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AUTHOR Trautner, Hanns M.; Eckes, Thomas

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ABSTRACT

Although there is a high level of research activities in the field of gender, these activities are only very loosely interconnected. In particular, the developmental and social psychological paradigms of research do not seem to have very much in common. This paper shows that at the intersection of developmental and social psychology many issues emerge that pose new kinds of questions for theorizing and research, and that developmental processes and social influences are closely linked. A conceptual framework is proposed for a developmental social psychology of gender. Gender is put forth as a social category, viewed as having many facets that are highly variable among people, as well as across contexts and points in time. The paper suggests that the sexes relate to each other at four interconnected levels: individual, interpersonal, group, and cultural levels. Content areas related to gender are proposed as biological/categorical sex, activities and interests, personal-social attributes, social relationships, stylistic and symbolic characteristics, and values. Gender-related constructs are: concepts and beliefs, identity or self-perception, preferences of attitudes; and behavioral enactment. The combination of constructs, content areas, and levels of analysis yields a three-dimensional 96-cell matrix that forms the basis for studying gender from a developmental social psychological perspective. Each cell in the matrix refers to a distinct set of research issues emerging at the intersection of a particular content area with a particular construct and level of analysis. An example is presented exemplifying the complex nature of the interrelationships between intraindividual changes, changes of social contexts, and changes in the relationship between the two: the change from hostile children in gender segregated groups to ambivalent adults with heterosexual relationships. (Contains 25 references.) (KB)



Putting gender development into context

Hanns M. Trautner & Thomas Eckes University of Wuppertal Open University of Hagen

There is a high level of research activities in the field of gender, however, these activities are only very loosely interconnected. In particular, developmental and social psychological paradigms of research do not seem to have very much in common (see Deaux & La France, 1998; Ruble & Martin, 1998). The aim of our paper is to show that at the intersection of developmental and social psychology many issues emerge that pose new kinds of questions for theorizing and research, and that developmental processes and social influences are closely linked to each other (see Eckes & Trautner, 2000). As most suited for such an integration, (a) the gender-as-a-social-category perspective is chosen, (b) gender is viewed as having many facets that are highly variable among people, as well as across contexts and points in time, and (c) it is suggested that the sexes relate to each other at four interconnected levels: individual, interpersonal, group, and cultural level. To exemplify the complex nature of intraindividual changes, changes of social contexts, and changes in the relation between the two, the changes taking place when hostile children in gender segregated groups develop into ambivalent adults with heterosexual relationships are described (see Glick & Hilt, 2000; Maccoby, 1998). The advantages of the proposed conceptual framework are demonstrated.

Requests for reprints to: Dr. H.M. Trautner Department of Psychology University of Wuppertal Gauss-Str. 20, S-14.15 42097 Wuppertal Germany

FAX: +49 202 4392341

e-mail: trautner@uni-wuppertal.de

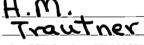
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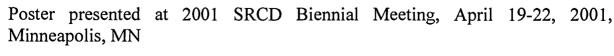
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PUTTING GENDER DEVELOPMENT INTO CONTEXT

Hanns M. Trautner University of Wuppertal, Germany

Thomas Eckes
Open University Hagen,
Germany

ABSTRACT

There is a high level of research activities in the field of gender, however, these activities are only very loosely interconnected. In particular, developmental and social psychological paradigms of research do not seem to have very much in common (see Deaux & La France, 1998; Ruble & Martin, 1998). The aim of our paper is to show that at the intersection of developmental and social psychology many issues emerge that pose new kinds of questions for theorizing and research, and that developmental processes and social influences are closely linked to each other (see Eckes & Trautner, 2000). As most suited for such an integration, (a) the gender-as-a-social-category perspective is chosen, (b) gender is viewed as having many facets that are highly variable among people, as well as across contexts and points in time, and (c) it is suggested that the sexes relate to each other at four interconnected levels: individual, interpersonal, group, and cultural level. To exemplify the complex nature of intraindividual changes, changes of social contexts. and changes in the relation between the two, the changes taking place while hostile children in gender segregated groups develop into ambivalent adults with heterosexual relationships are described (see Glick & Hilt, 2000; Maccoby, 1998). The advantages of the proposed conceptual framework are demonstrated.

INTRODUCTION

The need for an integration of developmental and social psychological perspectives in gender research

Developmental psychology and social psychology of gender are two separate worlds:

Only 29 references are cited in <u>both</u> chapters by Deaux and La France (1998) in *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (of the total of 309 references)

and by

Ruble and Martin (1998) in the *Handbook of Child Psychology* (of the total of 612 references)



Contributions of the <u>developmental perspective</u>

- Analyzing the temporal qualities of behavior, in particular, examining the pace, direction, and trajectories of ontogenetic changes
- Looking at distal sources in developmental history

Contributions of the social psychological perspective

- Paying attention to overt and covert variants of social influences on the processes under consideration
- Taking into account the social context in which the individual is acting
 - The assets of one approach are the deficits of the other approach

Conceptualizations of gender in psychological research

(see Ashmore, 1990; Deaux, 1984; Maccoby, 1988)

- the gender-as-a-social-category approach
 - viewing an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as heavily influenced by intertwined multilevel (i.e., individual, interpersonal, group, and cultural) factors associated with the categorical distinction between male and female.

Adopting this view means

asking how, when, and why it makes a difference to be male or female

This view contrasts with

- the sex differences approach
 - asking whether, and to which degree, the sexes differ in a number of cognitive abilities, personality traits, social behaviors, etc.
- the psychological gender approach
 - seeing masculinity and femininity as an essential quality of an individual's psychological makeup that helps to explain individual differences in a variety of gender-related behaviors.
 - The gender-as-a-social-category perspective is most suited for an integration of the developmental and social psychology of gender (see Eckes & Trautner, 2000)



Aim

To show that at the intersection of developmental and social psychology many issues emerge that pose new kinds of questions for theory and research

An <u>integrative approach</u> is more than simply adding to the one perspective what the other has to offer. Instead, it contains three <u>basic</u> propositions:

- Gender is subject to developmental processes throughout an individual's life span
- Gender is subject to social influence at any point in time
- Developmental processes and social influence are closely linked to each other

FOUNDATIONS OF A DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER

The multifaceted nature of gender

Gender is not a unitary essence manifesting itself in a stable set of tightly interconnected gender-related thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, but has many facets that may be related to each other in multiple ways, ranging from tightly knit associations among subsets of dimensions to only loose connections or even independence. The links between the different facets of gender are highly variable among people, as well as across contexts and points in time.

According to Huston (1983) and Ruble & Martin (1998), it has to be distinguished between

Constructs

- Concepts and beliefs
- Identity or self-perception
- Preferences of attitudes
- Behavioral enactment

and

Content areas

- Biological/categorical sex
- Activities and interests
- Personal-social attributes
- Social relationships
- Stylistic and symbolic charactersitics
- Values



Multiple levels of analysis

At any point in time, an individual's gender-related thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are being determined by multiple factors ranging from the broad societal level to specific interpersonal encounters and intraindividual processes. Thus, it seems crucial to specify the *levels* at which research questions are being raised and explanations of gender phenomena sought (see Ashmore & Del Boca, 1986).

The sexes relate to each other at four different but interconnected levels:

• Individual level

including cognitive, affective, and motivational intraindividual processes (e.g.: use of gender stereotypes in social judgment, influence of feelings on formation and change of gender stereotypes or gender-related attitudes, identification with positively valued social groups)

• Interpersonal (interactional) level

concerning dyadic (two-person) relationships and corresponding interactional processes (e.g.: gender- stereotyped expectations about the traits of other persons that lead to confirmatory perception-interaction sequences, or the activation of dating scripts)

• Group (role) level

dealing with the relation between females and males as group members or as occupants of different social positions (e.g.: relations between gender segregated groups, Maccoby, 1998; or power and status

differences between females and males and the consequences these differences have for gender-role distributions and perpetuation of gender stereotypes; see Eagly et al., 2000)

• Cultural (societal) level

studying gender in relation to systems of socially shared beliefs, norms, and values (e.g.: social constructions of gender showing up in stereotypic portrayals of females and males in the media, or forms of institutional gender discrimination)

The combination of constructs, content areas, and levels of analysis yields a three-dimensional 96-cell matrix (visually displayed in Fig. 1) that forms the basis for studying gender from a developmental social psychological perspective. Each cell in this matrix refers to a distinct set of research issues emerging at the intersection of a particular content area with a particular construct and level of analysis.



(For ease of presentation, the *time* axis, actually constituting a fourth dimension needed to account for processes of developmental change, is only symbolically shown as a sequence of discrete measurement points within a single arbitrary cell.)

To illustrate the kinds of research issues associated with the proposed matrix, consider the issues that result when combining the content area *gender-related values* (a topic that has been largely neglected by developmental psychologists) with the constructs and levels-of-analysis dimensions (see Table 1)

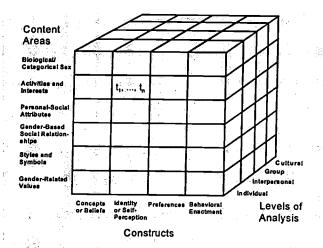


FIG. 1 Multidimensional matrix of research issues in a developmental social psychology of gender, (t_{μ} , t_{ν} = Measurement points indicating the time axis.)



Table 1: Four Levels of Analysis of Four Constructs in the Area of Gender-Related Values

| | Concepts | Identity | Preferences | Behaviors |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Individual | Knowledge about | Person's self-esteem | Positive evaluation of | Negative or benevolent |
| | evaluation of gender-typed | depending on his or her | gender-appropriate | responses toward the other |
| | traits, activities, etc. | perceptions of differential | activities, even when the | sex serving to promote the |
| | | evaluations of gender roles | activity itself is inattractive | actor's status or power |
| Interpersonal | Evaluative beliefs about | Covariation of self- | Choice of interaction | Matching one's self- |
| 1 | same-sex and cross-sex | evaluations with the | partners according to their | presentational style to the |
| | interactions | perceived gender-role | gender-role behavior | perceived partner's gender- |
| | | orientation of the interaction | | role attitude |
| | | partner | | |
| Group | Knowledge about power | Evalution of feminine and | In-group biases, degree of | Selection and identification |
| 1 | differences between female | masculine components of | favor with and which | of group leaders on the sole |
| | and male group members | self depending on | gender segregation in | basis of gender |
| | | membership in low- or high | various contexts is | |
| | | valued groups | evaluated | |
| Culture | Stereotypic images of | Evaluation of femininity | Cultural specifics and | Social practices that serve |
| | females and males as | and masculinity in | universals of valuing | to create and foster gender |
| | portrayed in the mass media | collectivistic and | feminine and masculine | hierarchies within society |
| | | individualistic societies | traits, activities, etc. | |



The dynamic interplay of developmental changes and social influence

We will not be able to fully understand gender as a social category unless we closely attend to both the developmental history and the social factors involved in bringing about gender effects. Developmental change and social influence do not merely coexist, rather they are viewed as fundamentally interdependent. This general proposition has several meanings and consequences:

- Gender-related constructs are subject to <u>change over time</u>
 e.g.: rigid gender concepts of young children tend to become more flexible during later childhood (Trautner, 1992)
- There are systematic changes in the social contexts that developing individuals encounter and that they actively choose or avoid e.g.: contexts may change from family to school, and, later, to the workplace, or from gender-segregated peer groups to intimate heterosexual relationships (Maccoby, 1998; Ruble, 1994)
- There are not only changing individuals in changing social contexts, but also changes in the impact of social contexts on individuals and in the mechanisms mediating between context, thought, and behavior e.g.: differential parental reinforcement, the child's striving for cognitive consistency with gender identity, peer reactions on gender-atypical behavior, stereotypic expectations concerning how to engage in sexual relationships, cultural norms that regulate family processes and work-life
 - sain or loose importance dependent on stage of development
- <u>Developmental factors</u> may begin to <u>exert their influence only after extended</u> <u>periods of time</u>

e.g.: genetic endowment, early levels of sexual hormones, social experiences during childhood may have some effects on gender development only later in adolescence or adulthood

Exemplifying the complex nature of the interrelationships between intraindivdual changes, changes of social contexts, and changes in the relation between the two

From hostile children in gender segregated groups to ambivalent adults with heterosexual relationships

Glick and Hilt (2000): Developmental transitions in gender prejudice from childhood to adulthood (see Fig. 2)

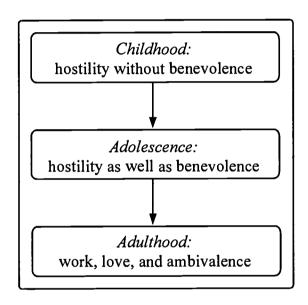
Maccoby (1998): How childhood tendencies to separate into same-sex groups later manifest themselves in interaction contexts characterizing adulthood



Basic question:

• What are the processes involved in the transition from largely gender segregated peer groups to romantic or intimate heterosexual relationships?

To answer that question, developmental researchers have focused mainly on cognitive variables (such as gender constancy or gender role knowledge), while much less attention is given to general emotional appraisals of gender groups (Lutz & Ruble, 1995). The nature of the required modifications depends, in part, on whether an adult is interacting as lover, worker, or parent (Maccoby, 1998).



Modeling the Development of Gender Prejudice (based on Glick & Hilt, 2000)



Childhood: Hostile attitudes in gender segregated groups

- Gender segregation and an exaggerated dislike of the other sex are powerful, cross-cultural phenomena in children that resist egalitarian-minded interventions by adults (see Maccoby, 1990, for a review). This own gender favoritism tends to peak around 7 years of age (Powlishta, 1995; Yee & Brown, 1994).
- Two likely causes for children's formation and maintenance of gender segregated groups, according to Maccoby (1998), are: (a) gender linked preferences for different kinds of play, (b) the concern for dominance and competition among boys that girls find aversive.
- Manifestations of hostile attitudes in childhood are also fueled by children's striving for social identity (Tajfel, 1981), as well as by the development of gender constancy (Lutz & Ruble, 1995), and they may be intensified by children's simple male-female dichotomy (Trautner, 1992) and its societal emphasis (Maccoby, 1998).
- Among young children, hostile prejudice may be more evident in overall evaluations of the other sex ("Who is better?") than in complex stereotypes about which sex possesses which traits (Glick & Hilt, 2000)
- Although younger boys and girls are well aware of one another as future romantic partners, they appear to be following a pattern of avoidance of sexuality, allowing only for teasing each other about heterosexual attraction (Maccoby, 1998). This redefines sexually tinged interactions as being hostile, not affectionate (Glick & Hilt, 2000).

Adolescence: Ambivalent feelings and the rise of heterosexual attraction

- During adolescence, sexual attraction can no longer be denied, leading to interdependent romantic relationships (see Leaper & Anderson, 1997).
- The greater flexibility in adolescent stereotypes (Katz, 1986), as well as the decrease of hostile attitudes not necessarily indicate a reduction in gender prejudice, but rather a change in how it is manifested. That is, the hostile prejudice of childhood does not simply disappear but, driven by sexual interdependence, becomes melded with benevolence, at least on the part of boys toward girls (Glick & Hilt, 2000).
- Caused by differences in male and female interaction styles that became ingrained during childhood same-sex interactions, boys develop a direct, highpower style, whereas girls acquire a more indirect style that works well with other girls but gives them less power in cross-sex interactions (Glick & Hilt, 2000).



- The latter makes cross-sex relationships less satisfying for girls, and may also explain why adolescent girls experience lower self-esteem compared to adolescent boys. At the same time, appearance increases in importance for girls' self-esteem (Maccoby, 1998).
- Benevolent sexism is most evident in adolescents' dating scripts which, until today, remain very traditional. They cast boys in an active role (as initiators and planners of the date and sexual behavior), whereas girls are expected to serve as gatekeepers for sex (Rose & Frieze, 1993).
- Among adolescents, who have greater cognitive abilities and for whom sexual relations become more salient, hostility may be more evident in attitudes about specific subtypes of men and women than about males and females in general (Behrendt, Eckes, & Trautner, 2000), or in attitudes about sexual relationships (e.g., toward sexual violence, see Krahé, 2000).

Adulthood: Love, work, and ambivalent sexism

- When reaching adulthood, the three themes of earlier periods of development, the tendency to separate, divergence in interaction styles, and the balance of power, have to be transformed according to the affordances of the new roles as lover, worker, and parent (Maccoby, 1998).
- Although gender-related attitudes become more complex and less rigid with increasing adult experience the ambivalence of adolescent gender relations continues into adulthood and its two main social domains: work and love. While in the work domain hostile (competitive) and segregated gender relations may somehow prevail, in love relationships (marriage and family) benevolent and intimate attitudes prevail (Glick & Hilt, 2000).
- The interactive repertoires learned in children's same-sex groups are useful, when interacting with same-sex others throughout life. However, they have to be modified to be successful in cross-sex interactions among adults (Maccoby, 1998).
- What were once merely differences in interaction styles between boys and girls become structural differences in the social positions of men and women that, in turn, create ambivalent attitudes on the part of each sex (Glick & Fiske, 1996). In particular, benevolent attitudes, as one component of ambivalent sexism, are directed toward men and women in traditional roles (Glick & Hilt, 2000).
- The preference of boys for competitions and dominance hierarchies is reflected in their occupational choices (e.g., careers in law and business). In contrast, girls' preference to minimize hierarchy and to foster sympathetic connections with others goes along with women's career preferences for occupations in social



services, health care, and education. The greater money and power that men typically have outside the home translates also to power within the marriage (Glick & Hilt, 2000).

• Although sexuality can be a source of hostility toward the other sex for both women and men, it is also the source of their interdependence and emotional attachment, in particular concerning their role as parents.

CONCLUSIONS

Our multidimensional, multilevel conceptual framework provides a coherent taxonomy that may raise new research questions promising to further our knowledge in the field. The advantages of the proposed conceptual framework are (Trautner & Eckes, 2000):

- it provides a broad, general conceptual scheme for undertaking a concerted effort in gender research;
- it helps to identify topics that have been largely neglected or less intensely researched;
- it highlights the multilevel, multidimensional nature of developmental change;
- it allows for divergent and convergent developmental courses or trajectories within and across constructs, contents, and levels of analysis;
- it draws attention to the relations existing between various dimensions of the matrix and helps to identify not only main effects, but also two- or multiway interactions between constructs, content areas, levels of analysis, and time.
- Our approach not only seems suited for the analysis of the interrelationships between changing individuals in changing social contexts, as has been exemplified for children's development from predominantly independent (i.e., gender-segregated, hostile group relations) into interdependent (i.e., romantic or communal) adults. It is also useful for planning potential interventions, e.g., if one aims at changing gender concepts and attitudes and needs to know when and how interventions will be most effective.



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Best wishes,

Karen E. Smith Assistant Director

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education, and
care of children
from birth
through