

Gender theories

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Gender theories Sex is biologically given. Some animal species have one sex; others have two, or three. Gender is how nature interprets the apparent biological differences between particular human bodies of different sexual anatomy. The distinctions between bodies observed and imposed by our culture is where sociologists and theorists of gender identity find their theoretical interests aroused, poised for deconstruction action.

This essay will visit the various approaches to gender realization under biological, interpersonal, or cultural. The essay will specify the one that I view being most valid, citing two personal experiences and two examples from scholarly sources. Over the years numerous major theories have been projected to explain gender development. Interpersonal-oriented theories tend to emphasize intrapersonal processes governing gender development.

In contrast, cultural theories focus on social structural determinants of gender-role development and functioning. According to Biologically-oriented theories, gender differences arising from the disparity biological roles played by males and females in reproduction bring about gender-role maturity and differentiation (Allen, Felluga p. 1-5). Biological theories have been proposed to explain gender development and differentiation.

Evolutionary psychology views gender segregation as ancestrally programmed.

The ancestral origin of differences in gender roles is analyzed in terms of mate preferences, reproductive strategies, parental investment in offspring, and the aggressive nature of males. From this viewpoint, modern gender differences originated from successful ancestral adaptation to the diverse

reproductive anxiety faced by men and women. Men contributed less to their offspring's likelihood of survival so they required multiple partners and were less selective with whom to mate. In addition, uncertainty of paternity raised the risk of investing resources in children who were not their own.

In contrast, women have to carry the fetus and care for their offspring years after their birth. Women adapted to their superior obligatory role in reproduction and parenting by preferring less sexual partners and favoring those who would be good lasting providers of the basic requirements of life for themselves and their offspring. Men, on the other hand, attempted to maximize the chances of paternity by reproducing with numerous young and physically striking females. Because of their size and strength advantage, males resolved troubles arising from conflicting reproductive interests by exercising aggressive dominance over females. According to evolutionary psychology, many current gender differences, such as the number of sexual mates preferred, criteria for selecting sexual partners, aggression, envy and the roles they fulfill originated from the ancestral sex differentiated reproductive strategies. Evolutionary psychology is projected as a superior option to more socially oriented explanations of gender differentiation.

However, this view, which attributes superseding power to biology, does not provide the mechanisms responsible for social patterns of behavior, nor does it specify the nature of the interactional relationship between genetic and environmental influences for disentangling their impact. Other analyses of gender differences from a biological point of view have centered on hormonal influences and estimates of heritability. Hormones influence the

organization of the neural substrates of the brain, including lateralization of brain function.

It has been reported that females show less lateral brain specialization than do males, but the differences are small and some studies find no such difference. Difference in degree of brain lateralization is assumed to create gender differences in cognitive processing. Though girls generally do better on oral tasks, and boys do better on some types of mathematical tasks, the differences are minute. Moreover, the gender differences have been losing ground over the past decade, which is much too short a time to be genetically determined.

However, there are clear and consistent differences in spatial skills favoring males. But this difference has also been diminishing in recent years, most probable as a function of social changes. Although hormones may play a part in spatial ability, the evidence suggests that ecological factors play a central role in the observed differences. In comparison, boys grow up in more spatially complex environments, receive more encouragement for outdoor play, and engage extensively in activities that foster the development of spatial skills.

In accord with a social source, gender differences in spatial ability are not found in cultures where women are granted greater freedom of action. (Kay, Albert. p. 6-11, Julia. p. 40-45). Cultural theories focus on understanding gender from a cultural or cross-cultural perspective. Cultural scholars do not dispute biological and interpersonal factors, but they assume that they are qualified by the influence of nature. One of the approaches is anthropology

which argues that when confronted with different values and ways of doing things in a foreign culture, you see the norm of your own society in a clearer light. This holds true of gender. Our views of gender are clarified by considering what it means elsewhere. An example of how cultural attributes vary is from a group village in the Dominican Republic where it is common for males to be born with undescended testes and undeveloped penis but because this condition is common the society doesn't regard it as abnormal.

Instead, boys born with this condition are raised as "conditional girls". They wear dresses and are treated as girls. At puberty, a secondary tide of androgens causes the testes to descend, the penis to grow, and muscle and hair typical of males to appear at which point the child is considered a boy and treated as a male. Anthropology holds that whatever genetic influences exist, the society we are socialized with is the one that shapes our genetic endowments. Other human cultures are not the only sources of insight into our own culture's views of normal and appropriate behavior for men and women.

In my view, gender development is determined by the culture upheld in one's area of growth. When I was young, the society around me made me realize my gender by buying me things they said by culture a boy should have. (Julia p. 51-54, Kruger p. 531) Reference list <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/English/theory/genderandsex/modules/introduction.html> Boston, Lyn Uhl. Kruger, S. F. (July 2002). Gender theories. *Journal of the history of sexuality*, 11, 530- Retrieved from