Psychology of Gender

Chapter 7

Gender Stereotypes: Masculinity & Femininity
Gender Stereotypes

- Stereotype threat – presence of negative stereotypes threatens performance and self-concept
- Gender stereotype – belief about the psychological traits and characteristics, and activities appropriate for men or women
- Gender roles – behaviors reflecting masculinity and femininity
- Until Industrial Revolution, more egalitarian roles between men and women
- After Industrial Revolution – Doctrine of Two Spheres and Cult of True Womanhood
Gender Stereotypes

● Doctrine of Two Spheres – belief that women and men’s interests diverge (men versus women, masculinity versus femininity – use of dichotomies)

● Cult of True Womanhood – started 1820-1860
  ● “real women” judged by others in relation to her virtues – piety (devotion, especially to religion), purity (virginity), submissiveness (weak, dependent, and timid), and domesticity (home and children)
  
  ● True Women could elevate men to be more religious and pure
Gender Stereotypes

- Male Sex (Gender) Role Identity (the more closely a man adheres to these roles, the more “manly” he becomes)
  - No sissy stuff – denial of all things feminine
  - The big wheel – quest and desire for success and status
  - The sturdy oak – touch, confident, and self-reliant
  - Give ‘em hell – violence, aggression, and daring
  - These roles prohibit close, personal relationships, and requires persistent competition and striving for achievement

- New model – Sex (Gender) Role Strain
  - Since 1960s and 1970s – more departure from traditional roles
  - Hegemonic masculinity has remained the same, however
Gender Stereotypes

- Stages of Development of Stereotypes:
  - 1 – stereotypes undeveloped; know behaviors and char. of genders
  - 2 – self-stereotype but not for others; indirect associations with gender for own sex but not other sex
  - 3 – stereotypes for self and sex; complex, indirect gender-related associations for both sexes

- Stereotypes supported by – illusory correlations

- Stereotyping trends similar to development of gender knowledge or identity:
  - Younger children use less stereotyping than older children
  - Men stereotype more than women
  - Boys stereotype more than girls
  - Flexibility in gender stereotyping increases with age
Gender Stereotypes

- Process & implications
  - Good side to stereotyping – cognitive process
  - Prejudice – negative evaluation of a particular group because of a particular characteristic
  - Discrimination – behavior that results in differential treatment
  - Sexism –
    - Hostile sexism – negative aspects of sexism; negative attitudes toward women
    - Benevolent sexism – positive aspects of sexism; positive attitudes toward women but serve to belittle women and keep them subservient
Gender Stereotypes

- Content of Stereotypes:
  - 2 dimensions – competence & warmth
    - Low competence & high warmth – pity (homemakers)
    - Low competence & low warmth – contempt (prisoners)
    - High competence & high warmth – admiration (admired leaders)
    - High competence & low warmth – envy (CEO, feminist)
Gender Stereotypes

- Perceptions of Women & Men:
  - 4 components used to differentiate 2 sexes:
    - Traits
    - Behaviors
    - Physical characteristics
    - Occupations
  - We make inferences regarding the other categories based on information we have in 1
  - Perceptions regarding feminine role has become more egalitarian and positive over the past 25 years, while perceptions regarding the masculine role has not shown as large changes
  - Women do show negative stereotyping as men (viewing men with hostility but also admiration and attraction)
  - We tend to exempt ourselves from stereotypes more often than we exempt others from them
Gender Stereotypes

- Masculinity, Femininity, Androgyny (combination of both masculine and feminine characteristics)
- Early measures (unidimensional approach – MF)
  - MMPI (used Mf scale based on a small sample of homosexual males to determine “feminine” items)
- Later measures (two-dimensional approach – M, F)
  - BSRI (60 characteristics to determine a M score and F score – leading to 4 different categories – Masculine, Feminine, Androgynous, & undifferentiated)
  - PAQ (also identifies individuals falling into these four categories)
- Adopting more positive traits of masculinity or femininity leads to better health and well-being than negative traits (especially for masculinity)