

CHALLENGING OR REINFORCING SOCIAL PREJUDICE?

Helen Longino, Ph.D.
Professor of Philosophy
Stanford University

AGGRESSION IN ANIMALS

- **i. stereotyped motor behavior (flank marking)**
- **ii. offensive reaction to 'intruders' in cage**
- **iii. maternal (protective) aggression**
- **iv. sexual competition**
- **v. others**

AGGRESSION IN HUMANS

- **i. conviction of violent crime**
- **ii. fighting in prison**
- **iii. delinquency (including truancy and drug use)**
- **iv. violent rage (verbal or physical)**
- **v. anger, irritability, verbal aggression**
- **vi. hitting a doll**
- **vii. diagnosis of Antisocial Personality or
Oppositional Defiant Disorder or Childhood Conduct
Disorder**

- viii. **score on psychological testing instrument**
 - a. **B-D Hostility Inventory**
 - b. **Aggression subscale of Child Behavior Checklist**
 - c. **Gray and Cloninger personality dimensions**
(impulsivity, anxiety, reward dependence)
 - d. **Others**

Sexual Orientation--Kinsey

- **Exclusively heterosexual**
- **Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual**
- **Predominantly heterosexual, more than incidentally homosexual**
- **Equally heterosexual and homosexual**
- **Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual**
- **Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual**
- **Exclusively homosexual**

Sexual Orientation -- Whalen, Geary, and Johnson

Orthogonal dimensions

- **degree of arousability,**
- **frequency of sexual interaction,**
- **number of partners,**
- **sexual identity of partner**
- **aspects of partner other than sexual identity.**

Gender

- **Variation in physical aggression**
- **Variation in risk aversion**
- **Variation in empathy and sociability**
- **Variation in childhood gender-stereotyped behaviors**
- **Variation in cognitive abilities**
 - **Verbal**
 - **Mathematical**
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Construction of object of inquiry

- **Semantic process**
 - **selective elimination,**
 - **re-aggregation.**

In behavioral research on aggression, sexual orientation, gender difference, others

3 aspects interact in the semantic process

- the shared context of origin, our folk psychology,**
- the requirements for creating a studiable object of inquiry, and**
- ontological presuppositions, especially individualism.**

Shared context of origin

- **Our interest in behavior lies primarily in the domain of our moral lives and discourse**
 - **why did so and so do thus and such?**
 - **what makes so and so act like that?**
- **Folk psychological system of classification and explanation of action that coordinates with our practices of moral judgment.**

Creation of studiable object

A) Isolation of phenomena that can be studied, i.e.

- reliably identified,**
- re-identified as of a particular type,**
- whose frequency can be measured.**

B) behaviors decontextualized,

- **event types**
- **represented as participating in natural regularities.**

C) recontextualized,

- **classified with other phenomena.**

Shared ontological presupposition

Methodological individualism:

- 1. The behavior of groups or populations**
 - aggregate of behaviors of individuals and**
 - thus best studied at the individual level.**
- 2. Causation internal to the individual**

CONCLUDING POINTS

- 1. The actual object of research, the phenomenon investigated, is not identical to the common abstract object.**

Research produces at best partial knowledge of a limited subset of the behaviors of interest.

2. Conflation of the common abstract object with a studiable object obscures the particularity and possible limited generalizability of the empirical studies.

3. The focus on the common abstract object marginalizes alternative (non-individualistic) approaches.

4. Reinforces belief in inherent group differences