

Gender socialization

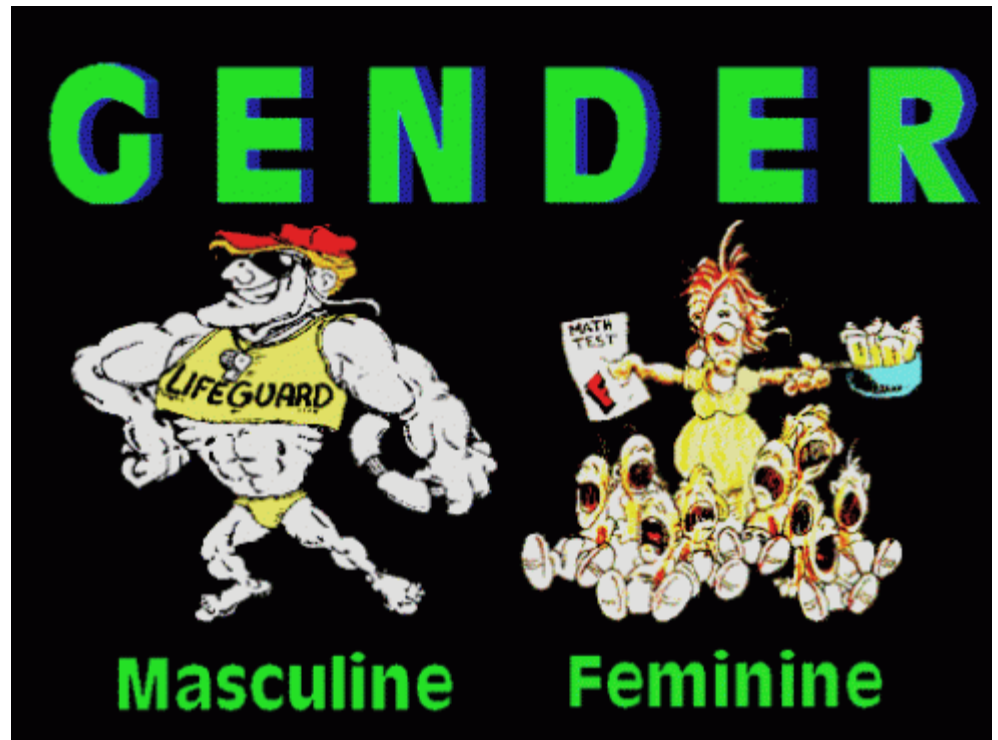
Socialization

process by which person acquires sense of self, identity; learns expectations of society that will hold individual accountable

- Gender is how people learn to conform to social roles of being male/female; gender appropriate/gender inappropriate behavior
- The process by which people learn to be feminine and masculine
- Why doesn't recognition of gender difference appear until about age 3? Gender-centric reasoning—what one gender likes other does not Gender stereotypes: cultural characteristics associated with male/female, most entrenched in ages five to eight

What is Gender socialization ????

Gender socialization is the process of learning the social expectations and attitudes associated with one's sex.



Sex and Gender

Sex refers to the biological characteristics with which we are born.

Gender refers to the learned attitudes and behaviors that characterize people of one sex or the other.

Gender roles are the characteristics, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that society expects of females and males.

Gender identity usually learned in early childhood, refers to one's perception of him or herself as either masculine or feminine.

Structural Functionalist Perspective

Men

- Financial support
- Economically dominant roles in family
 - Budget
 - Spending Decisions
 - Bank Account

Women

- give birth & nurse children
 - **“Natural”** to provide care
 - Prepare meals
 - Maintain home

Gender socialization

"What do you wish? A girl or boy?"



"It does not matter."

"Oh, hopefully it will be a boy."

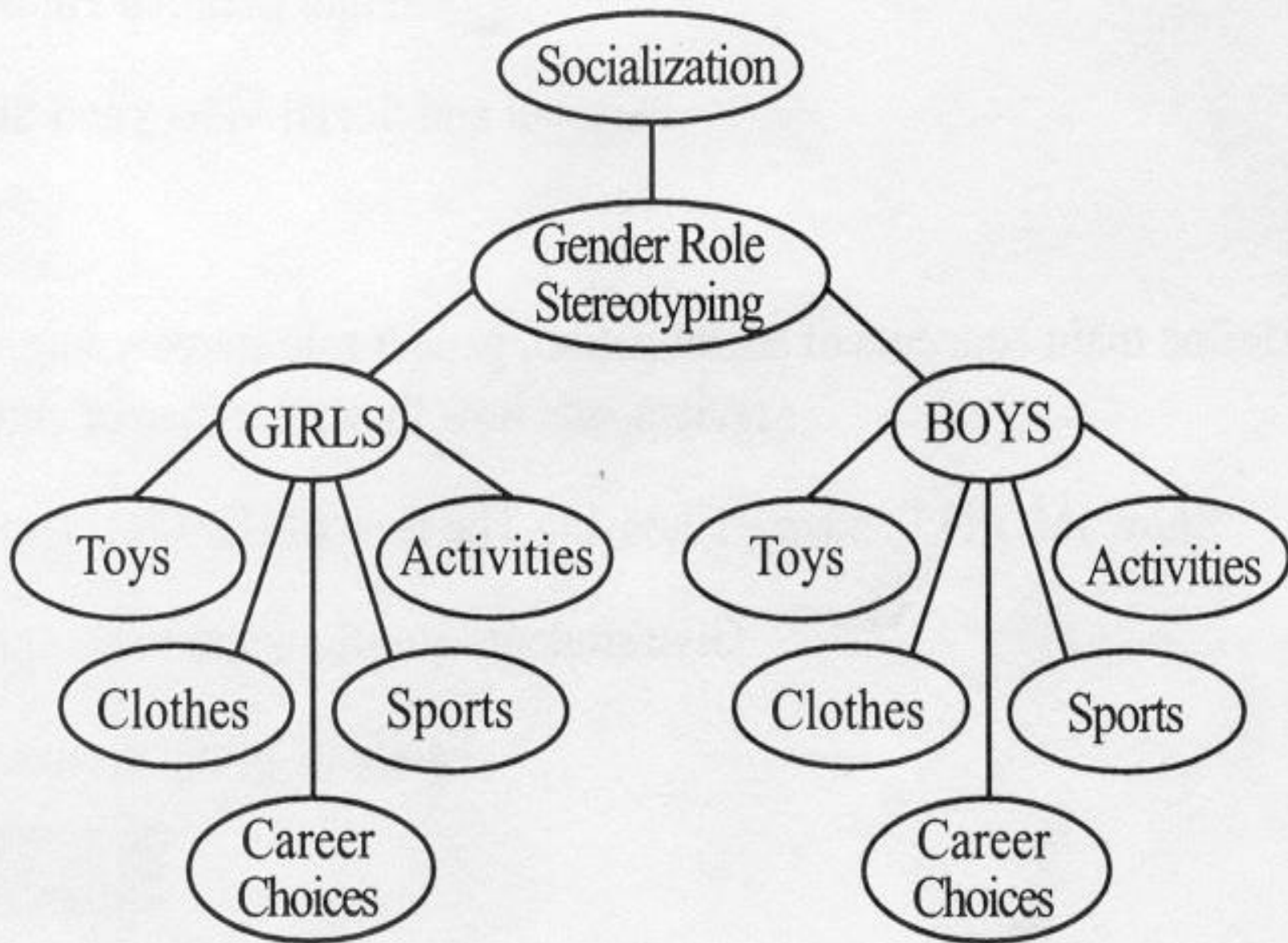


Pre-industrial society

- Gender based division of labor
- Women nursed and cared for children
- Men responsible for material needs

Industrialization

- Traditional division of labor **less** functional
- Belief system remains



Conflict Theory

Gender inequality = Power

Men dominate women

- Economic
- Political
- Social resources

Powerful have no incentive:

- To give up power or
- Share it

Conflict Theory

Continued Domination:

- Requires belief system (ideology)
- Supports gender inequality

Two beliefs

- Women-**Inferior** outside the home
- **Women-More valuable** in the home

Gender Assignment

- At birth, infants assigned to a gender category—boy/girl (US hospital nursery practices)
- Parental socialization—how do parents treat infants? Children?
- Similarity: Lytton/Romney meta-analysis receive same nurturance, warmth, responsiveness, encouragement, attention
- Difference: Toys, games, activities, discipline (boys punished more than girls; girls less autonomy than boys)

Parental practices

- Fathers socialize sons/daughters differently
- Fathers react more negatively to sons in cross-gender play (boys with Barbies) and boys believe fathers would do so.
- Fathers spend more time with sons than daughters, engage in more physical play; expect more toughness from sons
- Mothers spend more time with children, more involved in daily care
- Cultural differences—higher socioeconomic white children more gender stereotypical than African-American and lower socioeconomic backgrounds

Childhood Socialization

- Sex segregation—when, where and how do children begin to sex segregate?
- By age 3, girls and boys prefer same-sex playmates
- Girls preference for girls begins first
- Lasts through junior high
- More so when adults absent than present
- Play styles & communication content different
- Socialization contexts: six culture study found girls styles more nurturing interacted more with younger kids, boys more aggressive and dominance-seeking interacted more with older

Gender boundaries and crossers

- Gender boundaries—where one is female/male
- Children crossing boundaries (boys playing dolls, girls playing football) called “gender crossers” — stereotypes of sissies and tomboys (Barrie Thorne, Gender Play)
- Better to be tomboy than a sissy. Why? Girls face less pressure to conform to stereotypes than boys, more likely to boundary cross, less negative attention when they do. Gender socialization more negative for boys than girls? Why?

Theories of Socialization—Social Learning

- Social learning: gender is learned through positive and negative reinforcements
- Learning occurs through observation and modeling.
- Gender-typed behavior: one that elicits different responses depending on whether the person engaging in behavior is female/male
- Boys and girls are treated differently (boys don't cry, girls held more)
- Critique: children more involved in own learning not passive recipients; importance of peer group (Judith Rich Harris “peer matter more”)

Cognitive theories

- Cognitive psychology—how do individuals interpret and internalize gender meanings?
- How do we construct gender and sexual identity?
- Socialization is inside-out; gender socialization a part more general cognitive maturation
- Children label selves
- Gender schema theory: cognitive structures where people assimilate organize self gender. Larger world is raw material, self constructs from this.
- Gender polarization—gender as “opposite sex”
- Androcentric—belief that males superior to females; devaluation of feminine

Psychoanalytic theory

- Sigmund Freud—how one develops identity through early childhood experiences—ego (ego boundaries—me and not me), id (natural impulses/instinct), superego (internal morality, internalized society)
- Identification theory—unconscious psychological processes through emotional attachments to parents
- Gender identity: people's sense of self as male/female; sexual identity: people's sense of hetero/homo/bi/trans; social psychological construction

Feminist Psychoanalytic Theory

- Chodorow psychoanalytic feminism
- All children primary mother attachment; son's must "switch" attachment to father identification; daughters more intense emotional attachment to mothers. Why men more psychic stake in gender?
- Son problem—learning male gender identity "positional" self is solidified through separation from others, problem of distant father (distance; separation)
- Daughter problem—learning female gender identity as separate and independent from others—ego boundary formation (connection; relationship)

Problem with theories

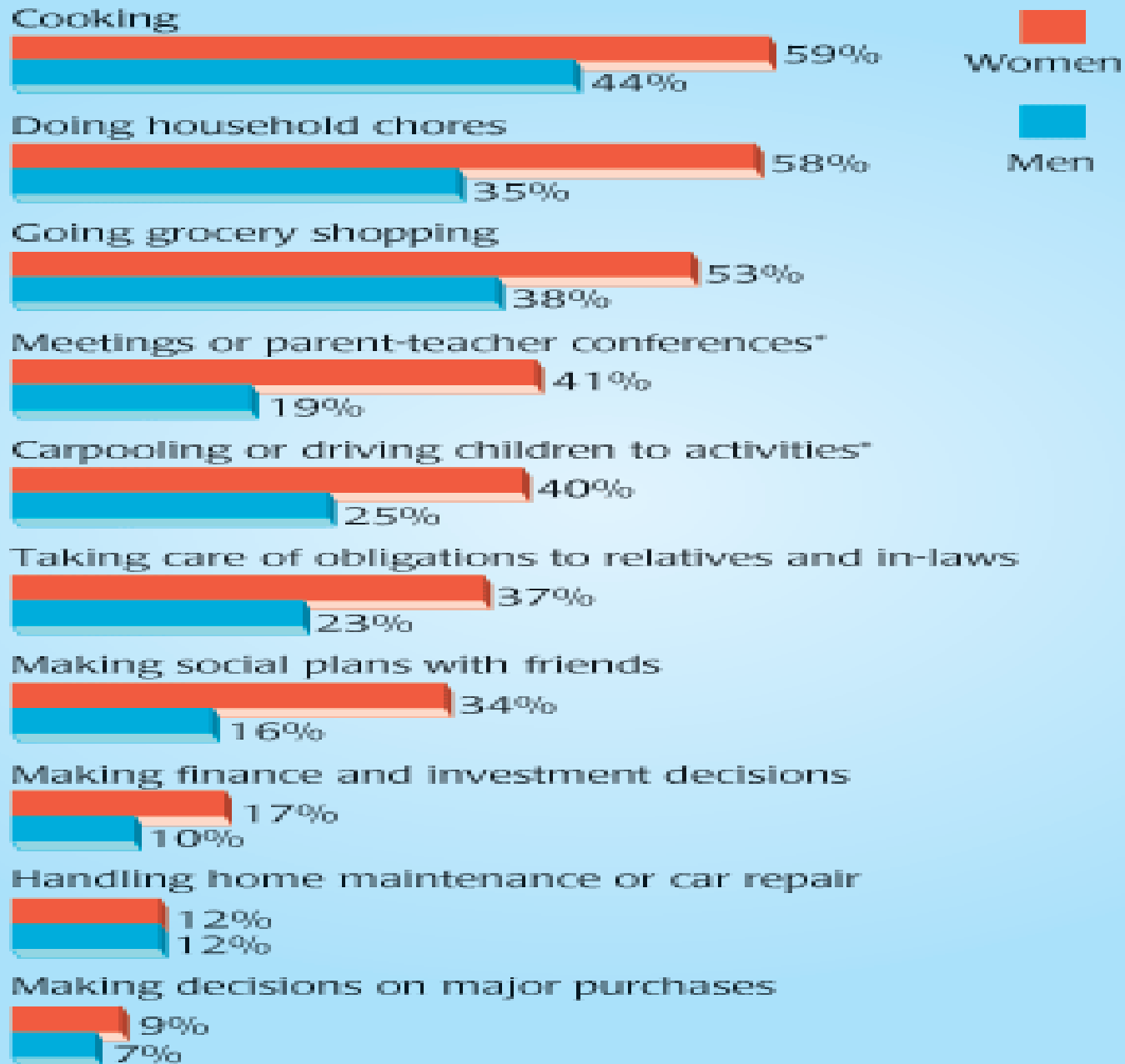
- Individualistic, doesn't account for social, developmentalist doesn't account for social structure and cultural history
- Emphasis on unconscious impossible to systematically test or verify empirically
- Falsely universalizes a western understanding of gender and relationship (Chodorow US WASP middle class family/mothering)
- Reinforces western cultural stereotypes of gender
- Ignores structural opportunities and constraints
- Sex/gender problem? What is relationship of sex and gender each to development or together in development?

Historical Gender Socialization

- Wharton's account a historical. Childhood gender socialization dependent on historical and cultural contexts which vary over time and place. Need to account for these differences. Children as “little adults” in early Europe; today extended childhood in U.S. Adolescence a recent cultural construct.
- Sex/Gender paradigm of gender socialization challenged by historical comparative accounts



Percentage who said they take most or all of the responsibility for this task...



Media and Socialization

Children ages **6-23 months (2005)**
19% TV in their bedrooms

Children ages **6-23 months (2011)**
29% TV in their bedrooms

Media and Socialization

Two-thirds (**65%**) of **0 to 8-year-olds** watch TV at least once every day

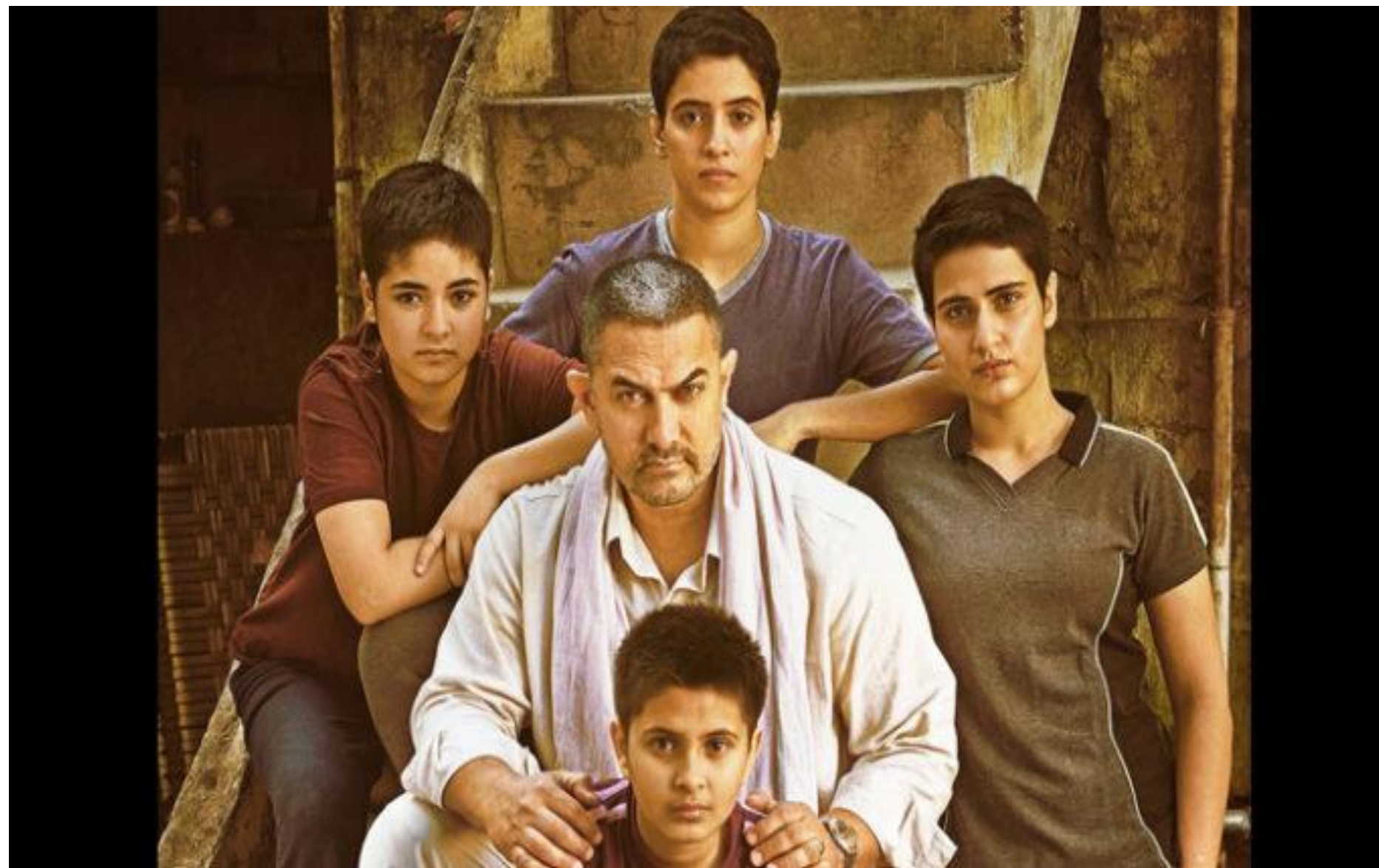
37% of 0-1 year-olds

73% of 2- to 4-year-olds

72% of 5- to 8-year-olds

Media and Socialization

- Learn about gender identity from news **media**
- 2. Learn from **video games**
- 3. Gender messages from **movies**



Who teaches gender roles?

Books & Textbooks

- Many books show gender typed behaviors
- More nonstereotypical books are now available

Popular Culture and the Media

There are many sex stereotyping examples in:

- Advertising
- Newspapers and Magazines
- Television and other Screen Media
- Music Videos

End of the session

thank u....