GENDER ROLES AND SOCIALIZATION

➢ THE NATURE–NURTURE DEBATE
The traditional view of masculinity and femininity sees men and women as polar opposites.

QUESTION: In what ways do we describe males and females as opposites?
“opposite sex”
aggressive/passive
instrumental (task oriented)/expressive (emotion oriented)
rational/irrational
want sex/want love
from Mars/from Venus

TRADITIONAL MALE SEX ROLE
• No sissy stuff
• Colors
• Vocabulary (precious, darling, cute)
• Food (salad, quiche)
• Hobbies
• No disclosure (showing feelings of vulnerability [sad, depressed, frightened] = weakness)

FEMALE
• Nurturing, expressive
• Disclosure (yes)
Are men and women really that different, or are these stereotypes?
Does society impose much of our gender differences? How?

**QUESTION:** What does nature vs. nurture mean???

**THE NATURE–NURTURE DEBATE**

**NATURE**
Differences in male and female beliefs, attitudes and behavior are:
- Innate (inborn, natural)
- Biological, physiological
  - Due to heredity
  - Fairly fixed

Because one is male, he is like this…
(strong, aggressive, instrumental, rational, breadwinner)

**NURTURE**
Differences in male and female beliefs, attitudes and behavior are:
- Learned
- Psychological, social, cultural
  - Due to environment
  - Very changeable

**NATURE** has to do with our **BIOLOGY**. So, much of who we are is determined by biology.

**NURTURE** has to do with our **SOCIALIZATION**
(the social nurturing we receive from our
parents, peers, school, media...). So, much of who we are is determined by how we are socialized.

Although sociologists are beginning to delve into the biological aspect of humans and recognizing that biology does play an important role in determining who we are, we do believe that “SOCIALIZATION” plays as equal or even a greater role in explaining who we are.

➢ THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEX & GENDER

We also need to define and understand the difference between the concepts

SEX    &    GENDER

Basically, SEX is BIOLOGICAL, GENDER is SOCIAL.

SEX refers to our “BIOLOGICAL” characteristics (chromosomal, anatomical, hormonal...). Our chromosomes, anatomy, hormones...

GENDER refers to the “SOCIAL” roles of being male or female (rather than physical qualities).

It is the social traits that society considers proper for each sex.
In our society the gender trait that is equated with the FEMALE sex is “FEMININITY,” and for the MALE sex, “MASCULINITY.”

And society/our socialization agents determine the appropriate ATTITUDES and BEHAVIOR that each gender is to have.

**QUESTION:** What are some gender-appropriate attitudes or behavior that we are supposed to have in our society??

**EXAMPLE:** Females and males tend to dress a certain way (according to gender), although females have a lot more flexibility than males. The fact that women on average, earn less than men is a form of gender discrimination. Men are expected to be strong, women are expected to be nurturing. Not as acceptable for men to cry/show emotions in public.

*Video, ABC News Special, “Boys and Girls are Different” (43 min.)*

➢ **HOW WE LEARN GENDER ROLES**

There are 3 main theories explaining how children are socialized to assume gender roles – social learning theory, cognitive development theory, gender schema theory.

**SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY**
How one comes to **BEHAVE** as a male or female.

- **CONSEQUENCES** control behavior
- If behavior is **REWARDED**, it will be repeated
- If behavior is **PUNISHED**, it will not be repeated
- We learn by observing what we should and shouldn’t do.

Children behave in what are considered to be **GENDER-APPROPRIATE** ways because they are **REWARDED** when they do so and **PUNISHED** when they do not by the various agents of socialization.

For example, a little girl who puts on her mother’s make-up may be told she is cute. A boy might be scolded.

We learn by reinforcement (pos. & neg.) and also by imitating same-sex significant others.

**BOYS** are **REWARDED** when they identify with **MALE MODELS**.

**GIRLS** are **REWARDED** when they identify with **FEMALE MODELS**.

➢ **WHO TEACHES GENDER ROLES?**
PARENTS

Mothers and fathers treat sons and daughters differently. Throughout childhood, parents, especially FATHERS tend to encourage their BOYS to be ACTIVE and encourage their GIRLS to take a more PASSIVE, FEMININE role.

Parents tend to encourage males to take risks and foster independence, in comparison to females who receive more help from parents.

Traditionally, fathers have been closer with their sons than daughters. They share in “male bonding” – shared activities rather than shared feelings. Rather than having a heart-to-heart, they bond by playing ball. Boys are encouraged to participate in team sports – teaches them to be tough, competitive, independent, achievement-oriented – qualities that prepare them for the real world.

On the other hand, girls are taught to be nurturing, more in touch with their emotions. Do you notice the helping professions that emphasize nurturing and caring (teaching, nursing) are dominated by women?
TOYS, PLAY, AND PEER INTERACTION
Peers socialize each other to adhere to APPROPRIATE GENDER ROLES. How?

EXAMPLE: children are encouraged by peers to play with toys that are considered gender-appropriate, and are often teased when they play with toys designed for the opposite gender, especially among boys.

What happens to the little boy who brings a Barbie over to his friend’s house to play?

Children punish each other for playing with gender-inappropriate toys by leaving them to play alone or by teasing them, such as calling them names like "sissy" or "tomboy."

Boys’ gender roles are more rigid. It’s OK to be a tomboy, not a sissy.

This is more rigid when we are young – Boys don’t play house. Especially rigid during adolescence – peer pressure. More flexible in adulthood.

Traditional boys' and girls' activities differ – BOYS' PLAY involves more INDEPENDENCE and COMPETITION (team sports), whereas GIRLS' tend to focus on DEPENDENCE and COOPERATION (jump rope & playing house).
The significance of PEER PLAY is that it socializes individuals for ADULT ROLES in society. Boys' play involves skills that are associated with success in the "real world," while girls' play involves nurturing roles. Is this changing?

Hopefully, as girls are becoming more involved in team sports, they will develop the same skills to broaden their opportunities.

TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS
Research in preschools confirmed that more attention was paid by the teacher to boys for achievement-related behaviors and to girls for compliance.

"Teachers tend to socialize boys to be active, assertive learners and girls to be quiet, passive learners."

Reports from classrooms (Sadker & Sadker) found that when a girl answered a question incorrectly teachers moved on to the next student to give the correct answer. On the other hand, when a boy answered incorrectly, teachers prompted him until he came up with the right answer. Also, when a girl called out the answer without raising her hand, she was likely to be
reprimanded. But when a boy did the same, teachers generally accepted his answer.

BOYS – louder, more demanding, get more of the teacher’s attention. Boys are called on more often. Teachers are more patient and generous with their praise with boys.

Another concern is that boys also have received more negative attention. More discipline, more anger, they fail, act up more, and drop out more.

GIRLS – are rewarded for their appearance and the neatness of their work. They can’t compete with boys for the teacher’s attention, and often give up and don’t participate in class.

One recommendation for K-12 educators: wait 5 seconds to call on someone. Boys hands go up immediately, even when they don’t have a definite answer. Girls wait longer and then don’t get called on very often.

**BOOKS AND TEXTBOOKS**

Although it has changed a great deal, women/female characters are still underrepresented in books, and often portrayed in domestic roles. Many textbooks ignore women in history, though
we now have women’s studies classes, and even women’s studies majors (B.A. at CSUF).

**POPULAR CULTURE AND THE MEDIA**
Advertising, newspapers/magazines, television/movies, music videos

TV shows and other media forms now include a lot more women of stronger character, who have careers as opposed to being shown primarily as housewives.

However, it is still common to see men portrayed as strong and independent and women as passive and in sexual and subservient behavior.

**EXAMPLE**, most action adventure movies star male characters as the hero, who often needs to rescue a female character. When women are superheroes, they are portrayed as sexy. Also, women are usually seen in commercials promoting household items, especially in daytime TV.

Reinforces stereotypes
Women are often wives, mothers, homemakers. They are emotional and need support.

Men are aggressive. They solve problems and rescue others. They are also portrayed as clueless when it comes to domestic work and taking care of the family.
What are examples of male-female stereotypes in TV shows?

Did you know...90% of narrators in commercials are men, especially in commercials directed toward women in family roles. “The voice of authority.”

Double standard of aging. When men age they become distinguished. Women just get old.

Example: the media doesn’t glamorize sex between people in their 60’s, unless of course it’s a “distinguished” 60-year-old man (Sean Connery, Harrison Ford) with a young woman.

➢ TRADITIONAL VIEWS AND GENDER ROLES
Are traditional gender roles good??

This arrangement is functional/runs smoothly because:

ADVANTAGES:
TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES – man as instrumental (breadwinner, achievement/goal-oriented), woman as expressive (homemaker, emotional, nurturing) promote STABILITY, CONTINUITY, & PREDICTABILITY – men and women know what is expected of them.
Eliminates ROLE CONFLICT — frustration and uncertainties one experiences when confronted with the requirements of two or more roles that are incompatible with each other. Don’t have to worry about “the second shift.”

**DRAWBACKS** —
This arrangement is not economically realistic for most couples.

Traditional gender roles can create stress, boredom, and anxiety. To be solely responsible for the finances/homemaking can be stressful.

Recent research has found marital satisfaction is greater when both husband and wife contribute economically, and share the housework and nurturing tasks at home — when they are both demonstrating instrumental and expressive traits.

All of the pressure is not on one partner. They can appreciate each other’s work/contributions.

 ➢ **CONTEMPORARY GENDER ROLES IN ADULTHOOD**

**Gender Roles in the Family**
With the increasing amount of mothers in the work force, more men are sharing in childcare and household responsibilities. However, women still feel primarily
responsible for the home & family. Family is more demanding for women, especially with young children. Men “help” their wives.

Although men are generally more involved in domestic duties compared to their fathers, women are still most responsible for home & children.

Why is this so??

Who usually makes more money?

**POWER** - the person who brings the most resources to the relationship. Power is decision-making ability. Resources are income and education.

In most cases men make more money, have more prestigious jobs than their wives. His job is considered by the couple as more important than hers. Therefore, if wives work, paid work is secondary to caring for the home and family.

**Video** - “That’s Not My Job” (12:23)

We will further discuss this in Ch.13-Families & Work.

**Gender Roles in the Workplace**

Gender roles in the workplace can negatively affect both men and women.
Gender pay gap (1/3 of every dollar man earns)

Senior management in the corporate structure
There is not “1” female CEO in the top 350 largest U.S. corporations.

And keep in mind that the average salary of CEO’s is around 2mil/yr.

A big reason for gender inequalities in the senior level of corporate management is due to GLASS CEILINGS.

Women graduate with degrees in business, as well as other fields that are male dominated
   have more internships
   and even better grades
are often tracked by the corporate world into positions that we call “SLOW TRACKS” or DEAD ENDS.

This is what we call the glass ceiling. Glass symbolically represents INVISIBLE BARRIERS.

The glass ceiling has to do with putting women into positions that do not directly affect the corporation’s net profit.
These are positions such as human resources. Although a position in human resources can be economically, as well as personally rewarding, corporations do not use these positions in moving up the corporate ladder.

Read “Double Standard”

Also, in order to accommodate family needs, many women settle for minimally demanding jobs that offer low wages & fewer benefits, and in the long run, forgo promotional opportunities seniority advantages, and pay increases.

Most companies do not foster a flexible, family-friendly environment. Workers often feel conflicted – commitment to work vs. family.

Many men would rather take a more active role in parenting. There is a stigma toward family-men – many bosses feel there is a lack of commitment, workers are not considered “team players.” Changes to accommodate families may create a more pleasant work atmosphere, which may in turn increase workers’ productivity.

Why does there have to be a conflict? Why can’t companies become more family-oriented – for women and men?
IS ANDROGYNY THE ANSWER?

Androgynous – person possesses both masculine & feminine characteristics.

Your text mentions that androgyny would be beneficial for girls and especially boys, since society has more rigid views of men’s roles. They wouldn’t be so pressured to be tough, “real men.” (Might stop being workaholics, refrain from engaging in risky sexual behavior, & live longer.)

Assertive girls and nonaggressive boys would be more acceptable in society.

When parents treat girls and boys according to gender, it can be a disadvantage for daughters and sons. They become limited by their gender, rather than empowered by their individual attributes.

How can we fix this if it’s wrong, or is it wrong?

Your text asks a good question – Would androgyny relax some of our rigid views of men’s roles? Or would androgynous men be dismissed as wimps or sissies?

As men get older, they tend to move away from instrumental orientation, and toward expressive orientation.