

Personality
What makes us who we are?

Psych 305A: Lecture 9

**Personality and Social Relationships
Wrap up**

Personality and Gender

1

Course Evals

- Please take the time to do them!
- <https://eval.ctlt.ubc.ca/arts>.

2

Midterm 2

- MC mean = 69% (good job!)
- Essay mean = 63%
- Overall exam mean = 67%
- Grades will be posted online tonight!
- Eric's Office Hours this week and next week, in Room 3605
 - Tues 1-2
 - Weds 4-5

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Problem MC Items

2. Why might the Big 5 personality traits have evolved?

- a) People high in extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness are more likely to have survived and reproduced
- b) Knowing and thinking about whether others are high or low on those traits tells you who to form social bonds with
- c) Men who are high in extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness are more likely to be successful in finding a mate
- d) There is no evidence that the Big 5 evolved
- e) A and B

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Problem MC Items

19. All of the following might be examples of social learning, EXCEPT:

- a) A child hitting “Bobo” in Bandura’s bobo doll study.
- b) A toddler helping an adult open a cabinet after watching his parents help each other.
- c) A student beating up someone younger after playing a violent video game.
- d) A convicted burglar deciding not to steal again because of the shame he suffered from his punishment.
- e) All of the above are examples of social learning.⁵

Problem MC Items

20. All of the following is true of personal construct theory, EXCEPT:

- a) It provided the theoretical foundations for the modern cognitive approach to personality.
- b) It argues that people can choose how to see the world.
- c) An individual’s perspective on the world shapes his/ her personality in a fairly stable manner.
- d) Perceptions are more important than reality.
- e) All of the above are true.

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Problem MC Items

21. All of the following characterize the difference between BIS and BAS, EXCEPT:

- a. People high in BIS are sensitive to punishment
- b. People high in BAS are highly impulsive and tend to seek novelty
- c. People high in BIS tend to be neurotic
- d. People low in BAS tend to be controlled and even-tempered
- e. All of the above characterize the difference between BIS and BAS

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Problem MC Items

27. The genetic approach addresses:

- a) whether personality is due to nature or nurture
- b) the proportion of variance in a trait that is due to genes
- c) the genetic basis of group differences
- d) all of the above
- e) A and B only

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Back to...

Personality and Relationships

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More on Assortative Mating

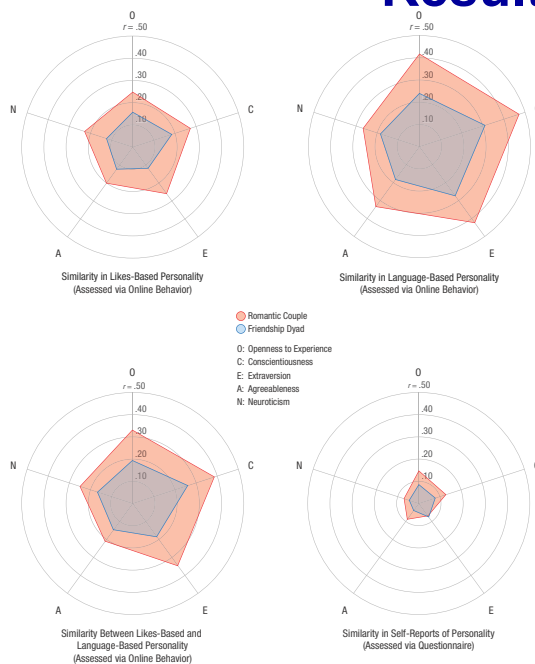
- Many studies show little personality similarity between partners
 - r s typically below .10
- But, self-reported personality may be biased due to *reference group effect* (Heine, Buchtel, & Norenzayan, 2008)
 - When judging our own personality, we compare ourselves to people we spend time with
 - These people tend to be like us
 - As a result, our self-rated personality may seem more different from our partner's than is accurate

New Research on Assortative Mating

- What if we measure personality with behaviour, instead of self-report?
 - Should avoid reference group problem
- Study measured Facebook likes and language in posts ($N_s = 295,320; 59,547$)
- Likes and words (e.g., “happy”, “amazing”) in posts predict B5 traits
 - Can be used to more reliably measure similarity in B5 between partners

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Results



For likes, average similarity between partners was $r = .24$

For language, average similarity between partners was $r = .38$

For self-report, average similarity between partners was $r = .10$

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Which traits predict future relationship success?

- Longitudinal study assessed three traits:
 - Positive Emotionality (PEM): Confidence, enthusiasm, social warmth, well-being, and zest
 - Negative Emotionality (NEM): Threshold for negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, fear
 - Constraint (CON): Self-control, harm avoidance, and endorsement of social norms

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Correlations with Relationships

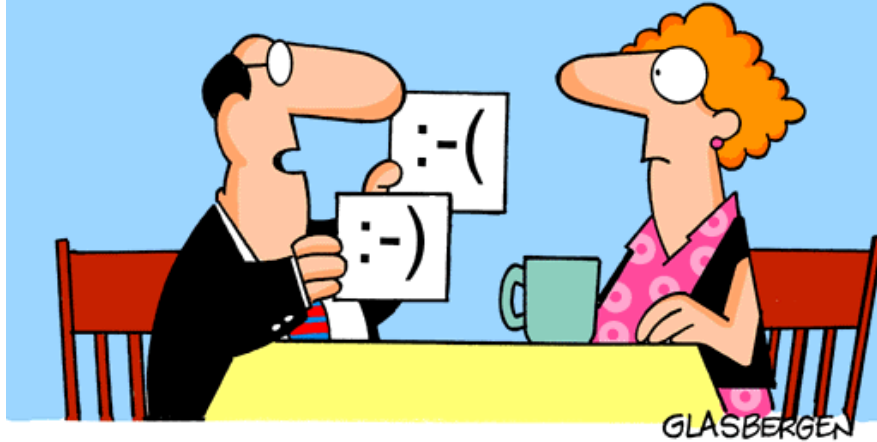
How does age 18 personality (PEM, NEM, constraint) relate to age 26 relationship outcomes?

	<u>Quality</u>	<u>Conflict</u>
• Positive Emotionality:	.14	.00
• Negative Emotionality:	-.21	.22
• Constraint:	.17	-.11

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Expression of Emotion

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"You always complain that I don't know how to show my emotions, so I made these signs."

How do emotion expressions influence a person's sexual attractiveness?

Tracy & Beall (2011)

Research question: Are there gender differences in how emotion expressions affect attractiveness?

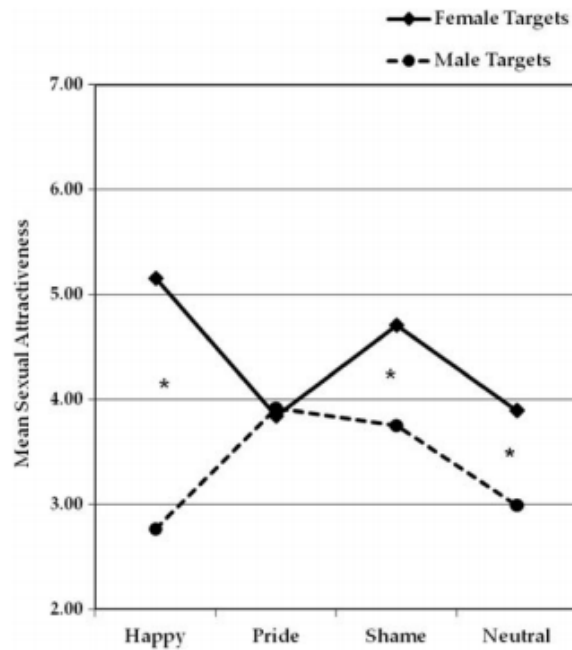
Across 2 studies ($N = 1041$), we tested the sexual attractiveness of four emotion expressions

How attractive do you find each person?



Pride **Shame** **Neutral** **Happy**

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Results

Happiness is the most attractive female emotion expression, and one of the LEAST attractive when shown by men



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Results

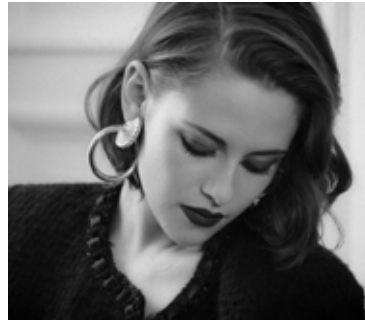
Pride is the most attractive male emotion expression and one of the least attractive when shown by women



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Results

Shame is attractive when shown by both genders



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Expression of Emotions in Relationships

- Gottman & Levenson
- Newlywed couples engaged in conflict discussion while videotaped
 - Videotapes coded for emotional responses, style of interaction [Observational data]
 - Physiological measures [Test-data]
 - Couple members rate partner's relationship satisfaction [Informant data] and own satisfaction [Self-data]
- Couples followed up to 5 years later
- Divorce was predicted from data, with 83% accuracy

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The “Love Lab”



Four Main Factors that Predict Divorce

- 1. Criticism vs. Complaint:
 - *Criticism*: Global statement of anger, displeasure, distress, or other negativity, tends to be blaming (e.g., “You never take me anywhere.”)
 - *Complaint*: specific statement of anger, displeasure, distress, or other negativity (e.g., “We don’t go out as much as I would like to”)
- Criticisms (but not complaints) predict divorce
- Escalation of negative affect is very bad
 - De-escalation of negative affect (e.g., through humor) is very good

Four Main Factors that Predict Divorce

- 2. Contempt: Insult, mockery, sarcasm, or derision of the other person.
 - Includes disapproval, judgment, disdain, exasperation, mockery, put-downs, or communicating that the other person is absurd or incompetent

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Four Main Factors that Predict Divorce

- 3. Defensiveness: Attempt to protect one's self from perceived attack
 - May include denial of responsibility, counterblame, or whine
 - May be a response to “Mindreading”
 - Attribution of motives, feelings, or behaviors made by one partner to the other partner
 - Example: “You always get tense in situations like this.”
“No I don't. You are the one who always gets tense!”

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Four Main Factors that Predict Divorce

- **4. Stonewalling:** The listener presents a “stone wall” to his/her partner.
 - No small “assenting” vocalizations like “mmm” or “yeah”
 - No head nods; neck is rigid
 - There is little gaze at the speaker
 - Little facial movement, but when there is it is negative
 - 85% of stonewallers are male

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Overall Findings

- Four “horsemen of the apocalypse” (criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling) predict divorce
- What distinguishes satisfied and dissatisfied couples is *not* how frequently they conflict, but the way in which negative feelings are expressed during conflicts.
 - Disagreements not more common among dissatisfied couples, but dissatisfied couples more likely to express disagreement with negative affect
- A 5:1 ratio of positive interactions to negative interactions is characteristic of a good marriage
 - ONE negative interaction can wipe out the effects of several positive interactions

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Overall Findings

- Negative emotions are associated with high levels of physiological arousal for men, but not for women
 - Men may avoid negative affect in relationships because it is more physiologically punishing
 - Emotionally, men experience lower levels of negative affect than women

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Personality and Gender/Sex

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**But wait, is it even ok to talk
about gender differences in
personality?**

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**Talk of Gender Differences:
controversial!**



- In February, 2005, Harvard University President Lawrence Summers commented in a speech that the differences in men's and women's achievement in math and science (which have been found repeatedly) might be due to genetic factors.

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Talk of Gender Differences

- MIT Biologist Nancy Hopkins left the room
 - “When he started talking about innate differences in aptitude between men and women, I just couldn’t breathe, because this kind of bias makes me physically ill.”
 - Summers later apologized, but eventually was asked to leave Harvard

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12 Years Later...

- August 2017: Internal memo by Google employee James Damore, age 28, leaked
- “the distribution of preferences and abilities of men and women differ in part due to biological causes... These differences may explain why we don’t see equal representation of women in tech and leadership.”

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Gender in Silicon Valley

- Some men say they feel “subjugated” by feminists
- Radical sub-group want to start a separatist men-in-tech movement
- Many agreed with Damore’s memo
- Also widespread anger; Damore was fired

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Are these statements ok?

- In response to Summers’ comments:
 - Steven Pinker: YES! It’s possible that hormones act on the fetus differently, affect cognitive and spatial abilities
 - We won’t ever know if this is true unless scientists are allowed to study it and talk about it
 - Liz Spelke: NO! Children are treated differently from such an early age, we can’t ever separate the role of environment
 - If we keep talking about it, girls will keep getting the message that they’re not as good

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Why is gender differences such a dangerous topic?

- Acceptance of gender differences in ability could promote discrimination
- If young children believe in differences, could inhibit success/hard work
 - Self-fulfilling prophesy

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Gender Difference in Math and Science

- Varies by culture
 - Most prominent in USA, where culture dictates that math is not “cool” for girls
- In the 1980s, American middle-school boys outperformed girls, at the highest ability level, by 13 to 1. Now, it’s 3 to 1.
- Gender difference only emerges after elementary school
 - When math gets harder, boys are encouraged to push through

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Why is gender differences such a dangerous topic?

- But, what about the progress of science?
 - Do we need to talk about the possibility of gender differences in order to learn the *scientific truth*?
 - Or, does this kind of conversation inherently *promote* problematic gender differences?

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UBC research addressed this issue

- Dar-Nimrod & Heine, 2006 (*Science*)
- Question: Does telling women that they are genetically worse at math lower their math performance?
 - If so, can we counteract this effect by telling them:
 - A) no real gender difference
 - B) there is a difference, but it's due to environmental causes

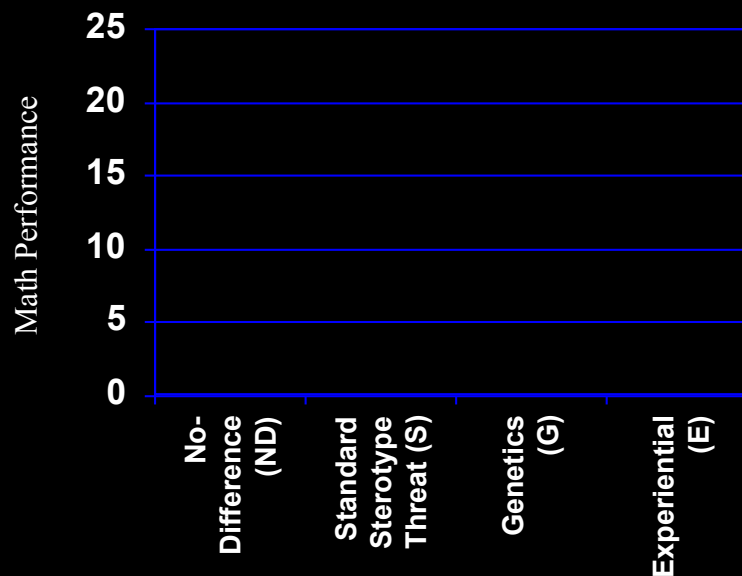
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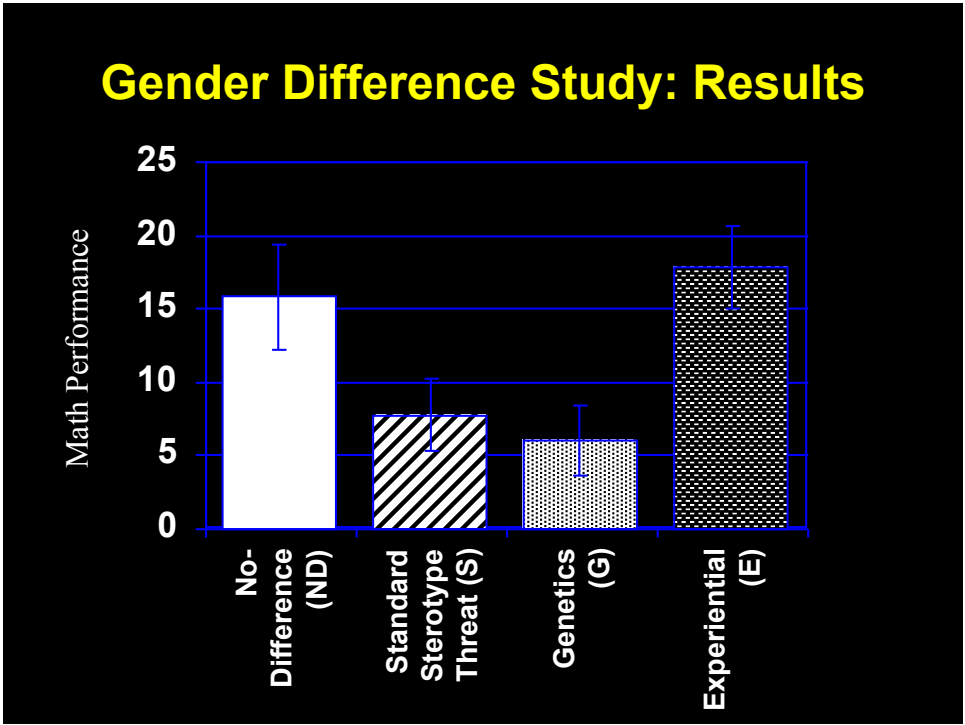
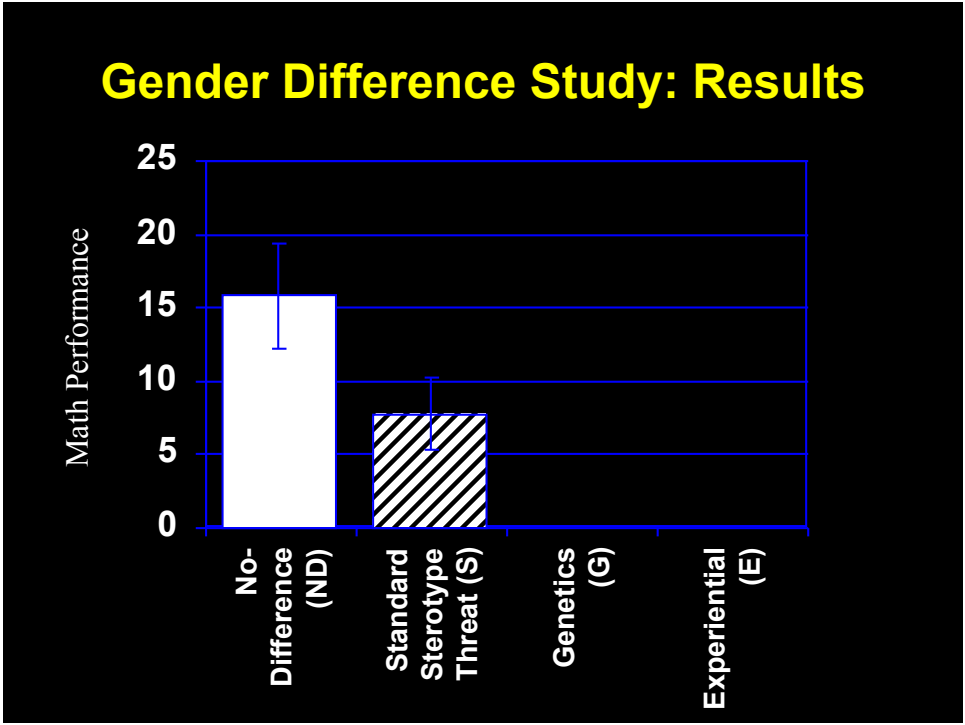
Gender Difference Study

1. Female pp read an essay
 - Condition 1: Essays argue for a gender difference in math, due to genetic factors (Summers condition)
 - Condition 2: Essays argue for gender difference in math, due to environmental factors (Spelke condition)
 - Condition 3: No essay, but prime gender (standard stereotype threat)
 - Condition 4: Essays argue for no gender difference
- 2. Pp do math test, performance assessed

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Gender Difference Study: Results





Gender Difference Study

- Telling women that gender difference is due to genes hurts their performance
 - Lack of control
- Why does telling them that it's due to life experiences solve the problem?
- What does this mean for research on gender differences?

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Are there gender differences in cognitive abilities?



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Gender Differences in Personality (positive effects mean men > women)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Extraversion | <u>d</u> |
| – Gregariousness | -.15 |
| – Assertiveness | .50 |
| – Activity | .09 |
| • Agreeableness | |
| – Trust | -.25 |
| – Tender-mindedness | -.97 |
| – Aggressiveness | .40- .86 (depending on measure) |
| • Conscientiousness | |
| – Order | -.13 |
| • Emotional Stability | |
| – Anxiety | -.28 |
| – Impulsiveness | .06 |
| • Openness | |
| – Ideas | .03 |

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Gender Differences in Emotion

- Women experience more negative emotions
 - Greater frequency
 - Greater intensity
- Women score higher on measures of empathy

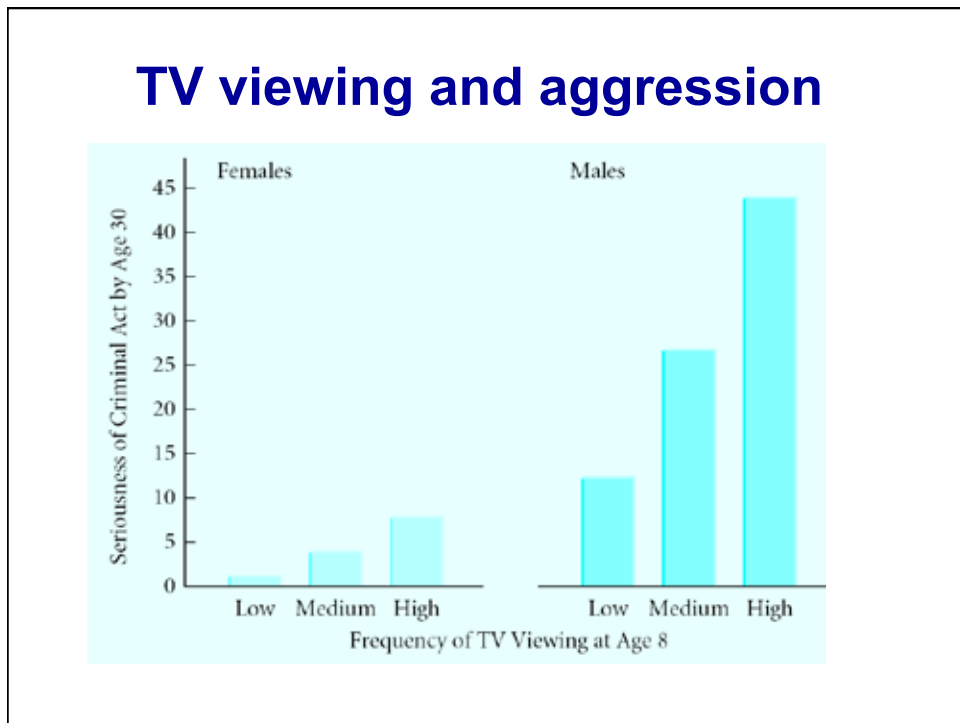
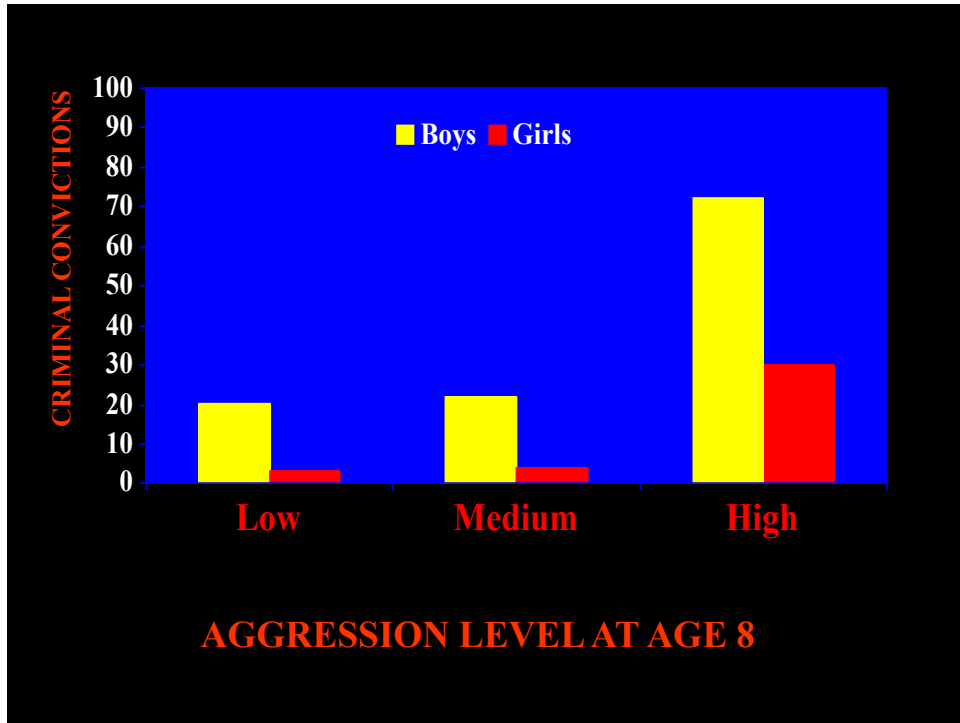
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Is there a gender difference in aggression?

- Until age 2, No!
 - In fact, some evidence that aggression is more common in play groups dominated by girls
- By age 4 or 5, boys show higher aggression
- By adolescence, boys are much more aggressive
 - And more conduct problems, higher delinquency
- Conduct disorders are 6-10 times more common in boys
- Men commit more crime across cultures

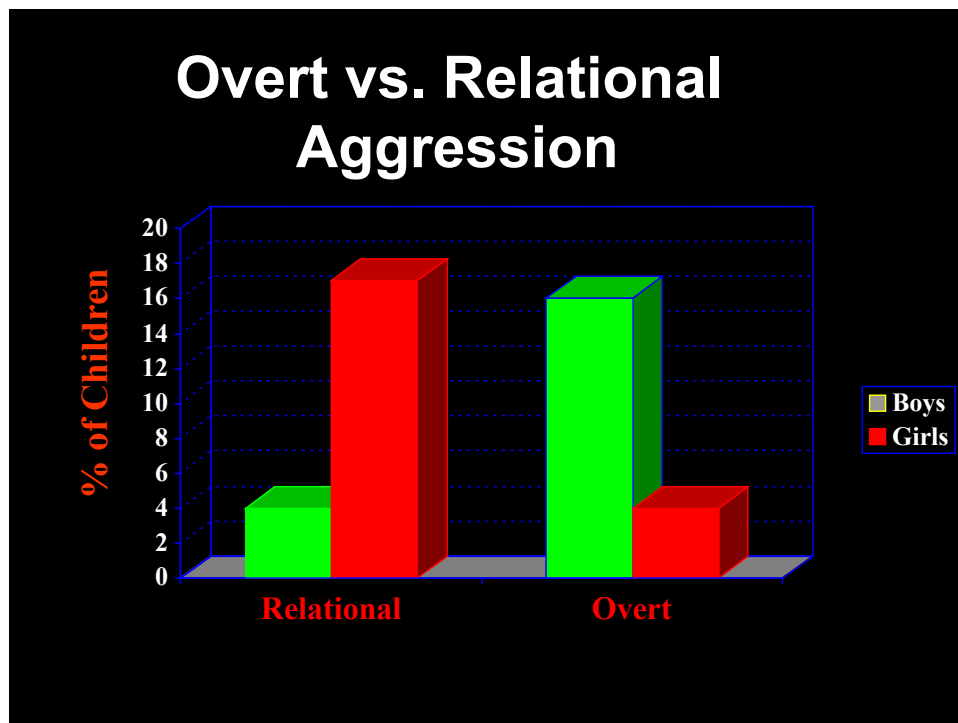
Homicide trends in the U.S.

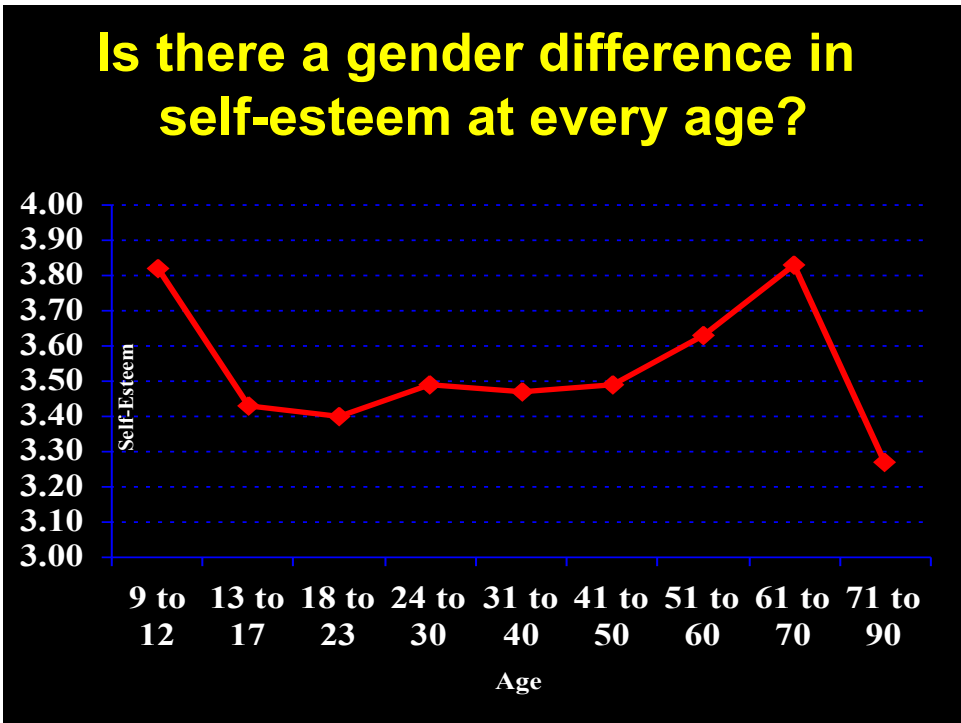
- **Males were almost 10 times more likely than females to commit murder in 2002**
- Male offender/Male victim 65.1%
- Male offender/Female victim 22.6%
- Female offender/Male victim 9.9%
- Female offender/Female victim 2.4%

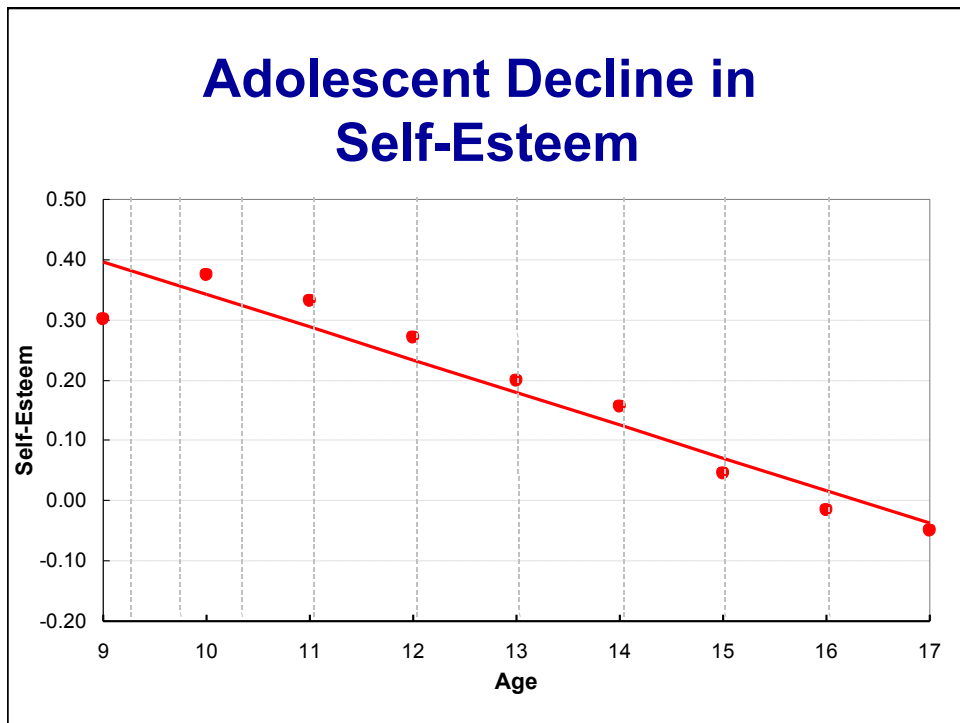
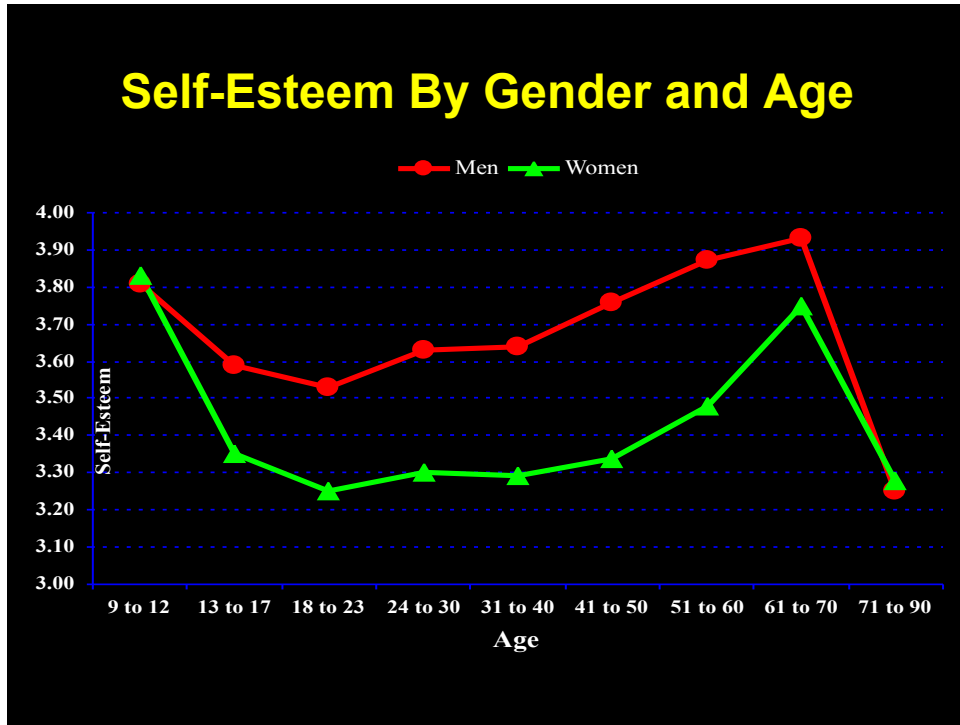


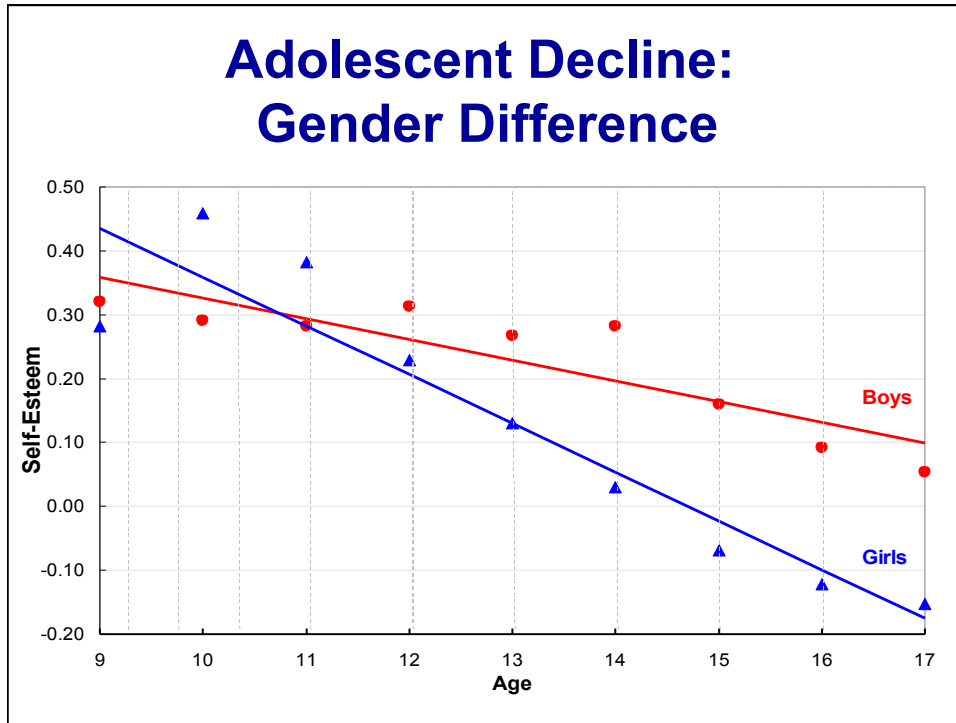
Explaining the Gender Difference in Aggression

- Girls show aggression differently than boys
- Overt aggression (male)
 - Physical assaults (hitting) and verbal assaults (yelling, insulting)
- Relational aggression (female)
 - Excluding others; withdrawing acceptance; spreading false rumors
- Study of 3rd-6th grade children
 - Examined overt and relational aggression
 - Peer nominations of aggressive kids





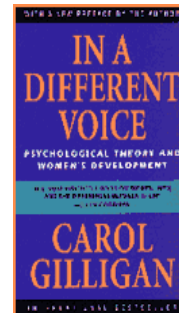




Why Do Girls Show a Greater Self-Esteem Decline than Boys?

What happens at adolescence?

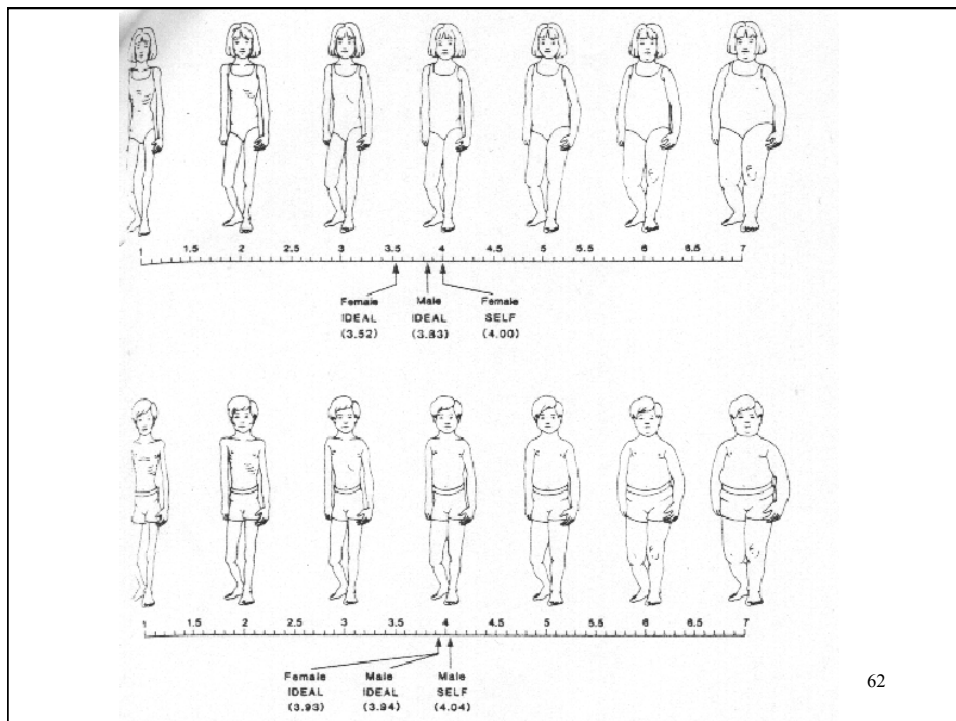
- **Girls' self-confidence fairly high until age 11 or 12**
 - Assertive about feelings
- **During adolescence**
 - Many girls accept stereotyped notions of how they should be (behavior and looks)
 - Repress true feelings
 - Adopt a “nice” and woman-like self-presentation



Why do adolescent girls decline in self-esteem more than boys?

- Idealized standards of beauty may contribute to girls' declining self-esteem
- Girls' bodies change with puberty, making it much harder to maintain the idealized body type presented by the media

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Gender Difference in Body Image

- Review of 222 studies over the past 50 years (Feingold & Mazzella, 1998)
- Findings:
 - Men have a more positive body image than women
 - Gender difference is larger for more recent studies

Body image and girls' self-esteem decline

- Experimental evidence
 - Exposure to media showing thin body ideal linked to lower self-esteem
- Quasi-experimental evidence
 - Introduction of American TV in Fiji increased prevalence of eating disorders in adolescent girls, and led to more negative body image

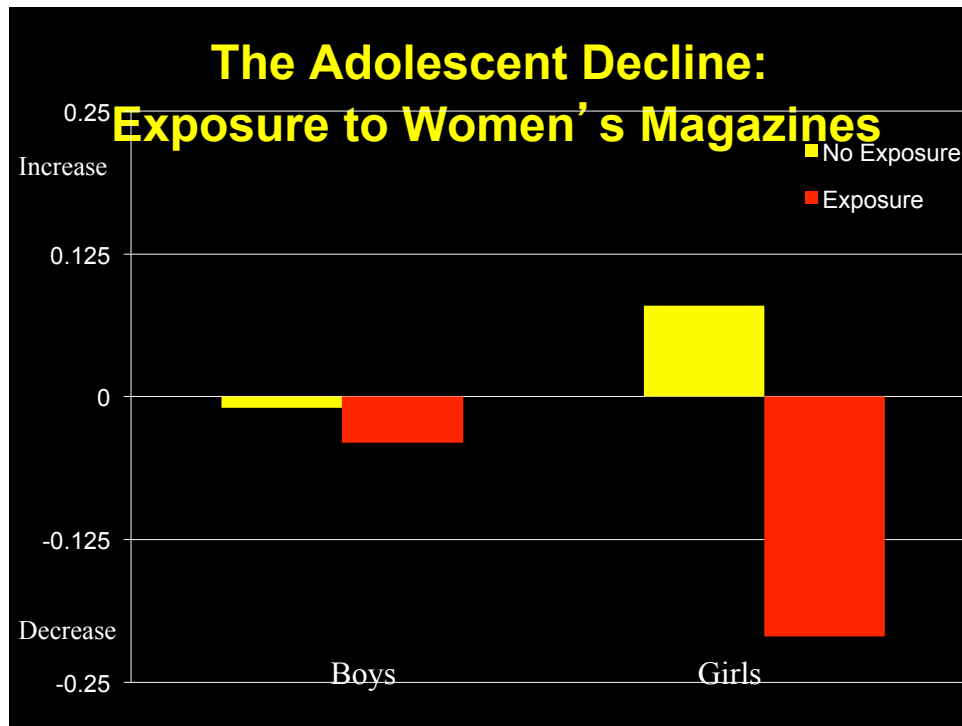
Body Image- Self-esteem Study

- Hypothesis: Girls in countries that begin receiving magazines depicting idealized body images will show larger decline in self-esteem during adolescence

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Methods

- Internet sample
- 34 countries
- Measured self-esteem in children (ages 9-12) and adolescents (ages 13-17)
 - Self-esteem levels drop, overall, between these two age groups
- Coded each country for availability of popular women's magazines (*Cosmopolitan, Glamour, Vogue*)
 - 11 countries have access to these magazines



Gender Roles

Popular conceptions of gender,
which may influence behavior

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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 or beliefs 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 continued...
- 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.”

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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...”

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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

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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

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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)

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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

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How can we explain gender differences in personality?

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Theories of Gender Differences

- Socialization theory (e.g., Eagly & Wood)
 - 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

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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

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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 re-assign Bruce’s gender
 - After surgery, Dr. Money became famous
 - Supported idea that gender is a social construction



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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

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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 (CAH)
 - Female fetus has overactive adrenal gland, hormonally masculinized
 - Prefer “male” toys
 - But – criticisms have been raised about which toys are considered “male”
 - Does not include puzzles, Lincoln logs
 - Inconsistent across studies

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Other Evidence for Hormonal Theories

- 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
- Lesbians with higher T more likely to be “butch” than “femme”
- More rambunctious frat boys have higher testosterone
- Men with higher testosterone have higher sex drive
- Women have higher drive when T peaks

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Conclusions on Sex and Gender Roles

- There are, on average, major biological differences between males and females
 - Some of these may be evolved, occur in-vitro
 - 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

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What about gender identity that does not match birth gender?

- New area of research, very few studies
- Olson and colleagues tested whether trans kids (age 5-12) show cognitive associations more similar to cisgender kids of same bio gender or same gender identity
- Results: Trans kids indistinguishable from cis kids who share same gender *identity*

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Next Week

- Last class!
- Culture and Personality
- Overview of course, Wrap up
- Review for final exam
 - Larsen & Buss, Chapters 17 & 20

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