



## Chapter 12: Gender and Sexuality

### Objective's for Today's Class:

The difference between sex and gender

Influences on gender

Gender roles and stereotypes

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## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GENDER?

*Sex:* Designates the biological aspects of being female or male

*Gender:* The psychological and sociocultural characteristics of being male or female

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### ● *Gender Role*

– A set of expectations that prescribe how females and males should act, think and feel

### ● *Gender Typing*

– The process by which children acquire the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are considered appropriate for their gender in their culture

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## Biological Influences on Gender

- Research suggests that biological factors, especially early hormonal production, play an important role in gender development
  - Estrogens primarily influence the development of female physical sex characteristics
  - Androgens primarily promote the development of male genitals and secondary sex characteristics

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According to social scientists, psychological sex differences are caused by contrasting roles in society



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## Social Influences on Gender

- Social role theory(Eagly): Gender differences result from the contrasting social roles of men and women.
  - Women have adapted to their roles with less power and less status than men and control fewer resources.

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## Social Influences

- Psychoanalytic theory of gender (Freud) theorized that children develop a sexual attraction to the parent of the opposite sex.
  - The child renounces this attraction because of anxious feelings and identifies with the same-sex parent.

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## Social Influences

- Social cognitive theory of gender (Bandura) proposes that children's gender development proceeds through observation and imitation.
  - Also through the rewards and punishments that children receive for gender-appropriate and gender-inappropriate behavior.
    - Jen, you are a being such a good girl when you help me do the dishes.
    - Bobby, you are a big boy. Big boys don't cry.

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## Cognitive Influences on Gender

- According to cognitive psychologists, children actively construct their gender world:
- Cognitive developmental theory of gender (Kohlberg) believes children's gender typing occurs after they have developed a concept of gender.
  - Once they consistently conceive of themselves as female or male children prefer activities, attitudes, etc that are consistent with this label

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## Cognitive Influences on Gender

- **Gender schema theory:** states that an individual's attention and behaviors are guided by an internal motivation to conform to their developing schemas.
  - This theory proposes that gender typing will begin when children are able to encode and organize information according to what is considered to be appropriate for each sex
  - When they have formed gender schemas.

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## Group Work!

- What characteristics describe female or male?
  - What does it mean to be feminine?
  - What does it mean to be masculine?
- Does it depend on the ethnic background of the male or female?



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## Gender Roles and Stereotypes

- **Gender roles:**
  - Sets of expectations that prescribe how females and males should act, think and feel
- **Gender stereotypes:**
  - Broad categories that reflect our impressions and beliefs about females and males



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## Gender Traits

- **Instrumental Traits (Roles):**

- Traits associated with males, they describe individuals who act on the world and influence it. (Aggressive and independent)
- As a traditional husband and father, a male would face the task of providing for the family and protecting it from harm. Thus, young boys are expected to become dominant, assertive, independent, and competitive

- **Expressive Traits (Roles):**

- Traits associated with females, they describe emotional functioning and individuals who value interpersonal relationships. (Warm and sensitive)

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## Gender Roles in Childhood

- In childhood, children learn quickly about gender roles, and boys receive earlier and more intense gender socialization than girls.
- The social cost of deviating from the social norm is HIGHER for males than females:
  - Effeminate behavior in boys → more negative reaction than masculine behavior in girls
  - Peer rejection and parental disapproval



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## Gender Stereotyping in Childhood

- By kindergarten, children understand gender stereotypes and use this information to guide behavior
- Their understanding grows throughout the elementary-school years
  - They begin to understand that gender stereotypes do not always apply



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## Gender Roles in Adolescence

- Psychological and behavioral differences between boys and girls become greater during early adolescence because of increased socialization pressures to conform to traditional masculine and feminine gender roles

- *Gender-intensification hypothesis*



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## Gender Stereotypes in Adolescence

- In early adolescence, gender stereotyping might increase again
- By late adolescence, gender attitudes become more flexible



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## Gender Roles in Adulthood

- Gender roles change during the adult years

- *Parental imperative*

- Mothers and fathers adopt different gender roles so they can raise children more effectively

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# Is There Any Truth to Gender Stereotypes?

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## Cognitive Differences

- Some research suggests that males are better at math and visuospatial skills while females are better at verbal skills
- National study by the US Department of Education (2000) found:
  - Boys slightly better at math and science
  - Girls better at reading and writing

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## Socioemotional Differences

- *Aggression.*
  - Males are more physically aggressive in all cultures
  - Females are more verbally aggressive
    - Females are more likely to engage in relational aggression

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## Socioemotional Differences

- **Emotional Regulation:**
  - Girls are better able at expressing their emotions and interpreting others' emotions
    - Boys show less self-regulation than girls
  - Girls are more willing to admit to feelings, but boys and girls are equally able to feel what others are feeling

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## Communication Differences

- **Rapport Talk**
  - The language of conversation and a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships
  - More characteristic of females than of males
- **Report Talk**
  - Talk that conveys information such as public speaking
  - More characteristic of males than of females

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## Are These Gender Differences Real?

- Meta-analysis done by Janet Shibley Hyde found that gender differences were nonexistent or small
  - Largest differences → motor skills, sexuality, and physical aggression

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## Next Class

- Exploring Sexuality...
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Developing a Sexual Identity

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