheider and White (1991) also found that in single-mother families, regardless of race, both boys and girls did twice as much housework as those living in two-parent families.

Two themes in our earlier conceptual discussion help make sense of gendered patterns in children's unpaid and paid work: at most, gender differences are statistical, not categorical, and gender intersects with other lines of difference and inequality. The extent and type of work done by girls and by boys may vary depending on the type of economic arrangement (e.g., small, family-owned shops vs. heavy factory labor), parental income, household configurations, birth order, and cultural ideas about gender, age, and patterns of obligation. Research in the USA shows significant social class and gender variation in the contributions of children, especially teenagers, to family labor systems. At the privileged end of the class spectrum, both girls and boys tend to do far less around the home and expect prolonged support from parents. But in low-income families, minimal earnings and the absence of parents due to long hours of employment tend to push responsibilities for the care of younger children and housework onto older children, especially girls. Dodson and Dickert (2004) document a pattern in which low-income single mothers from racial ethnically diverse backgrounds, with no money to pay for child care and no adult kin available to help out, rely on teenage daughters to care for younger children. Child-outcome studies of families where mothers were forced by state policies to leave welfare and take on low-wage jobs show negative effects for adolescent girls with younger siblings (Dodson and Dickert 2004).

Research on immigrant families living in the USA illustrates cultural variation and the effects of special circumstances, in this case, migration, on gendered patterns of children's work. Families immigrating from global South countries often assume that children will be contributing members of the household; as a Guatemalan mother in Los Angeles told her children, "You have a family, and if we're a family, we work together" (Orellana 2001). Orellana (2001) describes the many domestic chores undertaken by a 7-year-old girl in this family; her brother, a year younger, did far less domestic work. A similar pattern characterized the daily life of a 12-year-old girl in a Yemeni family living in Oakland; after school and on weekends, she did a great deal of child care and housework (nonimmigrant, middle-class girls who were her classmates did little work at home). The Yemeni-American girl's brother, close in age, did little work at home, but after school and during weekends, he helped his father and uncles at the family-owned mini-mart (Thorne et al. 2003).

4.3.3 Gendered Patterns in Children's Labor and Schooling in the Global South

Over the last three decades, processes of globalization have accelerated the movement across national borders not only of people (workers at every level of skill; immigrants, transmigrants, refugees), commodities (including a rapidly expanding array of products geared to children and young people), media, and images. The assumption that boys and girls should be attending school has spread globally, but the reality is sharply divided by social class and, to some degree, by gender. Over a decade ago, Tobias Hecht (1998) documented a spatial and social divide between two starkly different kinds of urban childhood in Brazil. The poor (the vast majority in a country with deep economic inequality) live, at best, at a subsistence level, with pressure on all household members, including both girls and boys, starting at a young age, to contribute. Hecht highlights children's economic contributions and the sense of obligation that frames their work by referring to this pattern as "nurturing childhood," in contrast with the "nurtured childhoods" of the affluent, who live in privatized families and attend school. As in the USA, in big cities in Brazil, neither boys nor girls in highly affluent families are expected to do much work apart from going to school.

The division between an elite stratum of girls and boys who have full access to schooling and the majority of far less affluent and often impoverished children who engage in various configurations of paid and/or unpaid work, increasingly along with attending at least some school, characterizes children's lives in much of the global South or "majority world." In 2008, the International Labour Organization estimated that worldwide, 215 million children were involved in child labor, a decline of 3 % from 2004. Child labor among girls (an ILO category that does not include many forms of unpaid household work) declined by 15 %, but boys' labor increased by 7 % (ILO 2008). The work children do ranges from very low-paid work in mines, factories, quarries, and agriculture, to working in restaurants or shops, to prostitution (where girls predominate, especially in trafficked sex). Most child work takes place in informal economies; millions of children, the majority of them girls, work as domestic helpers for their own or other families.

Loretta Bass' (2004) research in Africa shows how gender may thread through patterns of children's work and schooling. More than two-thirds of the estimated 28 % of children in Ghana who work for pay also attend school (around 90 % of children in Ghana help with household chores). There is a gender gap in schooling – two-thirds of girls and three-fourths of boys attend school – and in work – with girls working longer hours on average than boys. Because of cultural conventions, boys tend to work in wage labor and girls in unpaid domestic work. The time requirements of girls' domestic labor more often compete with their ability to attend school, which helps account for their lower rates of school attendance.

In the USA and some European countries, girls, on average, are now outperforming boys in overall educational achievement. But in much of the world, girls' disadvantage in education continues, especially in Africa and the Middle East. Globally, it is estimated that 72 million children of primary school

age are not attending school; of these, 54 % are girls (United Nations 2010). For youth worldwide, however, the literacy gap between boys and girls has narrowed to 5 % (among adults, worldwide, nearly 64 % of illiterate adults are women) (United Nations 2010).

4.4 Gender and the Daily Lives of Children in the Global North

Researchers working in global North contexts have found that children develop an emotional commitment to their gender as early as 2 years of age. When they arrive in preschool, many of them already act, speak, and behave according to conventional images of gender – although the content of these images may vary considerably. Images of gender may also shift over the life course and as a person moves from one context to another.

4.4.1 Gender-Separated Friendships, Groups, and Social Relations

Separation in the social relations and activities of girls and boys in middle childhood appears to be a relatively dispersed as well as a highly contextualized phenomenon. Cross-cultural research indicates that gender separation is the strongest and least flexible in the age span from 5 to 11 years, with boys defending the gender border more fiercely than girls (Whiting and Whiting 1988). New research from Scandinavia, where gender relations in general have become more equal during recent decades, does not indicate any radical change in this pattern (Gordon et al. 2000; Nielsen 2009). However, this research also indicates that gender separation among children interacts with specific social conditions; for example, while, overall, Scandinavian children experience less gender-differentiated life experience than in the past, this pattern is in tension with the amplified gendering of children's experiences of commercial culture.

Gender segregation may be institutionalized, for instance, in schools, classes, subjects, work groups, seating arrangements, and out-of-school activities, although less so today than previously in Scandinavia and in the USA. Nonetheless, some teachers still tend to reinforce the split, especially in situations of disciplining (Thorne 1993; Nielsen 2009). However, gender separation is also a child-driven project, and adult intervention to promote the relaxed mixing of girls and boys may not be very successful even though girls and boys separate more often on playgrounds than in classrooms. Children's promotion of separation between boys and girls varies with the situation. It tends to be stronger in crowded and institutionalized settings where children watch each other, and it often dissolves in more private and personalized contexts (Thorne 1993). Boys and girls who are friends outside school may belittle or even hide this fact when they meet each other in school or are together with larger groups of friends.

Children's separation into same-gender groups may help them develop and maintain collective identity, since gender is relatively simple to enact as

a dichotomy and carries important cultural meaning that children try to grasp. Bronwyn Davies (1989/2003) calls the phenomenon "category maintenance"; Barrie Thorne (1993) uses the anthropological concept of "borderwork" to describe children's active efforts to demarcate themselves from the other gender. Such borderwork can take many forms, ranging from discrete avoidance to teasing and fighting charged with feelings of thrill and excitement. In some contexts, for instance, when a group of children oppose the authority of a teacher or children from another classroom, the gender border may be provisionally suspended. Gender borders tend to soften up toward the end of primary school, but the excitement of chasing games at this age also may coexist with despair if one is at risk of personally being identified with the other gender or with something that is related to love or sexuality.

Studies of gender separation and a contrastive emphasis on the dynamics of girls' and boys' worlds have been criticized for perpetuating stereotypes instead of deconstructing them and for universalizing gender traits that may be highly tied to Western cultures and also to certain social class and ethnic groups. While it is true that a "difference" perspective may tend to overlook variation and the social interaction between girls and boys within which such differences are articulated, it is also problematic to neglect that fact that gendered patterns exist and have salience for children. Thus, gender patterns should neither be exaggerated nor overlooked. Such patterns often apply more to the "most popular half" than to others in a social class or school (Thorne 1993) – but this half is also often those who shape desirable ways of being a girl or a boy in particular settings. Thus, the patterns tend to become normative, and this means that children who do not conform are pressed to negotiate their relation to this norm in some way.

Research on children's friendships and social relations in Europe and the USA finds that girls' preoccupation with intimacy and social relations and boys' tendency to stir up each other through performance and competition are relatively stable patterns (Frosh et al. 2002; Nielsen 2009). The pattern may be expressed in the ways children allocate attention, their choice of strategies of communication, and how they establish friendships. Girls' interpersonal interest is often expressed in dyadic friendships where they use relational competence both as a means of establishing contact and of fighting and betraying each other. When girls form friendships, they often seek points of similarity, creating strings of attachments between them. But girls' groups may also be characterized by struggles for freedom and fights for alliances. The social life of girls seems to waver between these poles of care and attention and (often indirect) aggression to mark boundaries and make alliances. In interviews, girls often articulate details about their complicated relational world, whereas boys tend to talk less about relations and the social processes of which they are a part. Boys' more assertive and often more openly aggressive behavior can be connected to their more hierarchical and competitive social life, where getting public attention and admiration from a group of boys counts more than intimate relations and where demonstrating their superiority over girls may sometimes be a way of establishing a collective male identity (on boys' and girls' play and social relations, see, for instance, Paley 1984; Nielsen and Rudberg 1989; Hey 1997; Reay 2001; Jordan and Cowan 2004; Pascoe 2007). However, new

research from Scandinavia indicates that the values of boys' groups have become less macho. Even if boys still tend to stick to a hierarchical structure in their groups, there is more room for care and comforting each other and even for talking about feelings (Nordberg 2008; Nielsen 2009). Girls tend to be showing more individualistic behavior in combination with relational interests. One way of trying to grasp persistent gendered patterns in children's play and friendship is to ask how these patterns interact with changing contexts and new social conditions and in what ways they may also gain new meaning.

4.4.2 Gender in the Classroom

Until the mid-twentieth century, gender differentiation – whether through separate schools, separate classes, or different curricula – was often a goal in global North countries in order to prepare girls and boys for their future roles and tasks in society. This began to shift in Scandinavia and the USA after World War II, when an emphasis on equal rights and an educational ideology emphasizing child-centered development and learning gained dominance. "Boys" and "girls" became "children" or "students," and mixed-gender schools became the norm.

However, even though these shifts in language and institutional arrangements had the effect of muting gender as a central defining feature of students, many of the earlier assumptions and practices constitutive of gender difference remained remarkably intact. The ideal "ungendered" child of ideologies of child development was implicitly a generic male (Walkerdine 1990) – and in many classroom studies, those observed and referred to as "students" were actually boys. Before 1970, the few studies focusing on gender influences in classroom interaction criticized the treatment of boys in primary school, claiming that teachers, being mostly women, were unable to meet the boys' learning needs effectively (Brophy 1985).

During the 1970s, feminist researchers began to make girls visible in classroom research and to reveal problematic patterns hidden by the cloak of egalitarian educational discourses (Spender and Sarah 1980). Gender had remained a major organizing principle of classrooms under the claim and intention of gender neutrality. In a meta-analysis of 81 quantitative studies of primary and secondary schools, Kelly (1988) showed that in all countries studied, across all ages, school levels, subjects, and socioeconomic and ethnic groupings, girls received fewer instructional contacts, fewer high-level questions and academic criticism, less behavioral criticism, and slightly less praise than boys. One of the earliest Scandinavian studies of gender in the classroom concluded: "The overall picture of teachers' relationship to students of both sexes indicates that the girls do get some praise for their obedience and willingness to please the teacher, but that they pay a price for this by being forgotten and taken for granted, they do not exist as individuals in their teachers' minds" (Wernersson 1977: 254, translated from Swedish). This pattern may also be inflected by racialized ethnicity, as shown by a US study finding that Black girls in primary school more than other groups of students were encouraged to assume roles that developed their social more than

their academic skills (Grant 1994). Even though girls were often praised as good pupils in primary school, performed better, and were reported to be more satisfied with school, several studies indicated a serious decrease in girls' self-esteem as they moved through secondary school (Brown and Gilligan 1992). Although girls continued to get better marks than boys, teachers often perceived girls' classroom participation to change dramatically and for the worse in adolescence, becoming less compliant, less self-confident, and participating less in classroom discussions (Hjort 1984; Davies 1984).

In the 1980s, the focus shifted from analyses of inequality produced through differential treatment and double standards in the classroom to a focus on the active role children themselves play in constructing gendered worlds and taking up gendered discourse (Davies 1989/2003; Thorne 1993). This was an important interpretive shift in which girls' cooperative style was no longer seen as an expression of inherent obedience and passivity, but as an active taking up of gendered identity. The subtle interplay between the priorities and social orientations of girls and boys, the structure and content of classroom discourse, and the responses they received from teachers were seen as almost inevitably maintaining and reinforcing the traditional gender order.

The different social orientations of girls and boys were also seen as gender specific platforms for strategies of resistance toward power asymmetries in the classroom, especially in secondary school. Studies of youth cultures analyzed different gendered, ethnic, and class identities as positions for gaining power and control both in relation to teachers and in peer groups. Some working-class boys, for instance, seemed to oppose the middle-class culture of school through macho behavior, strengthening both their working-class male identity and the likelihood of dropping out of school (see, for instance, Willis 1977; Kryger 1988). Similarly girls could sometimes use docility to gain facilities or advantages, and they could use their interactive skills in order to gain influence. Adolescent working-class girls appeared to have their own patterns of resistance, using more personal weapons against teachers and school routines (e.g., see Davies 1984; Lees 1986).

In post-structuralist informed studies from the 1990s, the focus changed to the discursive practices through which culturally available meanings are taken up and lived out. These studies asked what positions are open for students to identify with in the gendered discourses of learning, and how do students position themselves in relation to such gendered discourses (for instance, Walkerdine 1990; Davies 1989/2003; Staunæs 2004). To do gender in the classroom is to continuously negotiate, maintain, or oppose the positionings offered in classroom talk. At the same time, because gendered images, metaphors and narratives are part of the everyday, unexamined discursive practices of the classroom, they mostly pass unnoticed by both teachers and students.

Recent studies have taken a broader social constructionist approach and put more emphasis on the open and ongoing processes through which students construct themselves as gendered subjects within specific contexts and organizational framings (see, for instance, Gordon et al. 2000; Reay 2001; Ambjörnsson 2004; McLeod and Yates 2006). School ethnographies combining observations,

interviews, and visual material from everyday life at school with an analysis of the wider material and political structures outside the specific school have become more prevalent. New emphasis has been put on relations between constructions of gender and of sexualities (for instance, Mac an Ghaill 1994; Pascoe 2007). The complexity, ambivalence, and multiplicity of masculinities and femininities among and within individuals has been emphasized and also the intersecting character of different social categories: gender, ethnicity, class and sexuality are not seen as additive identities, but rather as mutually constituting at every moment in the school setting, resulting in an array of different and fluid, but also hierarchically ordered forms of masculinities and femininities which come into existence by being "done" in interaction (e.g., see Connolly 1998; Ferguson 2000).

4.4.3 "New Girls" and "Failing Boys?"

The unfolding of different research perspectives throughout the last decades makes it difficult to say what changes in gendered classroom talk have taken place during that period. Different groups of students have been viewed from different perspectives in varied studies and at different times (Öhrn 2002). Studies of classroom interaction and gendered identities from the 1990s indicate a situation of both continuity and change. Several studies (including more recent school ethnographies) have found discourse patterns in classrooms similar to those in the 1970s. At the same time, they convey a more nuanced picture of variation related to social class, race, ethnicity, and educational context. It is not easy, however, to say whether this variation is due to changes in the ways gender may be expressed in schools today or to greater awareness on the part of the researchers relying both on the 1990s critique of the gender binary and on efforts in the 1970s and 1980s to make gender visible.

Since the early 1990s, a new figure has become visible, especially in research in Scandinavian classrooms: an active girl who keeps intact her relational interests and competencies but does not lose her self-confidence at adolescence. She does better than boys, not only in regard to marks but also in regard to coping with new qualification demands in school and society (see, for instance, Öhrn 2002; Nielsen 2004). When at the same time there are fewer manual jobs for boys with school fatigue, the net effect may be an advance for girls, especially from the middle class. New organizational models of group and project work seem even more than traditional classroom teaching to privilege high achieving students, and these students are more often found among girls and middle-class students, than among boys and working-class students. Studies from other countries show that working-class girls underachieve compared to middle-class girls, but the latter group of well-performing girls also report more stress and anxiety due to their own and their parents' expectations of academic success (Walkerdine et al. 2001). Surveys from the USA report continued lack of confidence among adolescent girls, a pattern inflected by racialized ethnicity: reduced self-esteem in adolescence is highest among Latino girls and lowest among African-American girls (Ohrenstein 1994).

As a mirror to the focus on the "new girl," the discourse of "failing boys" has become prevalent in public and educational debate (see, for instance, Epstein et al. 1998; Martino and Meyenn 2001). More boys have trouble with dyslexia, reading, and behavior and oppositional defiant disorder, and in recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of boys diagnosed and medicated for ADHD. Some of these differences may have a biological foundation (Hines 2004), and this may explain why girls always, in fact, have done better in primary school and why more boys than girls have been defined as needing special education (Öhrn 2002). What is new is that girls today tend to also keep up the lead in subjects like math and science where boys earlier surpassed them in secondary school. On average, in Scandinavia, the UK, and the USA, girls do better in practically all subjects, and they tend to keep their lead throughout school and thus are also becoming a majority in higher education. However, girls' success in school does not automatically translate into an advantage in the labor market (Arnot et al. 1999). It is also important to be aware that the difference in students' achievements related to gender and ethnicity is small compared to the difference related to social class (Ball et al. 2000).

A difficulty in connecting this to what goes on in the classroom is, however, that girls' and boys' situations in school are often analyzed from different perspectives – the "new" girls in term of agency and "failing" boys in terms of an assumed feminized school context (Öhrn 2002). During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a tendency to analyze boys in terms of social class, and girls in terms of gender, but the opposite is the case today where the "new" girl is often explicitly individualized, white and middle class, and the "failing" boys are grouped together as the losing gender. A range of political agendas and research perspectives inform current research on boys. The "what about the boys?" studies continue with the approach of the 1970s in which female teachers are blamed for boys' failure and unhappiness. The "multiple masculinities" agenda focuses on varieties of masculinity and blames the dominant boys for not accepting difference. The more post-structurally oriented studies question the automatic assumption of masculinities of one kind or another as being inextricably linked to the male-sexed body.

Does the degree to which girls lead in school – in combination with a general crisis of traditional masculinities in global North countries – increase anti-school attitudes among boys? Some boys see reading books and doing well in school as feminizing, and thus to be opposed, and the concept of "laddishness" has been used to describe the culture of boys who do not do well in school (see, for instance, Mac an Ghaill 1994; Connell 2000; Jackson 2006; Lyng 2009). Connell argues that many boys respond to the degradation of masculinity by investing in other arenas like sport, physical aggression, and sexual conquest. Others point to an element of defense against the fear of not succeeding in school; it is easier to say that one has not tried than that one has failed. Hegemonic masculinities, fear of feminization, and fear of failing may all be involved.

Another complexity is that even if schools today are to some degree characterized by new ways of constructing gender identities among girls and boys, teachers' interpretation of the students may not have changed to the same extent. Teachers tend to see oppositional girls as a bigger nuisance than oppositional boys, and they

often discipline girls for disruptive behavior they would tolerate in boys (Connolly 1998; Reay 2001; Nielsen 2009). Öhrn (1991) found in a study of Swedish classrooms that being outspoken and active do not necessarily give girls individuality in the classroom. Even when girls were outspoken, teachers continued to frame boys as individuals and girls by groups (with labels for active groups of girls, such as the "girl mafia"). The 1990s discourse of failing boys has aroused much more immediate attention than the discourse of silent and insecure girls in the 1970s and 1980s. The old gender order may also be seen in the research itself where the attention of even aware researchers has been easily drawn toward boys, while girls remain marginalized (Gordon et al. 2000).

4.4.4 Gender and Body Projects in Adolescence

In the transition from primary to secondary school, girls and boys often use different strategies to mark themselves as older (see, for instance, Frosh et al. 2002; Haavind 2003). These strategies could be seen in relation to differing social orientations in childhood. Boys tend to use strategies such as forming close and loyal all-male groups or even gangs, engaging with sports, and/or being tough and engaging in rule-breaking behavior. In contrast, girls more often stage themselves in a female heterosexual position, which in Western culture is often connected to exposing the body in tight clothing and investigating possible romantic relations (see, for instance, Lees 1986; Frost 2001; Hauge 2003). Performing well in school may become antagonistic to popularity, but not necessarily so. This may depend, in part, on configurations of social class and ethnicity among the students.

In secondary school, gender difference often becomes more exaggerated and eroticized. Much of the student talk and teasing documented in British, Scandinavian, and US secondary schools circle around style, appearances, and parts of the body, with public assessment related to gender and sexuality. This focus may split up previous groups of friends, leading to cliques and hierarchies of the more and less popular (see, for instance, Lees 1986; Eder et al. 1995; Frosh et al. 2002). Strong pressure toward heteronormativity at this age is also seen in sexualized harassment and use of words like "slut" and "gay" as insults. In a recent ethnographic study of constructions of masculinity in a US high school, C. J. Pascoe (2007) documents both hegemonic patterns of heterosexualized and aggressive masculinity enacted by boys who are socially dominant in the school and the experiences of boys who have come out as gay. Over the last few decades, the teasing and harassment of gay and lesbian youth in schools have become a focus of research, media reports, and intervention. Students who do not feel attracted or ready for heterosexualized talk and relations often become marginalized. Girls from cultural backgrounds where other markers of adulthood are used – like Muslim girls in Scandinavia who begin to wear head scarves – may also be excluded from the dominant culture and be seen as overly dependent on their families (Hauge 2003; Pichler 2009).

A focus on gender and sexuality among secondary school students may not be new, but the increased significance of the body as identity project is a more

contemporary development, with body shape and appearance more deeply connected to self-esteem and identity (see, for instance, Bordo 1993/1989; Frost 2001; Oinas 2001). The body has become a project (Brumberg 1997). Adolescent girls today (and at increasing younger ages) are vulnerable to the prevalent use and exploitation of the body in marketing and popular culture and also to real and imagined gazes from the boys at school. Eating disorders and dissatisfaction with their own bodies have become an epidemic among girls in various parts of Europe and the USA, and these problems are also emerging among boys. However, recent observations in Scandinavia and the USA suggest that the traditional opposition between being a clever girl and being feminine and sexy has been eroded. Some girls seem to feel free not to have to choose between being smart or sexy, although this amplifies demands, especially among young middle-class women, to be perfect in everything – slender, good looking, clever, ambitious, sexy, lots of friends – causing stress and burnout (Bordo 1993/1989; Ambjörnsson 2004).

The focus on the body brings new dilemmas. There is a more public focus on girls' bodies than boys' bodies in secondary school, and the popular boys often have the upper hand since they can draw on the widespread derogating images of women's bodies and sexuality as well as operate in groups whose members defend each other. In contrast, girls do not have recourse to a similar discourse about men nor, in most cases, can they match this form of organization. Girls also display ambivalence since getting attention for one's looks is a parameter of being popular. Girls in secondary school may waver between exposing their bodies to mark themselves as attractive young women and hiding them to prevent sexist comments from boys. The ambivalent position of girls' bodies may unsettle the power balance between girls and boys in secondary school. Even though girls, on average, may sustain an academic lead, some of them also lose some of their power and self-confidence over the course of secondary school. The relation to boys seems to take more energy for girls in school at this point than do boys' relations to girls (see, for instance, Holland et al. 1998; Frost 2001; Nielsen 2009).

4.5 Globalization and Children's Gendered Consumption

Images of highly gendered and sexualized female bodies and muscular and aggressive male bodies pervade the commercialized forms of popular culture that, by the late twentieth century, had come to infuse the daily lives of children not only in the global North but also in many parts of the global south. Global corporations design and advertise products geared to market niches that amplify and institutionalize distinctions of gender and age. For example, in the 1990s, US marketers coined the word "tween" to refer to girls, roughly between the ages of 7 and 13, who aspire to embody the sexualized styles associated with "teens" (Cook and Kaiser 2004). Distinctive styles of tight clothing, platform shoes, and rock music began to be designed for and helped constitute this emergent age/gender segment of consumers. In recent years, corporations have begun to promote special deodorants and hair

products designed for "tween" boys. Niche creation continues, heightening age-marked gender distinctions in order to maximize profit.

Barbie dolls – the first "fashion adult doll" with pointed breasts, typically bought for and by girls younger than tweens – are marketed by Mattel, a US-based corporation, but the dolls are assembled, often by young women factory workers, in China, Malaysia, and Indonesia with plastic from Taiwan and hair from Japan (Tempest 1996). Mattel advertises and distributes Barbie dolls around the world, with varying degrees of design adaptation (changes of skin, hair color, and dress) and market success. Grewal (1999) studied the marketing of and responses to various versions of Barbie in India; the "regular" white, blonde Barbie dressed in a sari did not sell well; another version with black hair, a bindi, and bangles did better; later versions continued to segment a market geared to middle- and upper-class girls in India and in the South Asian diaspora. But marketers have found that, compared with children in Japan and in global North countries, children in India are not as individuated as separate consumers (Grewal 1999). Chin (1999) observed low-income black girls playing with white Barbies, braiding their blonde hair into corn rows and other hair styles central to African-American culture. In short, while children are influenced by the gendered, sexualized, racialized, and (as in violent video games) aggressively masculine messages of commercial culture, they also exert agency and even resistance in the ways they use these objects.

Commercialized images of gender, age, sexuality, and other interrelated differences pervade not only the world of objects, but also the media (e.g., video games, television, movies, and comic books) that are consumed by children and global in reach. For example, violent and aggressive forms of masculinity are pervasive in the world of video games (Alloway and Gilbert 1998). The conventionally masculine skew of many games may help account for differences in the time boys and girls spend using video games. A 2007–2008 survey of a nationally representative sample of 12–17-year-olds and their parents in the USA found that almost all of those surveyed played video games, but boys were more likely than girls to be intensive gamers, playing on a daily basis for a relatively long duration (Lenhart et al. 2008). Boys were also more likely than girls to play a wider variety of genres, including action, shooting, fighting, and survival games. Girls and boys were equally likely to play games that involved racing, rhythm, simulation, or virtual worlds. Girls more often reported playing puzzle games. There is considerable debate (and inconclusive evidence) about the effects of media on children, including effects on gendered experiences and relations (Drotner et al. 2009).

Access to consumer goods depends on having monetary resources to buy them, but researchers have found that low-income parents in the USA will often stretch to buy their children a much desired pair of Nike shoes if that will help a child be socially accepted (Pugh 2009). Pugh found that in three California elementary schools, Nintendo Game Boys (a video-gaming system) were highly valued, discussed, and owned by boys from across the class and racial-ethnic spectrum; far fewer girls owned or played with Game Boys. However, there was a deep social

class divide in children's access to far more expensive – and, in the long-term highly consequential – market-based contexts such as private schools, afterschool and tutoring programs, and summer camps.

Anthropologists have theorized empirical relations between children, youth, and globalization, with gendered twists in some of their arguments and examples. The widening gaps between rich and poor that have accompanied neoliberal global economic restructuring are especially pronounced among children (of both genders), especially with the decline of class-leveling public schools and provisioning for children, as in the UK and the USA. Cindi Katz (2004) has traced the differentiated ways in which global capitalism, including processes of commodification, are interrupting traditional processes of social reproduction in a rural village in the Sudan and in Harlem in New York City. At the same time, the rapid movements of people, images, and commodities that accompany globalizing processes nurture global imaginations (Cole and Durham 2008). For example, Cole (2008) describes young women in Madagascar who use various fashion practices to attract European men, hoping, in a period when futures opened by schooling seem uncertain, that this may be a route to social and economic mobility.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter, we have employed two different, but interacting perspectives on children and gender: gender as empirical patterns and gender as a frame of interpretation. Conventional ways of framing gender tend to turn variation into a dichotomy of male/female, with more value placed on the male side. This way of seeing ignores complex variation within each gender group and leads to stereotyped gender attributions, double standards, and unequal treatment of girls and boys. As empirical pattern, gender is deeply entangled with other lines of difference and inequality, such as age, sexuality, social class, nationality, and racialized ethnicity. These entanglements shape the organization, salience, and meanings of gender in particular contexts. Gender is multifaceted, a dimension of bodies and physical reproduction; individual identities and personal experience; social relations and everyday interaction; and divisions of labor and the structuring of institutions such as families, schools, markets, and states.

Children's lives, including the gendered dimensions, differ in significant ways, depending on whether they live in industrialized and affluent countries, or in the more impoverished countries of the "global South." This chapter has directed more attention to children in the "global North" since most research on children and gender stems from this context. Contemporary childhoods in the global North are organized around two main institutions: privatized families and schools. In general, children do relatively little housework; however, school-age girls do considerably more than boys, but this pattern also intersects with other dimensions of difference and inequality. In the global South, the assumption that boys and girls should be attending school has spread, but the reality is sharply divided by social class and, to some degree, by gender. In many of these countries, both girls and boys make work contributions to

their families starting at an early age. Millions of children, the majority of them girls, work as domestic helpers for their own or other families.

Gendered patterns in play and schooling have been researched in the global North. Separation in the social relations and activities of girls and boys in middle childhood appears to be a relatively dispersed as well as a highly contextualized phenomenon. In crowded and institutionalized settings, children are often engaged in borderwork to uphold the segregation, and this seems to be relatively unaffected by changing gender relations in the society at large. Research on gendered patterns in children's friendships and social relations shows a complex pattern of stable and changing features; girls' preoccupation with intimacy may be combined with more individualistic behavior, and boys' tendency to stir each other up through performance and competition may be combined with values of care. Change has also taken place in the classroom – from a situation 30–40 years ago with quiet girls and domineering boys to the present situation where many girls take an active position in classroom talk and on average perform better than boys. This change seems to be related both to less gender stereotypical expectations and to changed demands of qualifications in school and society. Gender stereotypical differential treatment by teachers may still prevail, however. So may gender stereotypical conceptions of body and appearances, especially during adolescence. Strong pressure toward heteronormativity at this age is also seen in sexualized harassment and use of words like "slut" and "gay" as insults.

The increased significance of the body as identity project has made boys more occupied with their appearances but also made young women more vulnerable to the prevalent use and exploitation of the body in marketing and popular culture. Eating disorders and dissatisfaction with their own bodies have become epidemic among the new active and highly performing girls. Increased commodification and commercialized images of gender, age, and sexuality in popular culture in the times of neoliberal global economic restructuring help fuel this trend, even as these processes contribute to widening the gaps between rich and poor children.

How does this multifaceted framework for thinking about children and gender bear on issues of well-being? Children's present and future capabilities to flourish, to participate fully in life, and to experience satisfaction are severely diminished by conditions of coercion, violence, exploitation, harsh labor situations, and deprivation of opportunities for education and healthy growth. As we have discussed, gender (in conjunction with age, social class, racialized ethnicity, and other distinctions) enters into the distribution of these conditions. For example, girls are more often sexually trafficked than are boys, while recent global data indicates that more boys are engaged in onerous forms of paid labor. Rates of ADHD and "oppositional defiant disorder" are higher among boys, while girls have higher rates of depression and eating disorders. But, to reiterate one of our key points, none of these patterns is dichotomous; social conditions and gendered practices and meanings vary and change over time. Gender, as we have shown, involves the imposition of dichotomy and hierarchy upon empirical variation. Dichotomous framings of the normal and desirable render some children vulnerable to bullying

and harassment; feeling at home in one's body and able to express gender in ways that feel comfortable is surely one facet of well-being.

Amartya Sen's (2005) discussion of the distinction between – and the interrelatedness of – well-being and agency is highly relevant to questions about children, gender, and well-being. Growing up under conditions of gender inequality and differential treatment shapes patterns of agency, not only during childhood but also in the kind of adult the child will have a chance of becoming. As Sen points out, on a global scale, women's access to agency is vital not only for their own well-being but also for the well-being of men and children. Women's access to agency starts in childhood, and in this way well-being in relation to gender and children also extends to the creation of a better future for everyone.

References

Alloway, N., & Gilbert, P. (1998). Videogame culture: Playing with masculinity, violence, and pleasure. In S. Howard (Ed.), *Wired up: Young people and the electronic media*. London: UCL Press.

Ambjörnsson, F. (2004). *I en klass för seg. Genus, klass och sexualitet bland gymnasietjejer (In a class for themselves. Gender, class and sexuality among high school girls)*. Stockholm: Ordfront.

Arnot, M., David, M., & Weiner, G. (1999). *Closing the gender gap*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ball, S. J., Maguire, M., & Macrae, S. (2000). *Choices, transitions and pathways: New youth, new economies in the global city*. London: Falmer Press.

Bass, L. (2004). *Child labor in sub-Saharan Africa*. London: Lynne Rienner.

Bonke, J. (2010). Children's housework: Are girls more active than boys? *Electronic International Journal of Time Use Research, 7*(1), 1–16.

Bordo, S. (1993/1989). Reading the slender body. In S. Bordo (Ed.), *Unbearable weight*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Brophy, J. (1985). Interactions of male and female students with male and female teachers. In L. C. Wilkinson & C. B. Marett (Eds.), *Gender influences in classroom interaction*. Orlando: Academic Press.

Brown, L. M., & Gilligan, C. (1992). *Meeting at the crossroads: Women's psychology and girls' development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brumberg, J. J. (1997). *The body project. An intimate history of American girls*. New York: Random House.

Chin, E. (1999). Ethnically correct dolls: Toying with the race industry. *American Anthropologist, 101*(2), 305–321.

Cole, J. (2008). Fashioning distinction: Youth and consumerism in urban Madagascar. In J. Cole & D. Durham (Eds.), *Figuring the future*. Santa Fe: School of Advanced Research Press.

Cole, J., & Durham, D. (2008). Introduction: Globalization and the temporality of children and youth. In J. Cole & D. Durham (Eds.), *Figuring the future*. Santa Fe: School of Advanced Research Press.

Connell, R. W. (2000). *The men and the boys*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Connell, R. W. (2009). *Gender: A short introduction*. London: Polity Press.

Connolly, P. (1998). *Racism, gender identities and young children*. London/New York: Routledge.

Cook, D. T., & Kaiser, S. B. (2004). Betwixt and between: Age ambiguity and the sexualization of the female consuming subject. *Journal of Consumer Culture, 4*(2), 203–227.

Cunningham, H. (1995). *Children and childhood in western society since 1500*. London: Longman.

Davies, L. (1984). *Pupil power: Deviance and gender in school*. London/Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
Davies, B. (1989/2003). *Frogs and snails and feminist tales: Preschool children and gender*. Creskill: Hampton Press.
de Beauvoir, S. (1949/2009). *The second sex*. London: Jonathan Cape.
Dodson, L., & Dickert, J. (2004). Girls' family labor in low-income households: A decade of qualitative research. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 66*, 318–332.
Drotner, K., et al. (2009). Children and digital media. In J. Qvortrup (Ed.), *Handbook of childhood studies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Dwyer, C. (1996). Fighting the gender gap: Standardized tests are poor indicators of ability in physics. APS news-online 5 (7). http://www.aps.org/publications/apsnews/199607/gender.cfm. Accessed 24 Oct 2011
Eder, D., Evans, C. C., & Parker, S. (1995). *School talk: Gender and adolescent culture*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
Emanuelsson, I., & Svensson, A. (1990). Changes in intelligence over a quarter of a century. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 34*(3), 171–187.
Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V., & Maw, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Failing boys? Issues in gender and achievement*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). *Sexing the body*. New York: Basic Books.
Ferguson, A. A. (2000). *Bad boys. Public schools in the making of black masculinity*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
Frosh, S., Phoenix, A., & Pattman, R. (2002). *Young masculinities: Understanding boys in contemporary society*. Basingstokes: Palgrave.
Frost, L. (2001). *Young women and the body. A feminist sociology*. Basingstokes: Palgrave.
Goldscheider, F. K., & White, L. J. (1991). *New families, no families? the transformation of the American home*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Gordon, T., Holland, J., & Lahelma, E. (2000). *Making spaces: Citizenship and difference in schools*. London: Macmillan.
Grant, L. (1994). Helpers, enforcers, and go-betweens: Black females in elementary school classrooms. In M. B. Zinn & B. T. Dill (Eds.), *Women of color in U.S. Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Grewal, I. (1999). Traveling Barbie: Indian transnationality and new consumer subjects. *Positions, 7*(3), 799–826.
Haavind, H. (1987). *Liten og stor. Mødres omsorg og barns utviklingsmuligheter [Little and big. Mothers' care and children's possibilities for development]*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
Haavind, H. (2003). Masculinity by rule breaking. Cultural contestations in the transitional move from being a child to being a young male. *NORA, 11*(2), 89–100.
Hauge, M.-I. (2003). Jenter i virvelvind. Konstruktioner av kjønn, alder og etnisitet blant jenter i 12-14-årsalder, [Girls in whirlwind. Constructions of gender, age and ethnicity among 12-14 year old girls]. *Kvinneforskning, 3*, 32–43.
Hecht, T. (1998). *At home in the street: Street children of northeast Brazil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hey, V. (1997). *The company she keeps: An ethnography of girls' friendships*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
Hines, M. (2004). *Brain gender*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hjort, K. (1984). *Pigepædagogik - ? (Pedagogy for girls - ?)*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.
Hofferth, S. L. (2009). Changes in American children's time – 1997 to 2003. *Electronic International Journal of Time Use Research, 6*(1), 26–47.
Holland, J., Ramazanoglu, C., Sharpe, S., & Thomson, R. (1998). *The male in the head: Young people, heterosexuality, and power*. London: Tuffnell.
International Labour Organization. (2008). *Global child labour developments: Measuring trends from 2004 to 2008*. Geneva: ILO.
Jackson, C. (2006). *Lads and ladettes in school*. London: Open University Press.

Jordan, E., & Cowan, A. (2004). Warrior narratives in the kindergarten classroom: Renegotiating the social contract. In M. Kimmel & M. Messner (Eds.), *Men's lives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
Katz, C. (2004). *Growing up global: Economic restructuring and children's everyday lives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Kelly, A. (1988). Gender differences in teacher-pupil interactions: A meta-analytical review. *Research in Education, 39*, 1–23.
Kryger, N. (1988). *De skrappe drenge - og den moderne pædagogik (The tough guys and modern pedagogy)*. Copenhagen: Unge Pædagoger.
Laqueur, T. (1990). *Making sex: Body and gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Layton, L. (1998). *Who's that girl? Who's that boy? Clinical practice meets postmodern gender theory*. New Jersey: Jason Aronson.
Lees, S. (1986). *Losing out: Sexuality and adolescent girls*. London: Hutchinson.
Lenhart, A., Kahne, J., Middaugh, E., et al. (2008). *Teens, video games, and civics*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet and American Life Project.
Lloyd, B., & Duveen, G. (1992). *Gender identities and education*. Hempel Hemstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
Lyng, S. T. (2009). Is there more to 'anti-schoolishness' than masculinity? On multiple student styles, gender, and educational self-exclusion in secondary school. *Men and Masculinities, 11*(4), 462–487.
Mac an Ghaill, M. (1994). *The making of men. Masculinities, sexualities and schooling*. London: Open University Press.
Maccoby, E. E., & Jacklin, C. N. (1974). *The psychology of sex differences*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Magnusson, E., & Marecek, J. (2012). *Gender and culture in psychology: Theories and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Martino, W., & Meyenn, B. (Eds.). (2001). *What about the boys? Issues of masculinity in schools*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
McLeod, J., & Yates, L. (2006). *Making modern lives: Subjectivity, schooling and social change*. Albany: SUNY Press.
Miller, P. (2005). Useless and priceless children in contemporary welfare states. *Social Politics, 12*(1), 3–41.
Nielsen, H. B. (2004). Noisy girls: New subjectivities and old gender discourses. *Young Nordic Journal of Youth Research, 12*(1), 9–30.
Nielsen, H. B. (2009). *Skoletid: jenter og gutter fra 1. til 10.klasse [Schooldays: girls and boys from 1st to 10th grade]*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
Nielsen, H. B., & Rudberg, M. (1989). *Historien om jenter og gutter [The story of girls and boys]*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
Nordberg, M. (Ed.). (2008). *Masculinitet på schemat [Masculinity on the schedule]*. Stockholm: Liber.
Ohrenstein, P. (1994). *School girls: Young women, self-esteem and the confidence gap*. New York: Anchor Books.
Öhrn, E. (2000). Changing patterns? Reflections on contemporary Swedish research and debate in gender and education. *NORA, 8*(3), 128–136.
Öhrn, E. (2002). *Könsmönster i förändring? (Gender patterns in change?)*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
Öhrn, E. (1991). *Könsmönster i klassrumsinteraktion* (Gender patterns in classroom interaction), Göteborg Studies in Educational Sciences 77, University of Göteborg, Göteborg.
Oinas, E. (2001). *Making sense of the teenage body: Sociological perspectives on girls, changing bodies and knowledge*. Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press.
Orellana, M. F. (2001). The work kids do: Mexican and Central American immigrant children's contributions to households and schools in California. *Harvard Educational Review, 71*, 366–389.

Paley, V. G. (1984). *Boys and girls: Superheroes in the doll corner*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Paoletti, J. B. (2012). *Pink and blue: Telling the girls from the boys in America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Pascoe, C. J. (2007). *'Dude, you're a fag': Masculinity and sexuality in high school*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Pichler, P. (2009). *Talking young femininities*. London: Palgrave-Macmillan.
Pugh, A. J. (2009). *Longing and belonging parents, childeren, and consumer culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Reay, D. (2001). Spice girls', 'nice girls', 'girlies', and 'tomboys'. *Gender and Education, 13*(2), 53–66.
Rousseau, J. J. (1762/1979). *Emil or, on education*. New York: Basic Books.
Scott, J. W. (1988). *Gender and the politics of history*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Sen, A. (2005). Women and men. In A. Sen (Ed.), *The argumentative Indian* (pp. 220–250). London: Penguin.
Spender, D., & Sarah, E. (1980). *Learning to lose: Sexism and education*. London: The Women's Press.
Staunæs, D. (2004). *Køn, etnicitet og skoleliv (Gender, ethnicity and school life)*. Frederiksberg: Forlaget Samfundslitteratur.
Tempest, R. (1996). Barbie and the world economy, *Los Angeles Times*, Sept 22, pp. A1–A12.
Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender play: Girls and boys in school*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
Thorne, B., Orellana, M. F., Lam, W. S. E., & Chee, A. (2003). Raising children, and growing up, across national borders: Comparative perspectives on age, gender, and migration. In P. Hondagneu-Sotelo (Ed.), *Gender and U.S. immigration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
United Nations. (2010). *The world's women 2010*. New York: United Nations.
Walkerdine, V. (1990). *Schoolgirl fictions*. London: Verso.
Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H., & Melody, J. (2001). *Growing up girl: Psychosocial explorations of gender and class*. New York: New York University Press.
Wernersson, I. (1977). *Könsdifferentiering i grundskolan* (Gender differentiation in compulsory school), Göteborg Studies in Educational Sciences 22, University of Göteborg, Göteborg.
West, C., & Zimmerman, D. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender and Society, 1*(1), 125–151.
Whiting, B. B., & Whiting, C. P. (1988). *Children of different worlds: The formation of social behaviour*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor*. Aldershot: Gower.
Zelizer, V. A. (1985). *Pricing the priceless child*. Princeton: Princeton Univiversity Press.