



Development of Self

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Bowlby's theory of attachment

- John Bowlby was a British psychologist, psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst (1907–1990) who argued that **attachment is an innate system** shaped by evolution to promote survival
- Infants must attach to caregivers for **protection, food, and nurture**, while caregivers must attach to infants to ensure survival

Principles of monotropy

- Bowlby's theory of attachment is described as **monotropic**, as he suggests that the child forms an attachment to **one** (mono) key caregiver
 - This can be a mother or other person in the child's life, such as the father or even a grandparent
 - The more **time** a child spends with this carer – the primary attachment figure – the better the **quality** of attachment
- Bowlby proposed two **principles of monotropy**:
 - The **law of continuity**: the more **constant and predictable** a child's care the better the **quality** of attachment
 - The **law of accumulated separation**: every **separation** from the primary attachment figure **affects** the child

Social releasers

- Bowlby suggested that babies are born with innate behaviours ('**social releasers**') that help a caregiver form an **attachment to the infant**, such as:
 - **smiling**
 - **cooing**
 - **gripping** a finger
 - having a 'cute' **baby face** (large eyes, button nose, rounded appearance, rosy cheeks)
- The more **responsive** the caregiver, the **stronger** the attachment will be

Critical period

- Bowlby suggested that there is a **critical period** from around **three to six months** in a baby's development
 - It is during this 'window' that attachment must take place between caregiver and child



- If attachments are not made during this critical period, then the child will find making attachments later on difficult

Internal working model

- Bowlby suggested that a child forms a **model** for relationships based on their attachment and relationship to their primary attachment figure
- He called this the **internal working model**
 - A child who experiences a loving and **secure** relationship with a **consistent** and **safe** caregiver will grow up to expect this from later relationships
 - A child who experiences a **negative** relationship with their primary attachment figure will tend to form poor relationships in the future and expect negative treatment or treat others in such a way

Research which supports Bowlby's theory of attachment

Ainsworth (1970)

Aim:

- To investigate attachment **style** in infants using the **Strange Situation**, drawing from Bowlby's theory of attachment

Participants:

- 56 white, middle-class infants from the USA, aged 49–51 weeks.

Procedure:

- A **controlled observation** lasting 20 minutes, conducted as follows:
 1. The mother enters the room with her baby and sits down. The room contains interesting toys but is unfamiliar to the baby (i.e., it is a strange situation)
 2. A stranger enters, talks to the mother and then approaches the baby with a toy
 3. The mother leaves quietly and the stranger attempts to interact with the infant. If the baby shows distress the stranger attempts to comfort them
 4. The mother returns and greets the infant and the stranger leaves. The mother then tries to engage the baby in play and then she leaves, saying goodbye to the baby
 5. The baby is left alone
 6. The stranger enters and tries to play with and speak to the baby. If the baby is upset, the stranger will offer comfort
 7. The mother returns, greets the baby and picks them up. The stranger leaves quietly

Results:

- Ainsworth **categorised** the attachment styles she observed as follows:
 - **Type A: Insecure-avoidant (10–15%)**



- Little interest in mother, little distress when she leaves, and unconcerned about a stranger being in the room
- Later relationships: detached, low intimacy, low empathy

Type B: Secure (≈70%)

- Uses mother as a secure base when exploring the room, distressed when she leaves, comforted by her return, and avoids the stranger
- Later relationships: trust, openness, autonomy, healthy intimacy

Type C: Insecure-resistant/ambivalent (10–15%)

- Clingy, distressed even with mother present, extreme distress when she leaves, not easily comforted on return, mixed anger/anxiety.
- Later relationships: insecure, jealous, needy, emotional volatility, possible mental health issues, such as depression/anxiety

Conclusion:

- Attachment can be measured via observation
- Most children show **secure attachment**, but insecure patterns have long-term effects

Evaluation of Bowlby's theory of attachment

Strengths

- Bowlby's theory is supported by **animal studies**
 - **Lorenz** (1935) found that goslings imprint on the first moving object, suggesting that attachment is an innate process
 - This supports Bowlby's idea that attachment has developed as an evolutionary process to aid survival
- There is evidence to support the idea of **social releasers**
 - Caregivers were instructed to ignore their baby crying or smiling, whereby the babies then became increasingly distressed
 - This suggests that babies use social releasers as a way to elicit attention and attachment to their caregiver

Limitations

- Research suggests that babies form **multiple** attachments rather than just one
 - Research shows that children form attachments to a variety of caregivers from the age of 10–11 months
 - This suggests that Bowlby's idea of monotropy may not be completely **valid**
- Research has found that some children have formed attachments after the critical period of three to six months

Link to concepts

Measurement

- The variables involved in attachment research are very difficult to operationalise and measure
 - Ainsworth's study uses a controlled observation, with clearly defined behavioural categories but attachment is **complex** and may not be captured in one 20-minute observation
 - Moreover, this is a snapshot study, which means the data was collected once, on the day of testing so it lacks temporal validity
 - A **longitudinal** study could test whether attachment classifications remain stable over time, improving reliability.

Responsibility

- Researching attachment styles – particularly when real parent-child participants are used – is fraught with potential **ethical issues**
 - Both parent and child should be **protected** throughout, but the child must suffer some form of mild **distress** (e.g., separating them from their parent) if the results are to be **valid**
 - Additionally, the researcher cannot ask the child if they would like to **withdraw** from the procedure as the child is not able to understand such a question
- If, during the procedure the researcher picks up on potential **abuse** they should report their concerns to the relevant authorities
 - The researcher may, however, have **misinterpreted** what they have observed, which could result in a parent being wrongfully accused of mistreating their child



The effects of lack of attachment

- Lack of attachment happens when:
 - a child has not had the opportunity to attach to a **primary caregiver**
 - a child has had a period of **separation** from their primary caregiver (traditionally referred to as '**maternal deprivation**', proposed by **Bowlby**, 1953)
- The consequences of maternal deprivation can be both **emotional** and **intellectual**
 - E.g., delayed **literacy**, anti-social behaviour, **depression**, **impulsivity**
- It is now understood that there are **long-term effects** of **prolonged** separation from a primary caregiver
 - This is primarily due to the absence of **emotional care**
 - The consequences of lack of attachment involve difficulties in developing normal relationships
 - Lack of attachment is also a **risk factor** for the development of **criminality**

Research which supports the effects of lack of attachment

Bowlby's 44 thieves study (1944)

Aim:

- To investigate the social, emotional and psychological effects of maternal deprivation

Participants:

- An **opportunity sample** of 88 children from the Child Guidance Clinic in London, who had been categorised as '**emotionally maladjusted**'
- Half of the children, 44, were accused of **theft** (i.e., they were the 'thieves' of the study's title)
- The other 44 children, who had no history of theft, made up the **control group**

Procedure:

- Participants were **interviewed** for signs of being '**affectionless psychopaths**'
 - This was Bowlby's term, used to identify behaviour which lacks **empathy**, is callous and cruel and has no sense that actions have **consequences**
 - Bowlby suggested that this **characteristic** might enable someone to behave **criminally**
- The children's **families** were also **interviewed** by Bowlby to establish whether the thieves had had prolonged periods of separation from their caregiver(s)



- E.g., separations due to continual or repeated stays in **hospital** or **foster homes** with **few visits** from their family
- The thieves' data was **compared** to that of the control group

Results:

- Bowlby categorised **14** of the 44 thieves as affectionless psychopaths
 - Of these, **86%** had experienced prolonged periods of separation from their caregivers in the first two years of their lives
 - **17%** of the remaining thieves had experienced prolonged separation
 - **40%** of the thieves' group had experienced early separation from their caregivers
- Of the control group, only **5%** had experienced prolonged separation

Conclusion:

- Prolonged, early separation from caregivers is linked to affectionless psychopathy

Evaluation of the effects of lack of attachment

Strengths

- Studies show support for Bowlby's findings on maternal deprivation
 - Research into women who had experienced **separation** from their mothers for at least a year found that **25% experienced depression/anxiety**, compared with 15% of a control group (no separation)
 - The results also showed that the intensity of mental health issues was far greater in those who had experienced separation before the age of **six years**
 - This supports Bowlby's idea of a **critical period** for attachment to develop and that maternal separation has **long-lasting consequences**

Limitations

- Bowlby conducted the interviews with the children and families himself
 - This could lead to **confirmation bias** in the findings, as he may have looked for examples of affectionless psychopathy in the thieves' sample more than in the control group
- Bowlby may have confused deprivation with **privation**
 - Deprivation occurs when an attachment that has already been formed has been **broken**
 - Privation is when attachment has **never** been formed
 - The children of the 44 thieves study had disrupted early lives and may never have formed attachments in the first place
 - This suggests that Bowlby may have placed too much **blame** on the effects of deprivation on children's development

Link to concepts

Change

- Bowlby's study changed how people think about rearing and caring for children
 - It had a **positive impact** on how children were treated during separation from their parents, particularly during hospital stays, particularly with regard to encouraging regular visits from family
 - This means that there are **real-world applications** to Bowlby's research, as it highlights the importance of maternal/family care

Perspective

- Bowlby's theory has been instrumental in setting out a theory of child development which stems from the idea that attachment is part and parcel of how **identity** forms in the child and which can be seen in the emerging adult
- His theory is based on the idea that humans have a strong evolutionary urge to bond to another human who will take care of, nurture and protect them
 - Bowlby proposed that millions of years of evolution had produced a behaviour that is **essential** to the survival chances of human infants



Your notes



Enculturation & the development of self

- **Enculturation** is a form of **socialisation**: it is the process by which individuals learn and internalise the **norms, traditions, rituals, attitudes** and **practices** of the culture into which they are born and raised
- Enculturation happens almost at an **unconscious level**
 - People are not fully aware that they are being **enculturated**; it is simply part and parcel of growing up within a specific culture
- Enculturated behaviours and attitudes often become deeply **embedded in identity** and are resistant to change

Transmission of enculturation

- Enculturation is **transmitted vertically**
 - E.g., from parents (the most significant figures in enculturation)
- Enculturation is also **transmitted horizontally**
 - E.g., from siblings and peers
- Enculturation may also occur via **oblique transmission**
 - E.g., from other adults, celebrities, media and institutions

Functions of enculturation

- Enculturation is **adaptive** as it helps people to **survive and thrive** within their culture, preserving cultural practices from one generation to the next
- Enculturation affects and influences all aspects of a person's life
 - The attitudes, beliefs and behaviours involved in **parenting**
 - Parents generally try to raise their children using the best **practices and traditions** that they themselves have experienced and these are largely dependent on the culture in which they have been raised
- One aspect of parenting that is affected by enculturation is the attitude of parents towards **gender roles**
 - The ways in which girls and boys 'should' behave
 - What is 'right' and what is 'wrong' depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl

Cultural differences

- Research tends to suggest that parents from **collectivist** cultures are more **rigid** and **inflexible** in their attitudes towards **gendered behaviour**, compared to more the **progressive** and **liberal** attitudes of **individualistic** cultures

Research which supports enculturation & the development of self



Basu et al. (2017)

Aim:

- To investigate enculturation in **adolescents** and their parents regarding **gender-appropriate** behaviour

Participants:

- Adolescents aged 11–13 years and their parents
- One sample was from a highly **socially and economically disadvantaged** area of **Delhi, India**
 - 16 boys, 15 girls; parents aged 25–44, 40% with no formal education
- The other sample was from a **low-income**, disadvantaged area of **Shanghai, China**
 - 17 boys, 17 girls; parents aged 35–54, 75% with some formal education

Procedure:

- **Narrative interviews** were conducted with the adolescents and their parents separately
- The topic being discussed was '**gender socialisation**' with discussions exploring ideas as to how each gender should dress, behave, prepare for adulthood, and so on

Results:

- The researchers used **thematic analysis** which generated a range of **themes**, some of which were:
 - **Delhi:**
 - Girls were expected to be modest (e.g., wear long skirts, no jeans), "ladylike", or risk punishment
 - Boys were encouraged to be brave and tough, with fewer restrictions
 - Girls prepared for roles as wives and mothers

Shanghai:

- Girls were expected to display "proper" demeanour (upright posture, gentleness, and quietness) to avoid dishonouring the family
- Boys were given more freedom but expected to be polite and considerate
- Parents emphasised **career success** for both boys and girls

Both cultures:

- Strict prohibitions on male–female interaction, with punishments (e.g., shaming, beatings) for rule violations



- **Mothers** were the most influential in gender socialisation, with teachers and older siblings also playing roles

Conclusion:

- Some cultures **enculturate** traditional gendered behaviour, which may have a negative impact on children, e.g., the use of corporal punishment for perceived **rule violations**
- Some cultures adhere to deeply **entrenched** gendered behaviours and rules which appear to be **unequal**, e.g., boys being given more **freedom** than girls

Evaluation of enculturation & the development of self

Strengths

- The use of narrative interviews means that Basu's research collected **qualitative data** which is **rich, in-depth and insightful**
 - This means that it has good **explanatory power**, which is essential for the study of a complex topic such as enculturation

Limitations

- Narrative interviews can sometimes be **derailed** and **veer off-topic** if the participant wishes to talk at length on some unrelated matter
- The sample is not **representative**; e.g., more affluent areas of the two cities may well have reported less traditional attitudes towards gender socialisation

Link to concepts

Change

- Interviewing both the adolescents and their parents enabled the researchers to compare the extent of enculturation across generations
 - By doing so the researchers could determine the extent to which gendered behaviour may change over time and with increased **exposure** to globalisation
 - Younger generations are more aware of behaviours from other parts of the world – predominantly via US/Western media – which is likely to inform and guide their **expectations** of what it means to be male/female
- Cognitive dissonance may occur when the children of first-generation immigrants feel that they are both part of and removed from their parents' culture
 - They may acknowledge that their original culture is important while at the same time feeling some disconnection from it

Bias

- Basu's research avoids culture bias to some extent, as it focuses on two collectivist cultures, not assuming that there is a **universal norm** (modelled on Western, individualistic ideas)
 - However, as the two samples came from very different countries (India and China), there is bound to be some detail and refinement that gets 'lost in translation'

- Unless research is truly emic it cannot encapsulate the **validity** of what it means to be enculturated in the culture which is the focus of the study



Your notes



Social identity theory

- **Social identity theory (SIT)** suggests that a person's sense of self is shaped by their **group memberships**
- An individual's social identity is a combination of the various different **ingroups** to which they belong
 - E.g., family, college, psychology class, rugby team, etc.
- An individual may choose their **ingroups** but there are many ingroups over which an individual has no control
 - E.g., nationality, given sex at birth, ethnicity, age group
- Groups to which an individual does not belong are known as **outgroups**
- Negative attitudes towards outgroups can lead to **prejudice** and **discrimination**

Key processes

Social categorisation

- **Social categorisation** is the process by which people arrange others into groups according to specific **group characteristics**
 - E.g., . Millennials, Boomers, Americans, Italians, punks, hippies, etc.
 - Social categorisation can be a starting point by which **stereotypes** form
- Social categorisation occurs as an easy way of understanding others, as it requires little **cognitive energy**

Social comparison

- People compare their own ingroups with outgroups to maintain or enhance self-esteem
- **Downward comparison:** ingroup viewed as superior (e.g., employed person looking down on unemployed person)
- **Upward comparison:** outgroup seen as superior (e.g., small business owner admiring a billionaire entrepreneur)

Positive distinctiveness & ingroup favouritism

- Individuals emphasise the positive aspects of their ingroup to differentiate it from outgroups
- **Ingroup:** seen as diverse, distinct individuals
- **Outgroup:** seen as homogeneous, lacking individuality (the "they're all the same" effect)
- Leads to **ingroup favouritism** and outgroup derogation

- E.g., asylum seekers labelled as “criminals” or a “threat”, making them easier to dismiss or demonise

Social identity & peer influence

- Social identity can lead to individuals – particularly young people – to conform to the norms of their **ingroups**
 - This in turn may lead to them **conforming** to **risky** behaviour such as drinking and driving
- **Adolescents** are especially vulnerable as:
 - **peers replace parents** as key sources of influence
 - the adolescent brain is highly sensitive to **social rewards** (e.g., approval, acceptance), which often accompany risky behaviours
 - a strong need for **peer approval** motivates conformity
- Adolescents often imitate or amplify the behaviours of **high-status individuals** in their peer group to strengthen their ingroup identity

Research support for social identity & peer influence in the development of self

Graupensperger et al. (2018)

Aim:

- To investigate the extent to which college-age athletes, who strongly **identify** with their team, are at increased risk of conforming to teammates’ risky behaviours

Participants:

- 379 student athletes who were members of the **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)**
- The mean age of the sample was 19 years, with 46% female and 44% male participants
- The sample **represented** 23 sports in all, including baseball, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey
- Most of the participants were in their first year of college

Procedure:

- The participants were presented with **hypothetical** risky-behaviour scenarios (e.g., being offered marijuana), asking them to say how they would respond in such a situations
- The participants were then shown (fictional) responses from team-mates which appeared to show high agreement for these risky behaviours
- The participants were later given the chance to respond to the same hypothetical scenarios, altering their initial answers if they chose to



- A **focus group interview** was conducted with seven recently-graduated NCAA athletes that each played a different sport
 - They discussed their experience of college life, focusing on times when they had been faced with the prospect of engaging in risky behaviours

Results:

- Participants who displayed **higher levels of social identity** were more willing to **conform to risky behaviours**
 - Such behaviours included binge drinking, smoking marijuana, drinking and driving
- Student athletes who were on teams with higher levels of social identity were more willing to conform to concealing a concussion so that they could keep playing for the team

Conclusion:

- An individual can develop a strong sense of social identity by aligning their behaviour with that of the group (specifically, the ingroup)
- An individual with a strong social identity based on membership of a sports team are most likely to conform

Evaluation of social identity & peer influence in the development of self

Strengths

- SIT has been supported by a wealth of studies over several decades
 - This means that it is a **robust** theory that has withstood both **quantitative statistical testing** and **inductive qualitative** research
- There is good **application** to SIT and peer influence
 - E.g., it could be used to inform **anti-bullying** programmes in schools by presenting a positive, **prosocial** picture of what it means to be a member of the student body

Limitations

- People (both children and adults) do not always show in-group preference; in fact, they may actively dislike or **reject** one or more of their ingroups
 - This means that SIT is overly **simplistic** in its assertion that people identify with the groups to which they belong
- The above study used a sample of US college athletes who, by very definition, are **competitive** and have strong **group loyalty**
 - The results, therefore, cannot be **generalised** to young people who are not competitive athletes and who are not from the USA

Link to concepts

Perspective



Your notes

- A strong sense of social identity does not necessarily lead to negative acts such as conforming to possibly dangerous behaviours
 - Social identity in the above study was also found to **predict** conformity to teammates' prosocial behaviours, e.g., being helpful
 - This suggests that it is possible to **harness** the influence of social identity to promote desirable behaviours among young people, particularly those who are involved in sport and are thus more likely to have formed strong group identities

Causality

- Social identity is difficult to measure and difficult to form strong conclusions about, given the **unpredictable, changing** nature of people's group identities
 - Someone may be a passionate supporter of Manchester United yet they live in London and have never even been to Manchester, so why do they support a team which is hundreds of miles away?
 - It can be difficult to discern the point at which someone's group membership (e.g., being a psychology student) becomes part of their social identity (e.g., feeling a sense of belonging and **affinity** with other psychology students)



The effects of poverty in childhood

Prevalence of Poverty

- According to the **Global Multidimensional Poverty Statistics (2022)**, approximately **9.2%** of the world's population (700 million people) live in **extreme poverty**
 - This is defined as living on less than \$1.90 per day
- Around **26%** of the world's population (1.3 billion people) live in **moderate poverty**
 - This is defined as living on \$1.90–\$3.20 per day
- At least **80%** of the world's population lives on less than \$10 a day

Impact on children

- Poverty has a more devastating effect on **children** than adults because their development depends on consistent access to:
 - **basic needs**: clean water, nutritious food, adequate shelter
 - **stimulation**: educational resources, play, parental engagement
- Growing up in poverty strongly predicts **adult poverty**, reinforcing cycles of disadvantage

Developmental consequences

- **Health**: Poor nutrition leads to undernourishment (lack of food) or malnourishment (poor quality/low variety diet, e.g., junk food, heavily processed white bread)
- **Education**: Children in poverty may miss out on enriching experiences such as:
 - trips, hobbies, or extracurricular activities
 - parents reading to them or encouraging learning
- **Wellbeing**: Lack of stimulation, instability, and stress undermine both emotional security and cognitive development

Research which supports the effects of poverty in childhood

Kar et al. (2008)

Aim:

- To investigate the effect of poverty and malnutrition on children's **cognitive performance**

Participants:



- **40 children** aged 5–7 years and 8–10 years from Bangalore, India
 - 20 of the children were identified as being 'adequately nourished'
 - 20 were identified as 'malnourished'

Procedure:

- The children underwent a series of **tests** designed to assess their **neuropsychological** functioning
- The tests assessed:
 - their **motor speed** (finger-tapping test)
 - their **attention span** (a test in which they had to trail two colours)
 - their **executive functioning** (naming items beginning with the same letter)
 - their **visual-spatial ability** (completing an object with a missing part)
 - their **comprehension** (understanding verbal commands)
 - their **memory** (recalling abstract designs)

Results:

- Children identified as **malnourished** performed **worse on most tests**, with the exception of **motor speed** (the least cognitively demanding measure)
- They showed significant impairments on tests of **higher cognitive functions**, including:
 - **attention**
 - **working memory**
 - **verbal comprehension**
- Malnourished children also demonstrated **delays in key developmental markers** of mature cognition, particularly in **executive functions** such as:
 - planning ahead
 - decision-making
 - impulse control

Conclusion:

- Malnourished children experience cognitive **impairments** and **developmental delays** compared to adequately nourished children
- Their **cognitive development** may follow an **altered or delayed trajectory**, particularly in areas such as attention, memory, language, and executive functioning

Evaluation of the effects of poverty in childhood

Strengths



- Research into the effects of poverty has genuine **usefulness**: its findings could be used to help combat the negative impact of the effects of poverty, e.g., malnutrition, as **interventions** to help those in need
- Kar's findings could be used to persuade governments to implement programmes such as **breakfast clubs** in schools and **food banks** to ensure that no child is malnourished

Limitations

- Attempting to tackle poverty is a huge global issue which requires governments and agencies to work productively together
- It is possible that the malnourished children in Kar's study might have experienced **fatigue** or some **distress** carrying out so many tests
 - This is an **ethical consideration** which the researchers should be mindful of when conducting research with **vulnerable** participants

Link to concepts

Responsibility

- Conducting research into the effects of poverty is a highly **delicate and sensitive** issue
 - Those living in poverty should not be portrayed as 'poor', 'needy' or in any way **inferior** to the rest of the population
- Researchers must use reflexivity when conducting research such as Kar's
 - Are they bringing their own **bias or preconceived ideas** to the research?
 - Have they made **assumptions** about the issue and those affected by it before the research process has even begun?
 - There may be a temptation for researchers to assume a 'saviour' mode in highlighting global inequalities, which is something that they should constantly check for to avoid the researcher effect

Measurement

- The different types of tests used in Kar's research measured a range of **variables**
 - This is known as **method triangulation**, which helps to preserve the internal validity of the study and to avoid possible **bias** (which could be the case if only one method for obtaining data was used)



The effects of war in childhood

- Children have increasingly seen the devastating effects of **war** impact their lives
 - E.g., The ongoing **conflicts** in the Ukraine, Gaza, Syria
- War has impacted children in many different traumatic ways, including:
 - having to flee their home country due to danger or **oppression**
 - seeking **refuge** in other countries (often facing extreme danger to do so) either with or without their family
 - **losing** family members to the ravages of war
 - being **injured** and/or under **threat** every day
- The following research addresses the idea that:
 - children should not be viewed as **vulnerable** and **incompetent victims** of war
 - children should be viewed as **agents** of their own fate
 - children should be given **respect** based on their ability to be **resilient** in the face of terrible events

Research which supports the effects of war in childhood

Boyden (2003)

Aim:

- To challenge prevailing **assumptions** about children's resilience and vulnerability in relation to their experiences of living in war zones

Procedure:

- A **review article** analysing traditional Western perspectives on childhood and war, questioning whether these assumptions accurately reflect children's lived experiences

Results:

- Research on child development has typically focused on the **early years**, leaving **middle and later childhood underexplored**
 - This has reinforced the idea that children are **fragile** beings who require a lot of care from adults if they are to survive and thrive
 - Such assumptions may actually **undermine resilience**, preventing children from developing coping mechanisms or "resilient shells"
- War is not necessarily **rare or unusual**



- Western researchers often treat it as an aberration, assuming children in conflict zones will inevitably develop **PTSD**
- This reflects an **individualistic bias**, failing to consider **collectivist or cultural coping strategies**
- The concept of 'suffering' is **culturally relative**
 - What one society sees as unbearable hardship may be viewed by another as manageable or routine
 - Imposing one cultural lens on another is methodologically flawed
 - There is **anecdotal evidence** that children **flourish** in **adversity**, e.g., taking on caring roles, becoming the family 'breadwinner', keeping the family together, being **resourceful**
- Viewing children solely as **helpless victims** risks a **self-fulfilling prophecy**, reducing their agency and resilience

Conclusion:

- Children should be seen as **active agents** in their resilience, not passive victims
- They can develop coping strategies, insights, and opinions that may be as valid as those of adults

Evaluation of the effects of war in childhood

Strengths

- Boyden's ideas may be controversial, but she sheds a refreshing new light on the experience of children living in war zones
- By focusing on the drawbacks of Western, **individualistic** research in this field, Boyden has made a good case for there being a need for a more **emic** approach to the topic

Limitations

- Although Boyden has good intentions it may be that some of her ideas do not fully **represent** all children living in war zones
 - She underplays the traumatic, damaging effects of war on children which is something of an **omission**, given the subject
- Investigating the effects of war on children comes with many **difficulties** that may ultimately mean the research is **compromised**
 - E.g., finding enough participants; dealing with organisations or governments who may **block** access to information; treating participants with care so as not to add to any existing trauma

Link to concepts

Measurement

- A review article looks at a **range** of published research on a specific topic and comments on the findings, methodologies and conclusions contained within them, offering ideas

and suggesting ways forward based on what the research has uncovered

- One of the main **advantages** of this method is that it is less **time-consuming** than undertaking original research and it allows for an overview of what may be a **complex and multi-layered** topic
- This method does, however mean that the author has to relinquish **control** of the research process which could mean a loss of **credibility**

Bias

- Boyden points out the need for cultural relativism and an emic approach in her review article
 - She strives to avoid culture bias by highlighting the often patronising approach taken by Western researchers when investigating collectivist cultures – particularly those who have suffered privations or disasters
 - However, there is the possibility that she looks for examples of findings that reflect her own ideas about children living in war zones, which would affect the **validity** of the findings (**confirmation bias**)



Your notes