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Gender role perpetuation through selective media exposure

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Effects of mass communication are typically found to be small (Bryant & Zillmann, 2002). In the first large synopsis of media effects, Klapper (1960) argued that individuals tend to choose media messages that bolster pre-existing views and group norms; hence, „mass communication will serve as an agent of reinforcement rather than conversion" (p. 42-43). Throughout the history of communication research, selectivity in media use has been considered crucial for the suggested reinforcement (Donsbach, 1991; Festinger, 1957; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; Slater, 2007). As a result of selectivity in media use, media effects in the sense of change and conversion appear to be rare.

Traditionally, a lot of attention has been paid to reinforcement of political attitudes (Donsbach, 1991; Lazarsfeld et al., 1944). Yet other societal norms may be much more influential for our everyday perceptions and behavior and could be subject to selective reinforcement through media use as well. Specifically, we are interested in how selective media use may serve to bolster gender-typed norms.

Different preferences of women and men regarding news and entertainment have long been found in empirical research. In entertainment, women are more likely to watch tragedies, soaps, dramas, medical series, and romances; men, on the other hand, tend to prefer horror, sports, and action and adventure movies (Oliver, 1993, 2000; Potts, Dedmon & Halford, 1996; Preston & Clair, 1994). These preferences become already apparent in children at a young age (Haynes & Richgels, 1992; Valkenburg & Janssen, 1999). Boys prefer violence and vigorous action, whereas girls favor more nurturing and romantic content (Knobloch, Callison, Chen, Fritzsche & Zillmann, 2005). Likewise, news consumption is characterized by a gender gap (Pew Research Center, 2004) – men seek out newspapers, radio news, cable television news, and online news, whereas women are heavier consumers of „light news" outlets such as network morning shows and news magazines. Surveys in Germany found that men are more interested in politics, business news, and sports than women, while women show more interest in local issues and reports 'drawn from life' (e.g. Blödorn, Gerhards & Klingler, 2005).

Such observations of gender-typed preferences do not explicate origins of these choice patterns. In the following review, we present a series of studies that investigate origins of gender-typed differences in selective media exposure – children's gender-typed entertainment choices, research on preferences for news about same-sex individuals, gendered news topic preferences, and gender-based choices of news with positive or negative valence as a function of social circumstances. Before examining empirical research, the notion, importance, and origins of gender are explicated based

on Bandura's (Bandura, 2001; Bussey & Bandura, 1999) social-cognitive framework. Overall, our review will tackle the question of how recipients' own selections of media messages might drive the socialization of and adherence to gender roles and conceptions.

1. Notion, importance, and origins of gender

The term „gender" is used here to refer to the socially constructed genders as attributes that are associated with the sexes, in contrast to the physiological sex of a person. According to Bem (1981b, p. 369), „sex-typing is derived, in part, from a readiness on the part of the individual to encode and to organize information […] in terms of the cultural definitions of maleness and femaleness that constitute the society's gender schemata." Bem (1985) sees the tendency to use gender as a primary schema closely linked to the self-concept, which is gender-role orientation. To some, gender is more important as an organizing schema than to others. In light of gender schema theory, some individuals should be more likely to select media messages in gender-typed ways than others.

Gender is a key characteristic that molds people's daily lives, as well as their life-span biographies (e.g., Eagly, Eall & Sternberg, 2004). What talents and occupational opportunities someone pursues and how people view themselves and others is shaped to a great extent by a person's sex and gender-typed socialization. From birth on, people are differentiated by their sex (ironically, modern prenatal diagnostics allow this to start even before birth), resulting in gender-typed norms. Parents, peers, and educators have different expectations for boys and girls and encourage different gendered conduct. The media also convey society's perceptions on gender and even exaggerate gender stereotypes in their representation of male and female media personae (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

The „psychological determinants and mechanisms by which society socializes male and female infants into masculine and feminine adults" are addressed by Bussey and Bandura (1999, p. 676) in their social cognitive theory on gender development and differentiation. For the current review, their explications on the basis of social cognitive theory offer a well-suited theoretical background on the psychological origins of gender differences and on the processes which may guide gendered self-socialization through selective media exposure. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) stresses attributes that enable humans to adapt to cultural environments, such as the capability for symbolization, observational learning, self-regulation, and self-reflection. Social cognitive theory sees gender development neither as entirely formed by environmental forces, nor by intrapsychic processes that are independent of the social environment. Instead it stresses the interaction between personal factors, behavior patterns and the environment.

The environment that people experience depends in part on how they behave and which of the potentially available environments they choose. Bussey and Bandura

(1999) speak of a „selected environment" (p. 685). This applies especially to the symbolic environments provided by the media. In today's Western societies, media users are free to choose from an enormous variety of media messages and spend ample time with the media (e.g., MPAA, 2007). In egalitarian social systems, where environmental dictates are low, social cognitive theory „considers personal factors, including gender-linked conceptions, behavioral and judgmental standards as major influences in the self-regulation of gender development." (p. 685). Bussey and Bandura stress the personal agency, the power of the self to select environments, by which the self in turn is influenced.

Research on gender-typed media selections therefore investigates an important part of the influence that the individual plays in acquiring gender-linked roles and conduct. Prior extensive research has investigated how socialization along the lines of gender-typed expectations affects achievement-related personal choices regarding education and occupation (e.g., Eccles, 1994). This research focuses on socialization patterns in families, schools, and among peers. However, clearly the media also function as an important socialization agent (Bandura, 2001; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli & Shanahan, 2002). When choosing media information and role models from the media, the recipient becomes an agent of his or her own socialization environment.

2. Children's preference for gender-typed entertainment

Societal concerns that media may perpetuate social stereotypes (such as gender-stereotypes) and aggression have instigated ample research activity. Studies on the long-term behavioral consequences of preschoolers' media use have found exposure to violent television programs to be a significant predictor for aggressive behavior during adolescence.(e.g., Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger & Wright, 2001). Several studies have explored media use and the socialization of traditional sex-roles (Signorielli, 1989, 2001). Both the sex of the children as media users and the gender of media characters have been shown to influence preferences and expectations. Children of both sexes tend to favor media characters of their own sex, with boys showing stronger gender-siding than the girls.

However, most studies derive their data from reports of children or parents and do not necessarily reflect the children's actual preferences. Evidence based on actual choices and on settings that rule out confoundings (e.g., genres or proportion of male and female characters in the media) is rare, though. In order to address these shortcomings of earlier research, Knobloch, Callison, Chen, Fritzsche & Zillmann (2005) conducted two studies that focused on factors that influence self-guided selective media exposure of children in different cultures. They applied a method that provided immediate evidence of actual choices of the children, rather than asking them or their parents for reports of media use.

Four-to-six year-old boys and girls were asked to select children's videos that they would like to see most. The children could choose either between pairs of cartoon videos presenting aggressive versus peaceful, nurturing content, with male or female sex of story protagonists held constant (study 1), or between pairs of videos featuring male versus female protagonists, with aggressive or peaceful story content held constant (study 2). To investigate the influence that cultural settings with different gender role norms might have on the children's choices, the study was conducted in three countries with distinct cultural settings – China, Germany and the U.S. International data on gender equality were derived from United Nations reports – of these three countries, Germany was considered to come closest to achieving target levels of gender equality, while China was considered the country with the most traditional and unequal gender roles in its society. The U.S. was considered as falling between Germany and China concerning gender equality. The cultural setting with different emphasis on gender roles in the three countries was expected to vary the degree of gender-typed choices.

The first study, examining the effects of sex, age and country on the choice between violent and nurturing content, showed a uniform preference of young boys for violent content. More than two thirds of the boys' choices favored violent content, compared to less than a half of the girls` choices of nurturing content. It is interesting to note that neither culture nor age affected the level of preference for aggressive content. An analysis of the impact of sex on gender-typed partiality – where the boys' choices of violent content and the girls' choices of peaceful content were categorized as „gender-typed" – showed a smaller but significant difference between the sexes. Indeed, boys made more gender-typed content choices than girls did.

In the second study, which gave the children the choice between tapes with male and female characters within the same aggressive or peaceful story context, effects of sex, age and nationality on gender-typed choices were examined. The children showed a strong partiality for movies with protagonists of their own sex. Girls usually picked movies showing a female character, while the boys typically picked a movie with a male character. Interestingly, in the analysis of differences in gender-partiality between the sexes, the girls in the U.S. and in China showed stronger sex-siding than the boys. While German boys and girls showed no difference in their inclination toward protagonists of their own sex, girls in the U.S. and especially in China showed a more pronounced partiality for protagonists of their own sex, resulting in significant differences between the sexes in these countries (see Figure 1).

In short, children generally exerted gender-typed choices. Cultural context did not influence gender-typed content preferences but showed a strong impact on gender-siding. The studies reported here investigated gender-siding under the premise of children's selection of role models to learn from. Adults also may use the media as a source of information on social roles, as, for example, Bandura (2001) proclaims, possibly to sustain their own gender-typed behavior and interests. This could explain why adults still choose media content in remarkably gender-typed fashion.

Abbildung 1: Preference for video entertainment whose protagonist is of the recipient's sex as a function of sex and country of respondent
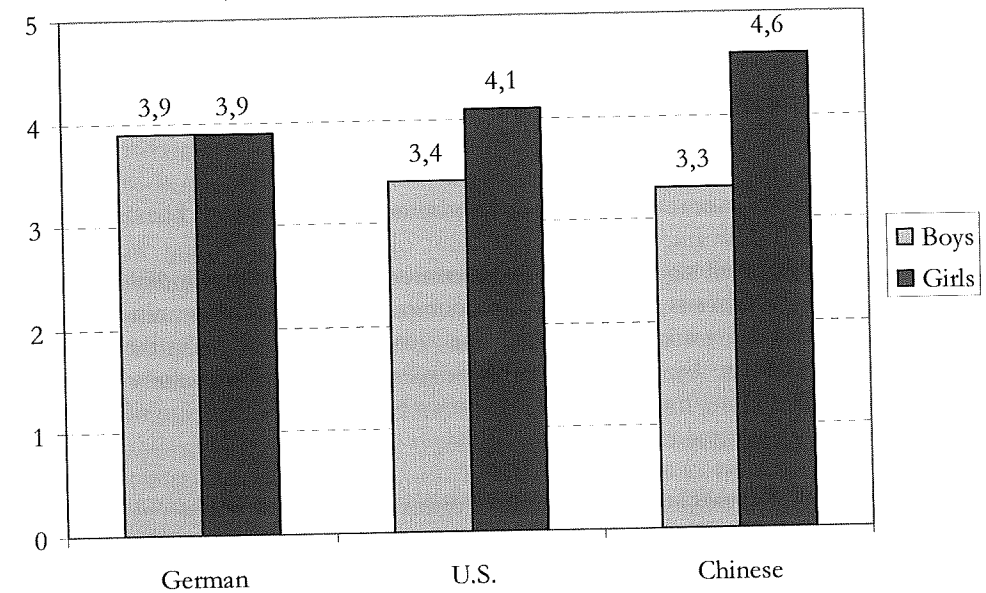
## 3. Adults' preference for news about same-sex individuals

Children's preference of same-sex characters can be readily explained along the lines of gender-typed self-socialization. However, even for adults, selective media use could serve adhering to gender-typed norms. Social cognitive theory of mass communication suggests that similar role models will be preferred, as „people are motivated by the successes of others who are similar to themselves" (Bandura, 2001, p. 274). Even though shared sex seems like a very rudimentary criterion for similarity, it might be sufficient to exert significant influence on selective media use. The research described in the following addresses this consideration.

Parallel to the research described in the prior section, Knobloch-Westerwick and Hastall (2006) examined preferences for media messages about same-sex characters but recruited participants from the age groups of 18-30 and 50-65 years. They were asked to browse an online magazine featuring eight manipulated articles and two distractor articles. The manipulated articles focused on individuals, who were portrayed in the text and in a picture. Characteristics of sex and age group (18-30 vs. 50-65 years) of the portrayed individual were varied, as well as the valence of the articles. While the participants read the articles, selective exposure to specific news reports was unobtrusively logged by the software. After the browsing time, the participants completed a questionnaire that included a self-esteem measure.

Both men and women preferred reading about same-sex individuals and spent about equal time on articles about news personae of their own sex. The sexes clearly showed different interests in reading about opposite sex individuals, though, as the men were significantly less inclined to read about opposite-sex individuals than women. While the women looked more at news about men, the men spent more time on the distractor articles, which did not portray individuals.

A follow-up analysis showed that, for each group of depicted individuals, the highest exposure share was to be noted for recipients with the same characteristics combination (see Figure 2). Young males discriminated the most in their selective reading, as they spent more time on news about young men than any other group and showed remarkably low interest for news about older women. Young women and older men also dedicated significantly less exposure to reports about individuals with whom they shared neither sex nor age group, compared to exposure to reports about personae of the same sex and age. Older women were most inclusive in their reading and did not differentiate by personae characteristics to a significant extent. Interestingly, articles about young men were the only news type that all recipient groups cared to read to roughly the same extent.

Abbildung 2: Selective news reading by news recipients' sex and age group
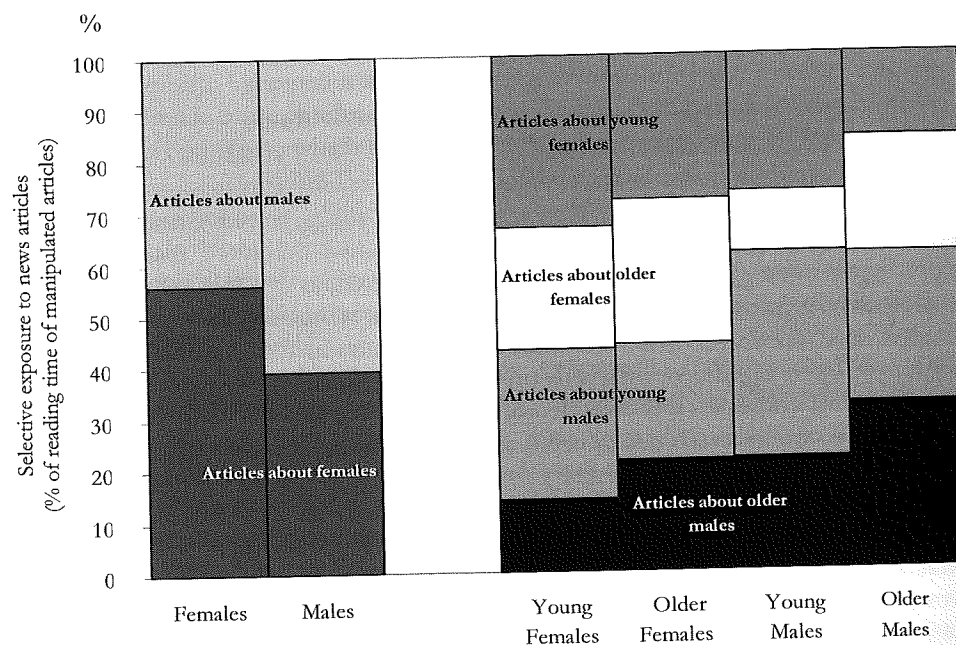
Exploratory analyses revealed that the sexes' preferences for story topics differed. The articles were grouped into news on social/interpersonal issues and news on achievement/performance issues. Indeed, the analysis showed that women favored the social topics, while the men preferred the achievement-related articles. As the following section will show, these findings inspired further research in the United States and in Germany that examined the origins of the sex differences with regard to news topic preferences.

4. Gendered traits' impacts on adults' preferences for news topics

Exploring the origins of the often noted gender differences in news interests of adult women and men, Knobloch-Westerwick, Brück and Hastall (2006) and Knobloch-Westerwick and Alter (2007) investigated the influence of several personality traits for which psychological research has found gender differences, as well as the impact of gender-role orientations on selective exposure to news. Given this focus, a glance at psychological research on gender-typed personality differences appears in place. For instance, a meta-analysis by Feingold (1994) found males to be more assertive and to have a higher self-esteem than females, whereas females are more extraverted, trusting, and, especially more tender-minded and nurturing than men. Such differences also exist for cultural expectations for the roles and the conduct of the sexes. In the cultures that are under examination in the two studies covered here – U.S. and Germany – men are expected to focus on achievement and performance in the professional world or sports, whereas women are expected to emphasize social relationships and lend support to others, including their professional lives (e.g. Cross & Madson, 1997).

Hence, for origins of gender-typed news topic preferences, achievement and affiliation motivation seemed particularly interesting, because they are related to the two gender-typed domains that also can be observed in the gender-typed preferences for specific news sections. Business sections, as well as the politics and the sports sections that are preferred by men, emphasize aspects of competition and achievement, while the health sections and community news that are preferred by women emphasize aspects of relationships and social issues. It is thus plausible that readers with a high achievement motivation are drawn to news on politics, business or sports, whereas readers with a high affiliation motive would prefer social news topics. Another personality trait that relates to competitiveness and achievement and shows gender-specific differentiation is self-esteem. Research typically shows higher self-esteem scores for males (e.g., Feingold, 1994). Hence, high self-esteem could be associated with a preference for achievement-related news, whereas low self-esteem should result in longer exposure to reports about social topics.

In addition to gender-related personality traits, Knobloch-Westerwick, Brück and Hastall (2006) and Knobloch-Westerwick and Alter (2007) used Bem's (1981a, 1985) gender schema theory to establish relevant factors. Gender role orientation was thus examined as an origin of gender-typed news topic preferences. The authors hypo-

thesized that news consumers with a more masculine gender orientation would spend more time reading about achievement or performance-related issues, while news consumers with a more feminine gender orientation would spend more time reading about social or interpersonal issues.

Both studies, in the U.S (Knobloch-Westerwick & Alter, 2007) and in Germany (Knobloch-Westerwick, Brück & Hastall, 2006), used experimental online news-magazines, with articles manipulated on the dimension of achievement/performance-related or social/interpersonal topic. The articles were counterbalanced regarding valence, presenting either positive or negative events, as well as the portrayal of male and female characters. While the participants browsed the magazine, their exposure times for the articles were unobtrusively logged. When the scheduled reading time elapsed, a questionnaire with general questions on the articles came up to provide closure on the browsing part. The participants then completed a personality questionnaire for affiliation and achievement motives, a self-esteem questionnaire, and Bem's sex-role inventory in a German translation.

The studies showed that in both cultures, the sexes differed in their news interests, even with potentially confounding factors such as valence of reports and portrayal of male and female individuals counter-balanced. Men both in the U.S. and Germany allotted about the same time for both topic realms, but the women read significantly more of the articles on social/interpersonal topics than of the achievement/performance related articles. They spent more time on the social/interpersonal articles, and less time on the achievement/performance articles than the male readers. Thus differences between men and women in the exposure times to achievement/performance or relationship related articles were due to the discriminatory fashion with which the women selected their reading fare.

Gender-role orientation and one of the tested personality dimensions also affected news selections. Readers with a more masculine orientation were drawn to achievement/performance-related news, while a more feminine gender role orientation was positively linked to exposure to social topics articles. Interestingly, in the German study, further regression analyses for men and women separately revealed that self-esteem was a positive predictor for reading about achievement/performance topics only for women. It also showed a marginally significant impact of the affiliation factor for men. Men who generally like to connect to others spent more time on reading articles about achievement and performance topics. The achievement motive was in neither of the studies found to be related to selective reading of achievement-related news. The impacts of the personality traits were weak, though, compared to the impact of sex. When sex was included as a predictor in the regression model, it emerged as the strongest predictor.

High self-esteem was negatively correlated with reading about social issues in both the American and the German sample. Hence, lower levels of self-esteem resulted in reading more reports about social topics. The affiliation motive, however, was not related to reading about social topics in the news. For both content domains, sex was the strongest predictor.

Given that the achievement motive did not influence selective reading of achievement-related messages, it is intriguing that self-esteem did affect exposure to news about these areas. The fact that individuals with low self-esteem spent more exposure time on social issues supports the notion that they may be more interested in learning how social interaction may affect them (Leary, Tambor, Terdal & Downs, 1995). On the other hand, more self-confident news readers may feel more prepared to pursue individual achievements and could, in consequence, be more attracted to reports about performance topics. Yet the self-esteem impact emerged only for female participants, who may have a different concept of relating to others than men do. A trend in men's news selection behavior, to the effect that a stronger affiliation motive was linked to longer exposure to achievement-related reports, also points to different ways in which men and women might relate to people depicted in the news. Baumeister and Sommer (1997) provided an argument that fits this observation; men seek affiliation in broader social spheres, sometimes also in hierarchical structures, compared to women who are said to pursue close dyadic relationships. Affiliation-oriented men might feel connected to those shown to be striving in the news, while self-esteem, on the other hand, is key to women's approach towards achievement-related information.

5. Gender-typed choices of news as a function of social circumstances

The research studies described so far have all drawn on constant recipient characteristics to explain typed media preferences. Even if we continuously bolster our gendered self through media consumption, this behavior must be subject to situational change and variation. If gender-typed behavior appears to be more functional in certain social settings, this might explain variance in levels of gender-typed media exposure. Perhaps the clearest indication that selective news exposure is not just a function of sex and gender, but also of social circumstances that call for gender-typed behavior, was provided by Knobloch-Westerwick and Alter (2006).

This study built on the idea that the sexes employ media use differently based on gender-typed mood regulation goals. More specifically, the sexes were hypothesized to differ in their media message choices when anticipating an opportunity to retaliate against a provoker. Retaliation can be considered aggressive behavior that is generally considered more acceptable for men than for women. After taking an ostensible emotion recognition test, participants received harsh negative feedback from the session supervisor and were then given the opportunity to browse news reports for a few minutes in a supposedly unrelated research study. The accessible news reports featured positive and negative news, as established per separate pretest of the stimuli. Selective exposure to news was unobtrusively logged by software, for the entire browsing period as well as for smaller time intervals. Half of the sample was led to anticipate evaluating the session supervisor at the end of the research session, which offered an opportunity to retaliate for the provocative and offensive feedback that the session supervisor had provided.

As hypothesized, the sexes differed in their selective news exposure, but only when anticipating an opportunity to retaliate. After being provoked, men who anticipated a retaliation opportunity favored negative news. In contrast, women who had been attacked by the session supervisor and anticipated a retaliation opportunity favored positive news. These exposure patterns were interpreted as reflecting efforts to sustain anger among male participants by reading negative news, in contrast to efforts to dissipate anger among female participants by reading positive news. In other words, the selective news exposure served emotion-regulation in the interest of complying with gender-typed behavior norms. The participants for whom no specific interaction anticipation had been induced did not demonstrate a specific preference for positive or negative news, falling in between the men and the women who anticipated evaluating the hostile supervisor.

In addition to this support for the hypothesized gender-typed news exposure, as driven by anticipated social circumstances, two observations in this study are furthermore of interest. Inspection of selective exposure during the specific time intervals within the general news browsing period indicated that the gender-typed patterns emerged across time. More pronounced gender-typed exposure occurred toward the end of the browsing, when the evaluation was believed to approach by participants who anticipated this retaliation opportunity. In addition, the actual evaluations that participants gave for the supervisor were correlated with the prior media exposure. The more time individuals had spent on negative news, the more negative were their evaluations. Hence, the selective news reading was indeed functional in sustaining or dissipating anger.

6. Conclusions

This research synthesis demonstrates recipients' preference for same-sex media characters, independent of recipients' age. Prior research also suggested a same-sex character preference; however, the investigations discussed here ruled out confounding impacts. (The greatest confounding bias is likely to result from the far greater number of male actors and characters in the media.) The research presented here furthermore focused on procedures in which participants exerted actual choices, instead of reporting and recalling media selections from the past or as a habitual behavior. In short, children, as well as adults of young and middle age prefer to learn about media personae of their own sex.

However, cultural differences for the intensity of gender-siding were demon--trated among children, which speaks for cultural origins of gender-siding in socialization. If preference for movies with same-sex characters is interpreted to reflect a motivation to learn about norms for one's own gender, then apparently this motivation is greater for girls in societies that have achieved less gender egalitarianism. If a culture's gender egalitarism is considered as a socializing factor, Chinese and American girls may, in fact, have an incentive not to learn from male models because

to them being different from boys is more important than to German girls. This interpretation is not consistently applicable for the boys' selective behavior though. The same need to differentiate themselves from the other sex should result in equally high levels of gender-siding for boys and girls in China and in the U.S. The opposite is the case. German boys had a markedly stronger preference for male characters than American and Chinese boys did. Here, gender egalitarianism could be interpreted as causing a higher motivation for the German boys to learn from same-sex models, because it challenges their security in male roles.

Gender-siding of adults of young and middle age, as it was investigated in Germany by Knobloch-Westerwick and Hastall (2006), showed a different pattern. Here, men and women allotted equal time to news about same-sex characters, but the men spent less time on articles about women than women spent on articles about men. Instead of reading about women, the men turned to the distractor articles that did not depict news personae. Because of the absence of such distractor elements in Knobloch et al. (2005), and because of the different media content used (entertainment and news), the results can only cautiously be interpreted in connection. However, gender-differences in sex-siding seem to undergo changes throughout the lifetime. The findings by Knobloch-Westerwick and Hastall (2006) do follow the interpretation suggested by the observation that learning from male models may offer an incentive for women, while learning about the lesser valued role of women offers little incentive, or even a disincentive for men. Possibly, male gender-siding increases with age, while female gender-siding decreases. This would deserve further research that takes the different possible interpretations of the current findings into consideration.

Apart from the preference for same-sex characters, the presented research has investigated gender differences in content preferences and offers some initial insight on the underlying psychological traits. Knobloch-Westerwick et al. (2006) and Knobloch-Westerwick and Alter (2007) showed that not only in reported preferences, but also in actual choices, a remarkable statistical effect of the biological sex exists. Men prefer achievement/performance-related topics, while women prefer articles about social or interpersonal issues. Such gender-typed content preferences reflect broad gender orientations which can be interpreted along the differences in self-construals as key to gender differences in personality traits (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997; Cross & Madson, 1997). Men's connection to others seems to be shaped differently, as men put more emphasize on the collective aspect of interdependence (teams), while women emphasize the relational aspect (dyads). Interpreting men's interest in news about others' achievements and performance in politics, sports or business in terms of relating to others can explain why the affiliation motive affected men's exposure times to this type of news.

The impact of self-esteem as a predictor for the exposure to achievement or performance related articles was limited to female participants. For women, going beyond the topic domains that are otherwise typically consumed by their gender and that our research proved to be linked to a high female role-orientation apparently is

supported by higher self-esteem. This indicates the need to further investigate the influence of personality attributes related to conformity motivations and self-efficacy, as conformity motivations could foster gender-typed news exposure. Especially individuals who want to 'fit in' and to meet social expectations might be more motivated to know about topics that are deemed appropriate for their gender. Future research could even address whether news personae that display gender-stereotyped conduct are preferred, and, if so, to what extent non-stereotyped behavior deters women and men from their otherwise preferred news contents.

Most gender-linked content selections proved to be perfectly in line with gender stereotypes. Both the boys' preference for aggressive content and the men's preference for news on achievement and performance mirror expectations for male behavior. Similarly, girls' leaning toward peaceful content and women's preference for news related to social or interpersonal topics converges with gender-typed norms. Overall, the examined trait variables were more valuable for predicting selective exposure to news about social/interpersonal issues than to news about achievement/performance topics. Other personality characteristics such as power motives or self-efficacy might be more relevant for that topic domain and could be examined in future research.

In the investigation of psychological traits as cause of gendered news interests, biological sex explained more variance in selective news exposure than the tested personality traits did. Nonetheless, it is not plausible that the biological sex is the actual cause of these preferences. More likely, additional factors play into news choices that appear to be bundled in the gender dimension. The discussed studies demonstrated some of the psychological dimensions that actually produce the statistical impact of biological sex, but further research is needed to identify what specific processes generate these patterns.

One challenge that needs to be addressed is the timeliness of the gender operationalization. Bem's (1981a) gender role inventory was developed in the 1970s and most likely does not fully reflect gender roles as of today. Another gap in the presented research is an actual demonstration of reinforced gender norms due to gender-typed media selections. All the presented studies are based on the assumption that the selections foster adherence to gendered norms. An investigation by Soduk (in prep.) has been designed to address this void.

When gender-based selective media exposure is accepted as a precondition for the influence of media on gender socialization, it becomes clear that gendered self-socialization is a reinforcing influence on gender stereotypes. Children as well as adults pay more attention to models of their own sex; their content preferences are likely to provide them with role models and knowledge from domains that are deemed appropriate for their gender. The media selecting self cannot be expected to be a counteracting force against gender-linked conceptions that are part of Western societies. Gender-role orientation, as a willingness to act on the knowledge about gendered conduct, necessarily must be a reinforcing factor, too. Overall, the research into gendered selective media exposure provides strong evidence for Klapper's (1960)

ideas that media use primarily bolsters the status quo. Gender stereotypes portrayed in the media are just one component in conserving gender roles. The audience certainly contributes greatly to the perpetuation of gender norms by favoring gender-appropriate messages and role models.

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