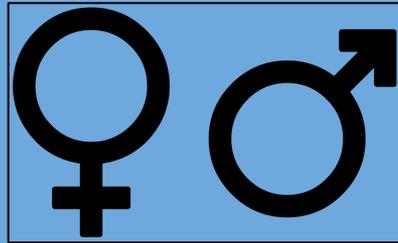


Culture and Issues of Gender and Sexuality



Presented by Elaine Samuels, Matilde Salazar, & Megan Petersen



Activity



Key Terms (Megan)

Sex - generally considered to be the biological aspects of femaleness and maleness

Gender - the acquired behavior and psychological aspects of being a woman or man

Male - of, relating to, or being the sex that typically has the capacity to produce relatively small, usually motile gametes which fertilize the eggs of a female

Female - of, relating to, or being the sex that typically has the capacity to bear young or produce eggs

Masculine - socially and culturally constructed characteristics of a boy/man

Feminine - socially and culturally constructed characteristics of a girl/woman

Androgyny - refers to individuals with strong personality traits associated with both sexes, combining toughness and gentleness, assertiveness and nurturing behavior, as called for by the situation

Biological Perspectives (Megan)

- ★ Gender is predetermined by genetic, physiological, and neural foundations of biological sex.
- ★ Androgens (male sex hormones) control prenatal development/maintain masculine characteristics.
- ★ Estrogens (female sex hormones) affect brain development.
- ★ Toy choices and behavior are related to biological differences in gender.
- ★ Testosterone levels are related to aggression.
- ★ Culture either encourages/discourages aggressive behavior.



Evolutionary Perspectives (Megan)



- ★ Motivation to pass on genes through producing offspring, ensuring survival of the species is an explanation for gender differences.
- ★ Women have limited capacity to reproduce; activities promote survival of children.
- ★ Men have almost unlimited capacity to reproduce; compete with other men for available women, focus on physical strength, aggressiveness.
- ★ Common goal: survival of children
- ★ Women and men enhance/display characteristics that are evolutionarily attractive: wealth, strength in men, youthfulness, health in women

Socialization & Learning Perspectives (Megan)

- ★ **Feminine/Masculine behaviors are not consistent across cultures.**
- ★ **Reinforcement and punishment are present in many cultures.**
- ★ **Children observe same-sex adult role models.**
- ★ **Learning history within a sociocultural context impacts gender differences.**



Infancy (Megan)



- ★ Sex of infants may be determined at 18-22 weeks in utero
- ★ Gender normative expectations begin before birth and continue to develop throughout infancy
- ★ Clothing, toys, adjectives used to describe infants based on gender

Gender Preference and Gender Ratio at Birth (Megan)



- ★ As of 2015, males outnumber females 103 to 100 globally
- ★ China - males outnumber females 110 to 100
- ★ India - 112 boys per 100 girls
- ★ Brazil & United States: 105 boys per 100 girls
- ★ Researchers: cultural preference for sons as opposed to daughters in many countries, family planning account for more males than females.

- ★ Family name and property are passed down patrilineally in many countries
- ★ Male children expected to support aging parents.
- ★ Daughters become part of husbands' families, dowry systems
- ★ Higher number of males also correlated to increased violence/crime among young men, reduction in unwanted births, female infant mortality



Discussion Questions (Megan)

- 1. How does culture influence gender differences?**
- 2. What are some of the ways biology shapes gender expression?**
- 3. What are some universal differences between genders?**

Infancy, Childhood & Adolescence

Elaine Samuels



Childhood

*Period of human lifespan between infancy and adolescence, ranges from 1- 13 years old.

*The principal foundation of nurturing in the lives of children are their parents, which make known to them values, beliefs, important knowledge and behaviors of their culture.

* The societal expectation regarding men and women concerning gender role categorization comes from parents and other caregivers



Foundation of Gender Socialization

- William and Best (1990), were two theorist who did extensive research in over twenty five different countries on gender stereotypes and behaviors in both male and female.
- They founded that attachment, care , submissiveness, and passivity were typical characters of women.
- Dominance, aggressiveness and achievement were traits ascribed to men
- In their research socialization of gender stereotype were among children five to eleven years old. Among all age clusters, children were accustomed to the male dominance than of the female.

Gender role stereotype were established in children by eight years old with reinforce behaviors. By nine years old, gender role stereotype description is applied to their personality which is carried throughout life, at this stage creates an explicit behavior such as social norms, ritual even dress codes(P.117)



Feminist on Gender Role Stereotype

Men

- In most known societies, men tend to hold positions of power and distribute available resources, they frequently have the opportunity to define social roles for both women and men.
- Men have the potential to use resources and status as compensations.
- To preserve male social dominance, younger men are rewarded for conforming to the behavior that later enables them to achieve positions of power in society

Women

- Women usually are discouraged from displaying activities that are kept for men. Different set of governing tasks are made clear for them.
- Women are expected to be submissive, nurturing, and weak in certain culture.
- The differing social status and power of women and men represent an important part of the ecological system in which children grow up.
- Power differences between women and men are related to their differential treatment by society, as well as gender differences in behavior.



Polygamous Societies

- It is customary for men to have multiple reproductive partners, the competition among men for women is very strong

- Young boys are taught to be aggressive and competitive.

Boys in these society sees cooperation and aggression rather than competition because they will one day share a common wife and children

- Polyandrous societies grant women more control over resources and more independence from one particular man. Socialization of girls focuses more on independence and assertiveness and less on obedience and submissiveness.



Gender Relationship in Childhood

- Peers in childhood socialization is key as parents and caregivers. Same sex and mixed sex provide effective context for the observation and practice of role behaviors.

Early gender segregation indicates very large differences, these differences need to be reinforced early by nine years old.

- Mixed-sex peer groups throughout childhood is universal, regardless of cultural norms that advice gender-segregated environments in childhood.

- Same-sex preference in playmates lends itself to a biological explanation of gender differences. Boys might bond together through activities that facilitate physicality and competition. Girls pattern of play, in comparison, emphasizes interaction and collaboration.



Indicators of Sexual Maturation

- Change associated with adolescent development centers on the puberty-period. The transition between childhood and adulthood last approximately one to two years.

- The physical and physiological changes during puberty are dramatic, having both psychological and social consequences

Boys- Change takes place in boys and varied from culture to culture:

- Voice change. Facial development. Muscle development. Sudden growth spurt. Nocturnal ejaculation

Girls- Change takes place in girls varied from culture to culture in terms of age:

- The milestone event that marked the ending of childhood for girls is a period called menstruation or menarche. Environment, nutrition and physical development are factors in determining when menstruation starts. Some cultures view this period as a “monthly illness”, a natural part of life—something given to them by God to prepare them for motherhood—over which they have no control.



Indicators of Sexual Maturation cont.

- In a collectivism community the transition from adolescence to adulthood is often considered a highly spiritual event that is celebrated with elaborate initiation ceremonies. These ceremonies often involve a ritual change of hairstyle, clothing, tattoos, or even circumcision to make the newly gained status as adult visible to all
- In a individualistic environment, young women and men to be sexually mature allows them to find a mate when they begin to feel sexual desire. Parents or other members of the community do not get involved in the young person's decisions about who or when to marry.



Gender, Sexuality, and Cultural Taboos

- In most cultures, the concepts of gender and sexuality are closely related. The cultural norms about what men and women should look like and how they should behave extends to the realm of sexuality. Chastity until marriage (particularly for women) is a norm among many cultures.
- Chastity norms rarely apply in the same way for young men, boys are frequently encouraged to engage in various types of activity to practice sexual behavior, satisfy their sexual desires, or express their virility and dominance.
- Male societies and those based on traditional Catholic or Islamic values generally have very strict chastity norms. Latino cultures that value and expect “machismo” from young men and passivity, subservience, and nurturance from young women. Those who deviate from these ideals are stigmatized, ostracized, and sometimes the victims of violence.
- In adolescence, when issues of gender and sexuality become particularly important, young people may struggle with the expression of their gender identity and sexuality. Deviating from gender norms and/or deviating from sexual norms may have serious social and psychological consequences



Cultural Taboos

- Child rearing and housework are mostly a woman's job- United States, Switzerland, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and South Korea
- In China, the only sexual behavior considered legal and morally permissible is heterosexual intercourse within a monogamous marriage. Any other behavior is considered illegal.
- Traditional Hinduism prescribes a very specific definition of sexuality. Unnatural sexual activity, including extramarital relations or homosexuality, results in losing one's home, mutilation, or even death
- Maya in Guatemala, it is common to freely choose one's sexual partner. Parents do not have much to say regarding the selection of a mate or the age of marriage. Nonetheless, Mayan adolescents respect cultural traditions and generally abstain from sexual contact before marriage. Their interactions are typically limited to talking, holding hands, kissing, and embracing.
- In recent years, we have heard more about transgender or relating to people who have a sexual identity that is not clearly male or clearly female individuals, as they openly declare their sexuality. Transgender individuals can be found in Thailand, India, Iran, Nepal, Vietnam, Indonesia, and other countries.



Critique

- Gender is referred to as biology
- Sexuality is seen as personal, define as your sexual orientation
- Homosexuality and heterosexual are examples of your sexuality
- Many countries do not embrace homosexuality because of religious ideologies.
- Parent are universally caregivers of childhood in teaching values, morals and culture



Division of Labor

Within the Family:

- Historically women are primarily responsible for child-rearing and housework and men work outside of the home.
- Despite the rise of industrialization and women working there has not been a significant change in her duties at home.
- Across various culture (US, Swiss, Indonesian, Phillipino, South Korean, etc), even if both spouses work the child-rearing and housework remains the main responsibility of the woman.

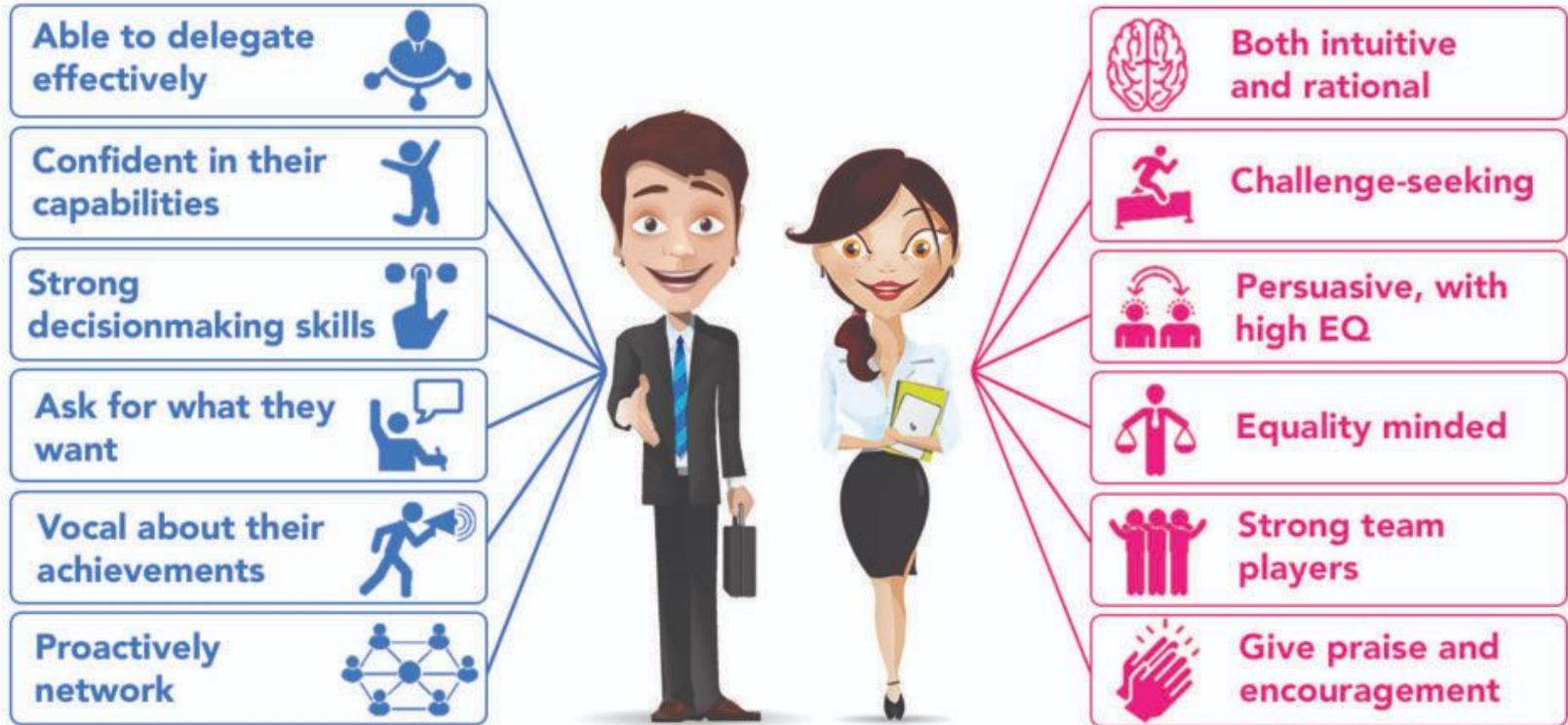


Division of Labor

In the Workforce:

- Although both genders can work outside the home, occupations tend to be dominated by particular genders or status.
- Women tend to have stronger verbal and interpersonal skills. Therefore, they tend to become teachers, nurses, therapist, or social workers. But often these positions are considered to be of a lower status.
- Males tend to have jobs that require physical strength, endurance and assertiveness. Men tend to also seek higher positions that also earn more money.

Qualitative Differences Between Male and Female Employees



Gender Relations in Social Status and Public Policy

In society social power, dominance, and influence in a family may be attached to the person with most economic power. Historically men have held those roles.

This influence and position in society it is often supported by political institutions within a culture.

Despite the prevalence of this pattern: For example, there have been shifts in how different cultures are viewing marriage: women's power in mate selection in China and birth control in Peru, as well as the age that male children are being launched from the home in Italy. Gender focused decisions can affect an entire ecological system.

House of Representatives



27.1%
Women



72.9%
Men

Senate



24%
Women



76%
Men

Source

Fact sheet: *Women in the U.S. Congress 2021*. (2021). Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University.



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Later Adulthood

The Experience of Menopause:

- Menopause is a universal event in a woman's life but how it is approached is primarily influenced by "cultural values, expectations and context" (Gardiner, 2018). In North America it is viewed negatively and almost seen as a disease but with very little information and accuracy.
- Cross culturally, the experience varies tremendously and symptoms may be a result of psychological and cultural influences, in addition to physiological reasons.
- The physical and the cultural view may be what determines how a woman experiences menopause.

Derry (2006), discussed the problem of viewing menopause from simply a biological model. She emphasizes considering changing the negative and degenerate perspective of menopause to one of maturation, compensation and adjustment for healthy functioning.

Male Menopause - Andropause

Research done by Singh, Madhusoodanan, & Sandhu (2008), supports that "The phenomenon of andropause is a reality". Healthline.com, concurs that "While female menopause is a natural part of aging, some older men never develop low testosterone beyond what is considered naturally acceptable" and "has been linked to reduced sex drive, erectile dysfunction (weaker erections), loss of muscle mass, increased fat accumulation, low bone mass, fatigue, sleep problems, and depression."

Gender Roles and Status in Old Age

- In traditional societies, older adults are respected because of the years of experience they have lived.
- In societies that provide influential roles based on age women can gain more power in their family as well as in society.
- In Kenya and Nigeria this is an opportunity that is only available if the woman is a grandmother and has a minimum of three living children. But often their communal work is not acknowledged nor are given public leadership positions.
- Although young men with education are now taking the responsibilities of elders the male elders still have influence through their relationships with them.

Discussion Questions (Matilde)

How are older people in your family and cultural background regarded?

Do you think elders hold the same level of influence as they used to in the past?

Q & A

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