

Development of Gender Identity



Theories

- Psychoanalytic (p. 378)
- Biological
- Socialization
 - by adults
 - by peers
 - by self
- Cognitive developmental

Biological Differences

- “Organization” at birth
- Activity level
- Readiness for social interaction
- Later...
 - aggression
 - some verbal abilities
 - spatial skills

Socialization by Adults

- Adult stereotypes about infants
- Differential reinforcement
- Opportunities

“Baby X” Studies

- Seavey, et al (1975)
- 3-mo-old infant
- Adults told infant was:
 - boy, girl, neither
- 3 min. session
- rubber football, doll, plastic ring
- doll when “girl”, ring when “boy”

“Baby X” Studies

- Condry & Condry, 1976
- Video of 9-mo-old infant
- Jack-in-the-box, plus other toys
- Adults told infant girl or boy
- If labeled as a boy, reaction to j-in-box seen as “anger”
- If girl, seen as “fear”

“Baby X” Studies

- Interact differently according to gender label, but...
- Do not report hold different beliefs about male/female infants

but...

- Lewis, et al. (1992)
- 10-mo-old infant
- labeled correctly or incorrectly
- expected differences in interaction
- interacted with male, rated self more feminine
- interacted with female, rated self more masculine

Differential Reinforcement

- Fagot (1978)
- 20- to 24-mo-olds and parents (home)
- girls-praised for dancing, dolls, asking for help; running, jumping, climbing discouraged
- boys-praised for block play; punished for female-stereotyped activities & behavior

Opportunities

- Boys' toys - invention, manipulation, exploration of physical world
- Girls' toys - imitation, understanding of social world

Opportunities

- Toys elicit different types of interaction
- Boys- little teaching, low proximity
- Girls-verbal interaction, close proximity

Family Structure Leve & Fagot, 1997

- 5-yr-old children
- 2-parent, single-mother, single-father
- One-parent families -less traditional beliefs and values

Socialization by Peers

- Females reinforce girls for feminine-typed play
- Males reinforce male peers for masculine-typed play; punished for feminine
- When discrepant, peer reinforcement more highly valued than adult

Self-socialization

- Gender segregation
 - experiences within same-sex peer groups shapes behavior
- E. Maccoby
- Gender schema
 - Cognitive schemas organize information and influence memory processes

Self-socialization (Maccoby)

gender segregation (by choice)



2 “cultures” of childhood
norms of social interaction
rules
language use

Causes of segregation

- Cognitive consonance
 - Fagot, et al. “early labelers” more gender typed behavior, more segregate
- Activity preferences
- Behavioral compatibility theory
 - DiPietro “rough & tumble play”
 - boys-play in larger groups, far from adults
 - girls-small groups

Moller & Serbin, 1996

- 35 month olds
- videotaped in classroom (2 X per week, 4 to 7 months)
- computed preference for same gender peers

Moller & Serbin, 1996

- Gender awareness
 - label photos of people
 - label drawings of objects

Moller & Serbin, 1996

- Rated toy preferences
 - cultural stereotypes
 - actual classroom use

Moller & Serbin, 1996

- Teacher ratings
 - disruptive/active
 - socially sensitive

Moller & Serbin, 1996

- 21% of boys/62% of girls played mostly with same sex peers
- no difference in gender knowledge
- toy preferences unrelated to segregation
- behavioral compatibility hypothesis supported

Gender Schema

- Learning
- Memory
- Choices

Learning

- can more accurately sequence own-sex activities

Memory

- Bauer (1993)
- 25-mo-old infant
- elicited imitation
 - 2 feminine activities-diaper, breakfast
 - 2 masculine activities-shave, build
 - 2 neutral-treasure hunt, party
- boys re-enacted male and neutral better

Memory Bias

- recall gender-consistent information better than gender-inconsistent
female doctors; male nurses
- distort memory to match stereotypes
- how effective will it be to present gender-atypical role models?

Choice

- Preschoolers choose activities labeled appropriate for their gender
- Bradford, et al. (1986)
- Gender-neutral, but labeled as “girl things”, “boy things”
- Explored gender-appropriate more
- Better recall 1 week later

Conclusions

- Some evidence for some biologically-based gender differences;
- Reinforcement for gender-typed activities begins early;
- Reinforcement supported (strongly) by peers;
- Gender-schemas aid the process.
