Week 7 Discussion

Gender Socialization

Not only are people born into a specific culture, they also are socialized into specific gender roles. “Cross cultural studies of gender are concerned with both the degree to which psychological processes and behaviors are relatively invariant across cultures and how they vary systematically with cultural influences,” according to Best and Williams (Matsumoto (Ed.), 2001, p. 197). Cultures often differ in the emphasis placed on social roles assigned to males and females; appropriate gender relations based on sexual role ideologies; gender stereotypes; and the incorporation of masculinity and femininity into self-concept and self-perception. Children are socialized into these gender roles through multiple agents, such as parents, siblings, peers, teachers, religious institutions, and various forms of media.

For this Discussion, consider various socialization agents and their influence on gender role development related to behaviors, attitudes, or expectations. Use your Final Project culture of interest and select another culture of interest to you. Select two socialization agents to use in this Dscussion.

Post by Day 4 a description of the two socialization agents you selected and explain how these agents influence gender role development across two different cultures. Then, describe two socialization agents that influenced your own gender role development and explain how. Finally, explain how your gender role development might have been affected if you were raised in a different culture. Support your responses using the Learning Resources and the current literature.

**Socialization Agent, Chinese #1**

We learn from Best and Williams that agents of socialization are places where we learn about socialization, like our family, our school, our peers and mass media (Best & Williams, 2001). I can definitely see how these agents would be where we learn so much. Mass media is a huge influence as what is portrayed there is often not material that we want our children to be aware of yet. Oftentimes, the information that you find on mass media is not even true, and instead, we find there a story on a specific subject that is more what the media wants us to see about it. In Chinese, women are often presented as subordinate to men and are used as decorations or sex objects more often than men in the mass media (Eisend, 2010). In addition, China state-run media or television program labeled the urban, successful unmarried women over the age of 27 as ‘leftover women’. Therefore,

These will lead to several consequences, for instance, in China, when evaluations of job applicants, men are favored over women for jobs that men have traditionally done (Tosi and Einbender 1985). Stereotyping of physical characteristics (e.g., beauty ideals for women) can lead to reduced self-dignity and body dissatisfaction, stereotyping of role behaviors (e.g., women taking care of children) may lead to restricted opportunities of self-development, and stereo- typing of occupational roles can lead to disadvantages in women’s careers.

The Chinese culture accentuates harmony, cooperation and respect for authority figures. In China, socialization is focused on teaching these values and also stressing the importance of belonging to the family group (Barkan, 2012). In school, the children are taught to value their membership in their homeroom as they call it. In Japan, the children stay in the same homeroom for many years so they have the opportunity to make lifelong friends of those who are in their same kumi (Barkan, 2012). It’s like a home away from home almost and the children in your kumi almost become extended family.

**Socialization Agent, Americans #2**

As I typed this heading, I am thinking about Facebook and the newest diatribe from Trump that is all over the social media. So he called a country a foul word, what else is new. This is the media that Americans are watching and or listening to. Trump supporters say that they would rather have an unprofessional president than one who is afraid to fight. I’d rather have a personable president who stands up for himself and his country. Can’t a person be both? I try not to get too into the mass media as it is just too stressful.

According to Barkan, schools in America teach the normal curriculum which is the three R’s, reading, writing and arithmetic, but they also teach a hidden curriculum which is the cultural values of their society (Barkan, 2012). School in the US also has homerooms, and I am thinking that when I went, we only had homeroom in HS. My maiden name is Smith and my homeroom in HS was almost all Smiths. Too funny!! As for the socialization agent of mass media in America, there is a lot of violence. According to Barkan, mass media aids in socializing our children, adolescents and even our young adults, but to what extent does the mass media violence cause the violence in our society – the answer is that there is a strong correlation between media violence and the societal violence in America (Barkan, 2012).

**My Two Gender Role Socializing Agents**

According to Sikic-Micanovic, there have been numerous studies done examining gender role socialization in families where they found girls and boys receiving gender specific socialization messages being transmitted in several different ways. These messages may be transmitted via task allocation, modeling, and or instruction. In a study done by Hill and Sprague, it was found that in socialization patterns, the biggest differences were related to social class and race rather than gender (Sikic-Micanovic, 1997).

Mass media enables a selective type of consumption which inspires boy and girls to envision their futures based on a cultural ideal that is replicated in media images. In industrialized countries such as Japan, consumerism is a gendered construct that has varying numbers of consumer behavior that is expected for each gender. Retail shops are also sites of education and socialization, showing how retailing activities perpetuate the Japanese gender roles. Obviously, the socialization of gender roles and culturally suitable consumer behavior are not distinct subjects (Sikic-Micanovic, 1997). We learn from Best and Williams that the socialization of boys and girls differ which helps to explain differing behaviors between them. Boys are usually raised to be self-reliant and independent while girls are raised to be nurturing and obedient. These findings suggest that there are subtle differences in the way boys and girls are raised which become less pronounced as they age (Best & Williams, 2001).

**Different Culture Changes and General Reflection**

I can’t imagine myself raised in a different way than I was. Since I am one of the oldest students in most of my classes, the culture I was raised in has changed drastically from how things were when I was growing up. How different might I be if what we have now was available in the 50s-70s when I was growing up? I didn’t even see my first computer until I was in my late 30s, or even early 40s. That computer was a Tandy and it was huge. It took up part of a room and everything was in dos. Those were the days! When kids didn’t have electronics and playing outside was what was done after school and on weekends.

Two gender socialization agents that influence me the most is the ‘family’ and the ‘school’. Since childhood, my parents never told us what to do or not to do based on our gender role. On the contrary, they strongly encourage us to try new things, explore our talent and interests. Especially as an elder sister, I was often asked to carry more responsibility to take care of my younger brothers and sisters. This influence me a lot and turn me to a very responsible person.

Another agent that has influence my gender development is the school. Taiwan is a very open-minded country regarding of the gender role. For example, comparing to other Asia country, more women are in the higher positions in the organization, and we also have a woman president now. This could be due to the culture and education system, from an early age, the teachers in school always tell us that girls can do big things like boys, and also have unlimited potential. These two factors have contributed to my gender development. When I am growing up, I never felt that my performance would be inferior to that of boys, and this attitude has made me perform well in both school and work.

I think if I was raise in a more conservative culture like Japan, I would have developed a different attitude toward my gender role. Since I was easily affected by the teachers and parent when I was young, I might be a totally different person if I grow up in Japan. I could be more submissive and domestic, abiding by the rules of a woman, supporting my husband, raising my children, dutifully instead of doing a master degree now.

References

Barkan, S. W. (2012). *Sociology: Brief edition.* New York, NY: Downbucket.org.

Best, D. L., & Williams, J. E. (2001). Gender and Culture. In D. M. (Ed.), *The handbook of culture and psychology* (pp. 195-219). New York, NY: Oxford Press.

Matsumoto, D. (2001). *The Handbook of Culture and Psychology.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Sikic-Micanovic, L. (1997). Socialization and gender: The significance of socio-cultural contexts. *Institute of Social Sciences*, 577-595.

Read a selection of your colleagues' postings.

Expand on your colleague’s posting.

Return to this Discussion in a few days to read the responses to your initial posting. Note what you have learned and/or any insights you have gained as a result of the comments your colleagues made.

Reference:

Best, D. L., & Williams, J. E. (2001). Gender and culture. In D. Matsumoto (Ed.), The handbook of culture and psychology (pp. 195–219). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hi Angela,

I thought that your post up for discussion this week was well done. You write about something that I have studied in the past. Giving your children gender specific toys is the American way. What is the first toy a father to be buys for his son? Something sports related. I like the point that you make about being able to share your brothers toys and that is what we do. We don’t feel right buying the masculine toys for our daughters but its ok if they play with their brother’s toys. This is a good reason to have two kids, a boy and a girl. I was lucky and have a son and a daughter. Having more than one child aids in helping them to grow up well rounded.

I’m not surprised about Japan’s school system and how discriminative it is. I’m studying Japan for my project and I’d like to find out if women have it really tough there to climb the ladder. I would imagine that it is difficult to be a good teacher if the parents are always scrutinizing you. Great post Angela!!!

Josie