CHAPTER 22

GROWING UP GENDERED: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT

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Feminist psychology draws connections between societal gender inequalities and gender-related variation in people's thinking and behavior. Psychological research that explicitly reflects feminist perspectives has steadily increased since the advent of second-wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s (Eagly, Eaton, Rose, Riger, & McHugh, 2012; see also Chapter 1, this volume). At first, this work largely occurred in the areas of social–personality and clinical psychology, with a focus on adult samples. Increased attention to feminist approaches occurred in developmental psychology in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., Burman, 1992; Jacklin & McBride-Chang, 1991). Some of this early work critiqued the male-as-norm emphasis in developmental research and theory (e.g., Gilligan, 1982).

In the mid-1990s, more developmental researchers considered manifestations of gender-based prejudice and discrimination during childhood and adolescence (e.g., Bigler, 1999; Powlishta, Serbin, Doyle, & White, 1994). A turning point was signaled in 2000 with the publication of Miller and Scholnick's volume, *Toward a Feminist Developmental Psychology*, made up of chapters by leading developmental psychologists who applied feminist perspectives to the study of social and cognitive development. Also around this time, developmental theories and models were advanced that explicitly examined gender-based prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Bigler & Liben, 2006; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Leaper, 2000). Today, it is common for developmental researchers to relate gender inequalities in society to the ways in which infants, children, and adolescents are socialized (e.g., see Leaper, 2015; see also Chapter 3, this volume).

In our chapter, we provide a brief survey of ways that gender inequalities in society can be seen as starting in childhood and adolescence. The available research is primarily limited to studies conducted in the United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, and western Europe; hence, some of the patterns that we describe may not generalize to other cultural contexts. To start, we discuss transgender youth, who challenge the basic gender binary that pervades most research on gender development. Next, we address research on intersectionality among children and adolescents and point to the complex ways that gender can be expressed. Third, we explain that gender-typed play provides children with different opportunities that may affect the roles they adopt as adults. In our fourth section, we examine how gender relates to academic achievement, which in turn influences the kinds of professions that people pursue as adults. Fifth, we consider sports as a context that can foster positive qualities but also reinforce negative features of traditional gender roles. Sixth, we explain how the sexualization of girls undermines their body image and confidence. In our seventh section, we review how benevolent and hostile sexism are enacted in the heterosexual dating scripts that many youth commonly adopt. Eighth, the prevalence and impact of sexual harassment are addressed. Ninth, we discuss heterosexism and discrimination against those who violate heteronormativity. Our 10th topic is traditional masculinity ideology in boys and how it

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contributes to sexism. Our final section focuses on how feminist identity may help to empower girls and young women.

TRANSGENDER YOUTH: BEYOND GENDER BINARIES

Parents, teachers, peers, and the media inundate children with messages, both subtle and explicit, about what it means to be a boy and what it means to be a girl (see Leaper, 2013, 2015, for reviews). Consequently, most children develop an awareness of their own gender (i.e., gender identity) as well as corresponding gender roles and gender stereotypes within the first several years of life (Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002). The speed and apparent ease with which children acquire knowledge about gender has led some to argue that gender is among the strongest, if not the strongest, sources of social identity during childhood (Powlishta, 2004).

Gender's primacy as a social category contributes to the widespread assumption that children's biological sex will typically match their gender identity. However, activists and researchers have increasingly questioned this assumption, instead arguing that sex and gender coexist in a variety of fluid configurations (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). This fluidity is reflected in people who identify as transgender. The term *transgender* describes people whose biological sex does not align with their gender identity. For example, Jazz Jennings, a transgender youth activist, is biologically male but psychologically identifies as a girl. As we describe next, transgender youth often encounter stigma and negative treatment because they do not align with traditional beliefs about sex and gender.

Transgender youth have previously been described as confused or delayed in their understanding of gender, but this interpretive lens is controversial and has been disputed in recent research (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Olson, Key, & Eaton, 2015). For instance, transgender children appear to identify more strongly with their expressed (vs. natal) gender at both explicit and implicit levels, and the strength of their gender identity is comparable to that of children who are not transgender (Olson et al., 2015). These findings imply that transgender identity does not originate from confusion about gender.

Awareness of transgender identity may emerge relatively early in life. Transgender adults in two studies reported that they started to feel "different" from others during middle childhood (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006; Grossman, D'Augelli, Howell, & Hubbard, 2005). The sense of being different is likely influenced, at least in part, by parents and peers who comment on transgender youths' gender nonconformity (Grossman et al., 2005).

The strong societal-level preference for gender role adherence can make childhood and adolescence difficult for transgender youth in the United States and other nations. Many transgender individuals report that they encounter stigma and negative treatment from family members and peers (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006; Grossman et al., 2005; Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, Card, & Russell, 2010). For example, Grossman et al. (2005) found that most mothers and fathers initially reacted negatively when they learned that their children identified as transgender. Moreover, harassment from peers appears to be a frequent occurrence, which likely contributes to transgender youth feeling unsafe at school (e.g., Toomey et al., 2010).

Because of the negative treatment they experience, transgender youth are at risk of experiencing difficulties in their mental health and psychosocial adjustment. For example, in one study transgender participants who experienced high rates of peer victimization during adolescence reported heightened depression and lessened life satisfaction during young adulthood (Toomey et al., 2010). Additional work has indicated that transgender youth have an elevated risk of suicidal ideation and suicidality (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2007; Haas et al., 2010). Prevention and intervention strategies that involve educating the general public, school personnel, and health care workers about transgender identity have shown some promise in reducing these negative outcomes (Fisher & Komosa-Hawkins, 2013; Haas et al., 2010).

INTERSECTIONALITY: MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

According to the interpretative framework of *intersectionality,* gender does not exist in a vacuum.

Instead, it interacts with a host of other social categories such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability. Accordingly, people's experiences with gender-based oppression and privilege are interwoven with their other social identities (hooks, 1981). Scholars who draw from the concept of intersectionality in their work have argued that social problems such as prejudice cannot be well understood without consideration of the ways in which social categories combine to create distinct identity configurations (Warner, 2008; see also Chapter 27, this volume). For example, an African American girl and a European American girl will likely have qualitatively different experiences with sexism because their gender, race, and ethnicity interact in distinct ways.

Adolescence may be a particularly compelling time to examine bias and discrimination through the lens of intersectionality. Cognitive development that occurs during adolescence contributes to more complex categorization abilities, which in turn afford a more sophisticated understanding of group processes and social structures (Bigler & Liben, 2007; Collins & Steinberg, 2006). By virtue of this deeper social awareness, youth may increasingly notice and participate in intersectional forms of bias during adolescence.

Studies examining the prevalence of intersecting forms of bias among adolescents are uncommon. However, the studies that do exist support the main tenets of intersectionality. Specifically, youth who are members of multiple stigmatized social groups appear to experience higher rates of peer victimization than do youth who are members of just one (Daley, Solomon, Newman, & Mishna, 2007; Grollman, 2012). For example, Grollman (2012) found that adolescents' reported experiences with discrimination increased incrementally as their membership in stigmatized social identities increased from one (e.g., African American) to four (e.g., African American lesbians who are of low socioeconomic status). These patterns are echoed in reports from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) advocates surveyed by Daley and colleagues (2007), who noted that bullying directed at sexual minority youth differs in quantity and kind depending on the target's gender. For instance, the advocates observed that bullying directed at LGBT boys often involves physical violence, whereas bullying directed at LGBT girls often involves sexual harassment.

Outcomes of experiencing discrimination also vary depending on youths' membership in intersecting social groups (Grollman, 2012; Poteat, Mereish, DiGiovanni, & Koenig, 2011; Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2010). For example, Seaton et al. (2010) found that among adolescents who experienced high rates of discrimination, Caribbean Black girls were particularly high in depressive symptoms compared with adolescents from other backgrounds. Relatedly, Garnett et al. (2014) found that adolescents who experienced more than one form of discrimination were more likely to engage in self-harm and suicidal ideation than adolescents who experienced just one form of discrimination. These findings point to the need for researchers and practitioners to consider the intersections of multiple social identities in their research and work with the general public.

GENDER-TYPED PLAY: OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRACTICE

Although most childhood gender differences are associated with small effect sizes, play is one area in which the mean differences are very large in magnitude (see Leaper, 2015). For example, girls are more likely to prefer dolls, cooking toys, and dress-up play, and boys are more apt to favor vehicles, action-adventure play, and sports. Play activities are important in children's development because they provide affordances to practice social and cognitive skills (Lillard, 2015). Thus, many girls and boys may develop different interests and skills when they engage in different play activities during childhood (Leaper, 2000). As Lever (1976) observed 40 years ago, these gender-differentiated experiences prepare girls for the domestic world of the family and intimate relationships and they prepare boys for the competitive world of work outside the home.

Despite substantial average gender differences in play, children vary in how rigidly they prefer gender-typed play and avoid cross–gender-typed play. Researchers have identified multiple factors that may influence gender-related variations in children's

play activities. These factors include both biological and social processes. Among the former, sex-related hormonal and genetic processes partly contribute to variations in play (see Hines, 2013, for a review). Social experiences are also known to affect relative degrees of flexibility or rigidity in children's toy selection and play activities. We focus on the latter in the remainder of this section.

The encouragement of gender-typed play activities is one of the most common means by which parents treat sons and daughters differently (Lytton & Romney, 1991). However, parents may be growing more flexible in their attitudes about the kinds of play they deem acceptable for their children (Wood, Desmarais, & Gugula, 2002). Greater flexibility is likely among mothers (vs. fathers), parents with daughters (vs. sons), and lesbian and gay (vs. heterosexual) parents (Goldberg, Kashy, & Smith, 2012; Lytton & Romney, 1991; Wood et al., 2002).

Despite these average differences, the associations between parent socialization and child play preferences tend to be weak (Leaper, 2015). One possible reason for this apparently weak correlation may be the relatively strong influence of gender schemas (Martin et al., 2002). From a young age, children quickly infer gender stereotypes from messages they receive from family, media, and peers (Leaper, 2015). Preschool children are often rigid in their use of gender categories to interpret their social worlds (Martin et al., 2002). Hence, young girls and boys tend to be resistant to counterstereotypical messages, especially if they view them as anomalies in their perceived environments. However, cognitive development during middle childhood is associated with variation in gender schematicity (i.e., degree of gender labeling and stereotyping; Martin et al., 2002). Children who are relatively gender aschematic are less likely to use gender categories to infer information; therefore, they may engage in a wider range of play activities (Leaper, 2015).

Peers are another factor that may influence children's gender-typed play preferences. Throughout childhood, most girls and boys affiliate primarily in same-gender peer groups. In these interactions, there are typically pressures to conform to the group's peer norms regarding play and other behaviors (see Leaper, 1994). These pressures may mitigate the likelihood that children will express a wider range of play interests. In a revealing longitudinal study of children at a preschool, Martin and Fabes (2001) observed that the amount of time spent with same-gender peers predicted increases in gender-typed play and decreases in cross–gender-typed play. They referred to this phenomenon as the *social dosage effect,* whereby exposure to same-gender peers leads to increased gender conformity. Thus, same-gender peer groups may have one of the strongest socializing influences on children's opportunities to practice particular play behaviors (see Leaper, 2000). Conversely, some studies have suggested that assigning children to cooperative cross-gender activities in the classroom may reduce gender typing (see Leaper, 1994).

A small proportion of children strongly prefer cross–gender-typed play over gender-typed play. These patterns typically emerge in early childhood. For example, this is seen among girls with congenital adrenal hyperplasia (involving high exposure to prenatal androgens), who are much more likely than other girls to favor physically active play such as sports and to dislike sedentary forms of play such as dolls (see Hines, 2013). Also, transgender children who do not identify with the gender assigned at birth may express strong preferences for cross–gender-typed play. Many peers and parents stigmatize gender-nonconforming children in ways that can negatively affectively their well-being (Leaper, 2015).

In summary, children's opportunities to access and practice particular play behaviors are commonly limited by their gender. An increasing body of research has suggested that these different play opportunities shape later social-cognitive competences (see Leaper, 2015, and Lillard, 2015, for reviews). These differences may contribute to later gender inequities in academic interests and skills (and occupational achievement) as well as socioemotional competence in intimate relationships (see Leaper, 1994, 2000, 2015). Moreover, gender-differentiated play activities reinforce traditional adult gender roles whereby women are expected to be primarily responsible for domestic care and men are expected to be economic providers in the competitive work world. In these ways, the socialization

of gender-typed play can be interpreted as a form of gender discrimination that perpetuates gender inequities in later adult roles (see Leaper, 2000).

GENDER AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR OCCUPATIONAL DISPARITIES

In the United States, gender differences in academic achievement vary depending on how achievement is measured and the specific academic domain being assessed (see Halpern et al., 2007; Leaper, 2013, 2015). On average, girls tend to have an advantage when achievement is measured through grades, whereas boys tend to have an advantage when achievement is measured through standardized test scores (see Leaper, 2015). Furthermore, girls tend to outperform boys in the language arts and writing, whereas boys tend to outperform girls in domains related to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Many of these gender differences are small in magnitude during childhood and adolescence; however, they compound over the years, thereby contributing to larger gender disparities in college majors and careers (American Association of University Women [AAUW], 2010; Leaper, 2015).

Gender-related variations in academic achievement also differ on the basis of sociocultural background. For example, in the United States, boys tend to outperform girls on standardized tests in math; however, girls from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to outperform girls *and* boys from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (AAUW, 2008). Indeed, many of the biggest disparities in academic achievement are more closely tied to ethnicity and social class than to gender. Furthermore, the magnitude of gender differences in academic performance varies cross-nationally (Else-Quest, Hyde, & Linn, 2010).

Although gender differences in general academic achievement have elicited scholarly interest for decades, recent years have seen a proliferation of research that aims to explain and reduce gender disparities (favoring boys) in STEM achievement. This work indicates that gender disparities in STEM achievement have become much smaller over time. Indeed, girls have even reversed the gender gap in some STEM domains (see Chapter 7, this volume).

Despite greater gender parity in STEM achievement, negative stereotypes about girls' STEM abilities remain common. These stereotypes originate from a variety of sources, including parents, teachers, and peers (see Halpern et al., 2007; Leaper, 2015). For instance, parents and teachers may behave in ways that transmit stereotypes about academic ability to their children (Halpern et al., 2007; Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2003). In addition, peers contribute to gender differences in STEM achievement by encouraging academic pursuits that are consistent with gender-role norms and discouraging academic pursuits that are inconsistent with gender-role norms (Robnett & Leaper, 2013a). Male peers appear to be an especially common source of discouragement for girls who are interested in STEM (Leaper & Brown, 2008; Robnett, 2016).

In sum, many girls appear to receive negative messages about their STEM abilities from a variety of individuals. These messages are often subtle, but evidence has suggested that they are nonetheless internalized by middle childhood. For example, Cvencek, Meltzoff, and Greenwald (2011) found that boys and girls in second grade endorsed the stereotype that math is for boys. Furthermore, relative to girls, boys reported a stronger math self-concept. Similarly, Neuville and Croizet (2007) showed that making gender salient hindered math performance for girls in third grade but had no influence on boys. These findings demonstrate that many girls are aware of math–gender stereotypes and that this awareness can contribute to decrements in their math performance. When experienced over the long term, exposure to negative stereotypes and corresponding performance decrements can lead girls and women to distance themselves from STEM fields (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999; see also Volume 2, Chapter 26, this handbook).

SPORTS: LET ME PLAY

Sports are popular extracurricular activities in the United States and other countries. Girls' sports participation in the United States has skyrocketed since the 1972 passage of Title IX, which mandated gender equity in educational opportunities for schools receiving federal funding. Only one in 27 high school

girls played sports before 1971, whereas one in 2.5 do so today (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005). Results from the most recent national Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance study of U.S. students in Grades 9 to 12 revealed that 54% of students played on at least one organized sports team in 2012–2013 (Kann et al., 2014). Particular groups of students, however, are more likely than others to play. Sport participation is higher among boys (59.6%) than girls (48.5%) and higher among Black (65.6%), White (59.3%), and Hispanic (57.7%) boys than Black (45.2%), White (51.1%), and Hispanic (44.9%) girls.

Participation rates, however, should be considered in light of opportunities for involvement. Research using national samples has revealed how gender, social class, and geographic location are related to opportunities to participate in sport (Sabo & Veliz, 2011). For instance, a survey of almost 25,000 public high schools revealed that girls' percentage of athletic participation opportunities in proportion to their numbers in the female student body was 39%. In contrast, boys' percentage of athletic participation opportunities in proportion to their numbers in the male student body was 51%. Schools with higher numbers of students eligible for free lunch offer fewer athletic opportunities than schools with few eligible students. For both boys and girls, rural schools offer the fewest number of athletic opportunities, whereas suburban schools offer the most. Finally, region of the country is also related to girls' participation rates. Girls in southern states have the lowest number of sport teams available, whereas girls in northeastern states have the highest. Taken together, it is clear that opportunities for sport participation are not equitably distributed in the United States. Girls, rural youth, and poor youth are less likely to have access than their counterparts.

Sport participation is associated with a number of positive outcomes for both boys and girls. A longitudinal study of adolescents found that athletes reported increased educational performance and aspirations, lower levels of depression and internalizing behavior, lower levels of externalizing behaviors (for boys only), higher self-esteem, and lower marijuana use (boys only) than nonathletes (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a). Longitudinal data have also demonstrated that sport participation in childhood and adolescence predicts physical activity involvement in young adulthood (Kjønniksen, Anderssen, & Wold, 2009). Despite these positives, however, some research has found that youth involvement in sport is associated with negative behaviors, including increased drinking (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fredericks & Eccles, 2006a; Sønderlund et al., 2014). Furthermore, a review of 11 studies found associations among sport participation, alcohol consumption, and both general and sexual aggression or violence (Sønderlund et al., 2014). Interventions aimed at educating high school coaches about prevention of sexual aggression are clearly necessary (Lyndon, Duffy, Smith, & White, 2011).

It merits noting that positive outcomes are not the inevitable result of sport involvement despite common claims that sports are a solution for social problems and provide youth, especially at-risk youth, with a positive outlet (Coakley, 2011). Moreover, duration of participation and breadth of involvement in sports and other extracurricular activities are differentially related to youth outcomes (Fredericks & Eccles, 2006a). A range of other factors are also relevant to children's and youths' experiences in sport. For example, parental attitudes about their children's sports ability are related to children's subsequent sport involvement, self-concept of sport ability, and value attributed to sport activity (Simpkins, Fredericks, & Eccles, 2012). Also, longitudinal research has indicated that the association between adolescents' sport participation and later self-esteem is partially mediated by peer acceptance (Daniels & Leaper, 2006).

The sporting environment itself is centrally important as well. Scholars have developed evidence-based models that specify how to construct optimal sport and physical activity contexts that increase the likelihood of positive youth development through sport (Perkins & Noam, 2007). An optimal sport context is characterized by simultaneously teaching sports skills along with life skills in a safe, fun, supportive, and challenging environment that involves caring relationships, well-trained adult leaders, facilitated and experiential learning, and moderate to vigorous physical activity (Perkins & Noam, 2007). These and other contextual factors are important in

promoting sport experiences that are more likely to yield positive developmental outcomes.

SEXUALIZATION OF GIRLS: UNDERMINING BODY IMAGE

Sexualization occurs when a person's value is based on her or his sexual appeal or behavior to the exclusion of other characteristics (American Psychological Association, 2007). The sexualization of girls and women is highly prevalent in today's media environment (Ward, 2016). Three major reports from the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia have documented the prevalence of sexualization and its negative consequences (American Psychological Association, 2007; Papadopoulos, 2010; Rush & La Nauze, 2006). As a result, girls and women routinely see sexiness encouraged and rewarded through mass media, and boys and men regularly see females depicted in ways that prioritize their sexual appeal (see Chapter 3, this volume).

Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and the concept of objectified body consciousness (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) explain that Western societies routinely sexually objectify the female body in interpersonal and social encounters and during individuals' experiences with visual media. Women's bodies are scrutinized as objects for the pleasure and evaluation of others, specifically men and boys. Media representations of African American women, Latinas, and Asian American women may be especially hypersexualized (Mok, 1998; Rivadeneyra, 2011; Ward, Rivadeneyra, Thomas, Day, & Epstein, 2013). As a result of these cultural pressures, many girls and women self-objectify, focusing on how their bodies appear rather than what they can do.

Self-objectification has implications for mental health, including heightened risk for disordered eating (Slater & Tiggemann, 2010), body shame (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998), depression (Grabe, Hyde, & Lindberg, 2007), and decreased self-esteem (Choma et al., 2010). In addition, self-objectification negatively affects math performance (Fredrickson et al., 1998; Hebl, King, & Lin, 2004) and the availability of cognitive resources (Gay & Castano, 2010). In short, a range of serious negative consequences are associated with self-objectification in girls and women (see American Psychological Association, 2007; Moradi & Huang, 2008) and increasingly in men (e.g., Schwartz, Grammas, Sutherland, Siffert, & Bush-King, 2010; for a review of self-objectification theory and research, see Chapter 13, this volume).

Only recently has research started to investigate how sexualized depictions of girls or women influence others' perceptions of these girls and women. Evidence has demonstrated that when women are sexualized in the media, they are likely to be objectified by viewers and considered less competent, less determined, less intelligent, lower in self-respect, lower in morality, and more sexually experienced (Daniels, 2012; Daniels & Wartena, 2011; Gurung & Chrouser, 2007; Loughnan et al., 2010). Negative attitudes toward a sexualized target are extended even to young girls. In an experiment, Graff, Murnen, and Smolak (2012) found that college students considered a fifth-grade girl to be less capable, less competent, less determined, less intelligent, and less moral and to have less self-respect when she was depicted in an overtly sexualized manner (i.e., wearing a very short dress with a leopard-print cardigan, holding a purse) than when she was not depicted in an overtly sexualized manner. Finally, recent evidence has demonstrated that self-sexualization by young women on social media may elicit negative evaluations of the profile owner by their female peers (Daniels & Zurbriggen, 2016; see also Chapter 23, this volume).

Only a few studies have examined the relationship between holding sexualized beliefs and girls' self-perceptions and behaviors. McKenney and Bigler (2014b) found that girls (ages 10–15) high in internalized sexualization (defined as the belief that being sexually attractive to males is an important part of the self) wore more sexualized clothing (Study 1) and reported higher levels of body surveillance and body shame (Study 2) than girls low in internalized sexualization. Girls high in internalized sexualization also earned lower grades and standardized test scores than their peers (McKenney & Bigler, 2014a, Study 1) and prioritized physical appearance over studying in a behavioral task (Study 2).

In summary, research studies have demonstrated clear costs to the psychological well-being and functioning of girls and women who self-objectify

or who hold beliefs that their sexual attractiveness is centrally important. In addition, negative social attitudes are levied against girls and women who are portrayed in sexualized ways in both traditional and new media.

HETEROSEXUAL DATING SCRIPTS: BENEVOLENT AND HOSTILE SEXISM

According to ambivalent sexism theory (see Chapter 18, this volume), norms in heterosexual romantic relationships are shaped by two complementary ideologies: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. *Hostile sexism* involves overtly negative attitudes about girls and women who violate gender role norms. For example, hostile sexism contributes to backlash against girls and women who are assertive. In contrast to hostile sexism, *benevolent sexism* is a subtle form of sexism that involves seemingly positive attitudes toward girls and women who conform to gender role norms. For example, benevolent sexism is reflected in the belief that women need men to protect and provide for them. The chivalrous attitudes underlying benevolent sexism work jointly with hostile sexism to maintain men's dominant status in society; traditional women are rewarded with protection, whereas nontraditional women are punished with hostility.

During childhood, hostile sexism may occur without benevolent sexism (Glick & Hilt, 2000). That is, many children hold fairly positive attitudes about peers who share their gender but fairly negative attitudes about peers who do not share their gender (see Leaper, 2015). For example, some girls and boys are resistant to interacting with one another, engage in gendered teasing, and derogate attributes that are associated with the other gender (Powlishta, 2004; Robnett & Susskind, 2010).

Benevolent sexism appears to emerge during adolescence as heterosexual youth begin to pursue romantic relationships (Glick & Hilt, 2000). This is in part because many aspects of heterosexual dating scripts are grounded in benevolent sexism (e.g., Viki, Abrams, & Hutchinson, 2003). For example, boys and men are often expected to initiate, plan, and pay for the date; they are also expected to engage in chivalrous behaviors such as opening the door or pulling out the chair for their romantic partner (Laner & Ventrone, 2000). These norms afford boys and men a significant amount of agency in their dating relationships. Conversely, girls and women are typically cast in a more submissive role; admonitions about being "too forward" or "coming on too strong" discourage girls and women from assertively pursuing romantic relationships and can reduce their sexual agency.

The association between benevolent sexism and traditional heterosexual dating is underscored in work showing that dating experience is correlated with benevolent sexism among adolescent boys (de Lemus, Moya, & Glick, 2010). Additional evidence has indicated that hostile and benevolent sexism may continue to shape relationships even after an initial courtship period passes. For example, Robnett and Leaper (2013b) found that benevolent sexism was associated with a desire for the man to initiate the marriage proposal and for the woman to change her surname after marriage. Other work has suggested that benevolent sexism is related to the attributes that people seek in a long-term romantic partner (e.g., youthful and attractive vs. a good financial provider), whereas hostile sexism is related to the distribution of power after the couple is married (Chen, Fiske, & Lee, 2009). These findings speak to the enduring role of hostile and benevolent sexism throughout relationships.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: GENDER-BASED INTIMIDATION

Sexual harassment, defined as unwanted sexual behavior, is a common occurrence in U.S. middle and high schools (see AAUW, 2011; Leaper & Robnett, in press). The AAUW (2011) conducted one of the most comprehensive U.S. surveys of adolescent sexual harassment. Among seventh graders, 48% of both girls and boys reported experiences with sexual harassment, either in person or online. However, among 12th graders, 62% of girls and 39% of boys reported experiences with sexual harassment. The apparent age-related increase in incidence of sexual harassment among girls may be partly due to girls becoming more aware of sexism when it occurs as well as actual increases in its prevalence (see Leaper & Brown, 2008).

In the AAUW (2011) survey, the most commonly experienced forms of sexual harassment included unwanted sexual comments (46% of girls; 22% of boys) and being called lesbian or gay in negative ways (18% of girls; 19% of boys). Although less common, students also reported unwanted touching (13% of girls; 3% of boys) and sexual intimidation (13% of girls; 2% of boys). Male classmates were the most commonly cited perpetrators.

The AAUW (2011) survey also assessed student perceptions about the attributes associated with girls and boys who they believed were most likely to be sexually harassed. Students indicated that girls are more likely to be targets of sexual harassment if they are traditionally more attractive but that boys are less likely to be targets of sexual harassment if they are traditionally more attractive. Furthermore, those who do not meet traditional gender expectations (being athletic for boys, being pretty for girls) or who are overweight were also perceived as at risk for sexual harassment.

Research has indicated that proactive rather than passive responses are mostly likely to mitigate the negative psychological effects of sexual harassment (see Leaper, Brown, & Ayres, 2013). The AAUW (2011) survey suggested that relatively few students used proactive strategies, such as asking the perpetrator to stop (31% of girls; 13% of boys), talking to a family member (32% of girls; 20% of boys), or reporting the incident (14% of girls; 6% of boys). Instead, the most common responses were to ignore the incident (56% of girls; 55% of boys) or do nothing (44% of girls; 59% of boys). Yet, these experiences appeared to have negative effects on the students because the vast majority (87%) reported that experiencing sexual harassment negatively affected them (e.g., they did not want to go to school). The average effect appeared to be especially negative for girls, sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, and students of lower socioeconomic status. Thus, inhabiting less privileged social statuses may compound the effects of sexual harassment on youth.

Given the prevalence of sexual harassment, it is important to identify factors that may mitigate its negative consequences. A study of adolescent girls examined a range of sociocultural, interpersonal, developmental, and individual factors as predictors of girls' coping responses to sexual harassment (Leaper et al., 2013). Feminist identity, self-esteem, perspective taking, perceived parental and peer support, and parents' education predicted particular coping responses (e.g., confronting, seeking help, or using avoidance). In addition, experimental work has demonstrated that empathy, perspective-taking ability, and learning about the seriousness of sexual harassment may encourage undergraduates to recognize that sexual assault is a problem (Diehl, Glaser, & Bohner, 2014). Last, researchers have highlighted how school-based prevention and intervention programs can reduce sexual harassment in childhood and adolescence (Espelage & Holt, 2012). Taken together, these studies have implications for intervention and prevention efforts aimed at reducing sexual harassment and its harm.

At the university level, grass-roots activism by groups such as End Rape on Campus and Know Your Title IX has put pressure on the U.S. Department of Education to consider sexual harassment and sexual violence to be a violation of Title IX, which prohibits sex-based discrimination in education (Kingkade, 2015). These efforts have brought widespread attention to this issue, and in 2014 the Obama White House convened a task force to protect students from sexual assault (White House, 2014). A large number of schools and universities are now facing federal inquiries into their handling of sexual harassment and violence. As of December 2015, the Office of Civil Rights had 194 Title IX sexual assault investigations open at 159 colleges and universities as well as 68 cases at 63 kindergarten–Grade 12 schools and school districts (Kingkade, 2016). In addition, the Clery Act, which is a federal law that requires colleges to report crimes that happen on campus as well as school safety policies, was expanded in 2013 by the Campus SaVE Act. The SaVE Act broadened the Clery reporting requirements to include all incidents of sexual violence, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

HETEROSEXISM: BEYOND HETERONORMATIVITY

Although legal rights for same-sex couples have expanded in recent years (see *Obergefell v. Hodges,*

2015), negative attitudes about same-sex relationships remain prevalent. These negative attitudes, which are commonly described as homophobia, constitute one facet of a broader ideological system known as heterosexism. Herek (1990) explained that heterosexism is a form of oppression that serves to denigrate same-sex attraction by portraying heterosexual attraction as the norm and all other forms of attraction as deviant. As a consequence of heterosexism, sexual minority individuals encounter manifestations of prejudice that range from being fairly subtle (e.g., underrepresentation in the media) to fairly overt (e.g., verbal or physical attacks). Similar to other forms of prejudice, heterosexism operates at the societal, institutional, and interpersonal levels, which makes it difficult to eradicate (Herek, 1990).

Although heterosexism appears to be fairly common during adolescence, there is variation in how strongly it is endorsed. For instance, adolescents who subscribe to gender role stereotypes or who hold more favorable views of intergroup hierarchy (an ideology underlying prejudiced attitudes) tend to have higher levels of heterosexism than their peers (Hoover & Fishbein, 1999; Poteat, Espelage, & Green, 2007). Gender is also a key predictor of heterosexist attitudes. Relative to girls and women, boys and men consistently demonstrate more negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians across middle school, high school, and college (Hoover & Fishbein, 1999; Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009).

Peers appear to play an important role in perpetuating heterosexism. For example, Poteat, Espelage, and Koenig (2009) showed that some adolescents, particularly boys and those who were younger, were reluctant to remain friends with gay or lesbian peers. Other studies have demonstrated that peer group norms can contribute to heightened heterosexism in individual group members. For instance, Poteat, Espelage, and Koenig examined the degree to which peer group norms were characterized by a preference for intergroup hierarchy. Their findings showed that adolescents who were members of peer groups that more strongly endorsed intergroup hierarchy were significantly more likely than other adolescents to express heterosexism.

Heterosexism can make adolescence a challenging time for youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or members of other sexual minority groups. As heterosexual relationships become an increasingly important focus among their peers, sexual minority youth may be singled out for their romantic or sexual preferences. Indeed, scholars have argued that prejudice in general and antigay sentiment more specifically may reach a boiling point during early adolescence (e.g., Aboud, 2005; Poteat et al., 2007). It is therefore unsurprising that sexual minority youth are more likely than other youth to be bullied, which in turn can contribute to a variety of psychosocial challenges, such as anxiety, depression, suicidality, and substance abuse (e.g., Poteat, Aragon, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Poteat & Espelage, 2007). Sexual minority youth also report feeling less welcome at school, which can have a negative effect on their academic performance and engagement (Poteat & Espelage, 2007). Collectively, this body of research suggests that sexual minority youth may face significant challenges during adolescence. Thus, interventions that aim to reduce heterosexism in middle schools and high schools appear to be an important next step for future research (e.g., Fisher & Komosa-Hawkins, 2013).

TRADITIONAL MASCULINITY IDEOLOGY IN BOYS: LEARNING TO BE A MAN

Traditional masculinity ideologies emphasize emotional stoicism, not acting feminine, not being homosexual, being sexually promiscuous, and being economically powerful (see Farkas & Leaper, 2016; Kimmel, 2008; Levant, 2011). A large body of research has documented associations between endorsement of masculinity beliefs and a range of negative intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes. These outcomes include depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, lower capacity for intimacy, sexist attitudes, homophobic attitudes, and sexual violence (Levant, 2011; O'Neil, 2013; Reidy, Smith-Darden, Cortina, Kernsmith, & Kernsmith, 2015). Endorsing traditional masculinity beliefs may also contribute to reduced academic effort (Jackson & Dempster, 2009) and avoidance of scientific fields (Archer, DeWitt, & Willis, 2014) among high school boys—perhaps especially among those from working-class backgrounds.

Recent ethnographic research has shown that as boys enter formal schooling, many experience pressure to align with masculinity norms (Chu, 2014). There are social rewards (e.g., peer acceptance) for conforming to these norms, but there may also be psychological costs to restricting emotional and relational expression to meet masculinity demands. Way (2011) found that early and middle adolescent boys reported high levels of intimacy in their close friendships, which contradicts cultural stereotypes about boys' limited relational abilities. In late adolescence, however, boys faced increased pressure to conform to masculinity norms such as stoicism and independence. It therefore became socially unacceptable to express intimacy and vulnerability in their friendships as they left boyhood and became men.

The previously described studies illustrate ways that boys learn about masculinity norms through their interactions with peers and adults. It is not the case, however, that boys conform unquestioningly to masculinity expectations. Some boys resist these pressures in small and large ways, for example, expressing emotional vulnerability to peers despite social prohibitions against male emotionality (Smiler, 2014; Way et al., 2014). Furthermore, adolescent boys who do not conform to masculinity norms may construct alternative interpretations of masculinity to claim a sense of self that is distinctly masculine even if it is not stereotypically masculine (Pascoe, 2003).

From ethnographic (Pascoe, 2007) and in-depth interview (Kimmel, 2008) studies, it is clear that heterosexual dating and sexual behaviors are important elements of masculinity in adolescence and young adulthood. Pascoe (2007) found that homophobic slurs are frequently used to police boys' behavior and enforce masculinity norms in high school. A central way that boys ward off homophobic insults, gain social status, and bond with other boys is to exert power over girls' bodies and sexuality. To do so, boys commonly talk about and engage in behaviors to "get" girls. Their attempts to get girls involve acts of dominance that boys construe as jokes or normal guy behavior but that are actually forms of sexual harassment. For example, this might occur when a boy simulates having intercourse with a girl while claiming to like her. Similarly, Kimmel (2008) found that proving one's heterosexuality is a key aspect of masculinity that young men must demonstrate repeatedly, particularly in peer contexts (see also Swartout, 2013). These studies reveal the masculinity landscape that all boys and young men must navigate whether or not they endorse masculinity beliefs.

FEMINIST IDENTITY: VALUING GENDER EQUALITY

In the United States, the women's movement has played an inarguable role in improving girls' and women's lives. Evidence of its influence can be found in a variety of domains, including the political realm, the paid workforce, intimate relationships, and women's health. Despite the positive outcomes associated with feminism, relatively few people self-identify as feminists. Research has suggested that this reluctance is due at least in part to stigma associated with the feminist label (Anderson, 2015; Leaper & Arias, 2011; Robnett & Anderson, 2017; Robnett, Anderson, & Hunter, 2012). For example, feminists are often characterized as "man-haters" even though this stereotype has little empirical basis; in fact, feminists may be more likely to identify structural causes of oppression than to blame individual men (Anderson, Kanner, & Elsayegh, 2009). The man-hater stereotype and similar negative stereotypes likely make individuals wary of the feminist movement even if they endorse gender-egalitarian ideals.

Relatively little research has focused on feminist identity among adolescents. This is surprising given that most adolescents have the cognitive capacity to recognize and reason about group-based inequality (Aboud, 2005). Although data on the prevalence of feminism among adolescents are uncommon, it is probably reasonable to assume that rates of feminist identity are at least as low among adolescents as they are among young adults. This is because postfeminist sentiments, which are broadly characterized by the belief that feminism is no longer necessary, appear to be increasingly prevalent among younger generations (see Anderson, 2015).

Barriers to feminist identity among adolescents parallel barriers documented in adult samples.

Negative stereotypes and misinformation about feminism appear to be common. For example, Manago, Brown, and Leaper (2009) found that a sizable minority of Latina adolescents defined feminism as bias against men (see also Robnett & Anderson, 2017). Participants in their sample also provided definitions of feminism that diverged from common conceptions of their term (e.g., equating feminism with femininity). Similarly, McIntyre (2001) found that low-income ethnically diverse girls were unfamiliar with the term *feminism* despite endorsing ideals that are consistent with feminism. She argued that this lack of familiarity may reflect deeper societal trends whereby members of different social groups have disparate levels of access to discourse about feminism.

Research has increasingly pointed to ways that feminist self-identification may help to empower girls and young women in ways that buffer some of the negative effects of sexism. For example, adopting a feminist identity has been linked to positive outcomes for women, such as heightened well-being and sexual health (Anderson, 2012). Furthermore, among adolescents and emerging adults, higher levels of feminist identity are associated with a greater likelihood of endorsing proactive responses to sexual harassment (Ayres, Friedman, & Leaper, 2009; Leaper & Arias, 2011; Leaper, Brown, & Ayres, 2013). It may therefore be fruitful for future research to consider how to destigmatize feminist identity among young women.

CONCLUSION

As we have reviewed, research on gender development during the past few decades has demonstrated that gender biases can constrain children's and adolescents' opportunities, self-concepts, motivations, and abilities. These constraints merit attention because they foreshadow inequalities found in adulthood. We join Eagly et al. (2012) in noting that the increased focus on gender biases in recent decades has roots in the feminist movement.

A feminist approach has much to offer to the study of gender development. A feminist perspective necessarily involves consideration of how social structures and cultural ideologies contribute to gender inequalities. Accordingly, researchers have tested for variation in gender-related patterns across different cultures and sociocultural groups within a society (see Leaper, 2015). Implicit in this approach is the notion that gender-role norms and stereotypes vary according to people's sociocultural background and their position in social hierarchies. It is therefore important for feminist researchers to be sensitive to the ways in which their own background contours their understanding of individuals from other social groups or cultures.

From our standpoint, a feminist approach to the study of gender development also involves celebrating substantial improvements in gender equality while simultaneously recognizing that more work needs to be done (see Liben, 2016). For instance, girls and women have made significant inroads into academic and professional fields such as biology; however, they remain severely underrepresented in physics and computer science, demonstrating some progress but also the need for more work toward gender equity.

It is important to note that taking a feminist approach does not mean ignoring biological processes that may partly underlie gender-related variation. There is strong evidence that genetic or hormonal factors contribute to gender-related variations in behaviors such as childhood play preferences (see Hines, 2013). However, even in instances in which this is the case, there is still variability that is due to other factors. Moreover, biology can be modified through environmental input. Last, gender-based oppression is the product of societal influences, not biological ones. Thus, biological differences should not be offered as justification for constraining an individual on the basis of gender.

Finally, looking ahead, more work is needed that looks beyond the field's focus on children growing up in mostly middle-class, European-heritage societies (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). We readily admit this is a limitation of our own review here, given the available research literature. In a diverse society such as that of the United States, more work considering the intersection of multiple identities is needed—including gender, ethnicity and race, sexual identity, and class, to name a few. A related point is to move beyond gender binaries and account for transgender as well as cisgender identities. A feminist developmental psychology

must consider the range of ways in which individuals and groups may express gender.

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