

Personality

What makes us who we are?

Psych 305A: Lecture 9

Personality and Gender

Midterm 2

- MC mean = 70% (good job!)
 - Range = 28-98%
- Essay mean = 69% (range = 18-100%)
- Overall exam mean = 69%, range = 25-95%
- Grades will be posted online tonight!
- Eric's Office Hours this week and next week, in Room 3605
 - Tues 1-2
 - Thurs 4-5

Problem MC Items

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

Problem MC Items

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.⁴

Problem MC Items

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

Personality and Gender/Sex

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

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.

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

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.”

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

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

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

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

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?

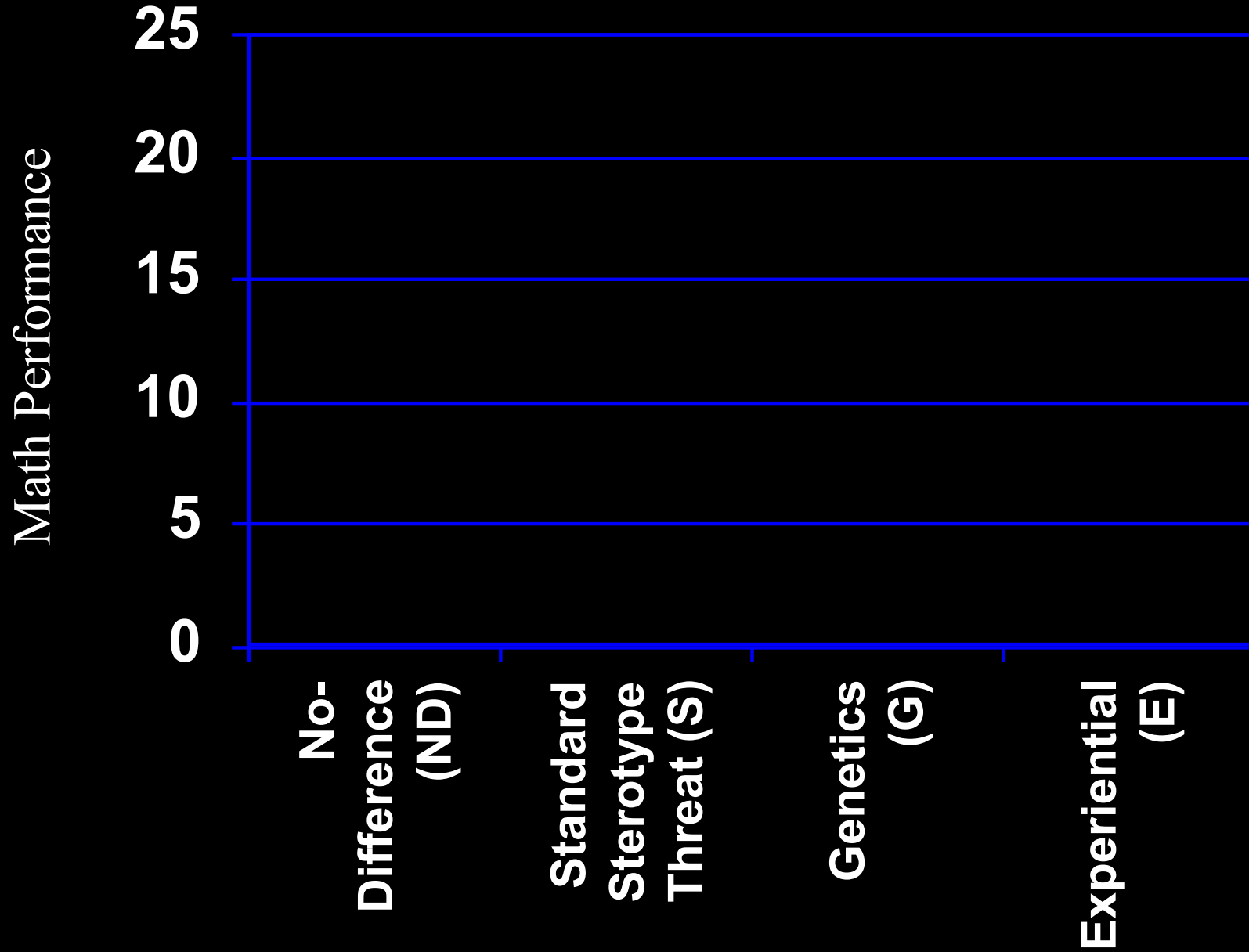
UBC research addressed this issue

- 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

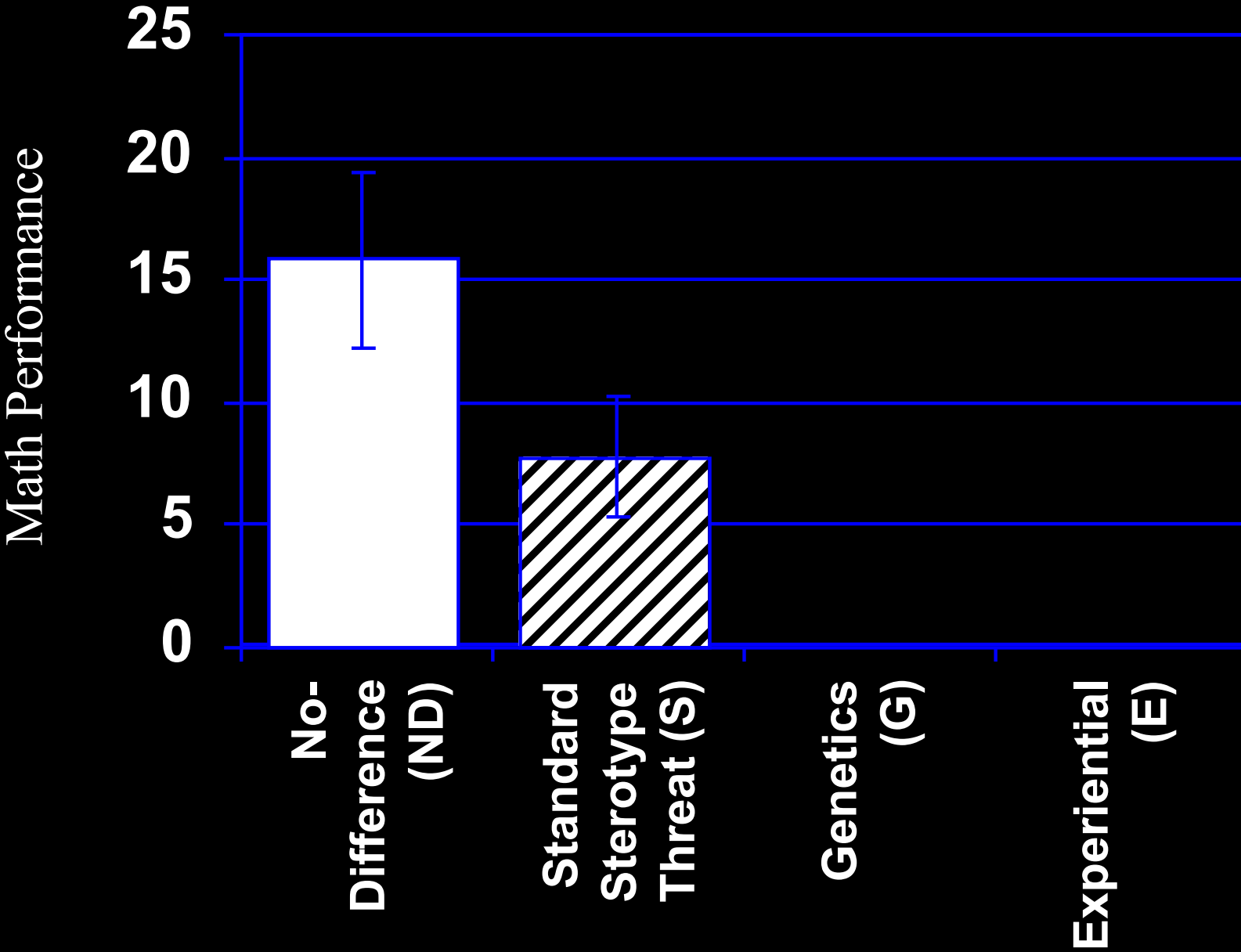
Gender Difference Study

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

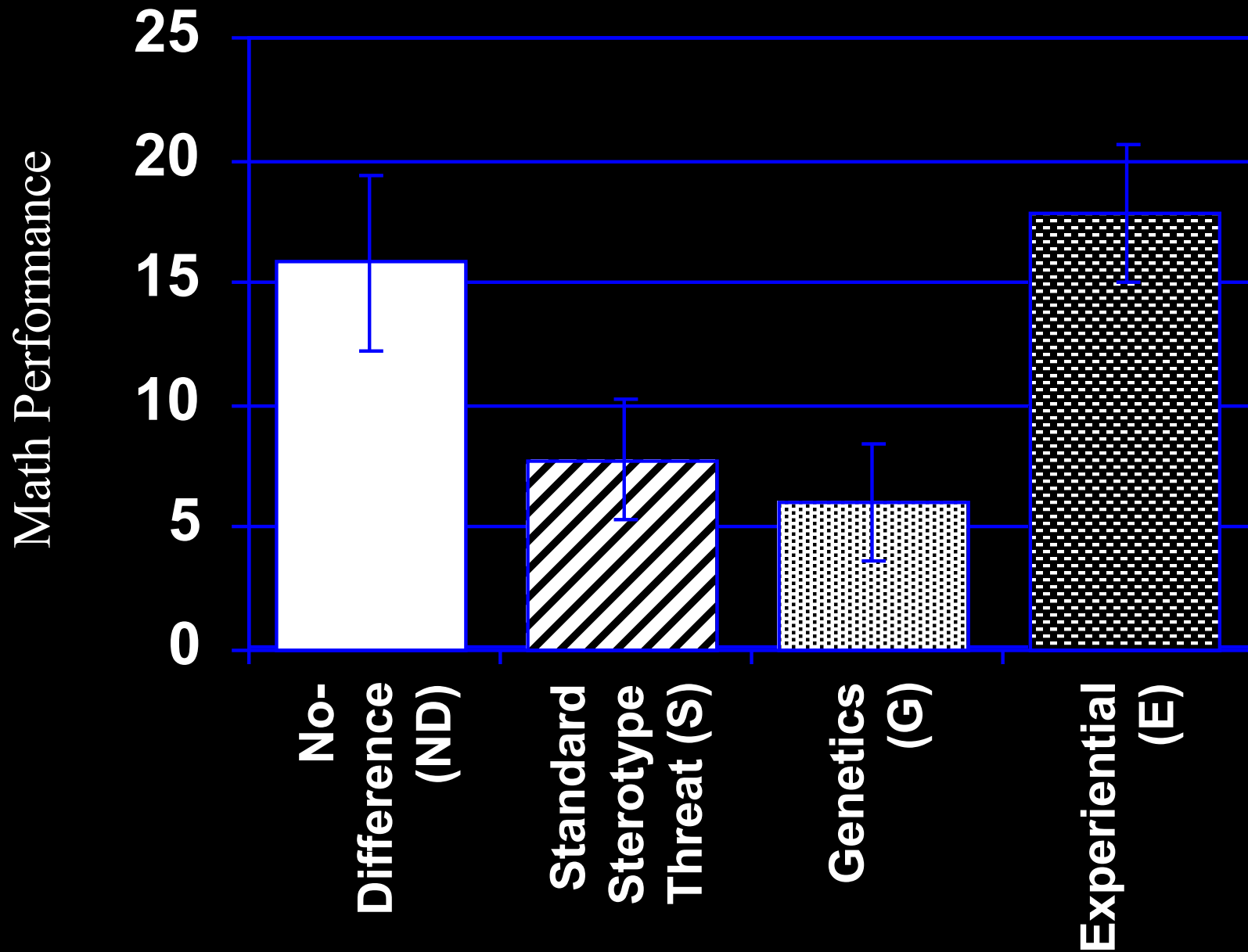
Gender Difference Study: Results



Gender Difference Study: Results



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?

Are there gender differences in cognitive abilities?



Gender Differences in Personality

(positive effects mean men > women)

- | | <u>d</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Extraversion | |
| – 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 |

Gender Differences in Emotion

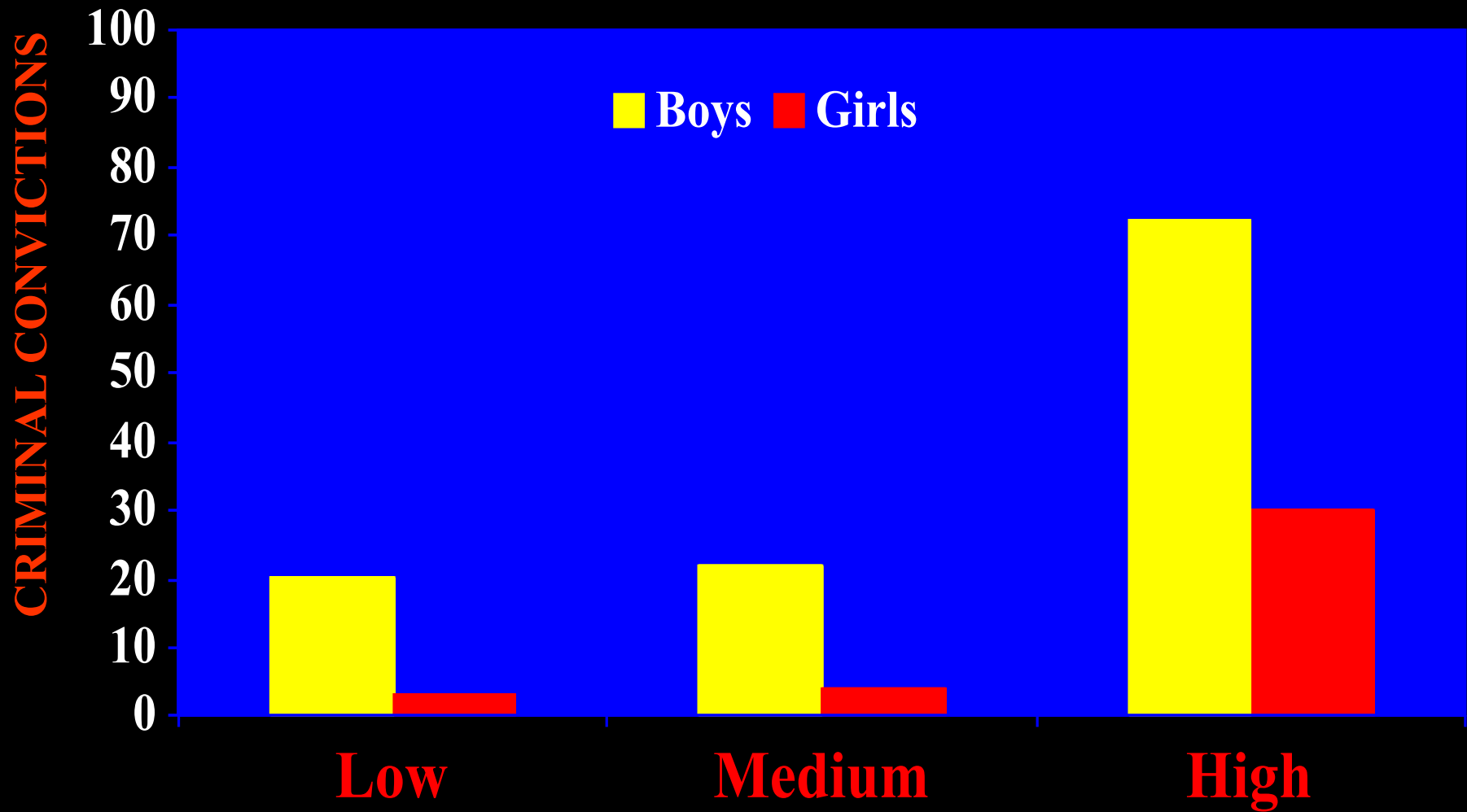
- Women experience more negative emotions
 - Greater frequency
 - Greater intensity
- Women score higher on measures of empathy

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

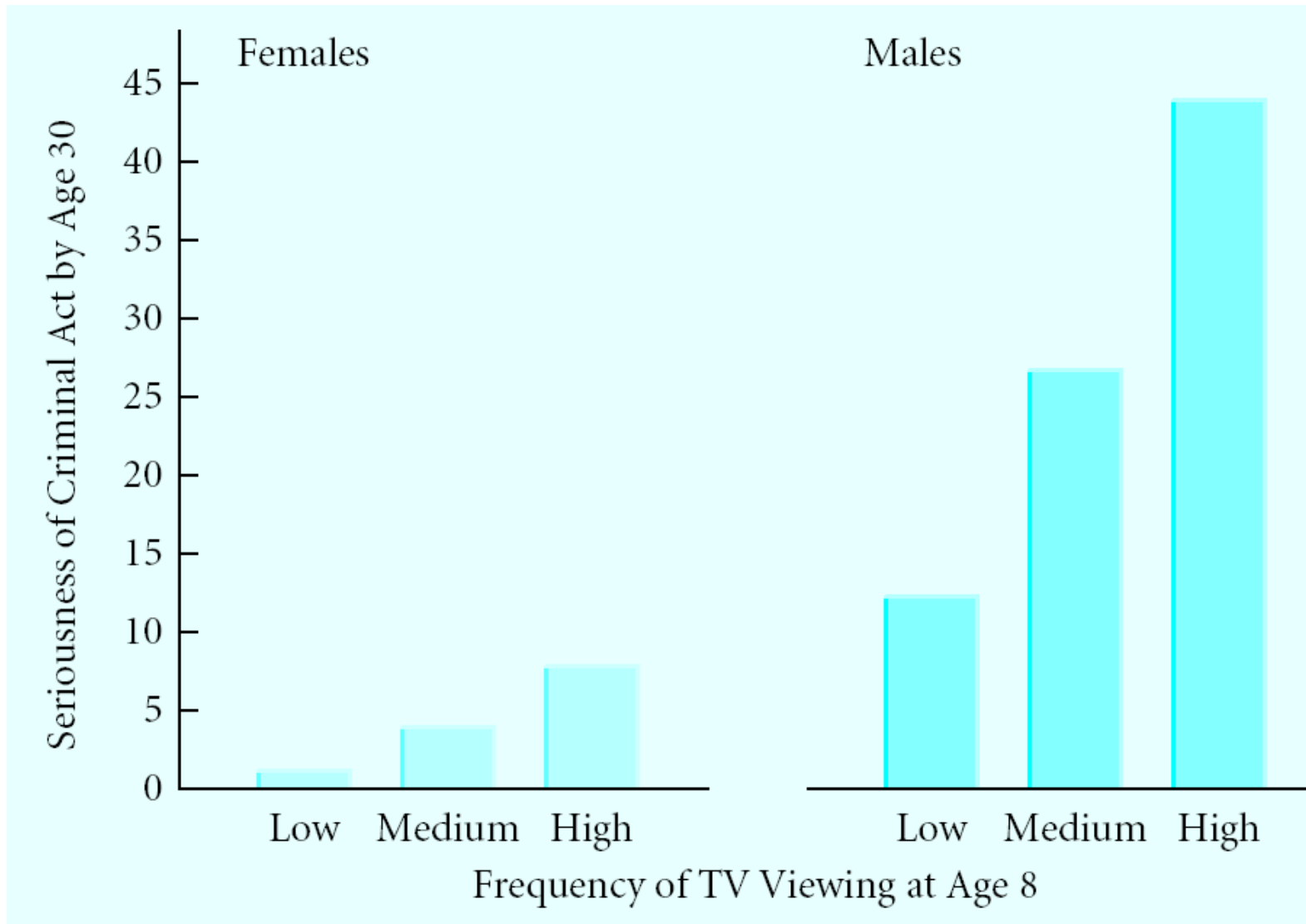
Homicide trends in the U.S.

- **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%



AGGRESSION LEVEL AT AGE 8

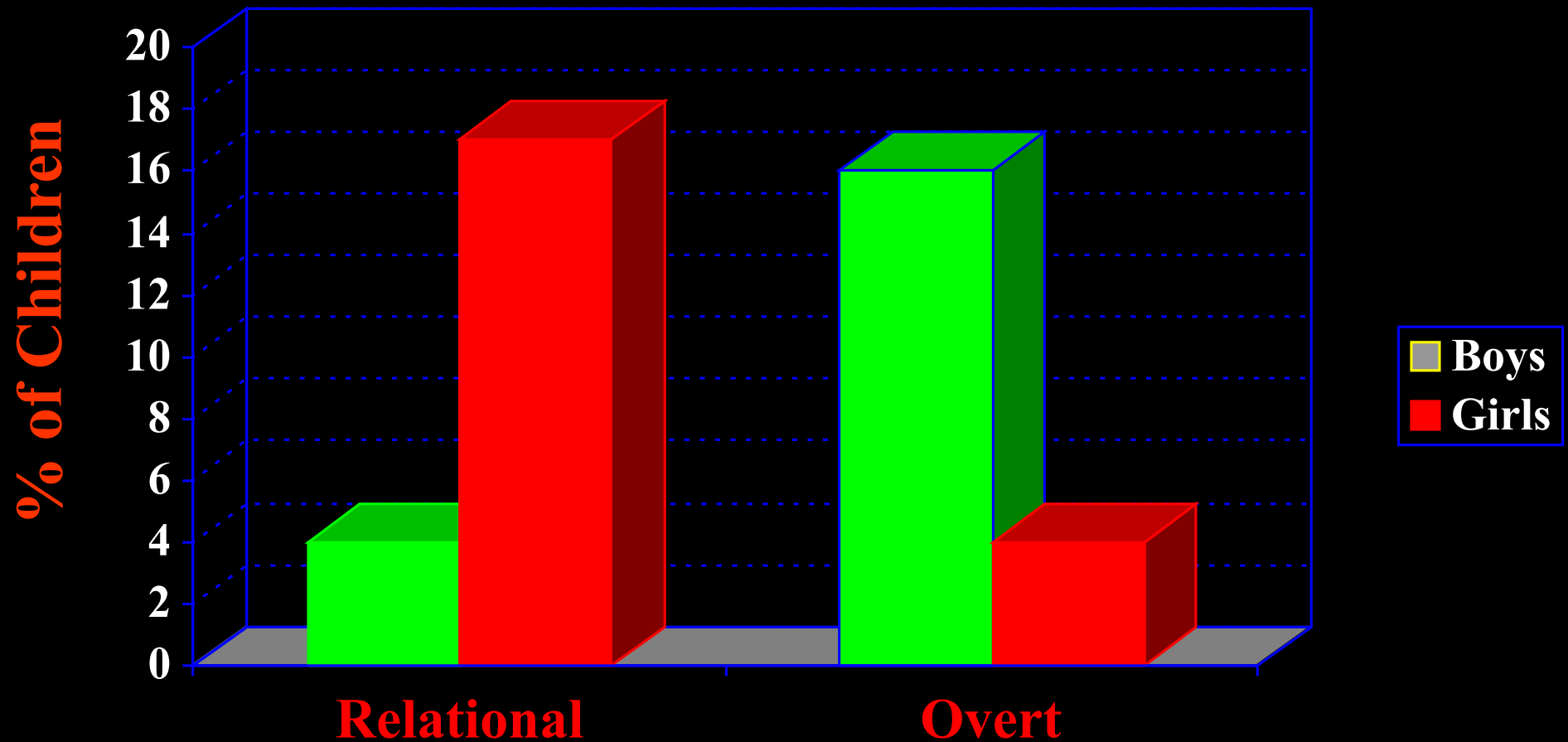
TV viewing and aggression



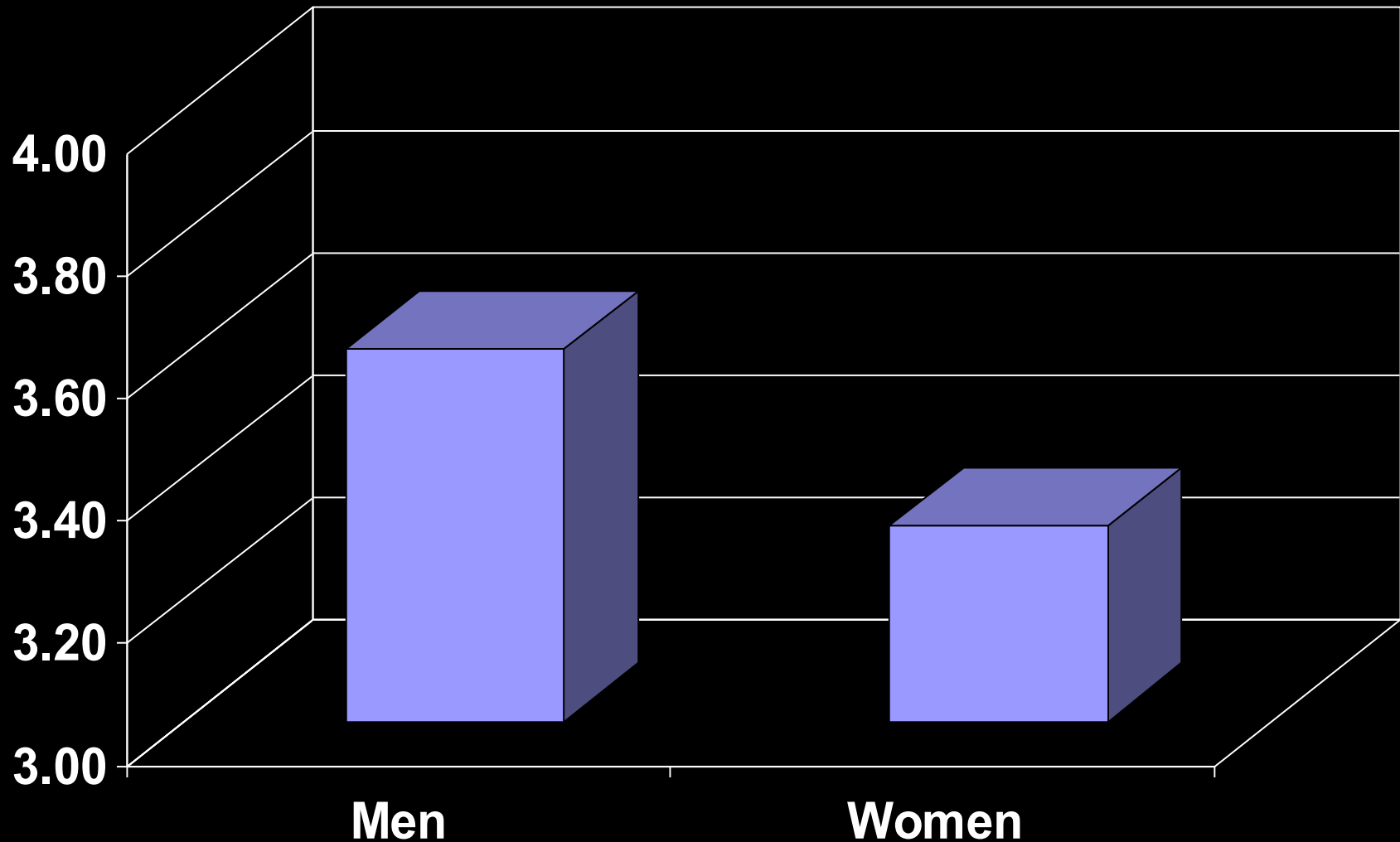
Explaining the Gender Difference in Aggression

- 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

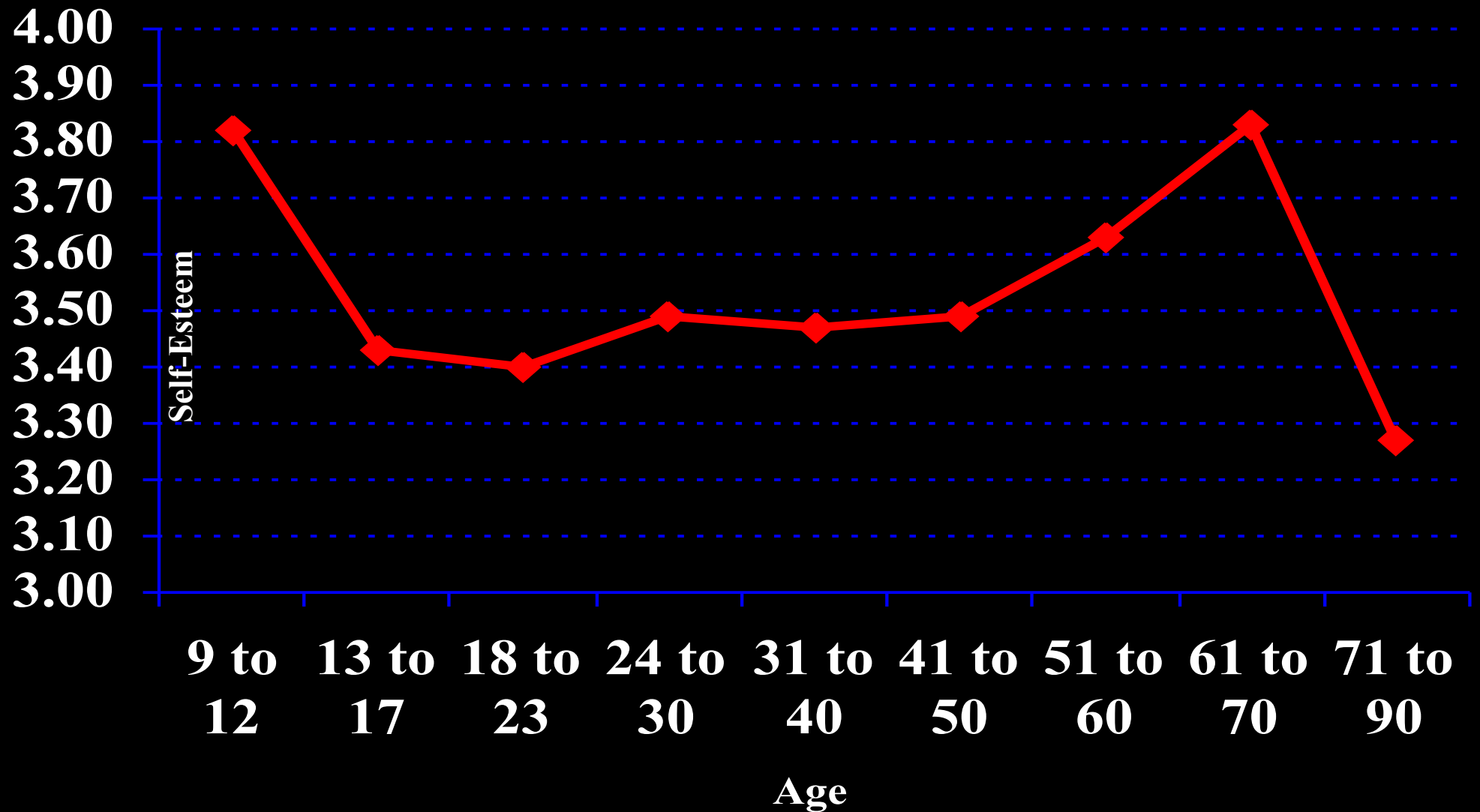
Overt vs. Relational Aggression



Other Gender Differences: Self-Esteem

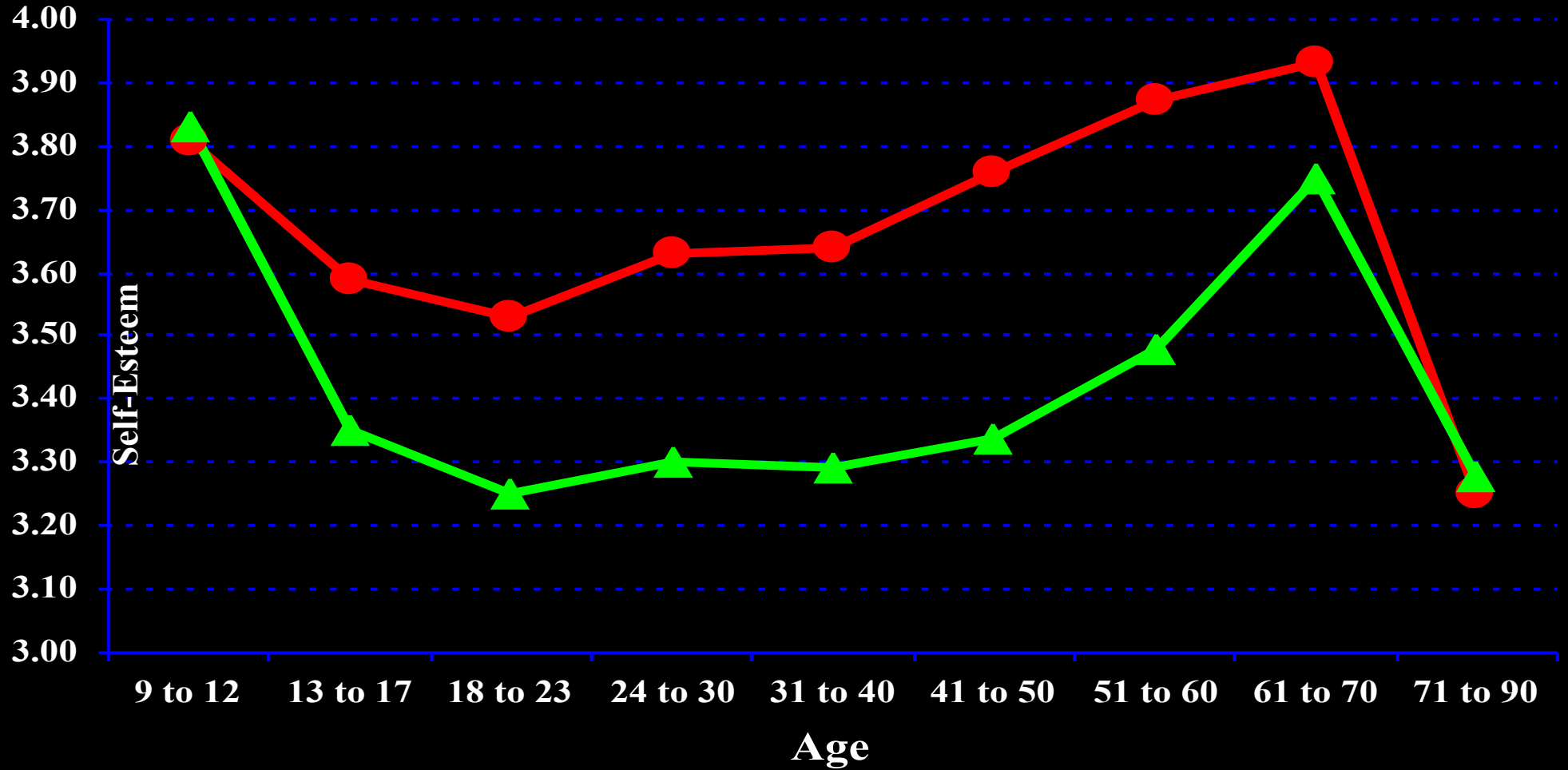


Is there a gender difference in self-esteem at every age?

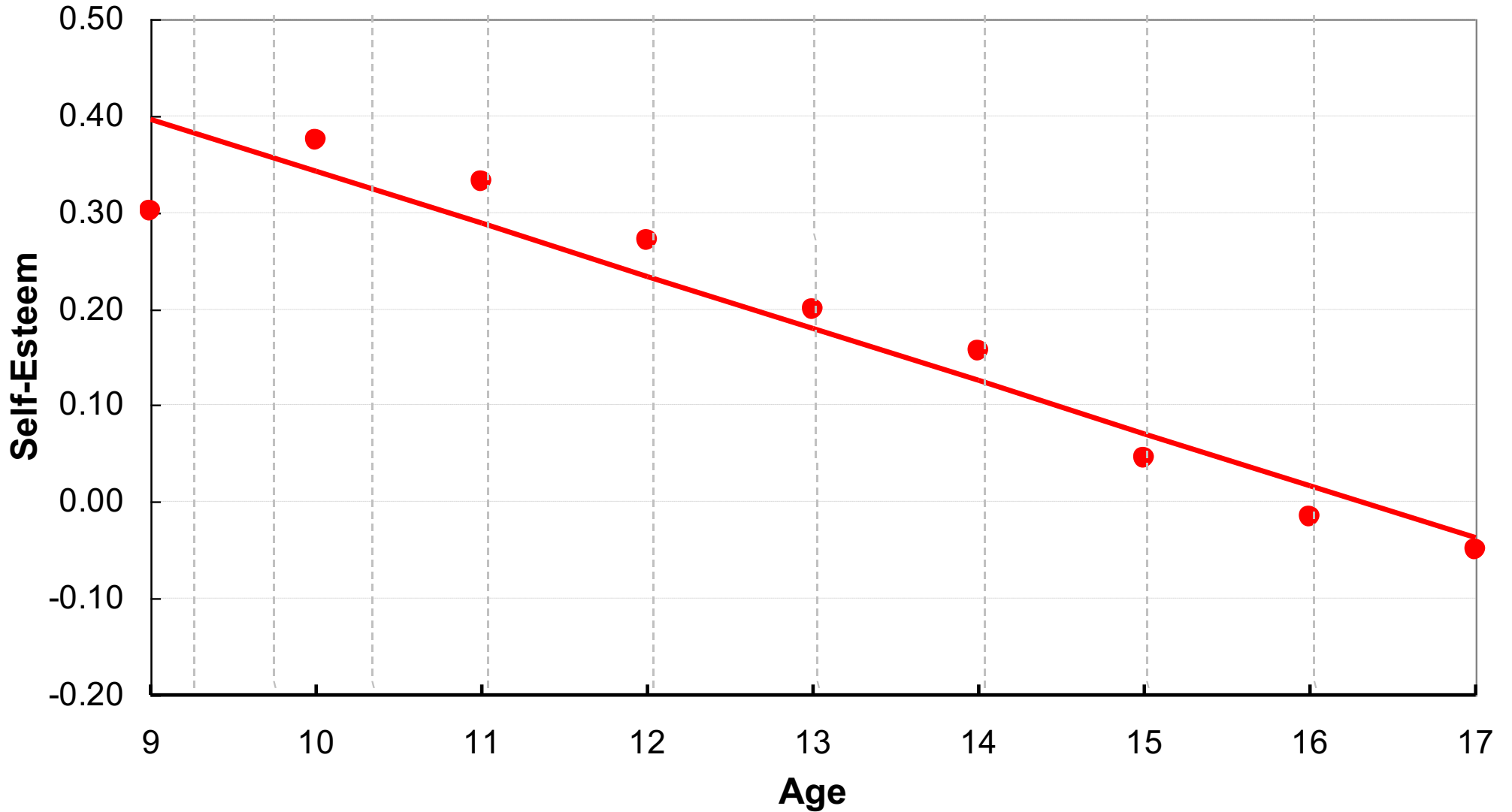


Self-Esteem By Gender and Age

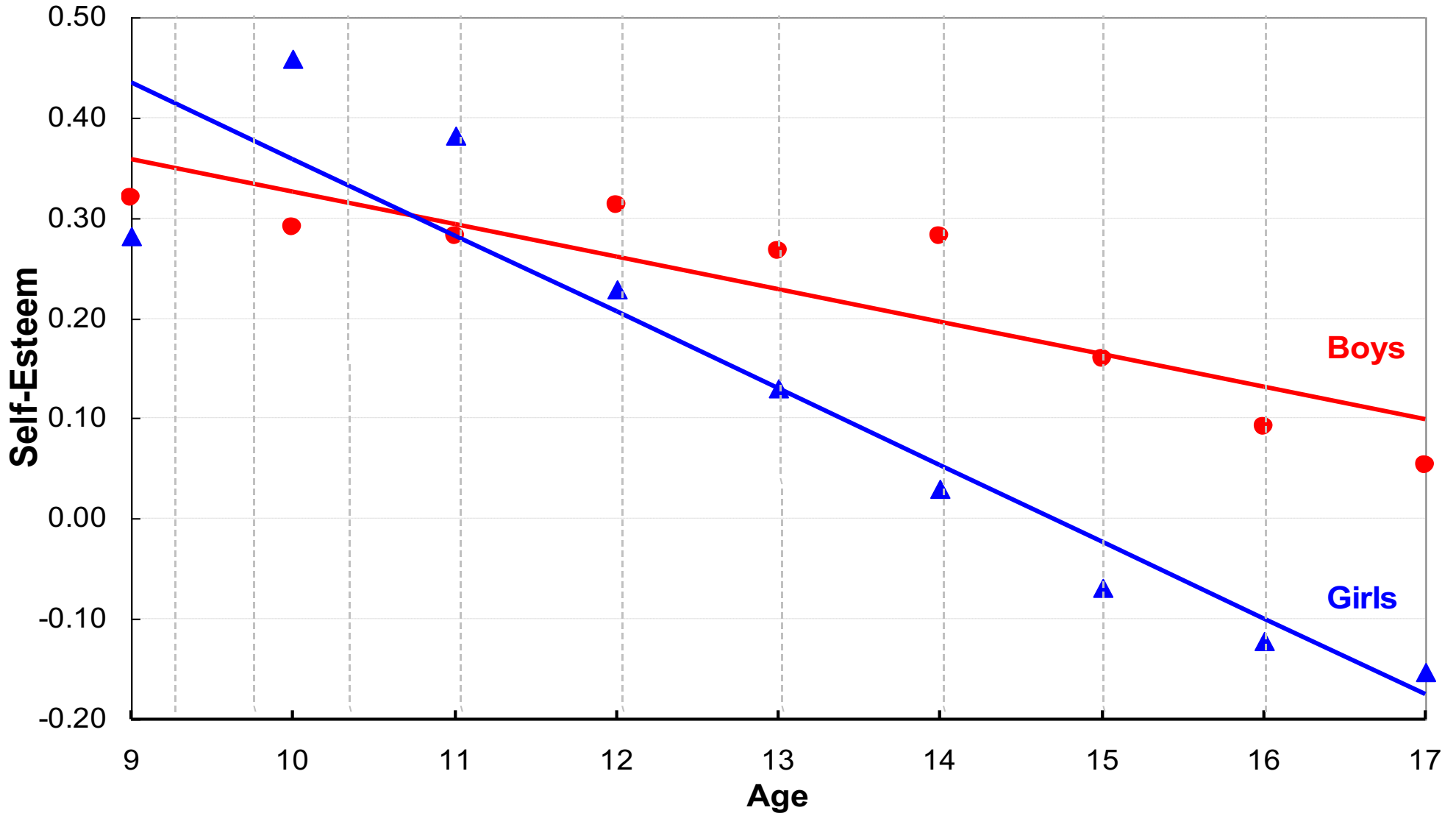
Men Women



Adolescent Decline in Self-Esteem



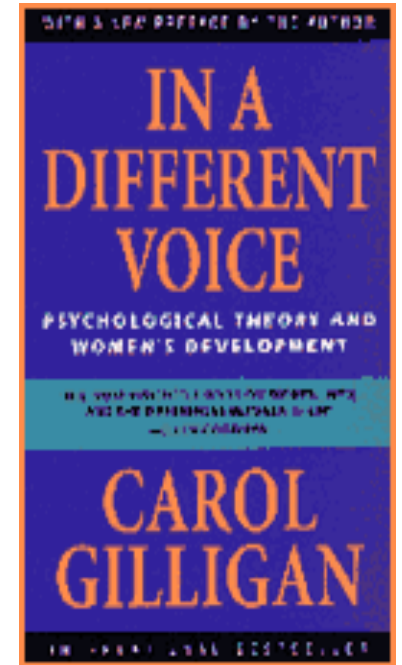
Adolescent Decline: Gender Difference



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

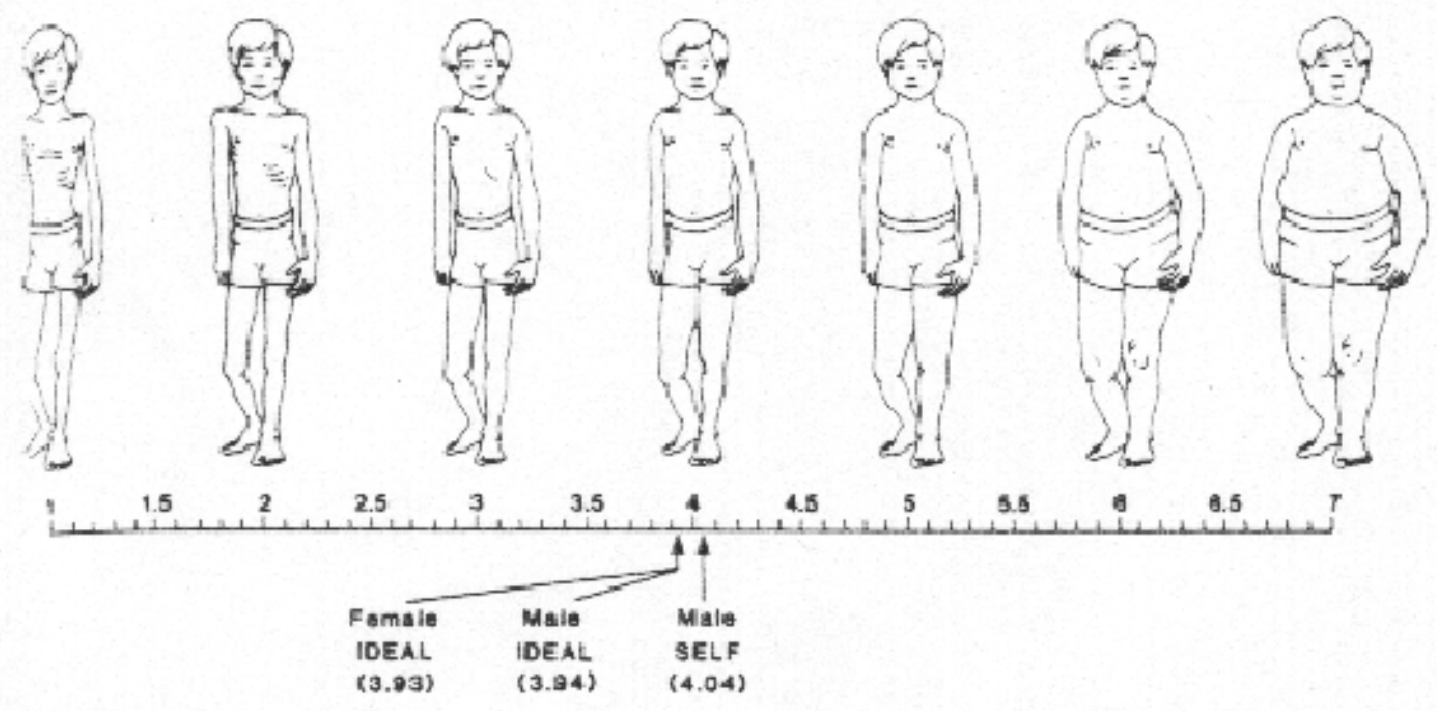
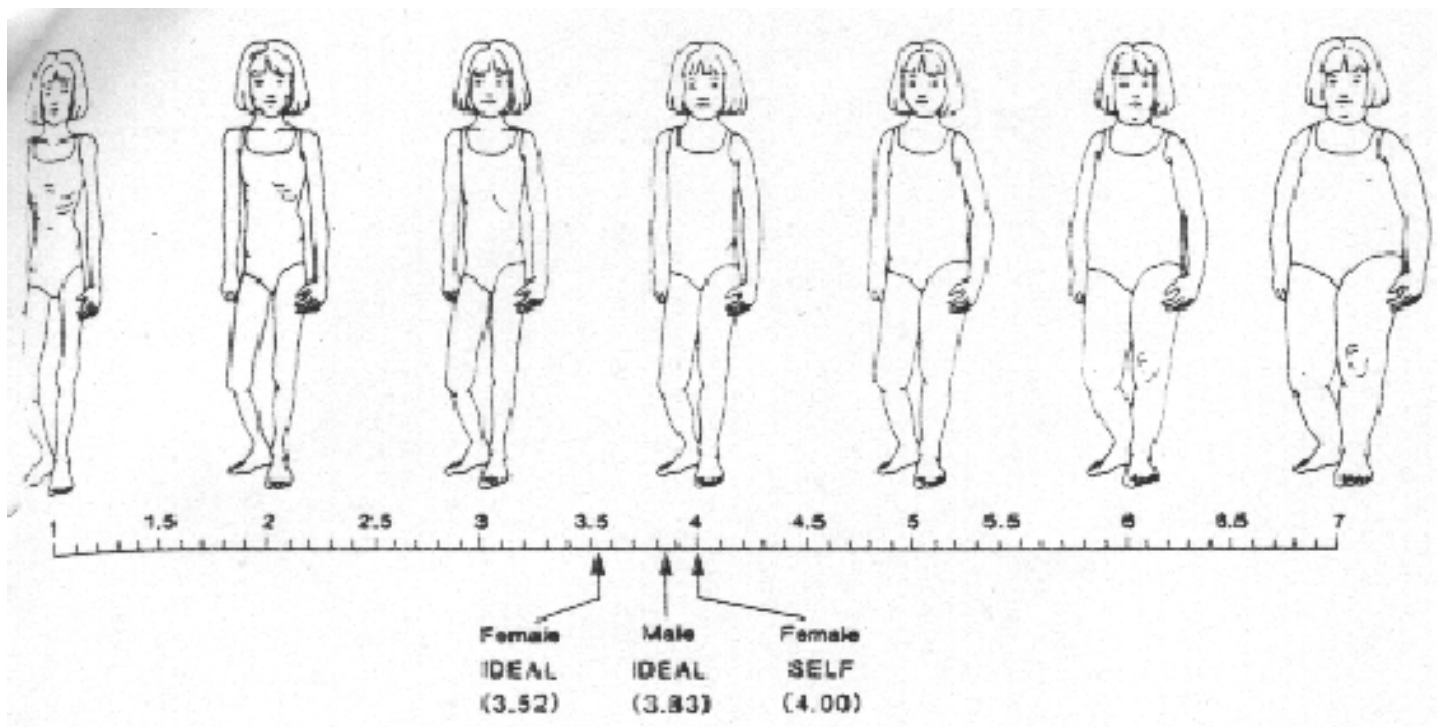
What happens at adolescence?

- **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



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

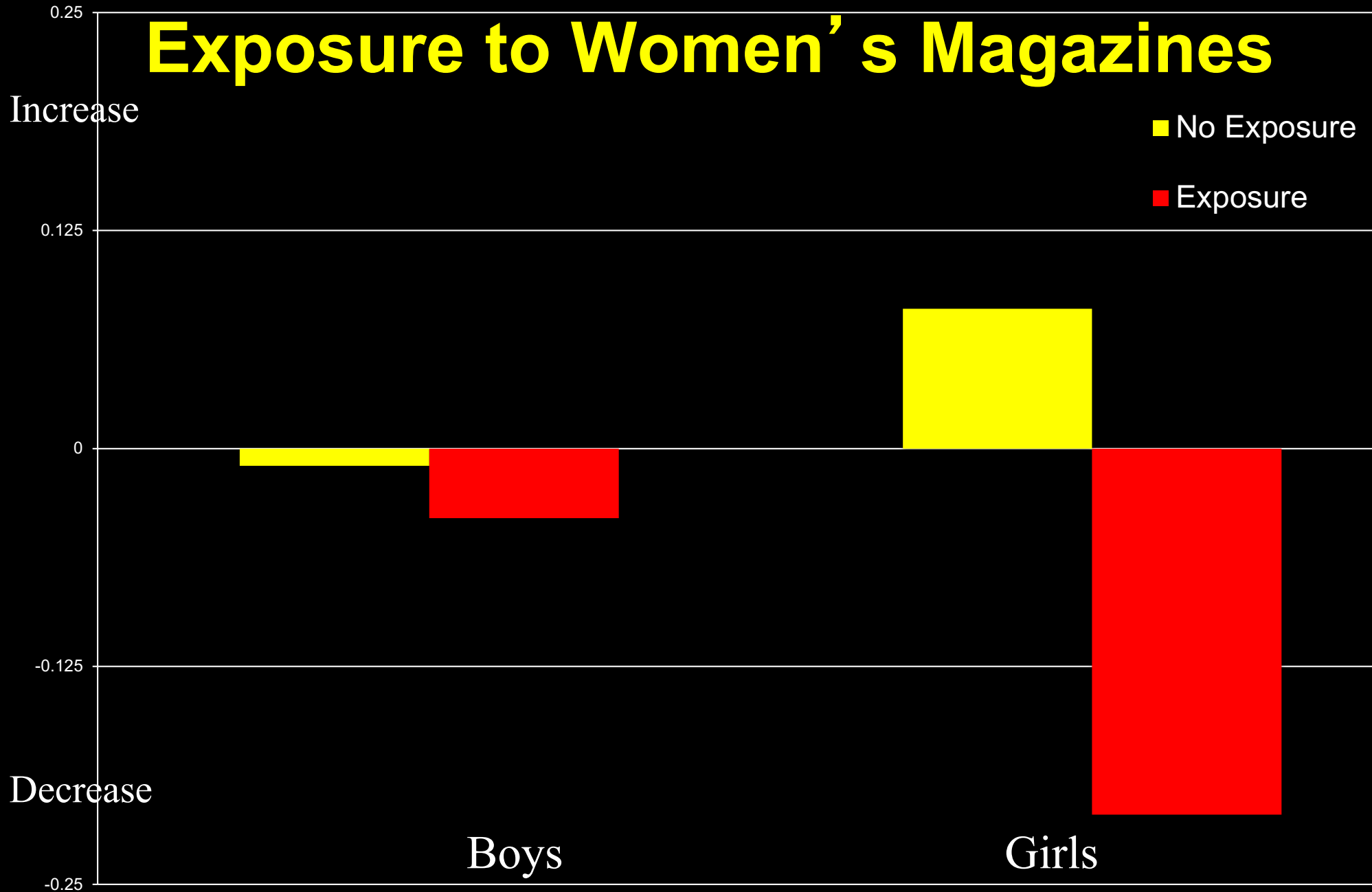
Body Image- Self-esteem Study

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

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

The Adolescent Decline: Exposure to Women's Magazines



Gender 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 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.”

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...”

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

How can we explain gender differences in personality?

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

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 re-assign 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 (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

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

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

What about gender identity that does not match birth gender?

- New area of research, very few studies
- Olson and colleagues tested whether transgender kids (age 5-12) show cognitive associations more similar to cisgender kids of same biological gender or same gender identity
 - E.g., are trans boys more like children born as girls or children born as boys
- Results: Trans kids indistinguishable from cis kids who share same gender *identity*

Personality and Culture

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 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)



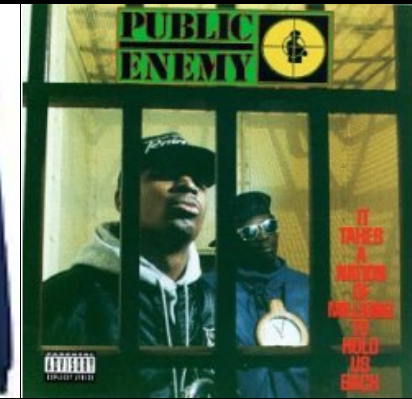
living spaces

(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?
- How would you describe BC culture, compared to the East Coast?
- What about Canada vs. the U.S.?

Next Week

- MOVIE: *Shattered Glass*
 - Movie will start just after 5, so come to class on time to watch it (feel free to bring popcorn)
- After class, read the article linked on the website (don't read it before you see the movie – spoilers!)
- Forward thinking: Nov. 29 (Last class)
 - Discuss film
 - Culture and Personality
 - Overview of course, Wrap up
 - Review for final exam