# **Chapter 3**

# **Gender Stereotypes and Gender Differences**

## *“Man should be trained for war and woman for the recreation of the warrior.”*

### Nietzsche

# **Stereotypes, Real Differences, and the Nature-Nurture Issue**

## Distinction among gender-role stereotypes, real gender differences, and the causes of gender differences

### Gender-role stereotypes: set of shared cultural beliefs about males’ and females’ behavior, personality traits, and other attributes

## Gender roles are changing

## The more we know about someone, the less influence that gender has on our impressions of them (Deaux & Lewis, 1984)

## Gender and ethnicity interact

### Within an ethnic group, males and females have some stereotyped traits in common, but also some that differ

### Within a gender, some stereotyped traits are common across ethnic groups, but others differ

## Historical nature of current gender stereotypes

 The cult of True Womanhood

## Some gender-role stereotypes turn out to be true🡪 real differences

### E.g., aggression

## If a gender difference is found, we must determine whether the difference is biologically or environmentally cause

### E.g., is gender difference in aggression innate?

# **Stereotype Threat**

## Claude Steele

## Stereotype threat: being at risk of personally confirming a negative stereotype about one’s group

### Negative stereotypes lead to self-doubt because one may confirm the stereotype, damaging performance

### E.g., stereotypes about women and math hurt women’s performance (Spencer et al., 1999)

## Being the object of two negative stereotypes hurts performance twice as much

### E.g., Latina women’s math performance (Gonzales et al., 2002)

## How do we counteract stereotype threat?

### Positive role models

# **Gender Differences Versus Individual Differences**

## What does it mean to say that males and females are different?

### Even when there are average gender differences in a particular trait, almost always there are still large individual differences

### Distributions overlap

# **Meta-Analysis**

# **Aggressive Behavior**

## Aggression: behavior intended to harm another person

### Males are more physically aggressive than females, *d*=.55

### Finding has been replicated in many cultures (Archer, 2004)

### Difference appears ~2 yrs

## Relational aggression: behavior intended to hurt others by damaging relationships

### Girls are slightly more relationally aggressive than males, *d*=-.13-.19

## What causes the gender difference?

### Aggression part of male role, passivity part of female role

#### Deindividuation research supports this link

### Boys imitate men, who are aggressive, and girls imitate women, who are unaggressive

### Boys are punished more for aggression, but some types of punishment may increase aggression

## What causes the gender difference?

### Girls identify with women, who typically administer discipline, making the punishment for aggression more effective in girls

### Probably: small biologically-based gender differences that are magnified by cultural forces

# **Self-Esteem**

## Self-esteem: level of global positive regard that one has for oneself

## Gender differences change over development

### Elementary school children: *d*=.16

### Middle-school children: *d*=.23

### High-schoolers, *d*=.33

### Adults: *d*=.10

### Older adults: *d*=.03

## Gender differences are larger in White (d=.20) than Black samples (d=-.04)

## Self-confidence: a person’s belief that she or he can be successful at a task

### Females tend to have lower self-confidence

#### Exceptions

##### Gender appropriate tasks

##### Clear, unambiguous feedback

##### Social comparisons

### Are women *lacking* in self-confidence or are men over-confident?

#### Avoid the female-deficit interpretation

### Girls are socialized for modesty, empathy, which may shape achievement estimates

# **Activity**

## Males are more active than females, d=.50

## Developmental change:

### Infants, *d*=.29

### Preschoolers, *d*=.44

### Older children, *d*=.64

## Situational constraints

### In presence of peers, *d*=.62

### Alone, *d*=.44

## 80-90% of hyperactive children are boys

## Maturational differences may be cause

# **Helping Behavior**

## Males help more than females, d=.34

## Surprised?

### Eagly & Crowley (1986) found gender difference in helping behavior was linked to the type of helping behavior measured

#### Heroic, chivalrous, dangerous, observed by others🡪 males scored higher

#### Nurturing and caretaking (part of female role) not usually measured in helping behavior studies

# **Anxiety**

## Girls and women are more fearful, d=-.30

### Difference is larger in self-reports than in direct observation

#### Are girls and women more willing to report fear?

#### Gender role stereotypes

## Regarding psychiatrically diagnosable phobias, women clearly outnumber men

# **Empathy**

## Women are stereotyped as more empathic

### Eisenberg & Lennon (1983): mixed results

#### Type of measure

##### Self-report measures: large difference favoring females

##### Observations: moderate difference favoring females

##### Physiological measures: small difference favoring females

#### Women are more empathic, but difference is small

# **Beyond Gender Stereotypes: Androgyny?**

## Psychologists’ traditional views of M-F

### Masculinity and femininity at opposite ends of one scale: one-dimensional, bipolar continuum

### How do we define masculinity and femininity?

### Is gender so simple?

### Why can’t someone be both masculine and feminine?

## The concept of androgyny

### Androgyny: combination of masculine and feminine psychological characteristics in an individual

### Based on 2-dimensional model of masculinity and femininity

## Measuring androgyny

### Sandra Bem (1974) developed a test

#### Two scores: masculinity and femininity

#### 1/3 of college students are androgynous

## Is it better to be androgynous?

### The good listener study

#### Androgynous people should do better in a wider variety of situations because they are capable of being feminine or masculine when the situation calls for it

#### Feminine and androgynous people were more nurturing

## Criticisms

### Androgyny is freeing, but creates demanding ideal

### Is it a sellout to men?

### Definition of androgyny rests on traditional assumptions about masculinity and femininity

### Personality traits versus actual behavior

# **In Conclusion**

## Beware of focusing on gender differences: gender similarities are the rule

### 30% of meta-analyses on psychological gender differences were close to zero (*d*≤.10)

### An additional 48% were small (*d* between .11 and .35)

**Chapter 3 Infancy and childhood**

Gender Typing: how knowledge about gender is acquired; how they develop personality characteristics, preferences, skills, behavior, self concept.

Factors that contribute to children’s gender typing—guarantee child growing up in N America will be well informed on importance of gender.

## How People Respond to Infant Girls and Boys

### Gender typing—female/male very important

### Parental Preferences About Sex of Children—earlier preference found for having boys. Recent—no preference

Other countries: China 120 infant boys for every 100 infant girls

Bias against female infants and health consequences

### People's Stereotypes About Infant Girls and Boys

#### Parents' ratings of infant sons and daughters. Katherine Karraker research---weak/strong;

Large featured/small; hardy/delicate; masculine/feminine

#### Treat children differently even by the environments picked for infant sons and daughters—pink,frilly/blues or green/trucks, animals

#### Strangers' judgments—similar to how parents treat differently

Adults living in relatively liberal communities may not judge gender stereotypes as rigidly

#### Stern and Karraker review of research: when infant given male or female label. 2/3 or more studies show gender-label affect—goy or girl had significant influence on people’s ratings . Largest difference with activities and physical development, smallest when judging developmental achievement and personality characteristics

#### Social Constructionism—construct or invent own version of reality based on prior experiences.

Expectations and interpretations of others is seen through stereotypic “lenses”---may bring about stereotypic behaviors in others. We may get what we expect

## Theories of Gender Development

### The Social Learning Approach—traditional theories of learning, behaviors important

#### Children are rewarded for "gender-appropriate" behavior, and they are punished for "gender-inappropriate" behavior

#### Children watch and imitate the behavior of other people of their own gender—modeling and observational learning.

### The Cognitive Developmental Approach Children are active thinkers—seek information and try make sense of information

 Children’s thought most important

#### Children develop powerful gender schemas—info organized around male and female

#### Children use gender schemas to evaluate themselves and the people around them

Gender Identity: realize that you are a boy, or a girl. part of gender self concept, self definition as female or male Label is possible by 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 years old

Prefer stereotypic activities as it is consistent with gender identity.

# Factors That Shape Gender Typing

## Parents

### Gender-Typed Activities—different toys provided; assign chores based on gender; discourage activities “inappropriate” for gender;

Males: fathers very concerned with potentially “sissy” activities

Girls allowed more flexibility in toys.

### Conversations About Emotions—different emotions discussed/gender

Daughter: talk about fear and sadness son: anger study: mother especially sadness w/daughter, fathers somewhat.

Mothers speak in more emotional tone with daughters

Study-3 and 4yr old girls more likely to talk about sad experiences

### Attitudes About Aggression—more difference in treatment, perhaps, when in elementary school

### boys may learn aggression/power is a “boy” thing. Boys learn aggression through imitation

Family structure—learn proper feminine/masculine behavior

### Attitudes About Independence—some situations treated same—parents give same kind verbal direction and suggestion.

### Other studies: mother allow sons more independence everyday activities. Other: encourage more indepence in boys; toddlers left alone in room

Different verbal directions to girls than boys—caution girls

### Individual Differences in Parents' Gender Typing—much variation exists.

Social class important for conclusions to be drawn. Ethnicity and social class related

#### Tenenbaum and Leaper study—Mex American dads

Fiese and Skillmen-parents talking to child

#### Nontraditional gender beliefs—parents who endorse nontraditional gender beliefs in own life may treat sons/daughter in gender-fair ways

## Peer Group—own age Peers encourage gender typing in 4 major ways:

### Rejection of Nontraditional Behavior—reject peers acting in ways non-appropriate to gender . Non traditional boys stronger rejection, .

Blakemore study—3 to 11 yrs , would you be friends with person

unwritten boys code quite rigid

### Gender Segregation—associate with others of the same gender, by age 2 or 3 in US and Canada.

###  Increases through early adolescence . peer pressure strong

Gender segregation encourages learning of gender-stereotyped behavior. Don’t learn broad range skills need to work well with both females/males

#### Both boys and girls learn that boys group had greater power. Encourages a sense fo Entitlement—inequality of segregated play groups leads to boys believing they deserve greater power because male.

### Gender Prejudice—prefer own gender study w/videotape interactions. Child rated child in video—girls “liked” girls, boys/boys

### Different Standards—use different standards in interactions. Respond to girls on basis of attractiveness; attractive girls most likely to receive prosocial treatment

#### Attractiveness, Prosocial Behavior & Aggression Study by Gregory Smith: preschoolers observed 5 mn sessions in classroom 5 days. How they treated each other; results showed attractiveness related to how girls were treated. Cutest girls prosocial treatment.

Boys—level of attraction not related to prosocial actions by others.

Similar for aggression-less attractive girls more likely to be hit, kicked and pushed

Not criteria for aggression toward boys

## School and Teachers' Behavior

#### girls as invisible

#### provide boys with more positive feedback

#### encourage dependence and politeness in girls

#### ignore girls of color, class differences

#### discourage assertiveness

### Encouraging Change

#### de-emphasize gender schemas

#### pay equal attention to girls

#### reduce inappropriate stereotypes about gender

### Gender and Education on the International Level

45 of 55 countries in Africa boys more likely to be in elementary school

#### Literacy---800 million illiterate adults in the world—2/3 are women

Education of a female considered a luxury in countries lacking essential resources.

#### birth rates related to education levels

## The Media

### Books

#### role models & self-esteem

### Television