

Gender Development From a Sociological Perspective

Clinical Sociology understands:

1. That a change in attitude can occur quickly. (Because of an influential book or conversations with a powerful speaker).
2. A change in behavior occurs more slowly. You may approve of a new idea or freedom but are somehow more reluctant to put it into practice.
3. Slowest of all to change are the notions of right and wrong. You may act on your new attitudes, but deep inside you feel anxious, or guilty. These kinds of feelings can take generations to change.
4. This all has to do with socialization, according to symbolic interaction theory.

The Sociological Perspective is not psychological.

Classical Psychology sees gender issues developing out of insecurities and inadequacies surrounding relationships with one's parents.

Examples?

Psychological explanations can be effective in treatments. So can Religion. But neither of these will work for all individuals all the time.

Both Psychology and Religion develop vocabularies of motive that some individuals will buy into.

Here again:

This agrees with W. I. Thomas:

When people believe something is true, then it becomes true in its consequences.

Examples?

1. Placebo Effect
2. Religious Miracles

SOCIOLOGICAL VIEW

For Clinical Sociologists

Gender develops out of Social Interaction

Gender: is a mental State

Sex: is a biological determination

There is an element of both biological and sociological processes present in gender development.

To begin with sexual acts are an individual discovery.

A child learns early on the goal of sex is orgasm.

What triggers orgasm?

The individual is socialized to this process and often re-socialized over time. We are all subject to a multitude of images and communications from society.

Examples of socialization

1. Family
2. Friends/Peer groups
3. Images
4. Media
5. Social Structures

The Individual then either re-creates societies gender expectations or not. Gays and Lesbians do not establish their gender identity by standard norms and values held by society. For some reason they are socialized differently.

The Clinical sociologist will have to try to determine how they were socialized, this could be done through a social history before a resocialization technique could be established.

Examples of socialization:

1. Buddhist Monks and the Blue Flower.
2. Fetish

Re-socialization then is a possibility when it comes to gender according to sociological theory.

1. How was the individual socialized?
2. What was available?
3. What did they internalize?

Finally this is a new area of study. There are some religious (faith based therapeutics) For those who want to follow the norm for religious reasons.

But for the most part both psychology and sociology for the most part seek coping strategies for individuals interested in dealing with gender related problems and issues.

Examples:

1. Support Groups (like Soda at OSU)
2. Becoming part of a community that totally accepts a different life style.
3. Slowly developing an understanding of one's self then finding ways to interject that self into your lifeworld.

4. Realizing that the problem is as much a problem for the society you live in, rather than an individual adjustment.

Actual medical options are available for those individuals wanting to biologically change their gender.

However this requires the individual to live as the opposite sex for six months and often with counseling to see if the individual can truly adjust to the societal treatment of different sexes.