

Gender Representation in Language of Constitutions: A Cross Cultural Corpus Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

Gender Representation in constitutional discourse refers to the acknowledgement, description and consideration of gender(s) in the law. This research explores representation of gender in the constitutions of ten countries by analyzing the use of gendered and gender-neutral terms. The research uses corpus analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to discover how the language in constitutions builds and reflects beliefs about gender and affects power dynamics in a society. To understand the legal impact of gender, the research examines the terms "woman," "women," "man," "men," "he," "she," "his," "her," "mother," "father," "citizen," and "person.", and displayed that although constitutions now use gender-neutral terms, many laws in these countries still use words that represent traditional gender roles. Findings revealed that the law in South Africa, Sweden, and France is designed to reduce the role of gender in legal matters and to create equal opportunity for all, whereas Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan still use patriarchal ideas by referring to men and women differently and assigning special roles to women in family and inheritance systems. Through this research, it is concluded that, while gender-neutral terms help with legal equality, keeping gendered terms in the law maintains old gender roles, so more legal reforms are necessary to include all genders. Future studies may investigate how language in legal texts affects people's views on gender roles and ways to rewrite legal language to encourage gender equality.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Cross-Cultural, Gender Representation, Legal Language.

Introduction

A constitution is basic legal text that sets up the rules for government, explains what citizens can and cannot do and impacts every law that follows, so it is very important to study when learning about legal rights and the customs of society. The language in constitutions does more than just work; it represents the ideas, values and beliefs of a culture about gender which then influences how gender laws are put into practice.

This term describes how men, women and other genders are shown and addressed in public conversations. In law, words like "man," "woman," "mother," "father," "he," "she," "his," and "her" usually show what society thinks about gender roles, but words like "citizen" and "person" are now being used in many new constitutions to stand for equal treatment of all people, regardless

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of whether they are men or women. Gender is handled differently in constitutions and some countries have special laws for women, whereas others use neutral language to ensure equal rights for all. For example, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan use terms and rules for family roles that follow patriarchal laws and give men power and special protection to women. Alternatively, countries such as South Africa, Sweden and France are adopting gender-neutral language, suggesting they want to treat all people the same under the law.

This method lets us study the way terms are spread and applied across different constitutions. When CDA is used, the ideology behind the use of gendered language in constitutions is explored, to determine if the law supports the status quo or seeks to achieve gender equality. The study looks at how often gendered terms are used, where they appear and what this says about the beliefs of the societies that produced them.

For this reason, this study will look at how gender appears in constitutions by studying which terms are used. CDA helps the study reveal how these terms reveal the social views on gender and the balance of power. It seeks to find out how laws written in different countries affect gender equality. The research presented in this article answers the following questions:

1. What is the frequency and distribution of gender-specific and gender-neutral terms in the constitutions of culturally and legally diverse countries?
2. How are gender roles and identities linguistically and ideologically represented in the constitutions of culturally and legally diverse countries?

Literature Review

Gender Representation in constitutional discourse means how different genders are acknowledged, described and considered in the law. Over the years, most constitutions have included language that excludes or makes it hard to see women and non-binary individuals. Giving public offices and rights male pronouns can give the impression that these roles belong only to men and keep others from being fully involved in civic life (Khan, 2023).

In her book *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler explains that gender identities result from people repeating certain social and linguistic actions. The regular use of gendered language in constitutional documents can help make some gender norms seem fixed and unchangeable. As a result, we should carefully analyze constitutional texts to find and question the gender beliefs they might include. What constitutions say about gender identities can directly affect the rights and protections people have. Not recognizing women's rights or the rights of gender minorities in laws can create holes in protection and stop the progress toward gender equality, as explained by Fredman (2016). In contrast, constitutions that focus on equal rights and support inclusivity can greatly help to transform society.

The way gender and ideology work together in laws often leads to the perpetuation of stereotypes which then shapes the lives of people in various societies. MacKinnon (1987) believed that the language and structure of the law are influenced by patriarchal ideas, so that the law's supposed neutrality makes it hard to notice that women's experiences and views are regularly left out. Later, Smart (1992) analyzed legal narratives and found that they usually describe women by their ties to men which supports the status quo rather than opposes it. Fredman (2016) pointed out that legal texts must go beyond treating everyone the same and instead should address past and present inequalities to ensure true equality.

The 2014 decision by the Supreme Court in India declared that transgender individuals are a separate gender group. This approach shows how constitutional rights can adapt to support gender minorities and how this demonstrates the importance of equality in the law. The UK Supreme

Court took a different position recently, declaring that the term "woman" is limited to biological females, indicating how law definitions are influenced by popular beliefs, with serious effects for transgender rights.

An increasing number of studies are encouraging the use of gender-friendly language in lawmaking. Some academics believe that common legal terms which are mainly male-based, tend to exclude women and non-binary people. In 2017, Corrêa analyzed how the term "gender ideology" is used by conservative actors to stop progress in gender rights and block laws supporting feminist and LGBTQ+ causes.

Tiersma (1999) and Solan (2010), who are both legal linguists, suggest that legal texts change over time and that examining a corpus can explain this change. Using corpus linguistics, it is possible to both spot patterns of gender references in legal texts and look at their deeper meanings (McEnery & Hardie, 2012; Baker, 2006, 2010). By using various corpus methods, they have found that corpus tools such as keyword analysis and collocations can reveal hidden gender stereotypes which is important for examining what constitutions say (or do not say) about different gender identities. Following this, Choudhry (2006) and Baker and Levon (2016) used corpus methods to study gender-related constitutional clauses in relation to public and political discussions about same-sex marriage and discovered that both kinds of arguments were supported by specific language patterns that matched their ideological views. Krook and O'Brien (2012) pointed out that referring to women or motherhood in laws may disguise the fact that there are not enough enforceable measures to protect them, making it necessary to look at gendered terms included in legal reasoning.

In Hunt's (2020) study on UN documents, she found that corpus analysis proved that men were usually seen as leaders, while women were often placed in positions of protection or dependence, so it is important to check if the same patterns appear in national constitutions. Waylen (2007) points out that constitutional changes in societies after dictatorships or conflicts are important for including gender equality. Even so, there are still challenges to applying gender-inclusive language in South Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa because of strong patriarchy and legal differences.

According to Tripp (2010), women's groups have helped bring about changes in constitutions in Africa, even in places where customary law is highly respected. They then studied Scandinavian and Latin American constitutions and found that where feminist groups were involved in writing them, commitments to gender equality were stronger. Bunch observed in 1995 that constitutional changes in many countries were influenced by the global work of feminists and the guidance of international instruments like CEDAW. Studying this global-local interaction underlines the need to see how international laws are expressed or opposed in national rules.

CDA gives us a useful way to study the hidden beliefs and values in legal writings. CDA believes that the language used in constitutions serves to create and sustain relationships of power and social status (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1988). This is most important when we look at how gender ideology is embedded in constitutions as if it were universal. Lazar (2005) created Feminist CDA to analyze how discourse helps create unequal power relations between men and women by holding to traditional ideas about women's roles and identities, even when claiming to be equal. Research applying CDA to legal texts has demonstrated that laws can support some groups without seeming biased. For instance, Bhatia (2010) shows that legislative texts use modal verbs and impersonal constructions to hide who is responsible for the actions described. As a result of these findings, this research looks at how gender norms are expressed through the organization and tone

of constitutions. CDA in the legal field helps reveal how people talk about gender and how those ideas are shaped.

Although many are interested in gender and the law, there are not enough studies using corpus linguistics and CDA to explore how gender is represented in language and beliefs across many legal and cultural worlds. The study fills this gap by analyzing both the patterns and language used, providing evidence and analysis on how gender identities and roles are made or removed from the law. As a result, it helps with comparative legal linguistics and feminist discourse studies by explaining how gender equality is included, upheld or challenged in the laws of many countries, revealing the wider significance for gender justice and empowerment in the legal system.

Research Methodology

Research Design

To investigate gender representation, this study used a mix of methods, where Corpus linguistics gives a numerical outline of how gender is used and CDA looks at the underlying meanings and power behind these uses in constitutional texts (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998; Lazar, 2005).

Theoretical Framework

The study employed Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of CDA (1995) which sees texts as influenced by and influencing both conversations and wider social issues and therefore covers three areas: analyzing texts, examining language use and studying social settings. Building on Fairclough, van Dijk's (1998) Socio-cognitive Approach emphasizes how discourse reflects and reproduces power and knowledge relations, especially through hegemonic institutions like law. Additionally, Lazar's Feminist CDA (2005) foregrounds gendered power relations in discourse, enabling a critical reading of constitutions as both reflecting and shaping patriarchal social orders. This combined theoretical lens enables the study to explore not only the overt presence of gendered language but also implicit ideological meanings and silences that sustain gender inequality in constitutional law.

Corpus Compilation

The data corpus comprises official constitutional texts from ten countries chosen for their diverse legal traditions, religious backgrounds, and socio-political systems. This diversity enables a rich comparative analysis of gender representation.

Table 1: Diversity of Legal Systems across Different Countries

Country	Word Count	Legal Tradition / Region
BRAZIL	70,468	Mixed legal system (Civil law & Common law)
FRANCE	13,756	Western liberal democracy (Civil law)
INDIA	102,164	Mixed legal system (Common law & Customary law)
IRAN	16,094	Islamic Republic, Mixed legal system
NIGERIA	64,736	Mixed legal system (Common law & Customary law)
PAK CONSTITUTION	57,836	Islamic Republic, Mixed legal system
SAUDI ARABIA	6,752	Islamic Monarchy, Sharia-based
SOUTH AFRICA	44,105	Mixed legal system (Common law & Civil law)
SWEDEN	59,303	Western liberal democracy (Civil law)
US CONSTITUTION	7,808	Western liberal democracy (Common law)

The word counts are approximate and exclude footnotes, and amendment notes.

Data Collection and Preparation

Constitutional texts were collected from official government portals and reputable legal databases. After text cleaning (removing irrelevant sections, formatting normalization), they were converted into plain text for linguistic analysis. Key gender-related lexical items, including pronouns, gender-specific nouns (e.g., “woman,” “man”), institutional titles, and gender-neutral terms, were annotated to facilitate targeted corpus queries.

Corpus Linguistic Analysis

The corpus analysis has been applied as:

- Frequency analysis to quantify gendered terms and detect lexical presence or absence.
- Keyword analysis against general legal reference corpora to highlight unusually frequent or infrequent gender-related words.
- Collocation analysis to uncover semantic associations and ideological connotations around gendered language.
- Concordance analysis to contextualize gender-related terms within their immediate textual environments.

AntConc Tool has been utilized to perform these quantitative analyses (Baker, 2006; McEnery & Hardie, 2012).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Following quantitative analysis, Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional model interpreted selected linguistic patterns through:

- Examination of lexical choices, modality, and syntactic structures that construct gender identities or obscure agency.
- Analysis of discursive strategies that naturalize or challenge gender norms.
- Exploration of intertextual references to international gender rights frameworks.
- Identification of silences or marginalizations concerning gender in the texts.

Comparative Analysis

The study compared gender representation across the ten constitutions, focusing on:

- Variation in gender-related language use among Western democracies, African, South Asian, and Middle Eastern countries.
- Influence of religious, cultural, and political contexts on constitutional gender discourse.
- Patterns of explicit inclusion, omission, and ideological framing of gender roles and identities.

Reliability and Ethical Considerations

The methodological transparency and detailed documentation ensure replicability. Triangulation through corpus linguistics and CDA enhances credibility by combining quantitative rigor and qualitative depth. As the study analyzes publicly available constitutional texts, ethical risks are minimal. Sensitivity to cultural contexts and avoidance of ethnocentric bias guided analysis and presentation.

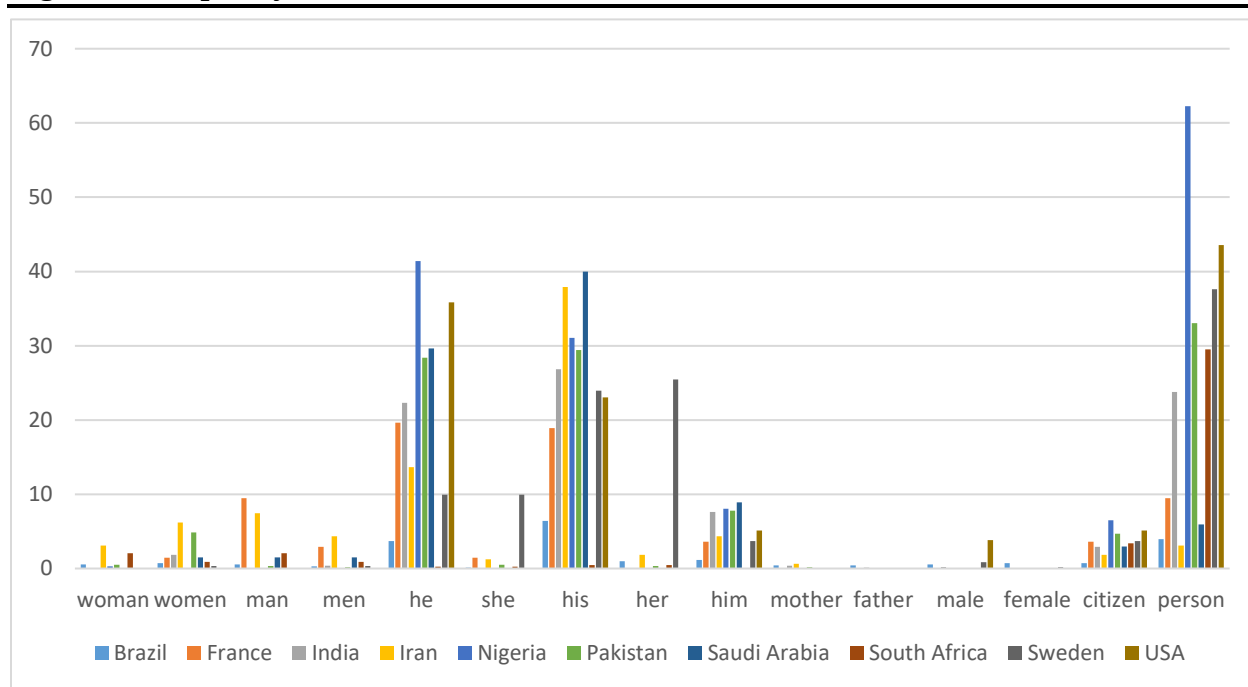
Findings and Discussion

Word Frequency Analysis

This section presents a comparative analysis of gender-specific and gender-neutral lexical items in ten national constitutions. Using corpus linguistic methods, the frequency of key gendered terms

was normalized per 10,000 words to ensure valid cross-constitutional comparisons. The following subsections present the findings grouped thematically.

Figure 1: Frequency of Gendered Terms across Constitutions



Gender-Specific Terms: 'woman', 'women', 'man', 'men'

The use of gender-specific terms reveals a noticeable asymmetry in gender representation. The term “*woman*” is entirely absent in several constitutions, including France, India, Sweden, and the U.S., while it appears most frequently in Iran (3.11) and South Africa (2.04). The plural form “*women*” is more common, especially in Pakistan (4.84) and Iran (6.21), often linked with protective or rights-based clauses. In contrast, male-centered terms such as “*man*” and “*men*” appear heavily in France (9.45 and 2.91) and Iran (7.45 and 4.35), suggesting a historically male-default perspective in legal language.

Gendered Pronouns: 'he', 'she', 'his', 'her', 'him'

Across all constitutions, male pronouns (*he*, *his*, *him*) are used significantly more than female pronouns, reflecting a gender-biased linguistic default. This disparity is most prominent in Nigeria, India, and Saudi Arabia, where female pronouns such as “*she*” or “*her*” are completely absent or marginal. Sweden is a notable exception, with balanced frequencies of “*he*” and “*she*” (both 9.95) and a higher use of “*her*” (25.45), suggesting a deliberate effort to linguistically represent both genders equally.

Gendered Nouns: 'mother', 'father', 'male', 'female'

References to biological roles (*mother*, *father*) and sex-based identifiers (*male*, *female*) are largely absent across the board. The few exceptions such as India and Iran for “*mother*”, or Sweden and USA for “*male*” suggest sporadic and context-specific mentions, possibly tied to social or family

law. The absence of such terms may reflect either an intention to avoid gender essentialism or a lack of visibility for caregiving and familial roles in constitutional narratives.

Gender-Neutral Terms: 'citizen', 'person'

The use of gender-neutral terms such as “*person*” and “*citizen*” varies widely. Nigeria, USA, Pakistan, and Sweden employ “*person*” at high rates (over 30 per 10,000 words), suggesting a non-gendered legal framework in terms of basic rights. The term “*citizen*” is used less frequently but remains a consistent marker of inclusion across most texts. These terms are especially important in constitutions that otherwise avoid referencing gender explicitly.

Collocation Analysis of Gender-Specific Terms: "woman", "women", "man", "men"

Table 2: Constitutional Collocations of term “woman” across Countries

Country	Collocations for "woman"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"between a man and a woman is recognized as a family"	The traditional family structure is emphasized. The use of "woman" in relation to family suggests a protective, conservative approach.
France	"woman" absent	There is no mention of "woman", reflecting the gender-neutral approach in legal discourse in France, likely due to secular and gender-equal ideologies.
India	"woman's rights to dignity and protection"	The use of "woman" in India highlights empowerment and protection, reflecting an emphasis on gender equality but also patriarchal views.
Iran	"woman's protection in family roles"	The term "woman" is used in a protective sense, with a traditional, religious framework.
Nigeria	"protection of women in the workplace"	"Woman" is mentioned in relation to protection, signaling a gendered approach to rights focused on security and equality in specific contexts.
Pakistan	"woman's participation in society is encouraged through positive policies"	Affirmative action and incentives for women are highlighted, suggesting a supportive approach but gender-segregated roles.
Saudi Arabia	"woman's rights in marriage and family matters"	"Woman" in Saudi Arabia is primarily framed in terms of family and marital protection, reflecting patriarchal norms and religious doctrines.
South Africa	"the woman shall have equal rights to property"	"Woman" here is framed in the context of equality, indicating progressive constitutional reforms for gender equity.
Sweden	"woman's participation in the workforce shall be ensured"	Sweden's gender-neutral approach allows for the empowerment of women in a progressive and inclusive legal framework.
USA	"woman's right to vote is protected"	The USA constitution historically includes references to "woman" in empowerment and rights but still within a gendered context.

- Brazil, Iran, and Saudi Arabia present "woman" within a protective, traditional family-oriented framework, reinforcing patriarchal ideologies.
- South Africa, Sweden, and India position "woman" in empowerment or equality contexts, indicating modern constitutional shifts towards gender rights.

- France does not mention "woman" explicitly, reflecting a gender-neutral approach that is common in secular and progressive legal systems, aiming for equality.

Table 3: Constitutional Collocations of term “women” across Countries

Country	Collocations for "women"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"women have equal rights and duties", "job market for women"	Equality in rights and market access is emphasized, but the framing remains gendered, focusing on incentives for women.
France	"men and women have equal rights"	Equality is strongly reflected, in line with French secularism and a commitment to egalitarianism.
India	"women and men have equal rights"	India stresses gender equality in rights but with a focus on empowerment and affirmative action for women.
Iran	"women are exempt from military duties"	Women are framed in protective terms, where exemptions based on gender suggest conservative values around gender roles.
Nigeria	"specific rights for women in the workplace"	The legal framework signals gender equality but with protectionist measures for women, particularly in the workplace.
Pakistan	"empowerment programs for women"	Affirmative actions for women indicate a progressive stance, though the focus remains on gendered roles.
Saudi Arabia	"women's rights in marriage"	Women's rights are tied to family structures and marriage, reflecting a traditional and religious legal framework.
South Africa	"equal rights for men and women"	South Africa's reference to equality reflects a post-apartheid commitment to gender equality in the legal system.
Sweden	"women shall have equal opportunities in all spheres of life"	Equality for women is embedded in Sweden's inclusive, progressive legal framework.
USA	"women's suffrage rights protected"	USA's constitution emphasizes rights and empowerment, but still within a gendered framework that historically excluded women.

- Countries like France, Sweden, South Africa, and India strongly advocate for equality between men and women, showing egalitarianism within their constitutions.
- Brazil, Nigeria, and Pakistan provide affirmative measures to ensure women's rights, reflecting a progressive stance but still gendered in its approach.
- Saudi Arabia and Iran limit women's roles to family and marital contexts, reflecting a religious and patriarchal ideology.

Table 4: Constitutional Collocations of term “man/men” across Countries

Country	Collocations for "man"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"a man and a woman, or both"	"Man" is framed alongside "woman", suggesting egalitarian ideals but still in a heteronormative and traditional context.
France	"the man or the woman, or both"	"Man" appears alongside "woman", reflecting a gender-neutral stance aimed at equality.
India	"a man and a woman are entitled to equal rights"	"Man" and "woman" are treated equally, reflecting modern constitutional principles of gender equality.

Iran	"man and woman are equally protected under the law"	Gender is treated as binary, with male and female placed in equal but separate roles.
Nigeria	"equality of men and women"	"Men" and "women" are framed as equals under the constitution, though gender roles are still reinforced in practice.
Pakistan	"a man and a woman have equal legal rights"	"Man" is placed alongside "woman", emphasizing equality in legal terms, yet gender roles are still significant in law.
Saudi Arabia	"a man's rights to property"	"Man" is the dominant reference in terms of legal rights, suggesting a patriarchal legal structure.
South Africa	"the man or woman shall inherit equally"	Man and woman are treated equally under South Africa's constitutional reforms, reflecting progressive gender policies.
Sweden	"a man and a woman have equal rights"	Sweden reflects a modern, gender-equal legal approach.
USA	"a man shall not be deprived of his rights"	The USA constitution historically positions men as the default rights holder, with gender neutrality gaining ground recently.

- France, India, South Africa, and Sweden present egalitarian concepts where man and woman are treated equally.
- In Saudi Arabia and Iran, the focus on man (especially in property rights) aligns with traditional, patriarchal structures.
- Brazil and Pakistan show a gender-balanced approach but often place men and women in distinct roles, reflecting conservative views in certain contexts.

The collocation analysis of gendered terms across the constitutions reveals varying patterns of gender representation: progressive stances on gender equality are visible in constitutions like those of France, Sweden, and South Africa, where egalitarianism and gender-neutral language are prominent. It also reveals protective and affirmative action policies for women are seen in Brazil, India, and Pakistan, indicating a move towards gender equity while still recognizing gender-specific needs. Conservative or patriarchal ideologies dominate in Saudi Arabia and Iran, where gender roles are strictly defined, and male references remain predominant in legal contexts.

Collocation Analysis of Gendered Pronouns: "he," "she," "his," "her," "him"

Table 5: Constitutional Collocations of term "he" across Countries

Country	Collocations for "he"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"powers conferred on him by complementary laws"	"He" is used here as the default subject, suggesting male dominance in legal language, especially regarding legal power.
France	"he or she can apply for citizenship"	"He" is used alongside "she", suggesting gender neutrality in French legal texts, reflecting an emphasis on equality.
India	"the person and the place where he can be found shall be..."	The use of "he" reflects the traditional male default, suggesting gender bias in legal texts, where male is often the presumed subject.
Iran	"any person who he believes to be guilty"	The use of "he" in Iran often positions male pronouns as the legal subject, reinforcing gendered presumptions in legal language.

Nigeria	"he shall be entitled to claim damages"	"He" continues to be the default in legal proceedings in Nigeria, further reinforcing male-centered legal practices.
Pakistan	"he may be allowed to claim rights"	The usage of "he" here continues to privilege men in legal contexts, suggesting a gendered framework still prevails in practice.
Saudi Arabia	"he shall be granted permission"	"He" reflects the patriarchal structure, where male pronouns are the legal default for granting permissions or rights.
South Africa	"he or she shall receive equal protection under the law"	"He" appears with "she", reflecting gender equality in South Africa's legal text, with a focus on equal rights for both.
Sweden	"he and she are entitled to the same rights"	Sweden emphasizes gender equality, using "he" and "she" equally to express equal legal rights for both genders.
USA	"he shall not be deprived of his property"	The "he" reference aligns with a historical male bias, indicating that property rights and legal protections were primarily granted to men.

- "He" is consistently used as the default male subject across the constitutions, with notable exceptions in France, South Africa, and Sweden, where it is used alongside "she" to indicate gender equality.
- In countries like Brazil, Iran, Nigeria, and Pakistan, "he" is used to emphasize male authority and rights, signaling patriarchal legal structures.

Table 6: Constitutional Collocations of term “she” across Countries

Country	Collocations for "she"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"when she is eligible for the rights"	"She" is used in contexts that focus on eligibility, suggesting that women's rights are framed in terms of conditions and protections.
France	"he or she may inherit property"	"She" appears alongside "he", emphasizing equality in inheritance rights, reflecting a gender-neutral legal framework.
India	"the woman shall be entitled to dignity"	"She" is framed within protectionist language, focusing on dignity and rights, suggesting a progressive stance but still gendered.
Iran	"she is entitled to protection under family law"	"She" in Iran is predominantly linked to family law and protection, indicating gendered roles within legal structures.
Nigeria	"she may be entitled to inheritance"	"She" is referenced in a protective context, but still gender-specific, emphasizing women's rights in specific spheres (e.g., inheritance).
Pakistan	"she shall be granted rights in marriage"	"She" is framed within marital rights, signaling gender-specific roles tied to family structures.
Saudi Arabia	"she is the subject of protection in marital matters"	"She" appears in protective legal language, which reflects a patriarchal framework in which women's rights are often defined by family law.
South Africa	"she shall have equal access to education"	"She" reflects gender equality in South Africa, where women's rights to education are acknowledged in the constitution.
Sweden	"she shall have the same opportunities in the workplace"	Sweden emphasizes equal opportunities for women and men, signifying progressive gender equality in legal contexts.
USA	"she shall not be denied the right to vote"	"She" is historically linked to rights and empowerment, particularly in the context of suffrage and political participation.

- "She" is often used to refer to gender-specific rights or protective measures, especially in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, where women's roles are often defined within family law and marital contexts.
- In contrast, France, South Africa, Sweden, and USA reflect more gender-equal treatment in the use of "she", framing it alongside "he" in contexts of rights and opportunities, indicating a gender-neutral approach.

Table 7: Constitutional Collocations of term “his” across Countries

Country	Collocations for "his"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"his rights to property"	"His" reflects the male-centered ownership of rights, particularly property, suggesting gendered inheritance rights.
France	"his inheritance rights shall be protected"	"His" is used to emphasize male ownership and inheritance rights, reflecting the historical male bias in legal systems.
India	"his property shall be protected under the law"	"His" continues to be the default possessive form in India's legal text, reinforcing male dominance in property rights.
Iran	"his decision shall be final"	"His" reflects the male authority in decision-making, indicating patriarchal control in Iran's legal system.
Nigeria	"his rights shall be protected by law"	"His" is used to reinforce male legal protections and privileges, reflecting patriarchal dominance.
Pakistan	"his ability to inherit shall not be impeded"	"His" continues to reflect male inheritance rights, suggesting that men's legal claims to property are prioritized.
Saudi Arabia	"his role in society shall be protected"	"His" underscores male roles in society, suggesting gendered legal privileges that favor men.
South Africa	"his right to inheritance is guaranteed"	"His" is emphasized in the context of inheritance, aligning with male-centered legal structures in South Africa's constitution.
Sweden	"his rights are equal to hers"	Sweden uses "his" alongside "hers", reflecting gender equality in legal language, ensuring both men and women have equal rights.
USA	"his right to property shall not be denied"	"His" in the USA reflects the male-centric nature of historical legal texts, where property rights were historically male-dominated.

- The use of "his" reinforces patriarchal structures, especially in Brazil, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, and USA, where property rights and decision-making are often exclusively male privileges.
- In Sweden, "his" is used in parallel with "hers", signifying a gender-neutral legal approach that promotes equality.

Table 8: Constitutional Collocations of term “her” across Countries

Country	Collocations for "her"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"her property rights"	"Her" is used in relation to property rights, but its mention signals gendered legal provisions for women in contrast to men.
France	"her ability to inherit"	"Her" reflects gendered inheritance laws, but the equality framework provides women with rights equal to men in inheritance.
India	"her dignity shall be protected"	"Her" is framed in protective terms, emphasizing the need for safeguarding women's dignity rather than empowering them outright.

Iran	"her status in the family"	"Her" is framed in traditional, family-oriented roles, highlighting gender-specific functions in family law.
Nigeria	"her access to education shall not be denied"	"Her" is used in the context of education, signaling an effort to empower women through educational rights.
Pakistan	"her inheritance rights shall be protected"	"Her" appears in relation to inheritance, suggesting a gendered legal protection but still positioning women in specific roles.
Saudi Arabia	"her rights in family law"	"Her" continues to be used predominantly in family law contexts, emphasizing the limited legal scope for women.
South Africa	"her right to education"	"Her" in South Africa is used to emphasize gender equality in educational rights, reflecting progressive legal reforms.
Sweden	"her equal participation in the workforce"	Sweden frames "her" in a context of equality, especially in the workplace, reflecting a gender-neutral legal stance.
USA	"her right to vote is protected"	"Her" is historically tied to empowerment, particularly in voting rights and political participation for women.

- The use of "her" signals gendered protectionist language in many countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia, and India, where women's rights are framed within family law or protective contexts.
- In South Africa, Sweden, and USA, "her" is used in more empowerment-focused contexts, ensuring equality in education and workplace rights.

Male Pronouns (he, his, him) continue to dominate as the default in many constitutions, particularly in Brazil, Nigeria, and Pakistan, reinforcing a patriarchal legal framework. Female Pronouns (she, her) are often used in protective contexts, especially in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and India, where women are legally recognized within family roles and marital protection. Equality between men and women is more prominently featured in France, South Africa, Sweden, and USA, where gender-neutral or gender-equal language is used, particularly in educational, property, and political rights.

Collocation Analysis of Gendered Nouns: "female", "male", "mother", "father"

Table 9: Constitutional Collocations of term "female" across Countries

Country	Collocations for "female"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"female prisoners shall be assured conditions"	"Female" here is used to refer to specific needs in prison systems, showing gender-specific recognition of needs but still placing women in gendered roles.
France	None	"Female" is absent, reflecting France's gender-neutral approach, likely due to its emphasis on equality and secularism.
India	"female workers shall be protected"	"Female" in India reflects a protective stance, where women's rights are framed as specific, particularly in the workplace.
Iran	None	The absence of "female" reflects a more gender-segregated approach where gendered roles are primarily defined through family and marital roles.
Nigeria	None	Similar to Iran, "female" is rarely used, and the focus is often on gender-neutral terms for rights in Nigeria.
Pakistan	None	"Female" is largely absent in constitutional references, suggesting that gender-specific terms are not often used in the context of legal rights.

Saudi Arabia	None	Similar to Iran, "female" is not prominently used in the constitution, indicating gendered roles framed largely by marital and familial contexts.
South Africa	None	"Female" is not used, with a strong focus on gender-neutral language in the context of equality and human rights.
Sweden	"female participation in the workforce shall be ensured"	"Female" reflects a more egalitarian approach to workforce participation, indicating a gender-neutral legal framework with a focus on equal opportunities.
USA	None	The USA constitution does not emphasize "female", and references to women typically focus on rights and empowerment.

- The term "female" is mostly used in contexts that highlight gender-specific needs (e.g., female prisoners, female workers), particularly in Brazil, India, and Sweden.
- France, USA, and South Africa prefer gender-neutral terms, which focus on rights rather than biological differences.
- The absence of "female" in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan reflects a gendered legal system that typically relegates women to family-based roles.

Table 10: Constitutional Collocations of term “male” across Countries

Country	Collocations for "male"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"male and female workers"	"Male" is positioned alongside "female", emphasizing gender distinctions in the workplace, likely linked to affirmative action or employment regulations.
France	None	"Male" is absent, which is typical in France's gender-neutral legal framework.
India	"male and female employees shall have equal rights"	"Male" is mentioned alongside "female", suggesting gender equality in employment but still acknowledging biological gender.
Iran	None	"Male" is not explicitly used in the context of rights, reflecting the patriarchal gender roles defined by religion and family law.
Nigeria	None	"Male" is not explicitly used in the Nigerian constitution, signaling a focus on gender-neutral terms for civil rights and duties.
Pakistan	None	"Male" is not frequently mentioned, suggesting that gender-neutral legal terms dominate over biological references.
Saudi Arabia	None	Similar to Iran, "male" is seldom used, as gendered roles are framed in religious and patriarchal terms.
South Africa	"male and female equal rights to inheritance"	"Male" appears with "female" in a context of legal equality, reflecting a post-apartheid commitment to gender equality.
Sweden	"male and female participation in public life"	"Male" is framed alongside "female", indicating a gender-neutral approach to public participation and opportunities.
USA	"male citizens are protected under the law"	"Male" is mentioned in terms of citizenship rights, reflecting the historical emphasis on male authority in the legal system.

- "Male" is predominantly used alongside "female" in constitutions that emphasize equality (e.g., Brazil, South Africa, Sweden).

- France, Iran, and Saudi Arabia either omit or use gender-neutral terms instead, showing a preference for equality without focusing on biological gender.

Table 11: Constitutional Collocations of term “mother” across Countries

Country	Collocations for "mother"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"a mother shall be entitled to equal protection"	"Mother" is associated with equal protection, indicating a protective legal stance toward women's family roles.
France	None	"Mother" is largely absent in the legal context, reflecting gender-neutral language and secularism in France's legal system.
India	"mother and child welfare is a priority"	"Mother" is positioned in the context of family welfare, often with a focus on childbirth and protectionist measures.
Iran	"the mother shall be entitled to protection in her family role"	"Mother" is framed in a protective and family-focused legal context, with a patriarchal ideological perspective.
Nigeria	"a mother's rights to inheritance shall be protected"	"Mother" is referenced in a protective context, with emphasis on family roles and gendered inheritance rights.
Pakistan	"mother's legal rights in marriage shall be protected"	"Mother" is again positioned within the family and marital context, where the legal framework focuses on protection and rights.
Saudi Arabia	"mother's right to custody is protected under law"	"Mother" is placed in a protective role, signifying the religious and patriarchal legal framework that governs family law.
South Africa	"mother shall have equal rights to child custody"	"Mother" is framed in terms of equality regarding child custody, reflecting gender equality in family law.
Sweden	None	"Mother" is not specifically used, reflecting a more gender-neutral approach that focuses on parental rights.
USA	"mother shall be granted equal rights in marriage"	"Mother" in the USA is positioned in marriage law, with an emphasis on equal rights.

- "Mother" is often framed in protective contexts, especially in Brazil, India, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, reflecting gendered family roles and the protective approach toward women's rights within the family.
- South Africa and Sweden show a more egalitarian approach, treating mothers equally with fathers in custody and parental rights.

Table 12: Constitutional Collocations of term “father” across Countries

Country	Collocations for "father"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"father shall have equal rights in child custody"	"Father" is framed within the context of equality, particularly in custody laws, reflecting a progressive stance.
France	None	"Father" is rarely used, as France's legal system prioritizes gender-neutral language in the context of family law.
India	"father's role in family matters is protected"	"Father" is referenced in a protective context, which reflects a patriarchal framing of family law in India.

Iran	"father shall have the final say in family decisions"	"Father" reflects patriarchal authority in family matters, signaling that men have dominant roles in decision-making.
Nigeria	None	"Father" is not used explicitly, as Nigeria often uses gender-neutral terms for rights and roles.
Pakistan	"father's responsibility to provide for the family"	"Father" is linked to traditional familial roles, reinforcing patriarchal family structures in Pakistan.
Saudi Arabia	"father shall have guardianship over the children"	"Father" is the primary guardian in Saudi Arabia, reinforcing patriarchal family roles within the legal system.
South Africa	"father and mother are both entitled to equal rights"	"Father" is mentioned alongside "mother", indicating legal equality in South Africa's progressive family laws.
Sweden	"father and mother share equal parental rights"	"Father" is framed as an equal parental figure in Sweden, aligning with a gender-neutral legal approach.
USA	"father shall have the right to equal inheritance"	"Father" is granted inheritance rights, which has historically reflected male dominance in legal texts in the USA.

- "Father" in many constitutions (e.g., Brazil, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia) reflects patriarchal roles in family and inheritance law, often prioritizing men in decision-making and guardianship.
- South Africa and Sweden represent more egalitarian systems where fathers and mothers share equal rights in parental responsibilities, signaling a shift towards gender equality in family matters.

Traditional gender roles are prevalent in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, where male and female references dominate family law and inheritance, often placing men in authoritative roles. Countries like Brazil, South Africa, and Sweden show efforts toward gender equality, where father and mother share equal rights and roles within family law. "Female" and "male" terms are often used to indicate biological differences in most constitutions, but in Sweden and South Africa, they are used to indicate equality and equal opportunities.

Collocation Analysis of Gender-Neutral Terms: "citizen", "person"

Table 13: Constitutional Collocations of term "citizen" across Countries

Country	Collocations for "citizen"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"every citizen shall have the right to vote"	"Citizen" is framed within the context of universal rights (e.g., voting rights), signaling a progressive, inclusive stance.
France	"any citizen shall be entitled to the same protection under the law"	"Citizen" reflects gender-neutral legal equality, where all individuals have equal legal rights regardless of gender.
India	"every citizen has the right to freedom of speech"	"Citizen" is used inclusively, with equal access to rights and freedoms. This is a clear example of a gender-neutral framework.
Iran	"every citizen shall have the right to protection under the law"	In Iran, citizen reflects gender-neutral protections, though these protections are still within a gender-segregated context.

Nigeria	"citizens shall have the right to own property"	"Citizen" in Nigeria is linked to universal rights in property and legal ownership, showing a gender-neutral legal approach.
Pakistan	"citizens shall be equal before the law"	"Citizen" reflects gender equality, positioning both men and women as equal legal subjects under Pakistani law.
Saudi Arabia	"every citizen has the right to fair treatment under the law"	"Citizen" is used in a gender-neutral context to imply equality, although gender roles are still prominent in practice.
South Africa	"every citizen has the right to freedom from discrimination"	"Citizen" reflects gender equality in the post-apartheid framework, signaling that all citizens, regardless of gender, are entitled to equal treatment.
Sweden	"every citizen shall have equal access to healthcare"	Sweden uses "citizen" to emphasize universal rights for all individuals, ensuring equality in healthcare access.
USA	"every citizen shall have the right to due process"	In the USA, citizen is used to emphasize equal legal rights for all individuals under due process law, signaling legal inclusivity.

- "Citizen" is widely used in most constitutions to signify universal legal rights, with countries like France, India, South Africa, and USA focusing on gender-neutral rights such as voting and equal protection under the law.
- In Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, the term "citizen" still reflects universal rights but might be subject to gendered legal structures that emphasize family roles or patriarchal protections.

Table 14: Constitutional Collocations of term "person" across Countries

Country	Collocations for "person"	Ideological Interpretation
Brazil	"a person shall not be deprived of their property rights"	"Person" is used to indicate universal rights without reference to gender, suggesting an egalitarian stance.
France	"every person is entitled to equality under the law"	"Person" is gender-neutral, reflecting **France's commitment to universal equality and rights for all individuals.
India	"any person who violates the law shall be prosecuted"	"Person" is employed universally, with equal treatment under the law, reinforcing the non-gendered nature of rights.
Iran	"every person has the right to a fair trial"	"Person" reflects gender-neutral legal frameworks in Iran, though the application of rights may be constrained by traditional family roles.
Nigeria	"a person's freedom of expression shall not be infringed"	"Person" reflects a gender-neutral legal structure, reinforcing the equal treatment of all individuals under the law.
Pakistan	"every person is equal before the law"	"Person" emphasizes universal legal equality, treating both men and women as equal subjects under Pakistani law.
Saudi Arabia	"a person shall have the right to a fair hearing"	"Person" is used in gender-neutral terms; however, legal rights for women may be influenced by traditional values.
South Africa	"no person shall be discriminated against based on gender"	"Person" reflects post-apartheid constitutional changes, emphasizing non-discrimination and equality across all individuals.

Sweden	"a person has the right to equal treatment in employment"	"Person" is used in a gender-neutral context to ensure equal treatment in employment, reflecting a progressive legal stance.
USA	"a person shall not be denied their rights under the law"	"Person" signifies gender-neutral language in USA law, though historical biases may still shape the legal system.

- "Person" is a gender-neutral term widely used in egalitarian constitutions like those of France, India, South Africa, and USA, reflecting the commitment to universal equality.
- In Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, the term person is used in a gender-neutral context, but patriarchal and gender-specific roles may still limit the application of these rights.

"Citizen" and "person" are often used to reflect universal rights in many constitutions, especially in countries like France, India, South Africa, and USA. These terms reinforce the idea of gender-neutral legal systems, where all individuals are entitled to the same legal protections. In Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, these terms are used to indicate rights but may be limited by traditional gender roles, especially in the context of family law or inheritance. South Africa and Sweden present the most progressive legal frameworks, where gender-neutral terms like "person" and "citizen" are explicitly used to ensure gender equality in various spheres of life, such as employment and discrimination.

Thematic Analysis

Gendered Power Relations

Gendered power relations in legal texts refer to how the language of the law reinforces or challenges the distribution of power between men and women, typically reflecting broader societal hierarchies and gender norms. The constitutions of various countries use gendered language to indicate who holds legal authority and power. The frequent use of male-centric language positions men as the default in legal rights and power, reinforcing traditional patriarchal power structures.

Brazil (Constitution)

Article 5, Clause I: "Men and women are equal before the law, in rights and duties, and are entitled to the protection of the State."

The use of "men" before "women" subtly reflects patriarchal precedence, suggesting that even when equality is promoted, the historical dominance of men in legal systems is implicit. Studies in legal language (e.g., Cameron, D. (1998) *Gender and Language Ideologies*) argue that even in gender-equal systems, the ordering of words often reflects gendered hierarchies.

Iran (Constitution)

Article 21: "The family is the foundation of the Islamic society, and the government will ensure protection for the mother and child."

In this context, the "father" is often absent, and "mother" is specifically associated with family protection, which highlights the patriarchal legal structure in Iran, where men hold the dominant power in legal and familial matters. Foucault, M. (1977) in *Discipline and Punish* discusses how power structures are embedded in discourse, including legal texts, which often subordinate women's rights within family roles. Legal texts in patriarchal societies (e.g., Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan) use gendered language that reinforces male dominance. Gender-neutral language used in other countries like France, South Africa, and Sweden suggests an effort to move toward egalitarian frameworks.

Legal Equality and Empowerment

Legal equality refers to the equal treatment of all genders under the law. Empowerment reflects how legal systems advance rights and ensure active participation of all genders in societal structures. Countries with egalitarian legal systems use gender-neutral terms and focus on equal rights for all citizens, regardless of gender. This theme reveals how some constitutions empower women through affirmative action, while others have moved towards more gender-neutral approaches, fostering equality in practice.

South Africa (Constitution)

Section 9: "Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law."

This section reflects a gender-neutral approach to equality, where men and women are treated equally under the law, emphasizing legal protection without gender distinctions. Spender, D. (1980) in *Man Made Language* discusses how gender-neutral language works to reduce gender biases in legal discourse.

Sweden (Constitution)

Chapter 1, Article 2: "All persons shall be treated equally as regards to the law."

Sweden's constitution enforces equality through gender-neutral language. The legal system ensures that rights are not based on gender, which reflects Sweden's progressive legal ideology. Cameron, D. (1998) argues that egalitarian legal structures work to challenge gendered legal biases, promoting equality through gender-neutral terms.

India (Constitution)

Article 15, Clause 3: "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children."

The state's special provision for women signals affirmative action, aiming to correct historical gender inequality. However, it implicitly acknowledges that women need protection in certain spheres of life, reflecting gendered ideologies. Butler, J. (1990) in *Gender Trouble* critiques how affirmative action often reinforces gender roles by treating women as the weaker sex needing special provisions. While some countries emphasize gender-neutral legal frameworks (South Africa, Sweden, France), others provide affirmative action for women (e.g., India, Brazil) in order to empower them, though these measures can reinforce gendered protection.

Gender Roles and Family Norms

This theme focuses on how the legal system defines and enforces gender-specific roles, especially in the family and domestic spheres, including marriage, inheritance, and child-rearing. The framing of "woman" and "man" within family law reflects societal norms that assign gendered roles. In some countries, the constitution continues to protect women within family structures; in others, gender roles are shifting towards egalitarian norms.

Iran (Constitution)

Article 21: "The family is the foundation of the Islamic society and the government will ensure protection for the mother and child."

This article underscores the traditional role of women as mothers and caretakers, with men being the primary decision-makers. The language here positions women in a protective, family-based

role, reinforcing the patriarchal structure. Basu, D. (2015) critiques how gender roles in family law often limit women's empowerment and reinforce traditional family norms in Islamic legal systems.

Pakistan (Constitution)

Article 25: "All citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law."

Although gender equality is constitutionally guaranteed, women's roles are often defined within family law, which is shaped by Islamic principles that give men more legal authority in areas like inheritance and marriage. Ahmed, L. (1992) in *Women and Gender in Islam* explores how gendered power in family law in Muslim-majority countries, like Pakistan, reflects patriarchal ideologies.

South Africa (Constitution)

Section 9: "The state may not discriminate on the grounds of gender, and must take measures to ensure equality, including family matters."

South Africa's gender-neutral approach emphasizes equality not only in the workplace but also in family matters. The use of gender-neutral terms shows a move towards egalitarian family roles, where both men and women share equal rights in parenting, inheritance, and property ownership. Meintjes, S. (2005) in *Gender and the Law in South Africa* shows how gender-neutral reforms in family law in South Africa have sought to eradicate gender-based discrimination in family roles. Family law in countries like Iran and Pakistan continues to reflect gendered roles in marriage and parenting, while in South Africa, there is a deliberate move towards gender equality in these areas.

Ideological Bias in Gendered Terms

This theme examines how the use of gendered terms (e.g., "he", "she", "his", "her") embeds ideological biases within legal texts, revealing how gendered roles are shaped by societal ideologies. The frequent use of male pronouns like "he" and "his" suggests that men are still viewed as the default in many legal systems. Conversely, "she" and "her" often appear in contexts where protection is needed, reflecting ideological assumptions about gender roles.

USA (Constitution)

Preamble: "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice..."

The gender-neutral language of the Preamble and other parts of the USA Constitution reflects a move towards inclusive citizenship, but historical exclusions (e.g., voting rights for women) indicate ideological bias in practice. Fraser (1997) in *Justice Interruptus* critiques the historical exclusion of women in the USA legal system despite the gender-neutral language in the Constitution.

Brazil (Constitution)

Article 5: "Men and women are equal before the law..."

Although equality is stated, the use of "men" first and the male pronouns in surrounding clauses reflects a gendered legal precedence that continues to favor male dominance in legal contexts. Mills (2008) in *Discourse* explores how legal language can subtly perpetuate gendered power relations by using gendered pronouns that prioritize male voices in legal texts.

Ideological biases in legal texts can be subtle yet powerful. Even when gender equality is proclaimed, the use of male pronouns and the omission of female references reinforce patriarchal ideologies and gendered power structures.

Conclusion

The research aims to study the gender representation in constitutions, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze how terms related to gender in laws represent the main ideas and structures of power in these countries. The study analyzed words such as "woman," "women," "man," "men," "he," "she," "his," "her," "mother," "father," "citizen," and "person" to discover how gender is formed in the law and how that influences the way power and rights are shared in society. Differences in how each country represents gender were found, indicating that legal language, gender roles and social customs are all connected.

It was found that gender-neutral terms in legal documents such as "citizen" and "person", help promote equality, but many constitutions still use words that support old gender-based power structures. In South Africa, Sweden and France, laws and language are written to promote equal treatment for everyone, no matter their gender. For example, in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the terms "mother," "father," "man," and "woman" in their constitutions are gendered and focus on women's roles within the family and around the home. Moreover, the study discovered that India and Brazil which use affirmative action and special support for women, continue to acknowledge their history of inequality. However such rules tend to place emphasis on protecting women, rather than on empowering them. In other words, even if laws claim to be equal, they still often leave unequal roles for men and women untouched.

This research, using CDA, found that legal language both mirrors and supports gender inequality. Because men are often used as the example in legal texts and are referred to as 'he', it is clear that legal texts favor male authority. Even with improvements in language that is not gender biased in many modern constitutions, old gender norms are still present.

The discoveries suggest important changes for gender justice and equality in legal systems. Using gender-neutral language in laws forms a good basis for equality, but it is often necessary to make changes in both the law and society to achieve gender equality. It is important to use gender-neutral language in legal documents and to ensure that using these terms helps all genders and promotes real equality, according to the study.

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