

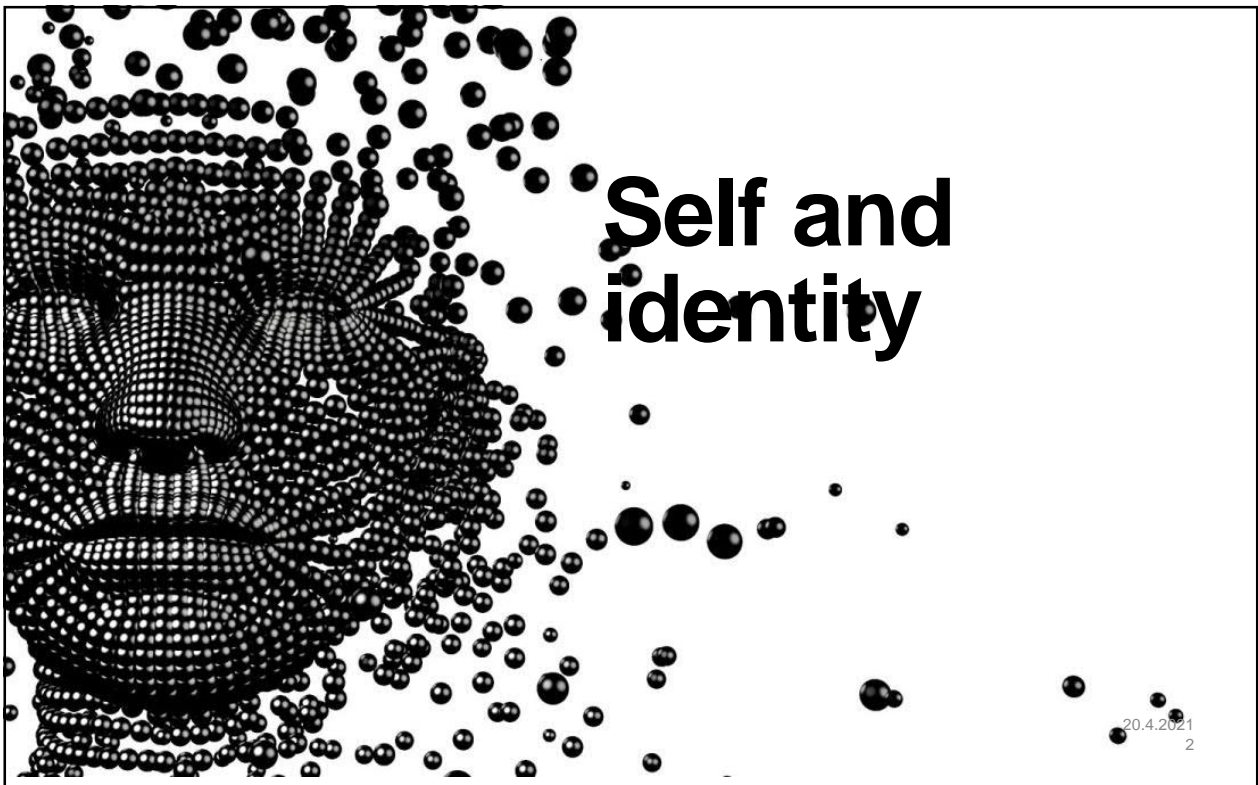


23C59000 - Consumer research

Self, identity, and gender

Ilona Mikkonen

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What is the difference between "self" and "identity"?

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The 'self' concept

Within the social sciences and humanities the terms 'self' and 'identity' are used in very specific, yet inconsistent and contested ways. In general, 'identity' is used to refer to one's social 'face' – how one perceives how one is perceived by others. 'Self' is generally used to refer to one's sense of 'who I am and what I am' and is the way the term is employed in this book. However, these are not dualistic constructs. Both the concepts of **self and identity** evolve out of social interaction (Millward & Kelly 2003), but because we are not merely 'stamped out' by society, we are active participants in our own **self/identity** construction (Bakhurst & Sypnowich 1995, Sartre 1956).

**Identity =
one's social face**

**Self =
who and what am I**


**Social interaction
has an effect on both**

**Active participants in
self/identity construction**

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SELF

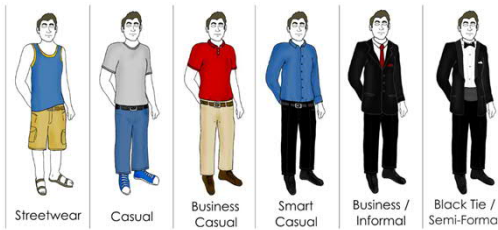
“the totality of the individual’s **thoughts and feelings** having references to himself as an object.”




IDENTITY

the **representation** of the self

→ A presentation of the self to others





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Three concepts of identity (Stuart Hall)

Enlightenment subject


- “conception of the human person as a **fully centered, unified individual**, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness, and action, whose “center” consisted of an inner core which **first emerged when the subject was born, and unfolded with it, while remaining essentially the same**”

Sociological subject

- “identity is formed in the “**interaction**” between **self and society**, The subject still **has an inner core** or essence that is “the real me,” but this is **formed and modified in a continuous dialogue with the cultural worlds** “outside” and the identities which they offer.”

Postmodern subject

- “**No fixed, essential, or permanent identity**. Identity becomes a “moveable feast”: **formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us** (Hall, 1987). It is **historically, not biologically, defined**. The subject **assumes different identities at different times**, identities which are not unified around a coherent “self.”



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Three concepts of identity (Stuart Hall)

- Enlightenment subject**
 - Theories and concepts that generally assume this perspective:
 - Self-concept, self-esteem, and self-discrepancy (e.g. Maslow; Rogers)
 - Personality theories (e.g. Freud; Erikson; McCrae & Costa)
- Sociological subject**
 - Theories and concepts that generally assume this perspective:
 - Looking-class theory of the self (Cooley)
 - Role theory (e.g. Mead; Parsons)
- Postmodern subject**
 - Theories and concepts that generally assume this perspective:
 - Identity and gender performance (Butler, Goffman)
 - Identity project and identity work (e.g. Alvesson)
 - Extended self (Belk)

Consumer psychology

Cultural consumer research

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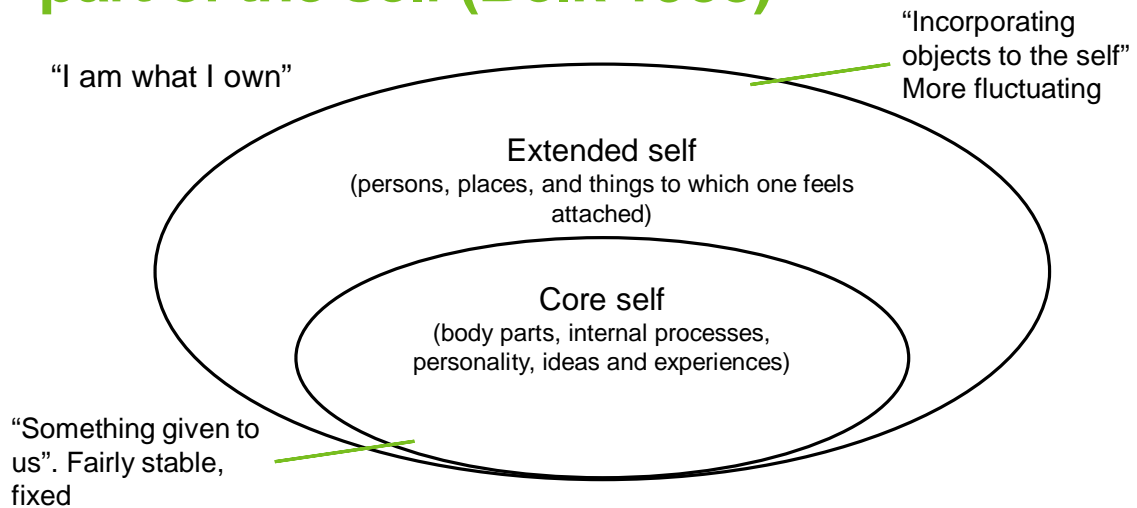
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Self/Identity in consumer research

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The traditional view of possessions as part of the self (Belk 1988)



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Possessions as part of self

We invest “psychic energy” into objects that we have spent time, effort, and attention on (Belk 1988)

They become more dear to us, and more indicative of the self.

Different categories of possessions:

- Heirlooms
- Disposable goods
- Shared possessions (e.g., a family table)
- Intangible goods
- Art or other collectibles



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The self can extend to possessions literally or symbolically

Literal extensions:

Athletic shoes: “I’m high performing as an athlete”

Tools: “This hammer allows me to do things I would otherwise not be able to do”

→ Possessions entail physical, instrumental value

Symbolic extensions:

Fashion: “This dress communicates my values”

Luxury items: “This Rolex makes me feel confident”

→ Possessions entail symbolic, identity linking value



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“Post Belk era”: identities have become more “liquid”

Today, society lacks identity determining structures (such as class) and is marked by increasing fragmentation, speed and liquidity:

- fast product-cycles
- changing values
- (consumer) movements
- sub-cultures
- ...

Identities have become fluid, **on-going projects** that are pursued in the presence of rapidly changing circumstances.

Identity **is an activity** rather than something stable – **a process**

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Identity projects

Fundamentally, the notion of the **identity project** suggests that people are actively concerned about the creation, enhancement, transformation and maintenance of a sense of identity (Bardhi et al. 2012; Belk 1988). Consumption is argued to perform a vital service in this regard by anchoring and buttressing **identity** (Bardhi et al. 2012; McCracken 1986), facilitating on-going negotiations across time (Syrjälä 2016) that bolster past lives and pre-empt future opportunities for self-making (Epp and Price 2008; Hill 1991). Further, the cultural imperative to work upon **identity** has become inescapable, demanding symbolic work of consumers at unprecedented levels such that they process ‘an ever-expanding supply of fashions, cultural texts, tourist experiences, cuisines, mass cultural icons, and the like’ (Holt 2002: 87). This cultural imperative is underscored by the waning influence of long-established social categories such as class, gender and occupation (Bocock 1993) and by the dilemmas of the self (Giddens 1991) that include ‘fragmentation, powerlessness, uncertainty and a struggle against commodification’ (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998: 131).

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Identity work

Identity work, then, necessitates the shrewd deployment of products and brands, their meanings, and the discourses surrounding them, such that a person is seen to be consuming the right *stuff* in the right ways (Belk et al. 1989; Bengtsson et al. 2005; Cronin et al. 2014; Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998; Gabriel and Lang 2006; Lury 1996; McCracken 1990). What is more, this negotiation of **identity** is influenced not only by embracing particular kinds of consumption but also by efforts to resist, abandon and avoid particular consumption artifacts, patterns and meanings (Hogg et al. 2009; Thompson and Haytko 1997; Wattanasuwan 2005). Moreover, achieving distinction and difference through these means relies increasingly on an ability to individuate and re-elaborate the material and symbolic offerings of the market (Arnould and Thompson 2005; Holt 1998).

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Identity conflicts

There are endless resources for identity construction through objects and consumption activities

- The overwhelming task of navigating through all the options and represent oneself in a coherent way
- Who do I want to be? How do I want to live?

Multiple, conflicting desired identities

- How to pursue all of them? Is it even possible?



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Identity – case fashion and clothing

Clothes are very fruitful domain of identity construction, as they are:

- simultaneously functional and highly symbolic objects
- used every day and are visible to others
- close to our body

Through clothes, consumers communicate the self, build desired self images, initiate identity changes and distinct oneself from others.

For many, clothes are a long-term material commitment, even though they would be worn for a shorter period of time



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The many dimensions of clothes

“Clothes as who I am”

- Consumers' everyday relation to clothing
- General appearance one wants to communicate in everyday life (e.g. at work)
- Clothes as practical and symbolic

“Clothes as who I am not”

- Outfit “failures” and embarrassment
- What I will not buy

“Clothes as who I want to be”

- Searching and reaching out for desired identities
- Trying out different styles
- Inventing and transforming the self



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Breakout rooms

Think about the theories of identity presented here
– do you agree or disagree with them?

Do your possessions/consumption choices extend
your sense of self?

Do you (knowingly) engage in identity work?
Have you experienced any identity conflicts

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GENDER

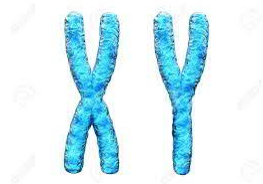
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What are sex and gender?

SEX RELATES TO BIOLOGY

Biological features and that demarcate men and women

Especially those having to do with reproductive potential



GENDER RELATES TO CULTURAL MEANINGS

Socially constructed roles of masculinity and femininity

Acceptable behavioral patterns within a cultural sphere, usually through a binary of masculine versus feminine

Stereotypes of how men and women are and/or how they should be



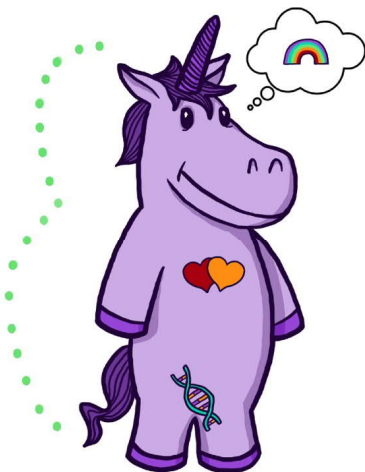
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The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

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Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Gender Identity

- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression

- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth

- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

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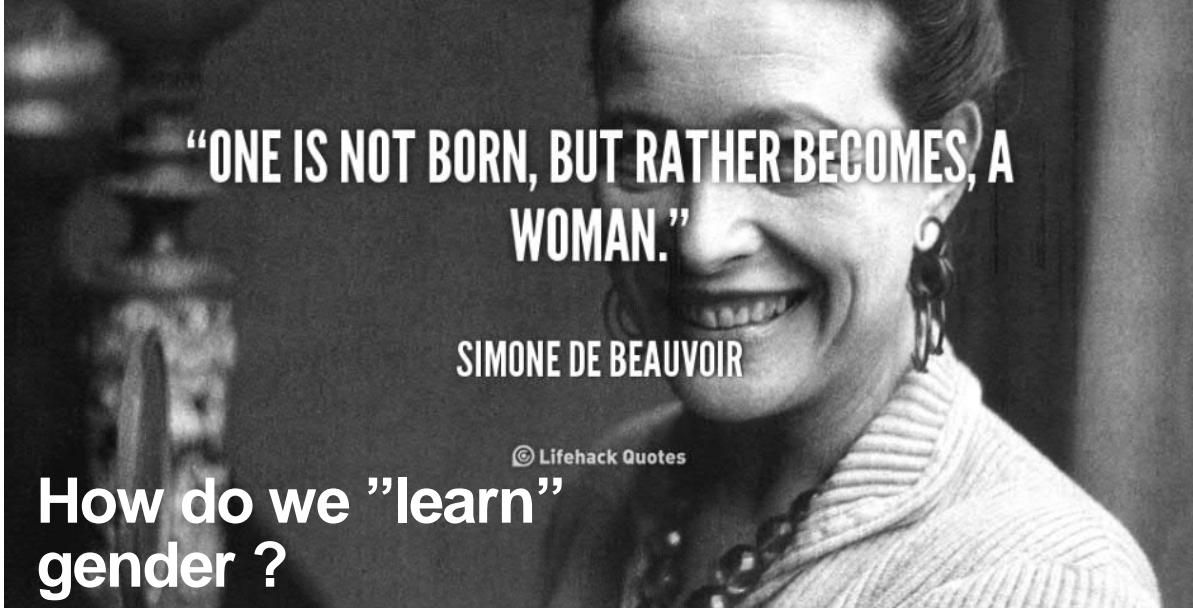
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Traditional Gender Stereotypes.

| <u><i>Feminine.</i></u> | <u><i>Masculine.</i></u> |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Not aggressive.</i> | <i>Aggressive.</i> |
| <i>Dependent.</i> | <i>Independent.</i> |
| <i>Easily influenced.</i> | <i>Not easily influenced.</i> |
| <i>Submissive.</i> | <i>Dominant.</i> |
| <i>Passive.</i> | <i>Active.</i> |
| <i>Home-oriented.</i> | <i>Worldly.</i> |
| <i>Easily hurt emotionally.</i> | <i>Not easily hurt emotionally.</i> |
| <i>Indecisive.</i> | <i>Decisive.</i> |
| <i>Talkative.</i> | <i>Not at all talkative.</i> |
| <i>Gentle.</i> | <i>Tough.</i> |
| <i>Sensitive to other's feelings.</i> | <i>Less sensitive to other's feelings.</i> |
| <i>Very desirous of security.</i> | <i>Not very desirous of security.</i> |
| <i>Cries a lot.</i> | <i>Rarely cries.</i> |
| <i>Emotional.</i> | <i>Logical.</i> |
| <i>Verbal.</i> | <i>Analytical.</i> |
| <i>Kind.</i> | <i>Cruel.</i> |
| <i>Tactful.</i> | <i>Blunt.</i> |
| <i>Nurturing.</i> | <i>Not nurturing.</i> |

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“ONE IS NOT BORN, BUT RATHER BECOMES, A WOMAN.”

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

© Lifehack Quotes

How do we “learn” gender ?


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According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet

- **Learning starts in early childhood**
 - “**early linguistic acts** set up a baby for life” → how others **talk about us and name** us sets up the learning process
 - How we are **dressed, what kind of presents** are we given
 - adults “do the child’s gender work” for them in the beginning,
 - How we are **treated** as children, how we are **talked to**, how we are **played with**
 - What kind of **activities we are directed to**, how we are **measured, what traits are praised** in us
 - **How we are segregated from school age to engage mainly with others from “our” gender**
 - “kids do indeed learn to **do gender for themselves, to produce sex-differentiated behavior**”



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According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet

- Learning continues in adolescence
 - “The heterosexual market” **dominates** the models of pairing up, and men and women are given “rules” of how to behave in relation to one another

→ “This market is the means by which **the social order comes to presume heterosexuality, marginalizing and rendering deviant any who do not eventually participate**”

heteronormative

adj. • het-ero-nor-ma-tive • \hē-tə-rō-'nōr-mə-tiv\

of, relating to, or based on the attitude that heterosexuality is the only normal and natural expression of sexuality

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The screenshot shows a Google search for "dating". The search bar contains "dating" and the Google logo is on the left. Below the search bar, there are navigation tabs: Kaikki, Kuvahaku, Videot, Kartat, Teokset, Lisää, Asetukset, Työkalut. To the right, there is a "Save to Pocket" button and a "SafeSearch" dropdown menu. Below the navigation tabs, there are several filter buttons: trump, zoosk, dating app, online dating, dating sites, couple, relationship, relationships, girls, dating advice, tips, woman, date, someone, dati. Below the filters, there are ten search results, each with a thumbnail image and a title. The results are:

- 10 ways to avoid falling victim to online ... independent.co.uk
- Breadcrumbing, orbiting and more... econoactimes.indiatimes.com
- Five Tips for Safe Online Dating | Psychology ... psychologytoday.com
- What is the difference between a relations... quora.com
- The Dating Advice You Need to Hear (From ... greatist.com
- 15 Dating Rules for Men that'll Transform Your...
- Best Dating Sites For Over 40 - Rom...
- Dating app fatigue comes from a lack of ...
- Relationship Abroad: 10 Things NOT T...
- 5 important things to know about dating-bot...

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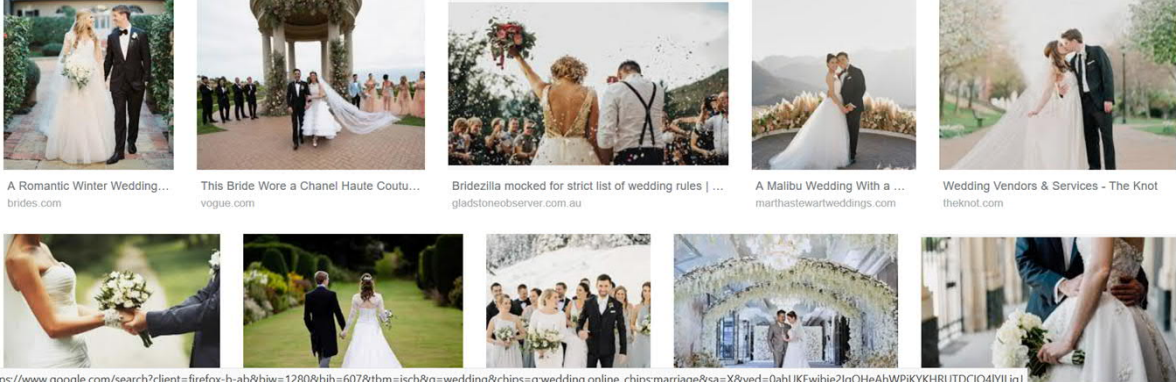
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Google wedding

Kaikki **Kuvahaku** Kartat Videot Teokset Lisää Asetukset Työkalut SafeSearch

serena williams meghan venues venue winter wedding average brides wedding venues royal wedding marriage wedding venue



A Romantic Winter Wedding... brides.com
This Bride Wore a Chanel Haute Coutu... vogue.com
Bridezilla mocked for strict list of wedding rules | ... gladstoneobserver.com.au
A Malibu Wedding With a ... marthastewartweddings.com
Wedding Vendors & Services - The Knot theknot.com

https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-h&hl=fi&rlz=1280&shih=607&thm=ic&h&v=wedding&chinc=αwedding online rhinc=marriage&ca=X&ved=DahIKFwhia2InCHeAHWPiKYYKHRTDClO4IVtInI

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Google family

Kaikki **Kuvahaku** Kartat Videot Teokset Lisää Asetukset Työkalut SafeSearch

families happy png dream australian silhouette holiday kids child whatsapp services life group children photography



Australian households and families | Austr... aifs.gov.au
The modern Australian family | Australian Insti... aifs.gov.au
Ballinger Family - YouTube youtube.com
Do value your family, it is the god's best gift f... naukinama.com
A central component of the Vanier Institute's ... vanierinstitute.ca

THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH IN THE F...
Family Portraits | JCPenney ...
Chinese Family Values
Yearly Subscription- Family
Family Private Health Insurance - Compare...

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A screenshot of a Google search for "romantic comedy". The search bar is at the top with the text "romantic comedy". Below the search bar are navigation tabs: "Kaikki", "Kuvahaku", "Videot", "Kartat", "Teokset", "Lisää", "Asetukset", and "Työkälyt". There are also search filters for "SafeSearch". Below the search bar are several circular filters: "movies", "rom", "imdb", "proposal", "rom coms", "wallpaper", "romcoms", "hollywood", "movie posters", "comedy movies", "best romantic", "love", "genre", and "types". The main content area displays a grid of movie posters and search results, including "5 Ways to Bring Back the Romantic Come...", "A Date with Miss Fortune", "50 Best Romantic Comedi...", "Me Before You - not just anothe...", "Romantic Comedy Movies: Amazo...", "Romantic Comedy images The Pro...", "Best Romantic Comedies of 2013 | POPSUGAR ...", "Loren's Fabulous Foundati...", "Romantic Comedy by MAG...", "Romantic Comedy Movie ...", "Romantic Comedies | SBS ...", and "Best Romantic Comedies of 2010 | POP...".

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[the] understandings of reality are influenced by constructions in the media (Hirschman 1988; O'Guinn and Shrum 1997; Bonsu, Darmody, and Parmentier 2010)

A collage of three advertisements. The top left is a Four beer advertisement featuring a woman in a black dress holding two cans of Four beer, with the text "6% alc", "Now Available Legally", "nice cans", and "Four". The top right is a Milk Real Men advertisement featuring a shirtless man climbing a rock face, with the text "MILK REAL MEN" and "LEAN MUSCLES". The bottom right is a WTA tennis player advertisement featuring a woman in a black dress swinging a tennis racket, with the text "STRONG IS BEAUTIFUL" and "WTA".

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Zayer, L. T., Sredl, K., Parmentier, M. A., & Coleman, C. (2012). Consumption and gender identity in popular media: discourses of domesticity, authenticity, and sexuality. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 15(4), 333-357.

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Gender development does not end with childhood or adolescence. Gender continues to be transformed as we move into the marketplace – as we learn to act like secretaries, lawyers, managers, janitors. And it continues to be transformed as our family status changes – **as we learn to be wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, sisters and brothers, grandmothers and grandfathers.** **As we age, we continue to learn new ways of being men and women:** what's expected from the teenage girl is rather different from expectations for a woman in her mid-forties and those expectations differ from those for a woman approaching eighty.



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Gender role portrayals in advertising

“Everywhere we look, we see images of the perfect couple. (For a still compelling discussion of the construction of male and female in advertising along these lines, see Goffman, 1976.) They are **heterosexual**. He is **taller, bigger, darker** than her. They appear in poses in which **he looks straight ahead, confident and direct**; she looks down or off into the distance, often dreamily. Standing or sitting, **she is lower than him, maybe leaning on him, maybe tucked under his arm, maybe looking up to him.**”



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Gender role portrayals in media

“Even the athletic young woman, however, is instructed to work on making her body desirable to men, as is attested by advertising and features in such publications as Sports Illustrated for Women.”



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THE SOCIAL BUTTERFLY
Chambray shirts + logo sweaters are the talk of the playground.

HER LOGO STYLES

THE LITTLE SCHOLAR
Your future starts here.
Shirts + graphic tees = genius

HIS T-SHIRTS

HIS TROUSERS

HER TROUSERS

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Kauppakorkeakoulu

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MENS
SHOP BLOG TEAM EVENTS

WOMENS
SHOP BLOG TEAM EVENTS

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BIC
for Her
BIC For Her™ Retractable Ball Pen

- A stylish pen designed just for her
- Elegant pen silhouette and jeweled accents add style
- Soft, pearlescent grip for all day comfort
- Convenient 2-pack
- Medium point size 1.0 mm

BIC More for your money...Always!

Sleep Pretty in Pink Women's Ear Plugs
Skull Screws Ear Plugs

How to Be GORGEOUS
How to Be CLEVER

Books in Harrods children's section

I HATE MY THING
I'M SUPER

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Kauppakorkeakoulu

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The Chef does everything but cook - that's what wives are for!

I'm giving my wife a Kenwood Chef

“Don't worry darling, you didn't burn the beer!”

Schlitz

show her it's a man's world

Van Heusen
man's world

A!

Laitoksen nimi
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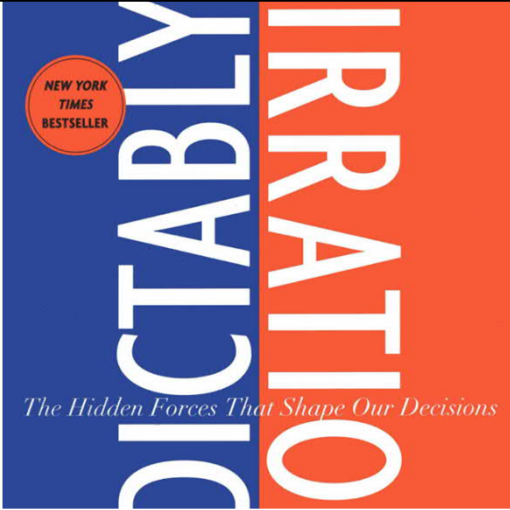
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PREDICTABLY IRRATIONAL
The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions
CHAPTER 9

The Effect of Expectations

Why the Mind Gets What It Expects

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Research on stereotypes shows not only that we react differently when we have a stereotype of a certain group of people, but also that stereotyped people themselves react differently when they are aware of the label that they are forced to wear (in psychological parlance, they are “primed” with this label). One stereotype of Asian-Americans, for instance, is that they are especially gifted in mathematics and science. A common stereotype of females is that they are weak in mathematics. This means that Asian-American women could be influenced by both notions.

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In fact, they are. In a remarkable experiment, Margaret Shin, Todd Pittinsky, and Nalini Ambady asked Asian-American women to take an objective math exam. But first they divided the women into two groups. The women in one group were asked questions related to their gender. For example, they were asked about their opinions and preferences regarding coed dorms, thereby priming their thoughts for gender-related issues. The women in the second group were asked questions related to their race. These questions referred to the languages they knew, the languages they spoke at home, and their family's history in the United States, thereby priming the women's thoughts for race-related issues.

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Wells, W. D., & Gubar, G. (1966). Life cycle concept in marketing research. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 355-363.

In the household's total income increases until the household head is in his late forties and then declines. There is an important interruption in this trend, however, among young married couples with children under six years old. At this stage, when the wives who have been working quit, there is an overall drop in median income of roughly ten percent. This means that households in the preceding stage—the young households with working wives—are better off financially than they will be for quite some time and are therefore likely to be particularly good prospects for a variety of goods and services.

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When we talk about gender stereotypes and restricting role expectations, we typically focus on women..

But what about men and their acceptable range of behaviors?

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Rules of manhood (Kimmell 1998)

[T]here are "rules of manhood":

1. **No sissy stuff** - - You can never do anything that even remotely hints of femininity. - -
2. **Be a big wheel.** You know, we measure masculinity by the size of your paycheck, wealth, power, status, things like that. - -
3. **Be a sturdy oak.** You show that you're a man by never showing your emotions. - -
4. **Give 'em hell.** Always go forward, exude an aura of daring and aggression in everything that you do. And this model of masculinity has been around for an awfully long time.



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Homophobia and cultural definition of manhood

Kimmel (2001, 35) further argues that “homophobia is a central organizing principle of our cultural definition of manhood”, and others (e.g.; Plummer 2001; Pascoe 2005) have also contended disassociation from homosexuality as one the central tenets of North American masculinity



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MMUK MAN
AWARD WINNING MAKEUP

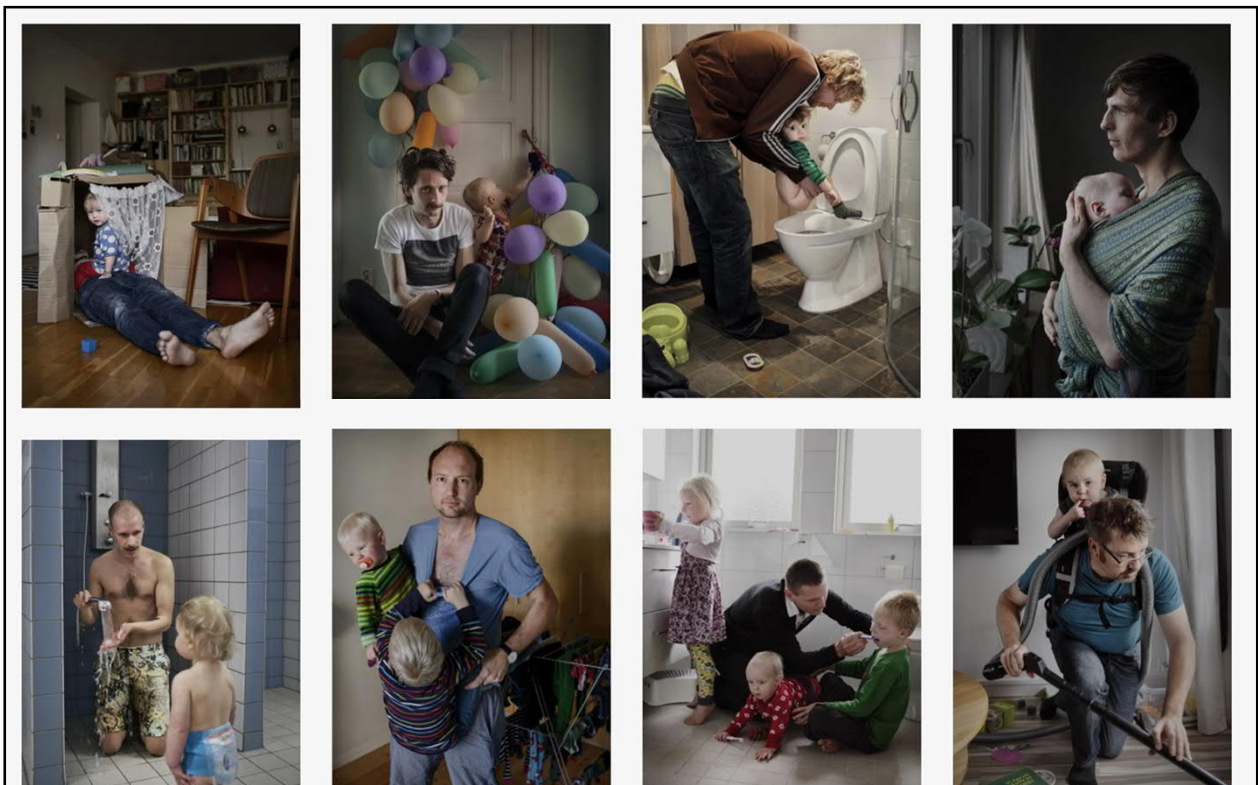
SHOP NOW

NO.1 MEN'S BB CREAM
WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

SHOP NOW

FIND YOUR SHADE
LET US HELP

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Breakout rooms

- Discuss the kind of role expectations you think men and women have in our contemporary society
- Are there behaviors that are considered inappropriate to men/women? Any consumption related behaviors or products?
- Can you think of any examples of marketing communications that reflect these expectations?