Relating Social Psychological Processes to Social Developmental Processes

Jacquelynne S. Eccles
University of Michigan
Paper presented at the Gender Roles Conference
San Francisco, April 2004
Overview of Presentation

- 3 Theoretical Approaches to Linking Social Psychological Processes to Social Development
- One Methodological Issue
- Two Research Examples
Theoretical Issue 1

- Extending Social Psychological Theories
- Linking Personal and Social Identities to the Ontogeny of Behavioral Choices

- I discussed the research associated with this issue earlier in the self concept session.
- If you want details, I can send them to you.
Extending Social Psychological Theories Linking Personal and Social Identities to the Ontogeny of Behavioral Choices

Critical issues for this session

- Importance of developing comprehensive models to guide longitudinal work
- Link between developmental changes in the salience of various identity domains and the need for identity formation as a developmental task
Personal Experiences

Subcultural Scripts, Beliefs, and Stereotypes

Societal Beliefs, Images, and Stereotypes

Personal Identities
  Self Concepts
  Personal Values
  Personal Goals

Social Identities
  Salience
  Content
  Perception of Barriers
  Due to One’s Group Membership

Expectations For Success

Life Choices

Subjective Task Value

Personal Values

Personal Goals

Perception of Barriers

Due to One’s Group Membership

Subjective Task Value

Life Choices

Expectations For Success

Personal Identities
  Self Concepts
  Personal Values
  Personal Goals

Social Identities
  Salience
  Content
  Perception of Barriers
  Due to One’s Group Membership

Expectations For Success

Life Choices

Subjective Task Value

Personal Values

Personal Goals

Perception of Barriers

Due to One’s Group Membership

Subjective Task Value

Life Choices

Expectations For Success
Subjective Task Value

- **Interest Value** – Enjoyment one gets from doing the activity itself
  - Similar to Intrinsic Value

- **Utility Value** – Relation of the activity to one’s short and long range goals
  - Similar in some ways to Extrinsic Value
  - But also includes Introjected Goals
Subjective Task Value Continued

- **Attainment Value:** Extent to which engaging in the activity confirms an important component on one’s self-schema or increases the likelihood of obtaining a desired future self or avoiding an undesired future self.

  - Individuals seek to confirm their possession of characteristics central to their self-schema.

  - Various tasks provide differential opportunities for such confirmation.

  - Individuals will place more value on those tasks that provide the opportunities for this confirmation.

  - Individuals will be more likely to choice those activities that have high attainment value.
Subjective Task Value: Cost

- Psychological Costs
  - Fear of Success/Failure
  - Anticipated Anxiety

- Financial Costs

- Lost Opportunities to Fulfill Other Goals or to do Other Activities

- Social Costs of Punishment or Rejection
Key Features of Model

- Focuses on *Choice* not on *Deficits*

- Points Out Importance of Studying the Origins of Individuals’ Perception of the Range of Possible Options

- Focuses on the Fact that Choices are made from a Wide Range of Positive Options
Key Features of Model 2

• Thus, the hierarchies of one’s Ability Self Concepts and Values are critical

• These hierarchies can be quite fluid and easily influenced by
  • Developmental Period of Individual and Associated Developmental Tasks
  • Situational Demands and Opportunities
  • Interaction of Social and Personal Identities with Current Situation
Key Features of Model 3

- It is developmental, although this is hard to show on the figure
  - Developmental maturity influences the entire model
  - Developmental periods and their associated developmental tasks influence the hierarchies
How Does This Relate To Gender?

- Gender and Gender Roles influence both the content and the hierarchies of ability self concepts and values.
- Gender and Gender Roles influence the developmental tasks individuals must engage throughout their life spans.
- Gender and Gender Roles influence the situational demands and opportunities individuals must cope with and adjust to throughout their life spans.
Other Two Theoretical Issues

- Extending General Self-Socialization Theories and Social Group Influences to Developmental Changes in Girls’ Behavior at Adolescence

- Extending Person Perception and Causal Attribution Work into Parental Influences on the Ontogeny of Children’s Self Perceptions
Methodological Issues

- Variable versus Person or Pattern Centered Approaches
  - Standard regression and SEM methods used with longitudinal data sets assess the relations among variables and often tell us little about the developmental processes at the level of the individual.
  - These methods are also designed to estimate the unique influence of each predictor – controlling for the influence of all other predictors.
  - Developmental processes may be better represented by patterns of influences that operate in interaction with each other at a more wholistic level.
  - If this is true, developmentalists need to look at the newly emerging person or pattern-centered approaches as an alternative methodological approach to longitudinal data analysis.
Extending General Self-Socialization Theories and Social Group Influences to Developmental Changes in Girls’ Behavior at Adolescence
Explaining The Link Between Girls’ Pubertal Timing and Normbreaking Behavior

Work by
Håkan Stattin
Margaret Kerr
Therése Johansson
Early developing girls compared to on-time or later developing girls

- Engage in more normbreaking behaviors:
  - **at home** (ignoring parents’ prohibitions, staying out late, run away from home)
  - **at school** (cheating, playing truant)
  - and **during leisure** (smoking hashish, getting drunk, vandalism, loitering, shoplifting)

- Have more strained relationships with parents and teachers

- Are more likely to show declines in school achievement
WHY?
Stattin, Kerr, and Johansson hypothesis

- It is not about stress or emotional trauma from being off-time
- It is not about pre-existing problems
It is about social influences that come about when early developed girls seek out similar peers in the normal way that most youths do.
Views of Self

Early developed girls will perceive themselves psychologically and socially more mature than their same-age peers.

- more concerned about autonomy and emancipation
- more interested in "mature" behavior
- more interested in heterosexual contacts
- identify with peers on the "same-maturity-stage"
Peer association

Girls with early pubertal development will associate with peers who match their early developmental stance:

- establish heterosexual relationships (most often with older boyfriends) earlier than later developed girls,

- seek out and will be sought out by peers who are chronologically older (but on the same maturity level).
Through opposite-sex relations with older males and older peers, early maturing girls:

- encounter peer environments with more advanced social behavior (i.e. drinking, drug use, and norm-breaking behaviors), and
- are brought into leisure-time settings in which these types of behaviors are more typical.
Early pubertal maturation → Perceiving oneself as matured → A more advanced social network → Normbreaking behaviors
Early developed girls perceived themselves as more mature at age 14.5 yrs.
Early developed girls associated more with chronologically older peers and working friends.
Early developed girls were more likely to have a steady boyfriend at 14 yrs.

The graph shows the percentage of girls having a steady boyfriend at different age groups:

- Early developed girls had a higher percentage of having a steady boyfriend compared to later developed girls across all age groups.

- The percentage decreases as age increases for both early and later developed girls.

- The bar chart clearly indicates the trend with early developed girls having a higher percentage at every age group compared to later developed girls.
Early developed girls had had sexual intercourse more often by 14.10 yrs.
Their empirical studies suggest that:

1. pubertal maturation is an instigating condition for heterosexual relations.

2. the link between pubertal maturation and problem behavior disappears once heterosexual relationships are controlled.
BUT

If their hypothesis is correct, then early pubertal timing should be linked to normbreaking under certain conditions and not others.
What kinds of conditions?

- Youths spend a lot of time away from home interacting with their peers
- So, leisure contexts should be important
What would a leisure context look like in order for us to believe that early developed girls risk developing future social adjustment problems?
It should be a setting where:

• early developed girls can meet peers and boys who are older than they are.

• early developed girls can establish intimate relations with boys who have problematic social adjustment.
In Europe and the US, many communities have provided alternatives for youths who aren’t interested in organized activities.

The idea is to keep youths off the streets and out of trouble.
Are girls who frequent youth centers more likely to start engaging in early sexual behavior?
Visiting these centers at the age of 13:

- Yes
- Yes

Early

Late

Intercourse (15 yrs)

Pubertal timing

seldom
Visiting these centers at the age of 13:

Early developed girls who often visit the centers are more sexually active 2 years later.

Diagram:
- Early Pubertal timing
- Late Pubertal timing
- Intercourse (15 yrs)

Graph legend:
- ♦️: seldom
- ■️: often
Are girls who frequent youth centers more likely to engage in normbreaking behavior?
Visiting the centers at the age of 13:

- Yes

Pubertal timing

- Early
- Late

Normbreaking (15 yrs)

- Yes
- No
Early developed girls who often went to the centers were especially high on norm-breaking 2 years later.

Visiting the centers at the age of 13:
- seldom
- often
Is going to the youth centers and getting involved with boys a particular risk condition for early developing girls?
Explaining normbreaking at the age of 15 from the interaction between center attendance, pubertal development, and heterosexual relations.

To be an early developed girl, to develop intimate heterosexual relations, and to often visit the centers – this is a real risk for normbreaking.
Conclusions

- The Stattin et al. work illustrates the power of person-centered approaches.

- It also illustrates the power of carefully breaking down a complex question into a series of tight theoretical propositions based in developmental social psychology.
Extending Person Perception and Causal Attribution Work into Parental Influences on the Ontogeny of Children’s Self Perceptions
How Might Parents Influence Their Children’s Behavior to Become More Gender Stereotypic?

- How might parents influence children’s self perceptions and behavior?
- How might gender-role stereotypes affect these influences?
PARENT, FAMILY, & NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS (e.g., Education, Occupation, Number of Children, Ethnicity, Neighborhood)

PARENTS' GENERAL BELIEFS & BEHAVIOR (e.g., Gender Role Stereotypes, General & Specific Personal Values, Child Rearing Beliefs, Emotional Warmth, Involvement in Activities)

PARENT SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS (e.g., Time Spent with Child, Encouragement to Participate in Activities, Provision of Toys, Equipment, Lessons, Training of Specific Personal Values, Attributions for Child’s Successes/Failures)

CHILD OUTCOMES (e.g., Self-Perceptions, Subjective Task Values, Interest Values, Future Goals, Performance Expectations, Activity Choices, Performance)

CHILD AND SIB CHARACTERISTICS (e.g., Sex, Past Performance, Aptitudes, Temperament, Attitudes)

PARENTS' CHILD SPECIFIC BELIEFS (e.g., Perceptions of Child’s Abilities/Talents, Perceptions of Child’s Temperament, Perceptions of the Value of Various Skills for Child, Perceptions of Child’s Interests)
PARENT, FAMILY, & NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS (e.g., Education, Occupation, Number of Children, Ethnicity, Neighborhood)

PARENT SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS (e.g., Time Spent with Child, Encouragement to Participate in Activities, Provision of Toys, Equipment, Lessons, Training of Specific Personal Values, Attributions for Child’s Successes/Failures)

PARENTS’ GENERAL BELIEFS & BEHAVIOR (e.g., Gender Role Stereotypes, General & Specific Personal Values, Child Rearing Beliefs, Emotional Warmth, Involvement in Activities)

PARENTS’ CHILD SPECIFIC BELIEFS (e.g., Perceptions of Child’s Abilities/Talents, Perceptions of Child’s Temperament, Perceptions of the Value of Various Skills for Child, Perceptions of Child’s Interests)

CHILD OUTCOMES (e.g., Self-Perceptions, Subjective Task Values, Interest Values, Future Goals, Performance Expectations, Activity Choices, Performance)

CHILD AND SIB CHARACTERISTICS (e.g., Sex, Past Performance, Aptitudes, Temperament, Attitudes)
Parents’ Perceptions of Their Children’s Math Ability

Question:

Do parents’ perceptions of their children’s academic abilities predict the children’s own confidence in their academic abilities?

YES! Especially in the Elementary School Years
- Parents’ Beliefs and Expectations Have Bigger Impact on Their Children’s Math and Language Arts Abilities than Do Teachers and School Marks, Particularly in the Elementary School Years

- Parents’ Early Confidence in Their Child’s Academic Abilities Reduce the Amount of Decline in the Children’s Own Confidence in Their Academic Abilities
Impact of These Beliefs on Daughters’ Math Confidence and Interest: MSALT Study

Teacher’s Rating of Girls’ Math Ability

Mother’s Rating of Girl’s Math Ability

.60

.31

.21

.19

-.20

Mother’s Rating of Girl’s English Ability

Girl’s Rating of Own Math Ability

Girl’s Interest In Math

.48

.48
Gender and Parents’ Perceptions

- Does the gender of one’s child influence parents’ perceptions?
  - YES

- Why?
Gendered Parental Beliefs

- There are “real” differences between girls’ and boys’ abilities and interests.
- Parents’ interpret girls’ and boys’ behaviors and performances differently.
- Both of the above.
Parents’ Causal Attributions for Child’s Success: MSALT

Importance of Natural Talent as Cause

- **Math**
- **English**
- **Sports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mother's Perceptions of:

- Child's Current Competence
- Difficulty of Domain for Child *
- Expectations for Child's Future Course Performance
- Expectations for Child's Likely Career Success *
- Child's Natural Talent in Math *

Mother's Attribution of Child's Success in Math to Talent

Child's Sex

- .13
- .44
- -.38
- .37
- .43
- .47
Specific Information on Child

Cultural Beliefs

Parents' Previous Experiences

Parents' General/Category-Based Beliefs

Parents' Child Specific/Target-Based Beliefs and Perceptions

Parents' Efficacy as Influence on Child's Skill Acquisition

Value Parents Place on Various Skills
Stereotypes

Sex x Stereotypes

Sex

Independent Estimate of Child’s “Actual” Ability

Parents’ Ability Perceptions

Child’s Ability Perceptions
Gender Stereotype for Math

Sex of Child X Gender Stereotype of Math

Sex

Teacher’s Rating of Child’s Math Ability

Parents’ Perception of Child’s Math Ability

Child’s own Math Ability Perception

Sex of Child X Gender Stereotype of Math

Parents’ Perception of Child’s Math Ability

Child’s own Math Ability Perception

MSALT