

Personality

What makes us who we are?

Psych 305A: Lecture 24

Personality and Gender Wrap Up Begin Culture

Announcement

- HSP credits
 - You CAN receive up to 3!
 - 1 hour per credit, 1 credit per extra % point on your final grade
- Deadline Nov 30th!

Sex Roles

Popular conceptions of gender,
which may influence behavior

Sex Differences vs. Sex-Roles

- Sex Differences
 - Actual differences between males and females in personality traits, self-esteem, aggression, achievement, etc.
- Sex-Roles (Gender Identity)
 - Stereotypes about what it means to be a “man” or a “woman”
 - Socialization of boys and girls to act in “gender appropriate” or sex-stereotypical ways
 - Development of gender identity

Summers Controversy

- The discussion continues...
- March, 2007, in the *New York Times Magazine*, Harvard government professor Harvey Mansfield said of Summer's comment:
 - “He was expressing seriously the notion that women, innately, have less capacity than men at the highest level of science. I think it's probably true. It's common sense if you look at who the top scientists are.”

Mansfield also said:

- “We need [gender] roles. Roles give us mutual expectations of what is either correct or good behavior. Women are neater than men, they make nests, and all these other stereotypes are mostly true...”
- Is he right? Do we need gender roles to tell us how to behave, and how to expect others to behave?

Research on Gender Roles

- The study of androgyny
 - 1970' s: politically motivated search to separate sex roles and biological sex
- Masculinity and femininity
 - Personality dimensions
 - Men and women can be high or low on both (or either)
 - Masculinity: Instrumentality, assertiveness, dominance
 - Femininity: nurturance, emotional expression, empathy

Are masculinity and femininity sex-related dimensions?

- Now typically studied as **instrumentality** and **expressiveness**
- Gender schemata
 - Cognitive orientations that lead people to process information through a sex-linked perspective
- One study found that variation in gender-typical behaviors is partly due to genetic variance
 - In women, 38% of variance in gender-typical behaviors due to genes
 - Genes for sex-typical behaviors → but these genes are not necessarily linked to biological sex

Stereotypes about Gender

- Highly consistent across cultures
- Men
 - Aggressive, autonomous, achievement-oriented, dominant, exhibitionist, persevering
 - INSTRUMENTAL
- Women
 - Affiliative, deferent, nurturant, self-abasing
 - COMMUNAL
- Stereotypes converge with actual sex differences, but are larger (exaggerated)

Gender Stereotypes

- Cognitive component
 - Social categories (e.g., ‘dads’ , ‘soccer moms’)
- Affective component
 - Positive or negative feelings that result from categorization
 - i.e., sexism, preference for one gender over the other
- Behavioral component
 - Treating people differently because of their social category
 - E.g., job discrimination
 - E.g., teachers giving more attention to boys

**Why are there gender
differences in personality?**

Theories of Gender Differences

- Socialization theory
 - Boys and girls are raised differently
 - Fits with Bandura's Social Learning Theory
 - Children observe and learn from same-sex parent
 - Evidence supports this theory
 - Parents encourage dependency in girls more than boys
 - More physical play with boys
 - Socialization differences replicate across cultures

Limitations of Socialization Theory

- Why do parents raise boys and girls differently?
- Why does it replicate across cultures?
- Can't account for cases of gender dysphoria due to incorrectly assigned gender
 - Case of Bruce and Brian Reimer and Dr. Money

Dr. Money and the Theory of “Gender Gate”

- Argued that before the age of 2, children’s gender is fluid
- Bruce Reimer presented an opportunity to test the theory on someone born male
 - Botched circumcision (1966); Money convinced parents to surgically reassign Bruce’s gender
 - After surgery, Dr. Money became famous
 - Supported idea that gender is a social construction



The Lives of Brenda and Brian Reimer

- But, Brenda Reimer (formerly Bruce) was not a happy girl
 - Hated dolls, liked running and fighting
 - Had few friends
- Finally, at age 13, both twins were told the truth
 - Brenda rejoiced, became “David”, and eventually married
 - Brian freaked out, became schizophrenic, drug problems
 - Both twins eventually committed suicide

Hormonal Theories

- Sex differences due to different hormones
 - Men have higher testosterone than women
- Hormonal influences on sex differences begin in utero
 - Congenital Adrenal Hyperlasia
 - Female fetus has overactive adrenal gland, hormonally masculinized
 - Prefer “male” toys

Evidence for Hormonal Theory

- In women, higher testosterone is linked with
 - Pursuing a more ‘masculine’ career
 - Greater career success
 - Greater dominance and aggressiveness
- Female prison inmates with more disciplinary infractions have higher testosterone
- More rambunctious frat boys have higher testosterone
- Men with higher testosterone have higher sex drive
- Women have higher drive when T peaks

Conclusions on Sex and Gender Roles

- There are major biological differences between males and females
 - Some of these may be evolved
 - Influence personality
- Cultural stereotypes about gender also shape personality and behavior (gender roles)
- It is often difficult to know whether a particular gender difference is biological or socially learned

Culture Perspective on Personality

What is Culture?

CULTURE:

Shared systems of meaning that provide the standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those who share a language, a historic period, and a geographic location



Useful metaphor -> **culture = game rules**

Useful metaphor:
culture = game rules

*Does John from Iowa know
the rules of this game?*

What kinds of
situations in our
culture require a
knowledge of game
rules?



Culture ≠ Race or Ethnicity

What are the differences between these?

A Classic Anthropological View

- Children, when they are born, are without culture, and hence are without personality, and almost without social relationships. The very fact of birth may be described as the termination of a biophysical relationship and, in the usual course of events, its replacement with a social relationship. Social relationships, then, expand with maturation; new culture is demanded in which to respond to other people so that the relationships are possible. The acquisition of that culture is ipso facto the growth of the personality. As the personality develops, the characteristic way of responding to given stimuli becomes more highly developed and, at the same time, more set.

– Bohannan, 1963/1971, p. 20

CULTURE & PERSONALITY



“We are forced to conclude that human nature is almost unbelievably malleable, responding accurately and contrastingly to contrasting cultural conditions.” (Mead, 1935, p. 280)

But Mead (1954) also observed that “.... the individual’s inclination to respond in a certain way is relatively stable when the cultural context is understood.”

MODERN CULTURAL VIEW

Personality traits as a products of biological and cultural evolution.

CULTURE → PERSONALITY:

“Personality is completely interdependent with the meanings and practices of particular sociocultural contexts. People develop their personalities over time through their active participation in the various social worlds in which they engage. A cultural psychological perspective implies that ***there is no personality without culture;*** there is only a biological entity”.

(Markus & Kitayama, 1998)

PERSONALITY → CULTURE

... and there is no culture without personality.

Personality meaning resides in artifacts people use (e.g., living spaces, consumer preferences, preferred icons, etc.) and institutions they support (Hollywood, capitalism, etc.).

[personality → culture]



Commercial brands

(Aaker & Benet-Martinez, 2001)



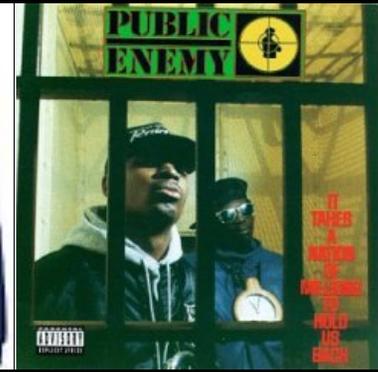
living spaces

(Gosling et al., 2002)



cultural icons

(Hong et al., 2000)



music preferences

(Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003)

The use and availability of these cultural products, in turn, perpetuates particular behavioral, affective, and cognitive tendencies (personality).

[culture → personality]

Example: “BC/Vancouver Culture”

- Anyone here not from BC?
- What parts of this culture seem (or used to seem) strange to you?
 - People from Canada but not BC can answer too!
- How would you describe BC culture, compared to the East Coast?
- What about Canada vs. the U.S.?