

PSYC2500A – Developmental Psychology
November 29/13 * Ch 8 is not on final exam
Gender Differences

Gender Stereotypes:

Men as being strong, aggressive, unemotional, breadwinners, dominant

Women as being passive, emotional, good at multi-tasking, caring, social

- gender stereotypes as varying from culture to culture
 - ex: in the US, men are seen as dominant, whereas in Nigeria it is still strong, but not as much as in the US
- socialization starts very early, from the toys that are available to the toys we buy them, on TV shows

From video about kids on gender roles

- at age 4 and 5, interviewed
- show rigid standards for what they believe is standard for boys and girls
- ex: dresses and long hair for girls
- **gender identity developed at about the same time that children adopt gender roles**
- **stereotypical schemas linked to gender identity**, quickly developed
- **by the age of 5, 90%** of children select the same characters as us, adults, in what differentiates boys from girls
- with time, become more flexible
- tend to become less rigid in what boys and girls can do
- **by adolescence and middle-school, will have more flexible images of what is expected from girls and boys**

Are there real differences between men and women? If so, what are they?

physical development and behaviour:

- the most obvious differences are the **primary and secondary sex traits**
- in terms of maturation, **most girls experience growth spurts during adolescence at the beginning of puberty, whereas boys develop later on in puberty**

Brain growth – young men have a thicker outer layer of the cortex. On the outer layer, we have **the sense of direction – spatial abilities**, which allows them to have a different sense of direction.

Text – Kail and Barnfield reference Eleanor Maccabee's book on gender difference, published in the 1970s.

- Maccabee et al summarized 1500 studies about gender differences – noticed many of them did not explicitly indicate gender differences
- women went back to work after the 2nd world war, women demanding more independence
- **differences they did report: achievement and skill – little girls typically have greater verbal abilities than little boys; read more than boys**
- other ability: **spatial abilities – little boys as having greater spatial abilities** in little boys: little boys at being better at mental rotation tasks
- women tend to use **landmarks – better at spatial memory**, whereas men who have better sets of **spatial relations and mental rotation are better at using a map (using directions and cardinal points)**
- findings consistently replicated

Personality and Social Behaviour:

- are these differences bred in the bone or are we socialized this way?
- boys exhibit physical aggressiveness more than little girls; even when playing (more towards males – more targeted)
- girls are aggressive in a different way – **in a relational way** (exclude others)

Emotional Sensitivity

- little boys as more empathetic than little girls overall

Social influence:

- **little girls as more compliant than boys are in group settings**
- in **terms of the messages** that are given by society – if there is a persuasive message, **little girls** will tend to buy into it more than boys
- overall, tend to find that **depression during adolescence is higher in girls than boys**
- **disease and dysfunction** – the chances for surviving prenatally are greater if female; the chances of getting a genetic disorder = greater if a boy
- ADHD greater in boys, language problems greater in boys
- **little boys generally more at risk than little girls**

Kail and Barnfield – talk about distributions – see text *

- psychology: if a trait is normally distributed, then most of us should be around the mean
- the 2 bell-shaped curves are not over-lapping; the mean behaviour for girls and boys is different
- many of the women have excellent spatial rotational skills; boys as having excellent spatial memory skills, but the averages tend towards one more than the other
- **Group differences** allow for variability** of the individual, ie a woman as being good at spatial rotation; male as having excellent verbal skills

Gender Identity:

- influences of people and the media

Video of female and male doll wearing each other's clothes

* Know that we're socialized into gender roles due to culture and parenting

- when we have our prototypical ideas of men vs women, as adults, are more flexible than children
- **but as parents** – what do we do as parents re: gender roles and children's understanding of them?

- **TED Talk:** anti-bullying is in the curricula, but not acceptance. Turning the negatives into positives will result in differences so that we can learn to embrace those who are different, feel different, express themselves differently.

- **acceptance results in conversations, which results in changed societies**

- as parents, we have to decide how socialization occurs

Transmission of gender rules – moms seem to be more accepting than fathers (fathers as a bit more stereotypical in their interactions w/children)

Gender roles evolving now much more rapidly than they have in the past (makeup on guys, etc)

- although right now, hair among little girls seems to be longer; not this way 40 years ago

Variability:

- there seems to be a link between the notion of acceptance of gender roles and **parental education**
- families who are poorer: seem so have much more rigid gender roles (girls should dress accordingly, boys and their toys)

*****Lawrence Kohlberg** – also examined gender identity in little children

- by 2 and 3, children are able to declare their own gender very confidently
- by 3 and 4, are able to say that their gender roles will be the same – **start seeing the stability in the gender identity**
- by 4 to 7, start seeing the **constancy** (ex: male doll who puts on a skirt is still a male) – the youngest child will see it as a girl, but the **older child (approx 6 years of age)** will see the doll as the same gender. **Consistency across situations establishes gender constancy.**

By 7, see that your gender does not change in different situations – **constancy**

- start seeing gender as stable; born a boy and will be a boy when you grow up

Language for children:

- gender identity in terms of cognitive behaviours: there are some models that can be replicated w/some tasks

EMERGING GENDER ROLES: see text***

- embedded in a cultural context
- North America – happens here; does it happen in a similar fashion elsewhere? Not necessarily the case

Androgyny – more prevalent now

- girls who are demonstrating traits more boy-like, boys who explore full dimension of humanity (more sensitive, emotional than their dads might have been)
- there are more individuals in our society who are showing more androgynous traits than before
- studies that look at their wellbeing—show more well-balanced than those who are more stereotypical

Beyond traditional roles ---- see the text****

Parenting – Ch. 14

- parenting; the changing family; brothers and sisters; maltreatment: parent-child relationships gone awry

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Theory (Ecological Model) of Parenting: * see text**

- focuses on the impact that the environment has on growth and individual

1. microsystem – refers to the environment in which the individual lives (this system includes family members, peers, religious communities, neighbourhoods, etc.)

- **the individual is helping create the experiences they have**

2. mesosystem – described as the **interactions between the microsystems**

- include experiences at home related to experiences at school, or church
- like microsystem, individuals are playing an active role in helping create the experiences we have

3. macrosystem – **influenced by culture and society in which a person lives**

- belief systems and ideology of culture influences the individual directly
- not as much freedom for individual to interact w/surroundings

4. exosystem – settings or events that influence the child's socialization even though the child has no

direct role in them (OUTSIDE)

- **has an INDIRECT effect on the child**

- new laws, government reform, environmental regulation, social unrest, etc
- effects of it can be short term or temporary (parents' work hours changing) or long term (ex: growing up during the depression)

- **included is the neighbourhood** (sociologists, geographers, psychologists now interacting w/each other to look at influences of neighbourhood on the lives of children)

- ex: poor neighbourhoods have more fast food venues over grocery stores

- the grandparents will possibly speak about differences about socializing the grandchild in terms of their cultural values

- Bronfenbrenner's model is useful when thinking of **influences**. **A child does not develop alone, but as a series of system** (think of the family as a system – parenting of child and the child's experiences)

- all levels interact

5. final level: chronosystem (represents the change over time)

- might change according to the reactions to it

- ex: parenting change over time

- transitions over the life course

- ex: divorces

- difference between, for ex: 10 and 15

- **this system acknowledges that the level of interactions within microsystems depends on time**

Culture and Values

- the link between the parenting issue and gender identity

- film about “the missing girls,” called “It's a Girl”

- about the 200 mill missing girls in the world (**India and China, mostly**) – aborted and abandoned and killed just because they are girls – **called “gendercide”**

- these girls are living in a society that values boys more than girls

- individual parents behave in a way that allows them to live in their society

- the girls who do survive often grow up to experience violence or even death at the hands of their partners