**Chapter 16 Psychology of Men**

Male Roles

Why should women care about men’s issues?

Masculine characteristics

Aggressiveness, independence, self-confidence, being unemotional

Major factors in male stereotypes:

No sissy stuff

The big wheel

The sturdy oak

Bad but bold

Stereotyped types of men

The businessman

The jock

The family man

The nerd

The player

The tough guy

The sensitive new-age guy

The average Joe

Recent History: Changes in the Male Role

Joseph Pleck (1981)

Whenever roles change, ambiguities are created because of contradictions between the old and new roles

Institutional definition and control of masculinity declined, shifting emphasis to internal, psychological masculinity and gender identity

Traditional vs. modern male roles

Traditional Psychology’s View of Men and Masculinity

Male sex-role identity (MSRI) paradigm: traditional psychology’s approach to the psychology of men, based on the assumption that a masculine identity is essential for good adjustment

Assumptions

Gender-role identity results from identification/modeling and, to a lesser extent, reinforcement and cognitive learning, and cognitive learning is more important in males than in females

Men’s negative attitudes and behaviors toward women are a result of problems of gender-role identity that are caused by mothers

Boys have academic and adjustment problems in school because schools are feminine; that only makes boys’ identity problems worse

None of these assumptions has much evidence backing the MSRI paradigm

Ideas have been revived in popular press

Backlash against advances for girls in the schools

A New View: Sex-Role Strain

Sex-role strain (SRS) paradigm: feminist psychology’s approach to the male role, based on the assumption that gender roles for men are contradictory and stressful

Assumptions

Gender roles are contradictory and inconsistent

A large proportion of individuals violate gender roles

Violating gender roles has worse consequences for males than it does for females

Some characteristics that are prescribed by gender roles are actually maladaptive

Lifespan Development

Infancy

Gender similarities are the rule

Boy babies are more active

Circumcision

Routinely done to 59% of male babies in US

Does it affect male psychology?

Childhood

Peer group gains importance, is a powerful shaper of behavior

Gender segregation in play

Boys are more sensitive to reactions of peers, but girls are more sensitive to reactions of teachers

Boys have more problems in school

Gender ratio in ADHD is 2:1-9:1

80% of hyperactive children are boys

Adolescence

Athleticism

Athletic participation is the most important factor in high school boys’ social status, popularity

Strain from ambiguity about success of individual vs. team

Physical effects

Strain for nonathletes

Violence in schools

Bullying and issues of masculinity are key

Emerging adulthood

Guyland

Adulthood

The Provider Role

Preindustrial Society

Provider role: the male role in preindustrial societies, which required the man to provide food and shelter for his family

Women were providers as well

After the Industrial Revolution

Men left home for factories, dividing male and female roles

Good provider role: the male role in industrialized societies, in which the man is expected to earn money and provide well for his family

High pressure, source of strain

Adulthood

Military

The military experience has been a standard one for American men

Appeals to masculinity are used as recruiting and training tools

Military’s definition of manhood: hyperaggressive, no emotions, treat women as objects

Militarism perpetuates the equation of violence and masculinity

Socialization for masculinity is geared to preparing boys for war (Zurbriggen, 2010)

Toughness, aggression, avoidance of femininity, restriction of emotions, power, dominance, control

Fatherhood

Importance of paternal influence

Direct effects vs. indirect effects

Father absence

Little or no evidence of harmful effects

Boys less stereotyped in choice of toys and activities

Nonresidential fathering

How much time do fathers spend with their children?

Is the father role a source of satisfaction, or inadequacy and frustration?

Male midlife crisis?

Complex forces, biological, personal, and social, converge on the middle-aged (40-55) man

Andropause: time of declining testosterone levels in middle-aged men

ADAM: androgen decline in the aging male

Male midlife crisis refers to personal turmoil & sudden changes in lifestyle, touched off by realization of aging, physical decline, being trapped in tired roles

10% of US men undergo something like this

Erik Erikson: major task of adult development is to resolve issue of stagnation vs. generativity

Confrontation with death

Relationships within the family

Post-parental period is rated positively

Men of Color

Men of color in the US share common experiences

E.g., high unemployment, lower wages

African American Men

Grier & Cobbs (1968): “Whereas the white man regards his manhood as an ordained right, the black man is engaged in a never-ending struggle for its possession.”

Given high percentage of female-headed households, do Black youth especially need Black male role models?

High unemployment rate among Black men creates strain for good provider role

Antisocial behavior, violence, crime may result

Volunteering for military more common

Roles of husband and father are closely tied to breadwinner role

Asian American Men

Uneven gender ratios from immigration patterns

Link between husband and adult roles

Stereotyped as asexual

Share many of difficulties faced by Asian American women

Latinos

Hispanic culture viewed as highly patriarchal

Expectations of *machismo*

Importance of *la familia*

Acculturation and endorsement of traditional gender roles

American Indian Men

Some tribes traditionally had relatively egalitarian gender roles

Acculturation and contact with dominant White culture has increased male dominance among Indians

High unemployment create strain

Health Issues

Men live ~6 years fewer than women do

Males have higher death rate, even prenatally

Heart disease

Strikes men at earlier ages

Estrogen is a protective factor

Lethal aspects of male role

Smoking (lung cancer & heart attacks)

Excessive drinking (cirrhosis of the liver)

Accidents

Men are less likely to seek help for medical, mental health, and substance abuse problems

Driving & fatal car accidents

Neither biological nor environmental factors alone can explain the higher mortality rates of males

Male Sexuality

Men go through same biological stages of sexual arousal as women do

In men, vasocongestion produces erection of the penis

Males have refractory period following orgasm

Heterosexuality as central aspect of male identity

Magazines such as Maxim & FHM

Androcentric focus on pleasing women & improving sex life

Unexpected findings about male sexuality

Men sometimes fake orgasm

Want more emotional involvement in sex

Feel under great performance pressure

Distinction between the male sex-role identity paradigm and sex-role strain paradigm

* Usefulness of understanding the psychology of men