Social influences on gender role

AO1:

- **Bandura**- social learning theory sees gender roles as being learned through observing social agents ie. Parents, peers, teachers and media. Based on principles of operant conditioning with children being rewarded for behaving within own gender role and punished if behaving inappropriately. Social agents model gender specific behaviour and children learn through vicarious reinforcement. If more benefits than costs, child will repeat behaviour.

- **Parents**- Treat boys and girls in different ways, and similarly rewarded and reinforced through praise. Encouraged into certain colours of clothing, play with different toys etc. If a boy falls over parents will tell him to “be a brave little boy” whereas will mother a girl.

- **Peers**- Raised in similar ways with gender appropriate behaviour being encouraged. Offer further models of gender appropriate behaviours. Punishments for gender non appropriate behaviour.

- **Media**- Television, books, films and toys. Males portrayed as boisterous and interested in sports, females dependent and emotional. Men more dominant and females more submissive. Learn behaviours from vicarious reinforcement as outcomes for different behaviours can be seen. Raise individuals self-efficacy and confidence if can relate to examples resulting in similar actions if benefits outweigh costs. Neg. outcomes cause doubt in individuals’ ability to imitate. Likely to display greater gender roles.

AO2:

- **Bussey**- Experiment showing film clips to boys and girls 8-9 years old. In video children seen to pick up gender neutral items, children given a choice of fruit to pick after. Boys selected same fruit as boys in film clip and girls did the same. How SLT occurs through peers and how gender roles may be reinforced through vicarious learning.

- **Langlois**- Fathers more disapproving of sons when playing with gender inappropriate toys such as dolls. Fathers only reinforce gender appropriate behaviour yet didn’t punish gender inappropriate. Occurred in peer relations too with boys being quicker to punish however girls showed more tolerance. Shows how positive reinforcement (from fathers) and negative reinforcement (disapproving of inappropriate behaviours) influence gender specific roles.

- Parents influence behaviour during childhood yet peers reinforce that already taught behaviour.

- **Williams**- Influence of media on gender roles. Usually has lack of control due to excessive media exposure these days. Found in Canadian communities that the one who had most access to most television channels had strongest sex typed stereotypes, whereas those in communities that had access to only one channel or never had access were much weaker. One which had no access was introduced to TV and two laters later found to have much stronger sex typed stereotypes. Children can be influenced to support social explanations.

- **Real world applications**- Programme makers pressured into less stereotyped roles in media and greater equality. More programmes showing both genders in the opposite roles, to influence greater equality amongst sexes.

- **Cultural bias**- Limited external validity as most research across western school settings. Cannot generalise to different cultures with different schooling systems. How culture can mitigate gender role behaviour in other societies and how influences gender development so could be confounding variable.