Roles IN FAMILY
A Contextual Model of Intercultural Communication
Roles

- A role is a person’s relative position/rank in a group
- Roles do not exist in isolation
  - Roles relate to other roles
  - Dictate communication
    - With whom
    - About what
    - How
- Roles = expected behaviors

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- **Formal**
  - Defined
    - CEO
    - Parent/Grandparent
    - Congressman
  - Contractual

- **Informal**
  - Less explicit
  - Behaviors must be learned through experience
  - Varies across cultures
Roles

Four dimensions
- Personal vs. Impersonal
- Formality vs. Informality
- Hierarchy
- Deviation from ideal role

- Family
- Social
- Occupational
**Self Actualization:** Living life to its fullest. Function as autonomous beings

**Esteem Need:** The need for respect or esteem from self, or others

**Belongingness Need:** The need to be a part of a group

**Survival Needs:** Physiological/Safety
All In The Family

- Transmits

  - Culture
    - Culture is transmitted to the family from the wider cultural context (environment/history)
    - Major institutions of a culture are tied together/interact with each other
    - Family is primary caretaker of cultural values/worldview
      - “Families do not develop their rules, beliefs, and rituals in a vacuum. The family provides the environment within which human values and morals develop and grow in the new generation; these values and morals cannot exist apart from the family unit.”

  - Identity
    - “The family is not only the basic unit of society, but also affords the individual the most important social identity”
      - Family history
      - Traditions/customs/language
      - Culture and ethnicity

(Samovar and Porter)
All In The Family

- Hierarchy
  - Patriarchal
  - Matriarchal
  - Each with its own cultural responsibility

- Legitimate roles
  - Father/Mother

- Default roles
  - Oldest child/Relative
  - “She wears the pants in the family”
Family roles: Individual/peer work

Role Survey
- Work with peer
- Choose five roles you each perform
- List at least 8 behaviors expected of you for that role

- Compare with your partner
- What similarities and differences were there between you?
Family roles

- Expectations made clear by culture/religious values

Father & Husband
- Leader
  - Directs family per roles each holds
- Provider
  - Wage earner
  - Bill payer
- Strength
- Disciplinarian
- Handyman

Mother & Wife
- Follower
  - Take direction
- Nurturer
  - Teach manners
- Taxi driver
- Counselor
  - Listen to problems
- Chef
- Shopper

Social/Symbolic
Family roles

Social/Symbolic

- Expectations made clear by culture/religious values
- Ultimately based in trust
Trust

- Trust must be earned
- Trust develops when
  - you can predict how another will behave under certain circumstances
  - they actually do as expected
- Trust is always a gamble
- Previous experiences influence ability to trust
All In The Family : Gender Roles

- 24 months of age: male/female differentiation learned

- *Often linked to religious beliefs and values*
  - Value statements:
    - She wears the pants in the family
    - Woe to the house where the hen crows and the rooster is still

- Cultural
  - Men: Task functions/superior gender
    - Dominant role/Income earner/Undisputed authority
    - Oldest son assumes authority in absence of father

  - Female: Social and cultural tasks/subservient gender
    - Domestic role/Need protection
    - Represent purity
    - Sacrifice self for family/Saintly
Power Bases

- **Legitimate Power**
  - Those elected/chosen

- **Referent Power**
  - Those we allow to have power because we admire them

- **Expert Power**
  - Those with knowledge/experience

- **Reward Power**
  - Those able to reward other’s performance (grades)

- **Coercive Power**
  - Those able to use threats/blackmail
High Status

- Shown more deference
  - Are listened to more often
  - Asked for advice more often
  - Rewarded with greater share of goods
    - Home: Place at the table/size of personal space
    - Community: Table at restaurant/Name in news
    - Work: Bigger car/office/salary
  - Receive more recognition for contributions
- High Status people talk more often to other high status people
- Are more likely to have a leadership role—person with the highest status is usually the leader
- Have more influence than low status people
Low Status

- Direct conversation to high status, not low status people.
- Communicate more positive messages to high status people.
- More likely to complain about the task they have been assigned (victim mentality).
- Are more likely to have comments ignored.
- Communicate more irrelevant information.
Status is a position in society that carries with it certain distinct behaviors and abilities.

- **High Status**
  - Age/Beauty
  - Position
  - Talent (celebrities)

- **Low Status**
  - Age/Beauty
  - Gender
  - Introverted/Social unease
  - Position

- **Cultural hierarchy application**
  - Men = high status
  - Women = low status
- **Role** is the behavioral definition required by persons occupying certain statuses. Thus, **Gender Roles** are the behaviors required by persons occupying the **Male or Female Status**.
Gender

- Gender *is* part of culture
  - *has its own* culture
  - gender **norms**
- Gender as status:
  - "tomboys"
  - "sissies"
The Cause of Gender Roles - Biology or Culture?

- most truckers are male, most nurses female (although there are male nurses and female truckers).
- most cooks are women, most chefs are men.
- the primary caregivers of children are usually women.
- men make more money for the same job than do women.
- women as a group consistently score lower on mathematics and science achievement tests men score lower on verbal ability and language facility.
- men are prone to aggressive, assertive, inexpressive actions, while women are prone to passive, expressive ones.
Biology Argument

- Predetermined appropriate sex based behavior
  - Thus:
    - Musculature - women are physically weaker than men
    - Brain function - women are more verbal, where men are more oriented to actions
    - Style - Women are more diplomatic, men are more direct.
    - Affection - Women are more nurturing, men are more instrumental (task oriented)
Culture Argument

- Appropriate gender behaviors learned from those around us
  - Conventional wisdom.
- Women are weak
  - Thousands of years of evolution
  - Consistent performance of physically less demanding tasks
- Women are verbal and scheming
- Men social, political, and economic resources.
  - Women must align themselves with a powerful man to achieve in those arenas.
- Women are nurturing
Genetic Difference

- Girls "xx"
- Boys "xy"

Hormonal Difference
  - testosterone (aggression) and androgen are higher in males
  - estrogen and others are higher in women.

Physical differences
  - Gonadal Difference - ovaries and testes
  - Genital Difference

Reproductive Difference - babies/cigars.

Brain Function difference.
Differences in motivation

- Culture exacerbates differences at birth
  - Acculturation into the appropriate role
    - Constant
    - Powerful
  - Traditional male and female behavior in American culture is not traditional in other cultures
    - “feminine" and "masculine" behaviors are culturally affected.
Different value placed on gender.

- Males most often inherit power
  - …and keep it (rarely is this not the case).
  - This is known as PATRIARCHY
    - men have afforded themselves most of the social power in almost every society known.

- Social Learning Theory
  - Children are rewarded for conforming to their parent's (i.e., society's) expectations
  - Children are punished for behavior that meets with disapproval.
    - Disapproved behavior is extinguished.