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Culture varies from place to place. In Turkey the juxtaposition of traditional Islamic culture contrasts with the overt sexuality commonplace in Western democracies. Do differences in culture necessarily mean conflict?

## P A R T T W O

# POWER AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

In Part Two, we look at the ways that each of the social sciences contributes to our understanding of power in society. Not only will we gain some feel for different topics, theories, methods, and data of each of the social sciences, but we also will explore how each of the social sciences helps us better understand human behavior—a goal shared by each of the disciplines within the social sciences.

In Chapter 4, we focus on what *anthropology*, with its concern for culture, has to tell us about the growth of power relationships in our own society, as well as various societies worldwide. In Chapter 5, we examine the *sociology* of relationships between power and social class, particularly as evidenced by stratification in American society. In Chapter 6, we focus on *psychology* and its explanations as to how and why individuals react in characteristic and different ways to power and authority, using theories of personality from that discipline. Control of economic resources is an important base of power in any society, so in Chapter 7 we turn our attention to *economics*. In Chapter 8, we examine government and power from the point of view of *political science*. Finally, in Chapter 9, we look at how the perspective of *history* can increase our understanding of how power in society changes over time.

# POWER AND CULTURE

## The Origins Of Power

Power is exercised in all societies. Every society has a system of sanctions, whether formal or informal, designed to control the behavior of its members. Informal sanctions may include expressions of disapproval, ridicule, or fear of supernatural punishments. Formal sanctions involve recognized ways of censuring behavior—for example, ostracism or exile from the group, loss of freedom, physical punishment, mutilation or death, or retribution visited upon the offender by a member of the family or group that has been wronged.

**Power in society** is exercised for four broad purposes:

- To maintain peace, order and stability within the society
- To organize and direct community enterprises
- To conduct warfare, both defensive and aggressive, against other societies
- To rule and exploit subject peoples

Even in the least-developed societies, power relationships emerge for the purposes of maintaining order, organizing economic enterprise, conducting offensive and defensive warfare, and ruling over subject peoples.

At the base of power relationships in society is the family or kinship group. A **family** is traditionally defined as a residential kin group. Typically, a family consists of an adult female and an adult male, sometimes joined through marriage, as well as dependent children. Though this is typical, there are numerous variations including families with only one adult or families not related by blood. But within most families, power is exercised in some fashion. Typically this occurs when work is divided between male and female and parents and children and when patterns of dominance and submission are established between male and female, parents and children.

In the simplest societies, power relationships are found partially or wholly within family and kinship groups. True political (power) organizations begin with the development of power relationships among and between family and kinship groups. As long as **kinship groups**, or people related to one another by blood, are relatively self-sufficient economically and require no aid in defending themselves against hostile outsiders, political organization has little reason to develop. But the habitual association of human beings in communities or

### functions of power in society

maintain internal peace,  
organize and direct  
community  
enterprises,  
conduct warfare,  
rule and exploit

### family

traditionally defined as a  
residential kin group

### kinship group

people related to one  
another by blood



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local groups generally leads to the introduction of some form of a more formal political (power) organization. The basic power structures are voluntary alliances of families and clans who acknowledge the same leaders, habitually work together in economic enterprises, agree to certain ways of conduct for the maintenance of peace among themselves, and cooperate in the conduct of offensive and defensive warfare. Thus, power structures begin with the development of cooperation among families and kinship groups.

Warfare frequently leads to another purpose for power structures: ruling and exploiting peoples who have been conquered in war. Frequently, traditional societies that have been successful in war learn that they can do more than simply kill or drive off enemy groups. Well-organized and militarily successful tribes learn to subjugate other peoples, retaining them as subjects, for purposes of political and economic exploitation. The power structure of the conquering group takes on another function—that of maintaining control over and exploiting conquered peoples.<sup>1</sup>

## Culture: Ways of Life

**Culture** is the ways of life that are common to a society. The culture of any society represents generalizations about the behavior of many members of that society. Culture does not describe the personal habits of any one individual.

In some societies, arranged marriages are the norm. Here, a bride and groom exchange vows in a traditional marriage ceremony in India.

**culture**  
all the ways of life common to a society

**cultural generalization**  
the description of commonly shared values, beliefs, pictures, and behaviors in a society

**subculture**  
the variation in ways of life within a society

**multiculturalism**  
acknowledging, protecting, and promoting multiple cultures and subcultures

Common ways of behaving in different societies vary enormously. For example, in some societies arranged marriages are the norm, but such practices are frowned upon in other societies. In some cultures, like those in New Guinea, people paint their entire bodies with intricate designs whereas in others, like the United States, only the faces of the female are painted.

The concept of culture is basic to what anthropology is all about. Anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn once defined culture as all the “historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational, and nonrational that may exist at any given time as potential guides for the behavior of man.”<sup>2</sup> In contrast with psychologists, who are interested primarily in describing and explaining individual behavior, anthropologists tend to make **cultural generalizations**. These cultural generalizations focus on aggregate behaviors within a society or values and beliefs that are commonly shared.

## SUBCULTURES

Generalizations about a whole society do not apply to every individual, or even to every group within a society. In virtually every society, there are distinct variations in ways of life among groups of people. These variations often are referred to as **subcultures**. They are frequently observed in such things as distinctive language, music, dress, and dance. Subcultures may center on race or ethnicity, or they may focus on age (the “youth culture”) or class (see “Is There a Culture of Poverty?” in Chapter 11). Subcultures also may evolve out of opposition to the beliefs, values, or norms of the dominant culture of society—for example, a “drug culture,” a “Goth culture” or a “hip-hop culture.”

## MULTICULTURALISM

**Multiculturalism** generally refers to acknowledging and promoting multiple cultures and subcultures. It seeks to protect and celebrate cultural diversity—for example, Spanish-language usage, African-American history, and Native American heritage. Multiculturalism tends to resist cultural unification—for example, English-only education, an emphasis on the study of Western civilization, and the designation of “classic” books, music, and art.

Multiculturalism invites students to formally explore the ways of life of their own subculture—Hispanic, African-American, Native American, or Asian history, for example. Multiculturalism also enables students to learn about societies other than their own—for example, non-Western cultures of Asia or Africa or traditional cultures of the Mayas or Aztecs. But some criticisms of multiculturalism include that it may denigrate the unifying symbols, values, and beliefs of American society and that it may encourage ignorance of Western European culture, including the foundations of individual freedom and democracy. In doing so, multiculturalism may serve to weaken the dominant “American” culture.

## CULTURE IS LEARNED

Anthropologists believe that culture is learned, and it is transferred, from one generation to another. Culture is passed down through the generations, and cultures vary from one society to another because people in different societies



### *Ruth Benedict's Patterns of Culture*

The concept of culture helps us understand ourselves by allowing us to see ourselves in relation to individuals in other societies and other cultures. Through the study of diverse cultures, we realize that there are many different ways of living—many different ways in which people can satisfy their social and psychological needs as well as their biological requirements—that our own culture is not the only possible way of life.

Perhaps this perception of the diversity of human existence was the most important contribution of cultural anthropologist Ruth Benedict in her widely read *Patterns of Culture*. As professor of anthropology at Columbia University, Ruth Benedict (1887–1947) popularized the notion that different cultures are organized around characteristic purposes or themes. According to Benedict, each culture has its own patterns of thought, action, and expression dominated by a certain theme that is expressed in social relations, art, and religion.

For example, Benedict identified the characteristic themes of life among Zuñi Pueblo Indians as moderation, sobriety, and cooperation. There was little competition, contention, or violence among tribal members. In contrast, the Kwakiutls of the northwestern United States engaged in fierce and violent competition for prestige and self-glorification. Kwakiutls were distrustful of one another, emotionally volatile, and paranoid. Members of the Dobu tribe of New Guinea, too, were suspicious, aggressive, and paranoid:

*Life in Dobu fosters extreme forms of animosity and malignancy which most societies have minimized by their institutions. Dobuan institutions, on the other hand, exalt them to the highest degree. The Dobuan lives out without repression man's worst nightmares of the ill-will of the universe, and according to his view of life virtue consists in selecting a victim upon whom he can vent the malignancy he attributes alike to human society and to the powers of nature. All existence appears to him as a cut-throat struggle in which deadly antagonists are pitted against one another in a contest for each one of the goods of life. Suspicion and cruelty are his trusted weapons in the strife and he gives no mercy, as he asks for none.\**

Yet Benedict was convinced that abnormality and normality were relative terms. What is “normal” in Dobuan society would be regarded as “abnormal” in Zuñi society, and vice versa. She believed that there is hardly a form of abnormal behavior in any society that would not be regarded as normal in some other society. Hence, Benedict helped social scientists realize the great variability in the patterns of human existence. People can live in competitive as well as cooperative societies, in peaceful as well as aggressive societies, in trusting as well as suspicious societies.

Today, many anthropologists have reservations about Benedict's idea that the culture of a society reflects a single dominant theme. There is probably a multiplicity of themes in any society, and some societies may be poorly integrated. Moreover, even within a single culture, wide variations of individual behavior exist.

\* Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), 172.

**socialization process**  
process by which culture is communicated to successive generations

are brought up differently. The process by which culture is communicated is called the **socialization process**. Some agents that work to teach culture include family, schools, religious organizations and the media. In these settings, individuals learn from other people how to speak, how to think, and how to act in certain ways.

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## The Components of Culture

Anthropologists often subdivide a culture into various components in order to simplify thinking about it. These components of culture—symbols, beliefs, values, religion, norms, sanctions, and artifacts—are closely related in any society.<sup>3</sup>

### SYMBOLS

**symbol**  
anything that communicates meaning, including language, art, and music

Symbols are culturally created and play a key role in the development and maintenance of cultures. A heavy reliance on symbols—including words, pictures, and writing—distinguish human beings from other animals. A **symbol** is anything that has meaning bestowed on it by those who use it. Words and language is symbolic communication. Objects or artifacts can also be used as symbols: The symbol of a cross is a visual representation of Christianity; a burning cross is a symbol of hate. The color red may stand for danger, or it may be a symbol of revolution. The creation and use of such symbols enable human beings to transmit their learned ways of behaving to each new generation. Children are not limited to knowledge acquired through their own experiences and observations; they can learn about the ways of behaving in society through symbolic communication, receiving in a relatively short time the result of centuries of experience and observation. Human beings can therefore learn more rapidly than other animals, and they can employ symbols to solve increasingly complex problems. Because of symbolic communication, human beings can transmit a body of learned ways of life accumulated by many people over many generations.

### BELIEFS

**beliefs**  
generally shared ideas about what is true

**Beliefs** are generally shared ideas about what is true. Every culture includes a system of beliefs that are widely shared, even though there may be some disagreement with these beliefs. Culture includes beliefs about marriage and family, religion and the purpose of life, and economic and political organization. For example, in China, the belief in filial duty means that sons should take care of their parents and other elder relatives. (In Chapter 3, “Power and Ideology,” we discuss the importance of belief systems in organizing the economic and political systems of societies.) In modern times, beliefs often are more fluid than they have been historically. For example, in the United States long-held beliefs about many ideas—for example, the role of women in society, racial equality, and homosexuality—have evolved drastically in the past half century. Partly this change in widespread beliefs came about because of the increased presence of a common media, but some changes also came about because of a change in values brought about by scientific research and the civil rights and women’s rights movements.

## VALUES

**Values** are shared ideas about what is good and desirable. Values tell us that some things are better than others. Values provide us with standards for judging ways of life. Values may be related to beliefs. For example, if we believe that human beings were endowed by God with rights of life, liberty, and property, then we will value the protection of these rights. Thus, belief can justify our values. However, values can conflict with each other (that is, the value of individual freedom conflicts with the need to prevent crime), and not everyone in society shares the same values. Yet most anthropologists believe that every society has some widely shared values.

**values**  
shared ideas about what is good and desirable

## RELIGION

**Religion** is evident in all known cultures. Although there are differences between societies in the nature of their religious beliefs, all cultures include some beliefs about supernatural powers (powers that not human and not subject to the laws of nature) and about the origins and meaning of life and the universe. Anthropologists, in their professional roles, do not speculate about the truth or falsehood of religious beliefs. Rather, anthropologists are concerned with why religion is found in all societies and how and why religion varies from one society to another.

**religion**  
a set of beliefs and practices pertaining to supernatural powers and the origins and meaning of life

Various theories have arisen about why religious beliefs are universal. Some theories contend that religious beliefs arise out of human anxieties about death and the unknown or out of human curiosity about the meaning, origins, and purpose of life. Other theories stress the social functions of religion—that it provides goals, purposes, rituals, and norms of behavior for people.

More than 80 percent of the world's population identify themselves with an organized set of religious beliefs. About 33 percent of the world's population is Christian. Islamic (Muslims), Hindu, and Buddhist religions combined account for about 40 percent of the world's population. Judaism accounts for about 0.2 percent of the world's population.

## NORMS

**Norms** are shared rules and expectations about behavior. Norms are related to values in that values justify norms. If, for example, we value freedom of speech, we allow people to speak their minds even if we do not agree with them.

**norms**  
shared rules and expectations about behavior

The norm of tolerance derives from the value that we place on individual freedom. Fairly trivial norms, like lining up at ticket windows instead of pushing to the front or “sticking to the right” in a crowded corridor, are called **folkways**. Folkways may determine our style of clothing, our diet, or our manners. **Mores** (pronounced “morays”) are more important norms. These are rules of conduct that carry moral authority; violating these rules directly challenges society's values. For example, a young Indian couple might challenge an important norm, like arranged marriage, by opting to marry for romantic love. Like values and beliefs, some norms within a given culture conflict with each other, and not everyone shares a belief in all of society's norms.

**folkway**  
a trivial norm that guides actions

**mores**  
important norms that carry moral authority

**sanction**

a reward or punishment for conforming to or violating cultural norms

**SANCTIONS**

**Sanctions** are the rewards and punishments for conforming to or violating cultural norms. Rewards—for example, praise, affection, status, wealth, and reputation—reinforce cultural norms. Punishments—for example, criticism, ridicule, ostracism, penalties, fines, jail, and executions—discourage violations of cultural norms. But conformity to cultural norms does not depend exclusively on sanctions. Most of us conform to our society's norms of behavior even when no sanctions are pending and even when we are alone. For example, do you close the bathroom door when you are home alone, with no chance of anyone else entering the house? For society, conformity to society's norms absent of sanctions means a more orderly existence. For example, most people stop for a red light even at a deserted traffic intersection, making it less likely that an accident will occur. We do so because we have been taught to do so, because we do not envision any alternatives, because we share the values on which the norms are based, or because we view ourselves as part of society.

**artifact**

a physical product of a culture

**ARTIFACT**

An **artifact** is a physical product of a culture. An artifact can be anything from a piece of pottery or a religious object from an ancient society to a musical composition, a high-rise condominium, or a beer can from a modern society. But usually we think of an artifact as a physical trace of an earlier culture about which we have little written record. Anthropologists and archaeologists try to understand what these early cultures were like from the study of the artifacts they left behind.

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**The Nature of Culture**

Culture assists people in adapting to the conditions in which they live. Even ways of life that at first glance appear quaint or curious may play an important role in helping individuals or societies cope with problems.

**FUNCTIONALISM**

Many anthropologists approach the study of culture by asking what function a particular institution or practice performs for a society. How does the institution or practice serve individual or societal needs? Does it work? How does it work? Why does it work? This approach is known as **functionalism**.<sup>4</sup>

**functionalism**

a perspective in anthropology that emphasizes that cultural institutions and practices serve individual or societal needs

Functionalism assumes that there are certain minimum biological needs, as well as social and psychological needs, that must be satisfied if individuals and society are to survive. For example, biological needs might include food, shelter, bodily comfort, sexual needs, reproduction, health maintenance, physical movement, and defense.

Social and psychological needs are less well defined, but they probably include affection, communication, education in the ways of the culture, material satisfaction, leadership, social control, security, and a sense of unity and belonging. Given that humans have few inborn instincts on how to meet these biological, social, and psychological needs, culture provides the mechanisms—

including social groups and institutions, rules of conduct, and tools—that structure meeting one’s needs within a society. Despite great variety in the way that these needs are met in different cultures, we can still ask how a culture goes about fulfilling them and how well it does so. Functionalists tend to examine every custom, material object, idea, belief, and institution in terms of the task or function that it performs.

To understand a culture functionally, we have to find out how a particular institution or practice relates to biological, social, or psychological needs and how it relates to other cultural institutions and practices. For example, in modern societies, families still can perform numerous biological, social, or psychological functions. Or a society might fulfill its biological needs for food by hunting and fulfill its psychological needs by worshiping animals. Although functionalism is not the predominant perspective used by most anthropologists today, it shaped some of the methods and perspective that are prevalent in contemporary times.

## MATERIALISM

Another approach to the study of culture emphasizes the importance of the ways in which humans relate to their social and natural environments. These anthropologists believe that acquiring the materials essential for survival shape the relations that people have with each other and with their environment. Securing their material well-being means that people will attempt to maximize the natural resources at their disposal and humans form groups to organize the acquisition of material goods, whether through bands of hunters, farming communities, or modern stockbrokers. Anthropologists using the **materialist perspective** focus on how people make their living in their specific environmental setting.

Some materialist anthropologists emphasize the role of technology, defined as both the tools and the knowledge humans use to overcome their environment and meet their material needs. Technology and the environment impact culture. Thus, technology and the effort to use the environment to fulfill one’s material needs influence a wide variety of practices and social institutions, including marriage practices, family structure, religious practices, economic structures, and political systems.

Modern materialists also assert that the relationship among technology, the environment, and culture is circular. That is, technology and the environment shape the culture, and the culture adopts practices that may then change technology and the environment, that then reshapes the culture, and so on. The relationship among the three variables is constantly evolving. An example of this can be seen in fishing cultures. When people fished for subsistence, fish were plentiful and the means of catching were relatively simple (net, rod, or spear). As the product of fish becomes more of a commodity, technology changes: bigger fishing vessels, industrial nets, and so on. This also changes the society: Some fishers own boats and can become wealthier; others do not and have a more difficult time making a living. And, of course, the environment changes: Fish become scarcer. But the impact does not stop there: Technology responds by the growth of industrial fisheries rather than private fishers. And

### **materialist perspective**

a perspective in anthropology that focuses on the impact of how people make their living in their specific environmental setting on culture

**intensification**

when population growth causes increased use and exploitation of the environment

**idealism**

a perspective in anthropology that focuses on the importance of ideas in determining culture

**ethnocentrism**

judging other cultures solely in terms of one's own culture

the environment continues to respond: Fewer fish still. Culture also responds: rules on minimum catch size and eventually the replacement of fishing as an occupation with other tasks.

When a population grows and in response to that growth exploits the environment and uses it more intensely, this is a process known as **intensification**. With intensification, populations use their environment and detrimentally impact it. They then are forced to use energy to meet their material need in other ways and develop creative means of doing so. In short, they use both their environment and their knowledge or labor more “intensely.” This forces cultural change because (1) societies must respond to the changes in technology and use and (2) social relations have necessarily changed between individuals during this process.

**IDEALISM**

While the materialist approach is important for modern anthropology, another important perspective in anthropology is idealism. **Idealism** focuses on the importance of ideas in determining culture. Proponents of idealism believe that the inherent uniqueness of humans and their desire for meaning beyond material well-being is defining and essential to what shapes culture. Indeed, idealists assert that the components of needs and the resources to meet them all are socially constructed (by a culture of ideas). Think of the idea of hunger. In an affluent society, you might ask someone, “Are you hungry for a slice of pizza?” The individual might accept or reject the offer of pizza, depending on absolute hunger or on craving (perhaps she felt like eating a turkey sandwich instead). In other cultures, hunger is hunger and food (whatever is available) satisfies that hunger.

Idealists assert that people’s perceptions of their environment are important in shaping their relation to it. For example, one society might place a house of worship on the most fertile land or sacrifice valuable resources to a deity. Idealists also assert that how people view resources is culturally determined. Many cultures reject a wide variety of food for religious or cultural reasons: Americans typically reject horsemeat, reptiles, dog and cat meat, insects, and many plants. Both Muslims and Jews reject pork, and Hindus reject beef. To idealists, the social construction of resources that meet material needs indicates the importance of ideas, whether they are religious, cultural, or political in shaping all other aspects of life. To idealists, the struggle for meaning, the importance of relations between individuals, and the creation of culture and of symbols and intellectual needs drive humans in the creation of culture. Idealists view materialism as a limited (and Western-biased) viewpoint of human motivation.

Using any of these perspectives, anthropology helps us appreciate other cultures. It requires impartial observation and testing of explanations of customs, practices, and institutions. Anthropologists cannot judge other cultures by the same standards that we use to judge our own. **Ethnocentrism**, or judging other cultures solely in terms of one’s own culture, is an obstacle to good anthropological work.



### Clifford Geertz's Anti Anti-Relativism

Clifford Geertz, a renowned anthropologist, writes that cultural relativism is increasingly widespread in anthropology. In doing so, Geertz espouses a view not of “relativism” (the opposite of anti-relativism) but an anti anti-relativism. Geertz asserts that relativism seeks to avoid provincialism, but that anti-relativism seeks primarily to avoid nihilism, which is the total rejection of moral judgments. He claims that anti-relativism bedevils relativism, blaming it for all types of social maladies.

He juxtaposes this reality with anthropology’s function, which he claims historically has been to “identify strange phenomena, and it is confrontation with such phenomena, not relativistic philosophical views, that has undermined outmoded theories.” Anti-relativism, in attempting to find the basis for morality, rejects this important function of anthropology.

*A scholar can hardly be better employed than in destroying a fear. The one I want to go after is cultural relativism. Not the thing itself, which I think is merely there, like Transylvania, but the dread of it, which I think unfounded. It is unfounded because the moral and intellectual consequences that are commonly supposed to flow from relativism—objectivism, nihilism, incoherence, Machiavellianism, ethical idiocy, esthetic blindness and so on—do not in fact do so and the promised rewards of escaping its clutches, most having to do with pasteurized knowledge, are illusory.*

*To be more specific, I do not want to defend relativism, which is a drained term anyway, yesterday’s battle cry, but to attack anti-relativism, which seems to me broadly on the rise and to represent a streamlined version of an antique mistake. Whatever cultural relativism may be or originally have been (and there is not one of its critics in a hundred who has got that right), it serves these days as largely a specter to scare us away from certain ways of thinking and toward others. And, as the ways of thinking away from which we are being driven seem to me to be more cogent than those toward which we are being propelled, and to lie at the heart of anthropological heritage, I would like to do something about this.\**

\* Clifford Geertz, “Distinguished Lecture: Anti Anti-Relativism,” *American Anthropologist* 86, no. 2 (1984): 263–278.

## CULTURAL RELATIVITY

But **cultural relativity**—suspending judgment of other societies’ customs, practices, and institutions—enables anthropologists to examine aspects of culture and determine their function within that society. For example, many criticize the policy of the government of the People’s Republic of China that mandates that each couple may have only one child. When examined through an ethnocentric American prism, we would think that such a policy violates one of the fundamental freedoms of individuals. But if we suspend judgment and look at the policy using a cultural relativist perspective, we might determine that given that society’s focus on the needs of the community (rather than in-

**cultural relativity**  
suspending judgment  
of other societies’  
customs, practices, and  
institutions



## *The World's Missing Girls*

In China, a census conducted in the year 2000 indicates that the nation has 19 million more boys aged 0 to 15 years old than it does girls. In Pakistan, a woman's in-laws compel her to abort a 4-month-old fetus—her third abortion—because the fetus that she is carrying is female. Newspapers report the new “middle-class trend” in India: relatively inexpensive ultrasound technology used for sex selection. In Zambia, a promising HIV treatment program, antiretroviral therapy (ART), is introduced, but only one-third of the patients are female, despite the higher prevalence of the virus in women there.

The following table shows the population–sex ratio for selected countries for 2005. The figure for each nation is the number of males per one hundred females. In most industrialized democracies, the number of boy and girl babies born in a given year is roughly equal, with a slight skew toward a few more boy babies. But because women's life expectancy is longer, the cumulative ratio of females to males is skewed toward there being more females. That is, on average, females in the United States live about six years longer than men; thus there are more women than men in total.

The table also shows the extent of the problem of missing girls in the selected countries. In parts of some nations—like China, India, and Pakistan—the sex ratio is imbalanced because female fetuses are being aborted. Infant girls also are more likely to be victims of infanticide.

The preference for sons is common in many societies. In many agricultural societies, sons are desirable because they will provide labor. In China and parts of India, sons are responsible for their parents' well-being during old age. Without a government-supported old-age benefit program and with daughters traditionally responsible for the care of their in-laws, many believe that they *need* a son to survive later in life.

In some societies, the sex imbalance is exacerbated by government policies. For example, for many years China's one child policy meant to control that country's population growth was blamed for the sex-ratio imbalance and the abandonment of girls. India also offers incentives for

dividual liberties), the enormous population growth previously seen without population-control policy and the fear on the part of the state that it might not be able to support uncontrolled population growth (with food, jobs, transportation, and housing), then we can see the function that the policy performs within that culture.

However, cultural relativism can lead to moral dilemmas for scholars and students. Although it is important to assess the elements of a culture in terms of how well they work for their own people in their own environment,<sup>5</sup> an uncritical or romantic view of other cultures is demoralizing. For example, in China the one-child policy has resulted in rampant abandonment of baby girls. (Sons bear the responsibility of caring for one's elders in China, thus having a son ensures that the parents will be cared for in their old age.) There also are reports of abortions being performed for the purpose of sex selection in

## CONTROVERSIES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

smaller families, leaving many to charge that such policies encourage sex-selective abortions because prospective parents limiting the number of children they will have more frequently chose to have male children.

In other societies, the problem of missing girls is due to an inherent lack of value on female life. In some parts of Africa, female children are less likely to be given the basic necessities—including food, potable water, and medicine—in favor of their brothers.

The impact of sex imbalance looks similar despite its numerous causes. In China, “bachelor villages” inhabited exclusively by bachelor men who cannot find wives are cropping up. Tens of thousands of women and girls have been kidnapped in China in recent years. The victims are sometimes forced to marry their captors or sold to another man to become his wife. Experts also say that the sex-ratio imbalance could have dire political consequences, pointing to rebellions historically that have fomented when the sex ratio became imbalanced as groups of young men without the prospect of a family or a future turn against the political system that spawned their situation.

**POPULATION SEX RATIO FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES, 2005  
(MALES PER ONE HUNDRED FEMALES)**

United States	96.8
Niger	104.6
Pakistan	106
India	105.2
Guinea	105.1
China	105.6

SOURCE: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects: The 2003 Revision* (<http://esa.un.org/unpp>).

China. In other cultures, a preference for sons has resulted in the practice of female infanticide. Anthropologists might explain the preference for sons in terms of economic production based on hard manual labor in the fields. But understanding the functional relationship between female infanticide and economic conditions must not be viewed as a moral justification of the practice (see “Controversies in Social Sciences: The World’s Missing Girls”).

Some elements of a culture not only differ from those of another culture but are better. The fact that all peoples—Asians, Europeans, Africans, Native Americans, and others—have often abandoned features of their own culture in order to replace them with elements from other cultures implies that the replacements served peoples’ purposes more effectively.<sup>6</sup> For example, Arabic numerals are not simply different from Roman numerals; they are more efficient. It is inconceivable today that we would express large numbers in Roman nu-

merals; for example, the year of American independence—MDCCLXXVI—requires more than twice as many Roman numerals as Arabic numerals and requires adding numbers. This is why the European nations, whose own culture derived from Rome, replaced Roman numerals with numerals derived from Arab culture (which had learned them from the Hindus of India). So it is important for scholars and students to avoid the assumption of cultural relativity—that all cultures serve their people equally well.<sup>7</sup>

## Authority in the Family

The family is the principal agent of socialization into society. It is the most intimate and important of all social groups. Of course, the family can assume different shapes in different cultures, and it can perform a variety of functions and meet a variety of needs. But in all societies, the family relationship centers on sexual and child-rearing functions. A cross-cultural comparison reveals that in all societies most families possess these common characteristics:<sup>8</sup>

### characteristics of the family

- Sexual mating
- Childbearing and child rearing
- A system of names and a method of determining kinship
- A common habitation (at some point)
- Socialization and education of the young
- A system of roles and expectations based on family membership

These common characteristics indicate why the family is so important in human societies. It replenishes the population and rears each new generation.

Within the family, the individual personality is formed. The family transmits and carries forward the culture of the society. It establishes the primary system of roles with differential rights, duties, and behaviors. And it is within the family that the child first encounters authority.

## MARRIAGE

### marriage

a socially approved sexual and economic union between a man and a woman, intended to be lasting, and implying social roles between the spouses and their children

To an anthropologist, marriage does not necessarily connote a wedding ceremony and legal certificate. Rather, **marriage** means a socially approved sexual and economic union between a man and a woman, intended to be more or less permanent and implying social roles between the spouses and their children. Marriage is found in all cultures, and anthropologists have offered a variety of explanations for its universality. One theory explaining marriage focuses on the prolonged infant dependency of humans. In many cultures, infants are breast-fed for up to two years. This results in a division of roles between the female nurturer and the male protector that requires some lasting agreement between the partners. Another theory focuses on sexual competition among males. Marriage minimizes males' rivalry for female sexuality and thus reduces destructive conflict (see "Focus: Social Science Looks at Sex in America"). Still another theory focuses on the economic division of labor between the sexes. Males and females in every culture perform somewhat different economic activities; marriage is a means of sharing the products of their divided labor.



## Social Science Looks at Sex in America

The popular media—advertising, films, television, magazines, and novels—portrays sex in American culture as pervasive and relentless. The highly publicized “sexual revolution” of the 1960s, presumably fostered by birth control pills and women’s renewed quest for equality, was widely believed to have inspired more, better, and livelier sex. Indeed, television talk shows, *Cosmopolitan* and *Playboy* magazine polls, music videos, and a host of movies depict America as a nation preoccupied with sex.

But the best social science evidence indicates that most Americans enjoy faithful, monogamous, conventional sex lives. The most comprehensive national survey of sex practices, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago, interviewed 3432 Americans aged 18 to 59 years old. Unlike earlier magazine-reader polls, respondents were randomly selected to constitute a cross section of Americans. (The study was originally planned by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, but opposition in Congress to government-funded “sex research” obliged social scientists to seek financial support from private foundations.)

Trained interviewers were sent to households throughout the nation; respondents were interviewed in person and were also given a confidential form to fill out and return. The results destroy many popular myths about sex in America. Among the key findings are the following:

- The vast majority of Americans (83 percent) have only one (or zero) sex partner in a year. Over a lifetime, 31 percent of women have had only one partner, and an additional 36 percent have had only two partners; the median number of partners for women is two and for men, six.
- The vast majority of married Americans (75 percent of men and 85 percent of women) have never been unfaithful to their spouses.
- Only one-third of Americans have sex twice a week or more; an additional one-third have sex a few times a month, and one-third only a few times a year or not at all.
- Married people have more sex and experience orgasm more often than single people.
- Over 75 percent of men, but just 29 percent of women, almost always have an orgasm during sex.
- Among sexual practices, vaginal sex is the most popular practice (with 90 percent men and 86 percent women reporting having participated), followed by masturbation (63 percent men, 42 percent women), with oral sex a distant third (27 percent men, 19 percent women).
- Homosexuality is rare. Only 2.7 percent of men and 1.3 percent of women report having had a homosexual experience in the past year. Only 9 percent of men and 4 percent of women have ever had a homosexual experience in their lifetime.
- Fifty-four percent of men and 19 percent of women report that they think about sex daily.

The sociologists who conducted the study argue that our sex lives, in large part, follow social “scripts”—that is, cultural norms that influence sexual behavior. They note that most Americans choose sexual partners who are close in age and educational and ethnic background. The result is greater sexual compatibility and more stable relationships.

SOURCE: Edward Laumann, Robert Michael, Stuart Michaels, and John Gaynon, *The Social Organization of Sexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). The popular bookstore version is *Sex in America: A Definitive Study* (New York: Little, Brown, 1994).

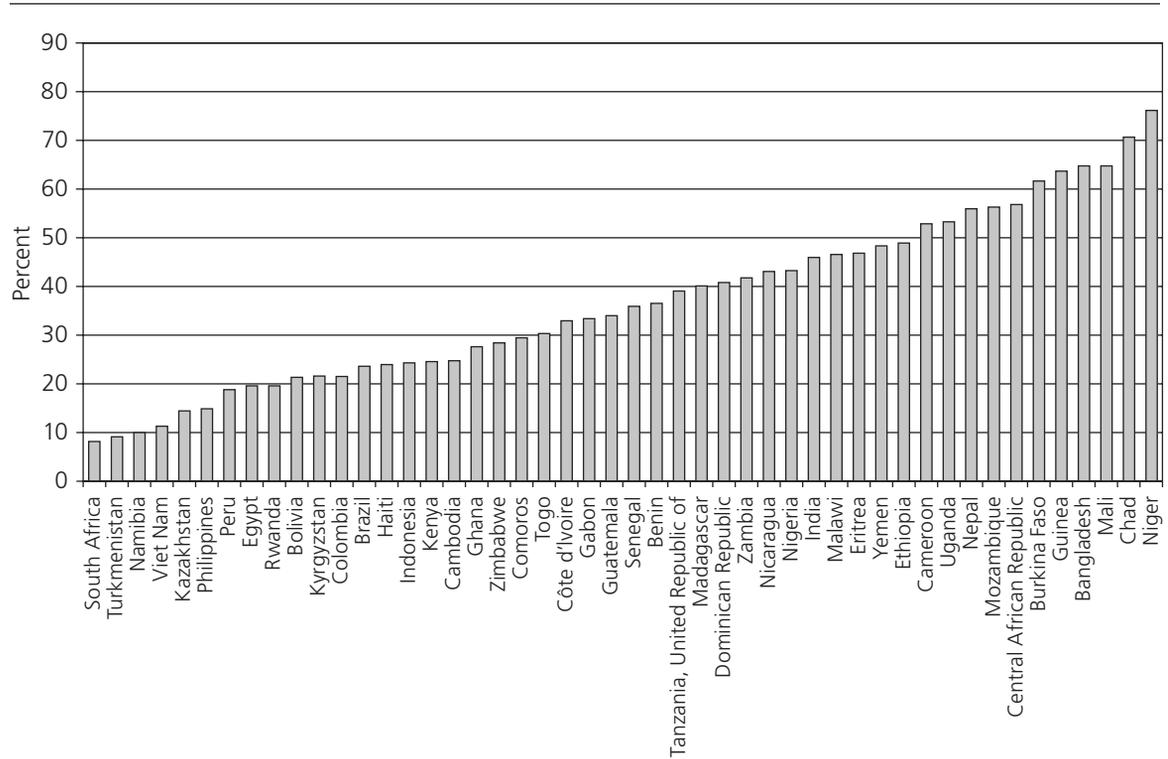
Culture determines practices that impact the lives of many. In Thailand, a Yao bride and groom pose after their wedding ceremony. What effect does early marriage have on the lives of young girls?



© John R. Jones; Papilio/Cortis

Marriage is found in all cultures, but the institution varies from culture to culture. In some cultures, common practice holds that a girl should be married by the time she is 18 years old. Although UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, has lobbied against this practice as a violation of human rights, the practice nonetheless continues and is particularly widespread in areas of Africa (Figure 4-1). Oftentimes, parents of girls encourage the marriage of very young daughters—hoping that the marriage, typically to an older and oftentimes better educated man—will benefit both the child and the family financially and socially. At the very least, the marriage of a daughter while still a child alleviates some of the financial burden on the family by placing the financial burden for the upkeep of the girl on the husband. Research indicates that early marriage is detrimental to girls. Girls who married before the age of 18 years are less educated, have more children, and are more likely to experience domestic violence than those who were married after age 18.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 4-1 Proportion of Women Aged 20–24 Years Old Who Were Married by the Age of 18 Years Old, Selected Countries**



SOURCE: UNICEF, *Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice*, 2005.

## ROMANTIC LOVE

Most Americans believe that romantic love should be the basis of a marriage, but this ideal does not characterize marriages in many other societies. On the contrary, in many societies, like India and among some Inuit of Greenland, romantic love is believed to be a poor basis for marriage and is strongly discouraged. (Nonetheless, in most of the world societies, romantic love is depicted in love songs and stories.) Marriages based on romance are far less common in less developed societies where economic and kinship factors are important considerations in marriage.<sup>10</sup>

## MONOGAMY

Family arrangements vary and the marriage relationship may take on such institutional forms as monogamy, polygyny, and polyandry. **Monogamy** is the union of one husband and one wife; *polygyny* is the union of one husband and two or more wives; *polyandry* is the union of one wife and two or more husbands. Throughout the world, monogamy is the most widespread marriage

### **monogamy**

a marriage union of one husband and one wife

form, probably because the gender ratio (number of males per one hundred females) has been near one hundred in all societies, meaning there is about an equal number of men and women.

## THE FAMILY IN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES

### patriarchal family

the male is the dominant authority, and kinship is determined through the male line

In most agricultural societies, the family is **patriarchal** and patrilineal: The male is the dominant authority, and kinship is determined through the male line. The family is an economic institution as well as a sexual and child-rearing one; it owns land, produces many artifacts, and cares for its old as well as its young. Male family heads exercise power in the wider community; patriarchs may govern the village or tribe. Male authority frequently means the subjugation of both women and children. This family arrangement is buttressed by traditional moral values and religious teachings that emphasize discipline, self-sacrifice, and the sanctity of the family unit.

### role of women

Women face a lifetime of childbearing, child rearing, and household work. Families of ten or fifteen children are not uncommon. The property rights of a woman are vested in her husband. Women are taught to serve and obey their husbands and are not considered as mentally competent as men. The husband owns and manages the family's economic enterprise. Tasks are divided: Men raise crops, tend animals, and perform heavy work; women make clothes, prepare food, tend the sick, and perform endless household services.

## THE FAMILY IN INDUSTRIALIZED SOCIETIES

### effects of industrialization on the family

Industrialization alters the economic functions of the family and brings about changes in the traditional patterns of authority. In industrialized societies, the household is no longer an important unit of production, even though it retains an economic role as a consumer unit. Work is to be found outside the home, and industrial technology provides gainful employment for women as well as for men. Typically, this means an increase in opportunities for women outside the family unit and the possibility of economic independence. The number of women in the labor force increases; today in the United States, about 71 percent of adult women are employed outside the home.

The patriarchal authority structure that typifies the family in an agricultural economy is altered by the new opportunities for women in advanced industrial nations (see "International Perspective: Women in the Workforce"). Not only do women acquire employment alternatives, but their opportunities for education also expand. Independence allows them to modify many of the more oppressive features of patriarchy. Women in an advanced industrialized society have fewer children, and divorce becomes a realistic alternative to an unhappy marriage.

### role of government

In advanced industrial societies, governments perform some of the traditional functions of the family, further increasing opportunities for women. For example, the government steps into the field of formal education—not just in the instruction of traditional skills like reading, writing, and arithmetic, but in support of home economics, driver training, health care, and perhaps even sex education, all areas that were once the province of the family. Government wel-



## INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

## Women in the Workforce

Over time, more and more women have joined the workforce throughout the world. Even in the last twenty years, international statistics indicate that the world's female workforce has increased rapidly.

In the United States, the percentage of women working outside the home rose from 31 percent in 1950 (not shown in the accompanying table) to nearly 60 percent in 1980 and over 70 percent today. Virtually all other industrialized nations have experienced similar increases in the percentage of women in the workforce. Nonetheless, fewer than half of women in some nations (for example, Italy, Mexico, and Turkey) are included in the workforce. In contrast, women in Scandinavian nations (Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) have long had higher workforce participation rates than American women.

FEMALE LABOR FORCE OF ALL AGES DIVIDED BY FEMALE POPULATION 15–64 YEARS OLD  
(IN PERCENT)

Country	1980	1990	1995	2000	Country	1980	1990	1995	2000
Australia	52.7	62.9	64.8	66.2	Korea, South	NA	51.3	53.2	55.6
Austria	48.7	55.4	62.3	63.3	Luxembourg	39.9	50.7	58.0	77.5
Belgium	47.0	52.4	56.1	58.7	Mexico	33.7	23.6	40.1	41.6
Canada	57.8	67.8	67.6	70.5	Netherlands	35.5	53.1	59.0	66.3
Czech Republic	NA*	69.1	65.4	64.1	New Zealand	44.6	62.9	63.3	67.9
Denmark	NA	78.5	73.6	76.0	Norway	62.3	71.2	72.4	76.4
Finland	70.1	72.9	70.3	72.7	Portugal	NA	NA	61.1	59.6
France	54.4	57.6	59.4	63.8	Poland	54.3	62.9	62.4	68.3
Germany	52.8	57.4	61.7	64.5	Slovak Republic	NA	NA	NA	63.6
Greece	33.0	43.6	45.9	49.2	Spain	32.2	41.2	45.1	50.9
Hungary	NA	NA	50.5	52.0	Sweden	74.1	80.1	76.1	75.5
Iceland	NA	NA	82.4	82.6	Switzerland	54.1	59.6	67.8	77.4
Ireland	36.3	38.9	47.8	56.5	Turkey	NA	36.7	34.2	26.5
Italy	39.6	45.9	43.3	47.8	United Kingdom	58.3	65.5	66.0	67.5
Japan	54.8	60.3	62.1	64.4	United States	59.7	68.9	70.7	70.7

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 2004–2005* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), 861.

\* Not available.

fare programs provide assistance to dependent children when a family breadwinner is absent, unemployed, or cannot provide for the children. The government undertakes to care for the aged, the sick, and others incapable of supporting themselves, thus relieving families of still another traditional function.

Despite these characteristics of industrial society, however, *the family remains the fundamental social unit*. The family is not disappearing; marriage and family life are as popular as ever. But the father-dominated authority structure,

**family as  
fundamental  
social unit**

The rapidly changing nature of families in the United States can be seen in this photo. Here, a gay couple cares for their children. In the middle of the twentieth century, divorce and single parent families were relatively rare. Today, the American family is a flexibly defined unit.



© Corbis

with its traditional duties and rigid gender roles, is changing. The family is becoming an institution in which both husband and wife seek individual happiness rather than the perpetuation of the species and economic efficiency. Many women still choose to seek fulfillment in marriage and child rearing rather than in outside employment; others decide to do this temporarily. The important point is that now this is a choice and not a cultural requirement.

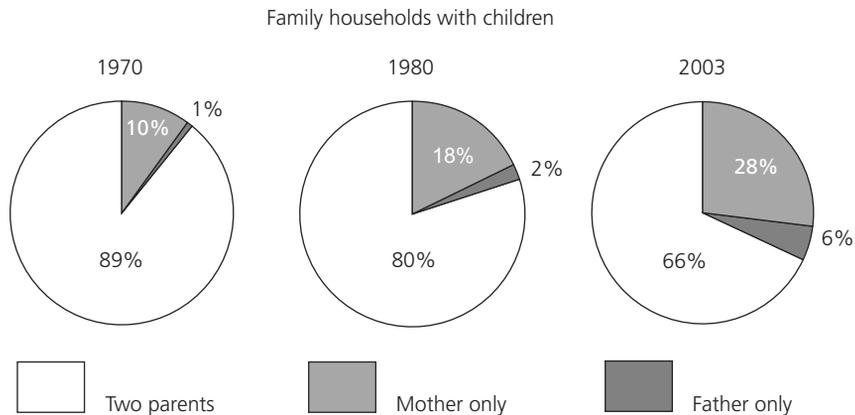
## THE AMERICAN FAMILY

The American family endures. Its nature may change, but the family unit nonetheless continues to be the fundamental unit of society.

Today, there are more than 75 million families in America, and 250 million of the nation's 290 million people live in these family units.<sup>11</sup> About 32 percent of the population lives in nonfamily households, including people with nonfamily roommates and people who live alone.

However, the nature of the family unit has indeed been changing. Husband-wife families comprise 66 percent of all families with children, whereas 34 percent of all families consist of a single adult and children. Female-headed families with no spouse present have risen from 10 percent of all families in 1970 to 28 percent of all families in 2003 (Figure 4-2). The birthrate has declined from 3.7 births per woman of childbearing age in the 1950s to 2.4 in the 1970s and to only 1.8 in 2000. This last figure is below the projected zero-population growth rate (2.1 children per female of childbearing age).

It is not really clear what factors are contributing to these changes in the American family. Certainly, new opportunities for women in the occupational world have increased the number of women in the workforce and altered the traditional patterns of family life. Economic concerns may be an even more



**Figure 4-2**  
**The Changing**  
**American Family**

important factor: Families must increasingly depend on the incomes of both husband and wife to maintain a middle-class lifestyle.

## DIVORCE

Almost all societies allow for the separation of husband and wife. Many developing societies have much higher divorce rates than the United States and other advanced industrialized societies Table 4-1 shows the percentage of marriages that end in divorce for various countries. From this data, we can see that divorce is more prevalent than in the United States in some nations and rarer

**Table 4-1** A COMPARATIVE EXAMINATION OF DIVORCE

Country	Divorces (as percentage of marriages)	Country	Divorces (as percentage of marriages)	Country	Divorces (as percentage of marriages)
Belarus	68	Germany	41	Armenia	18
Russian Federation	65	Netherlands	41	Greece	18
Sweden	64	Switzerland	40	Turkmenistan	18
Latvia	63	Iceland	39	Spain	17
Ukraine	63	Kazakhstan	39	Azerbaijan	15
Czech Republic	61	Luxembourg	39	Croatia	15
Belgium	56	Austria	38	Cyprus	13
Finland	56	Denmark	35	Tajikistan	13
Lithuania	55	Slovakia	34	Georgia	12
United Kingdom	53	Bulgaria	28	Italy	12
Moldova	52	Israel	26	Uzbekistan	12
United States	49	Slovenia	26	Albania	7
Hungary	46	Kyrgyzstan	25	Turkey	6
Canada	45	Romania	24	Macedonia	5
Norway	43	Portugal	21		
France	43	Poland	19		

SOURCE: Human Development Report, 1999, United Nations.

in others. In 2001 in the United States, there were 4 divorces per 1000 population, compared with 8.4 marriages.<sup>12</sup> At this rate, we would expect half of all marriages to end in divorce. The U.S. divorce rate has moderated somewhat in recent years; it was higher at 5.2 divorces per 1000 population in 1970. The median duration of marriages that end in divorce is seven years.

Women are more heavily burdened by divorce than men. Most mothers retain custody of children. Although both spouses confront reduced family income from the separation, the burden falls more heavily on the mother who must both support herself and rear the children. Divorced fathers are generally required by courts to provide child-support payments; however, these payments rarely amount to full household support, and significant numbers of absent fathers fail to make full payments. Most divorced persons eventually find new spouses, but these remarriages are even more likely to end in divorce than first marriages.

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## On the Web

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### EXPLORING ANTHROPOLOGY

The website for this textbook (<http://www.thomson.edu.com/login>) offers resources for exploring anthropology on the Internet. More information can be found at the following websites:

- **Anthrotech** (<http://www.anthrotech.com>)  
A good place to begin to browse the web for information about anthropology is the Anthropology Resources and Services site, especially its general orientation link “What

Is Anthropology?” This site directs visitors to databases, publications, conferences, directories, job opportunities, and discussion forums in anthropology.

- **The American Anthropological Association** (<http://www.aaanet.org/resinet.htm>) This is the website of the professional association for anthropologists. It contains links to many anthropological sites and provides additional information about the study of anthropology.
- **Human Relations Area Files** (<http://www.yale.edu/hraf>) A more advanced site at Yale University, it is designed to “facilitate the

cross-cultural study of human behavior, society, and culture.” It includes links to the *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, *Encyclopedia of World Cultures*, and other reference works and publications. This site is maintained by a consortium of universities; its data files are open only to students and faculty at member universities.

- **Society for Applied Anthropology** (<http://www.sfaa.net>) This site is a tool for facilitating applied anthropological research. It includes student forums, links to other anthropological websites, and anthropological publications.

## Sociology and the Study of Social Classes

Sociologists disagree on why societies distribute wealth, power, and prestige unequally. On one side are the functional theorists, who argue that stratification is necessary and perhaps inevitable for maintaining society. On the other side are the conflict theorists, who argue that stratification results from the selfish interests of groups trying to preserve their advantages over others.<sup>5</sup> Still yet another perspective, the symbolic interactionists, argue that social stratification is the result of interactions between individuals. And postmodernists cite the inability of the three previous perspectives to adequately address social stratification in a postindustrial society.

### FUNCTIONAL THEORY

The functional argument assumes that society is stable and orderly and that a stable society requires inequality within it. Functionalism might be summarized as follows:

- Certain positions are more important to a society's survival than other positions and require special skills. For example, in most societies, occupations such as governor, physician, teacher, and priest are considered vital.
- Only a few persons in society have the ability (intelligence, energy, and personality) to perform well in these positions.
- These positions require persons who have ability to undergo extensive training and education before they occupy these positions.
- To motivate able people to endure the training and to sacrifice their time and energy for education, society must provide them with additional rewards.
- The result is social inequality with some classes of people receiving more rewards than others. Inequality is inevitable and essential to ensure "that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons."<sup>6</sup>

In other words, an expectation of inequality is essential in getting people to work harder in more difficult jobs that require longer training and greater skill.<sup>7</sup>

Sociologists who advocated functionalist theory included Talcott Parson and Robert Merton. Parsons stressed the need for a **division of labor** (when individuals perform distinct, assigned functions) within families and within society. If individuals and institutions perform their tasks, society can remain stable. Merton described various aspects of function within society, including **manifest functions** (the acknowledged and expected functions of societal relations or an institution), **latent functions** (unrecognized or unanticipated functions of societal relations or an institution), and **dysfunctions** (the undesirable

#### functional theory

inequality is necessary to get people to work harder in more demanding jobs that require longer training and greater skills

#### functionalist theorists

Talcott Parsons

Robert Merton

#### division of labor

individuals perform distinct, assigned functions

#### manifest function

the acknowledged and expected function of societal relations or an institution

#### latent function

the unrecognized or unanticipated function of societal relations or an institution

#### dysfunction

the undesirable by-product of relations or institutions

by-products of relations or institutions). For example, the media is a social institution whose manifest function is to inform and entertain. Its latent function may be to socialize young Americans and immigrants to a common culture. But its dysfunctional impact may be that it discourages social and civic interaction by providing a “too convenient” form of entertainment.

## CONFLICT THEORY

In contrast, **conflict theory** focuses on the struggle among competing groups in society over scarce resources. Conflict theorists have argued as follows:

- People who possess property, income, power, or prestige—the upper classes—simply wish to protect their position in society. Thus, the stratification system is perpetuated.
- There are many “functionally important” positions in society that are not highly rewarded. It might be argued that a garbage collector, electrician, an auto mechanic, or a plumber is just as important to the survival of society as is a physician or a lawyer.
- Many people in the lower classes have the ability to perform in high-status occupations, but because of unequal educational opportunities, they never get the chance to do so.
- Wealth is not the only way of motivating people. Conceivably, societies might reward people merely by recognizing their services. Cooperation could then replace competition as a motivating force.
- Stratification negatively affects the thinking of members of the lower class. Stratification may even be “dysfunctional” to society if it fosters feelings of suspicion, hostility, and disloyalty to society among those in the lower classes.

In short, the stratification system is imposed on society by those at the top. It allows them to use their power and prestige to keep what they have.

Sociologists who used the conflict perspective in their research include Max Weber (pronounced VAY-ber) and C. Wright Mills. Weber argued that power is the ability of an individual in a social relationship to carry out his or her will despite resistance from others in the social relationship. Mills saw society as competition between groups in society, and he argued that in the United States a ruling class exists. That is, the power structure is composed of a small **power elite** that includes top business executives, media moguls, and military and government leaders who dominate decision making in this country. (Elite theory is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, “Power and Ideology.”) Later in this chapter, we examine the ideas of Karl Marx, who argued that the struggle between classes was the driving force in history and politics.

**Feminist theory**, which regards society through a gendered prism and emphasizes the patriarchal nature of society, is considered a form of conflict theory. Feminist theory emphasizes the struggle for equality of women with men and the transformative nature a change in relations between the sexes could have on society.

### **conflict theory**

inequality is imposed on society by those who want to retain their wealth and power

### **conflict theorists**

Max Weber

C. Wright Mills

### **power elite**

Mills’s term for a ruling class who dominates decision making

### **feminist theory**

a form of conflict theory, a theory of social stratification that uses a gendered prism and emphasizes the struggle for equality of women with men

## SYMBOLIC INTERACTION THEORY

Symbolic interaction theory differs from both the functionalist and conflict theories in that it focuses on a microlevel of analysis. That is, whereas functionalism and conflict theory analyze large groups and institutions within societies, symbolic interaction theory focuses on individuals and small groups in society. Specifically, symbolic interaction theory examines the role that symbols play in creating meaning for communication between individuals (interaction). There are a few key tenets of symbolic interaction theory:

- Symbols include not only written language but also facial expressions, gestures, signs, and common meanings.
- Symbols help people assign meanings to social situations. For example, a couple flirting might engage in behaviors like increased eye contact, smiling, tilting of the head, and close physical contact. Flirting can occur with spoken language.
- The assessment of social interaction is through a **subjective reality**. That is, one individual's idea of what occurred in a social interaction is just that—an individual's interpretation of events.
- Our assessment of social interaction prescribes our behavior.
- Our identities and concept of self are shaped by social interactions and our perceptions of these interactions.

Symbolic interactionists view social class as the result of individuals' actions. That is, social structures, classes, and institutions come from the interaction between individuals and the use of symbols in their everyday communications. Symbolic interactionists concede that these interactions can be structured and defined by larger political and economic structures, but they argue that interaction between individuals and the meaning ascribed to that interaction is constantly changing. For example, even in a brief encounter, one individual can discern a great deal about another. We often evaluate individuals and subjectively compare them to ourselves by using such symbols as

- Possessions: What kind of car does the person drive? What kind of clothing does she wear? Is it neatly pressed or rumpled? Are her nails manicured? What kind of shoes and sunglasses does she wear, handbag does she carry?
- Language: Does she sound educated? Have a large vocabulary? Have an accent associated with rich or poor areas?
- Facial expression and demeanor: Is she commanding or reticent, proud, or meek?

Oftentimes our interaction is impacted by our subjective perception of who we are interacting with. We might respond to someone in a higher social class with deference and might respond to someone in a lower social class with a lack of respect.

Theorists using the symbolic interaction theory include George Herbert Mead and Herbert Bloomer. Both Mead and Bloomer, who coined the term

### subjective reality

one individual's idea of what occurred in a social interaction; that individual's interpretation of events

### symbolic interaction theorists

George Herbert Mead  
Herbert Bloomer

*symbolic interaction*, were part of the Chicago School. The **Chicago School** refers to the Sociology Department at the University of Chicago—the first Sociology Department in the United States. The faculty at the Chicago School were instrumental in nurturing the new discipline and also formed the professional sociological organization now called the American Sociological Society.

**Chicago School**  
the first Sociology Department in the United States at the University of Chicago

## POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism asserts that the functionalist theory, conflict theory, and symbolic interaction theory have proven inadequate in analyzing societies in a postindustrial world. Postmodernism rejects these theories as unsuccessful and asserts that discipline—specific borders within the social sciences (for example, psychology, political science, and economics)—undermine the ability of the social sciences to effectively analyze postmodern societies. Postmodern societies typically have certain characteristic traits including

- An information explosion facilitated by the print and electronic media.
- An economy with high levels of information and service related jobs.
- An emphasis on consumerism.
- Increased globalization.

Postmodernism is an emerging theory in sociology and the rest of the social sciences. While rejecting older theories, it also calls into question key assumptions on which those theories are based. Critics of postmodernism contend that, although the theory succeeds in forcing a reevaluation of old assumptions, it ignores some object realities within society, including inequality in power relationship within and between societies.

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## On the Web

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The website for this textbook (<http://www.thomson.edu.com/login>) offers resources for exploring power and social class on the Internet. Sociology covers a very broad range of subject matter—social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. This chapter has focused on power and social class, but the subject matter of social class ranges from the intimate family to the hostile mob, from organized crime to religious cults, and from the sociology of work to the sociology of sports.

- **American Sociological Association/Society for Applied Sociology** For a better understanding of the full range of sociology, begin by visiting the websites maintained by the American Sociological Association (ASA, [www.asanet.org](http://www.asanet.org)) and the Society for Applied Sociology (SAS, [www.appliedsoc.org](http://www.appliedsoc.org)). The ASA site is oriented toward academic sociology, primarily teachers of sociology in colleges and universities, but it also provides student career information including “Job Prospects for the BA Graduate.” The SAS site is oriented toward practicing sociologists in government, health care, law enforcement, and human resources. It includes information on “Becoming a Sociologist” and “Sociology Job Listings.”
- **U.S. Census Bureau** Current information on income, education, and occupation of Americans, as well as information on poverty and inequality, can be found in U.S. Census Bureau data ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). An “A to Z” index includes direct links to data on “income,” “poverty,” “inequality,” and so on.

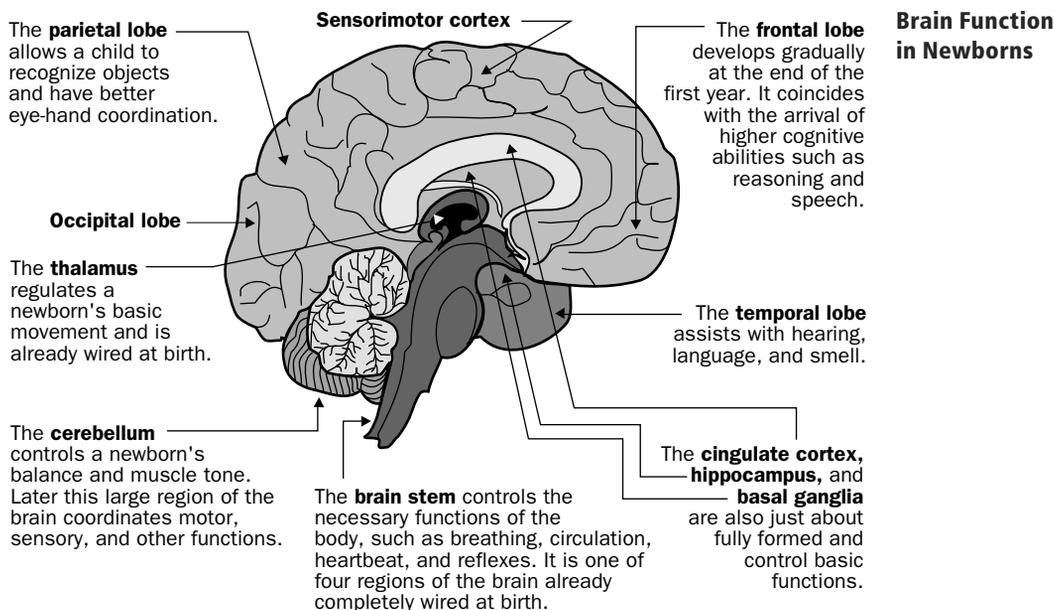
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## Approaches to Psychology and Personality

Psychologists differ over the precise conditions contributing to the development of personality. Definitions tend to be linked to major approaches to individual behavior and to the major approaches within psychology itself. In examining these varying approaches, we can see that there are varying explanations as to how individuals gain power over their behaviors, thoughts, and feelings as

## Inside the Brain

A newborn's brain is already wired for rudimentary behaviors—breathing, heartbeat, reflexes, crying, sucking, and so on. But in higher regions of the brain, neuronal connections are still being created (see the accompanying figure). These connections are stimulated and reinforced by an infant's exposure to language, images, sounds, and even facial expressions.



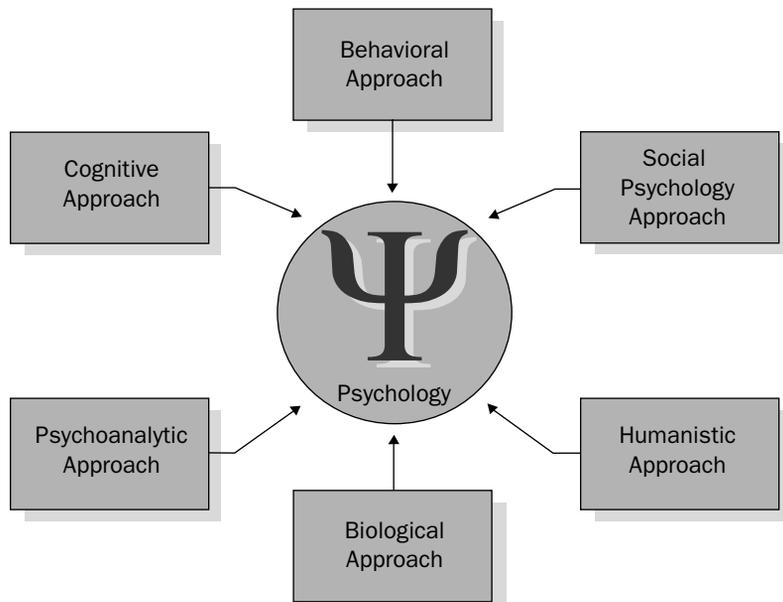
As we examine some of the theories and perspectives of personality in this chapter, we should remember that heredity and environment, *nature* and *nurture*, play important roles in shaping human beings. We examine some theories of personality that emphasize instincts and heredity, others that emphasize early childhood experiences, and still others that emphasize continuing growth and development over a lifetime. There is no single “right” theory of personality, and all can provide insight as to how individuals perceive, relate to, and use power.

well as over other individuals. These approaches are not necessarily exclusive; many psychologists employ more than one approach in their efforts to understand behavior (Figure 6-2).

Today, most research on personality employs the cognitive approach. The **cognitive approach** is a methodology that emphasizes how people learn about themselves and their environment. Cognitive theorists assert that differences in personality are the result of differences in how individuals mentally represent informative. One cognitive theorist, Albert Bandura, developed **social-learning theory**, which states that behavior is shaped by internal cognitive

**cognitive approach**  
a methodology that emphasizes how people learn about themselves and their environment

**social-learning theory**  
behavior is shaped by internal cognitive processes and observing the behavior of others



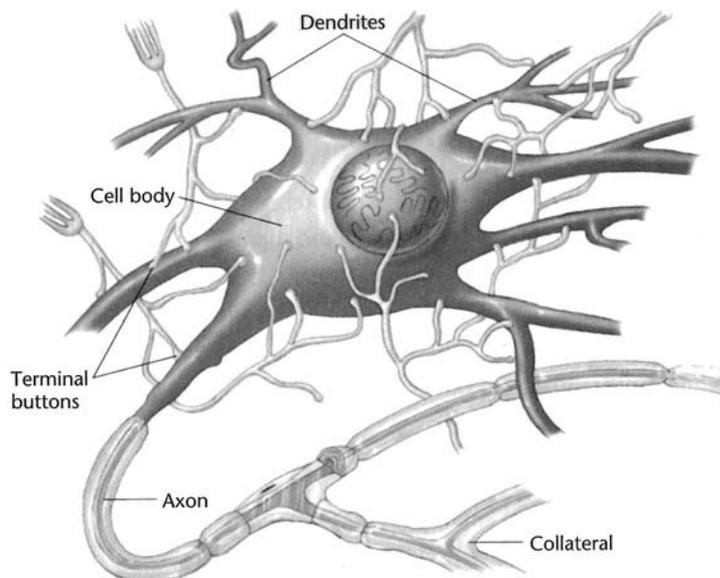
processes and observing the behavior of others as well as the environment that behavior occurs in. Bandura cites intuitive evidence for this approach—one does not teach an adolescent to drive by giving that person the car keys. Another example of the cognitive approach is **cognitive neuroscience**, which explores how mental activities are executed in an individual's brain. Cognitive neuroscientists might study a person's brain while he or she is performing a mental activity such as problem solving.

## BIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Biological psychology attempts to explain behaviors as the results of electrical and chemical events taking place within the brain and nervous system. Cells in the human brain, called **neurons**, transmit impulses to other cells as well as muscles and glands. Neurons receive impulses on branches of the cell called **dendrites** (from the Greek *dendron* for “tree”). Electrical and chemical processes travel down the **axon**, a long tubelike structure. **Neurotransmitters**, which are chemical messengers, carry messages across **synapses** from one neuron to the next. Given these processes, biological psychologists sometimes use electrical stimulation and chemical therapies to change mental processes and behaviors (Figure 6-3).

Biological psychologists also are interested in the impact of genetics on personality and the heritability of traits. Personality traits as varied as shyness, curiosity, risk taking, and aggressiveness have been identified in genetic

**Figure 6-3 Synapses at the Cell Body of a Neuron**



Many different axons, each of which branches repeatedly, synapse on the dendrites and cell body of a single neuron. Each branch of an axon ends in a swelling, called a *synaptic terminal* which contains neurotransmitters. When released, neurotransmitters transmit the nerve impulse across the synapse to the dendrites or cell body of the receiving cell.

### **cognitive neuroscience**

explores how mental activities are executed in an individual's brain

### **biological psychology**

the study of electrical and chemical events in the brain and nervous system

### **neuron**

a cell in the human brain that transmits impulses to other cells, muscles, and glands

### **dendrite**

a branch of neurons where the cell receives impulses from other neurons

### **axon**

a long tubelike structure that protrudes from the cell body of a neuron

### **neurotransmitter**

a chemical in the brain that crosses synapses in order to stimulate the next neuron

### **synapse**

a connector between neurons

**evolutionary psychology**

the study of relationships between biological needs, genetic coding, and psychological traits of humans

**psychoanalytic (Freudian) psychology**

a theory in psychology that explains behavior as a product of the interaction of biological instincts and social learning, especially early childhood experiences; named for its founder, Sigmund Freud

**psychoanalysis**

insight-oriented therapy, often focused on early-childhood experiences

research. There also appears to be genetic predispositions to alcoholism, schizophrenia, depression, and other mental disorders.

A related field of **evolutionary psychology** describes relationships between biological needs, genetic coding, and psychological traits of humans. It assumes that psychological traits have evolved over millions of years through the process of natural selection—that is, the development of genetic traits that improve survival and are passed on to future generations (See “Focus: Evolutionary Psychology: The Mating Game”). Some evolutionary psychologists examine the biological origins of differences between the sexes in relation to propensity to violence, aggression, parenting styles and sexual inclinations.

But genes provide only a probability for a specific personality trait. Synapses must be formed, and neurotransmitters must stimulate neurons before genes can do their job. The effect of early childhood experiences can be profound. Genetics may increase the probability of personality traits and even predict the likelihood of various mental illnesses. But experiences largely determine whether the wiring for these genes will be developed or not. It is very difficult to estimate what proportion of an adult’s personality is determined by genes versus that which is developed by interaction with his or her environment.

## PSYCHOANALYTIC (FREUDIAN) PSYCHOLOGY

**Psychoanalytic (Freudian) psychology** views behavior as a product of the interaction between biologically based instincts (for example, hunger, sex, survival, and aggression) and our efforts to satisfy these instincts in socially acceptable ways. Early childhood experiences that forbid immediate gratification of instinctual drives tend to force them into the unconscious where they remain to affect dreams, speech, and mannerisms and to create anxieties, some of which may develop into emotional problems or mental illness (see “Masters of Social Thought: Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalytic Theory”).

**Psychoanalysis** is a type of insight-oriented therapy that encourages patients to think about themselves—their problems, dreams, and memories—so that they can gain insight into the causes of their own difficulties. Psychoanalysis encourages patients to talk about early childhood experiences, thus revealing unconscious thoughts and processes (most concerning early-childhood conflicts and sex). The revelations may result in greater insight as to the impact of these experiences on personality development. Although traditionally the practice of psychoanalysis has been the domain of the Freudian-trained psychiatrist, many clinical psychologists employ certain aspects of psychoanalytic psychology in their approach to therapy.

### *The Authoritarian Personality*

The Freudian approach to power relationships focuses on early-childhood determinations of habitual responses to power and authority. Power motives—for example, a need to dominate others or, the opposite, comfort in accepting direction—are organized into the personality early in life.

An early influential study of power, authority, and personality, one that was conducted mainly within the framework of Freudian theory, was the landmark study *The Authoritarian Personality*.<sup>11</sup> This study was undertaken after



## *Evolutionary Psychology: The Mating Game*

Understanding sexual behavior has long posed a challenge to psychologists as well as the rest of us. Why do some men ogle women's breasts and evaluate women so much on their physical attractiveness? Why do some women judge men more on their power, resources, and earnings potential? Why are men more likely to engage in short-term and extramarital affairs than women?

Evolutionary psychologists are proposing answers to these and similar questions about sexual behavior by reference to the mating concerns of our prehistoric ancestors. They argue that human sexual behavior, and human behavior generally, has been shaped by biological challenges confronting men and women and the evolutionary development of mental devices for coping with these challenges.

Evolutionary psychologists contend that men and women are as different psychologically as they are physically. In every culture, men consistently value youth and physical attractiveness in a mate more than women do. Women are consistently more concerned with a man's power, status, and resources. These preferences evolved from the different biological challenges facing men and women. Women invest far more time and energy in child rearing than men; human infants require years of nurturing. Over millions of years, women evolved a psychology that preferred men who appeared to have the power and resources to offer protection and assistance in the tasks of child rearing. In contrast, men's reproductive success depends on the fertility of their mates. So men have developed a mind-set that searches for signs of fertility—youth, large breasts, and good looks. (Cultures where food is less plentiful may prefer heavier women, while more affluent cultures may prefer slimness. But in all cultures, the hips should be roughly one-third larger than the waist, a ratio that suggests high fertility and good health.) Women also appreciate men's physical attractiveness because it promises good genes for their offspring. Thus, men as well as women in most cultures, modern as well as ancient, “beautify” themselves.

However, women must balance good looks against men's willingness and ability to provide continuing subsistence for the nest. Women must be concerned with men's commitment to a relationship long enough to nurture children.

While men have a stake in maintaining a long-term relationship with women to help ensure the survival of offspring, another strategy available to men is to impregnate as many women as possible to increase the likelihood that their genes will be continued. Thus, men, even those with long-term mates, are psychologically more predisposed toward short-term anonymous affairs than women. Women in long-term relationships may also engage in affairs, but it is likely to be part of a search for a new, more attractive, more resourceful, or more committed mate.

Male-oriented erotica, as in pornographic videos, feature lust-driven females willing to engage in sex acts with multiple partners with no emotional attachment. Female-oriented erotica, as in romance novels, feature handsome, powerful males with fiercely passionate commitments to the heroines.

Evolutionary psychology does not offer any solution to differences between the sexes, but it suggests that a better understanding of the contrasting psychologies of men and women will shed light on those differences.



## Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalytic Theory

Viennese physician Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) was principally responsible for the development of psychoanalytic theory. He first studied hypnosis because he learned that neurotic symptoms could be removed during hypnotic trance. But he soon found that patients did not really need to be in a full hypnotic trance so long as they felt relaxed and uninhibited. He encouraged them to engage in free association—that is, to say anything that came into their minds without regard to organization, logic, or embarrassment over socially unacceptable ideas. He wanted to make the patient’s unconscious motives, drives, feelings, and anxieties conscious ones. The goal of psychoanalysis, as it was called, was to help patients attain insight, or self-knowledge. Once that was achieved, the neurotic symptoms tended to disappear.

According to Freud, the personality is composed of three major systems: the id, the ego, and the superego. The *id* is the basic system of life instincts, or drives—hunger, thirst, sex, rest, pain avoidance, and so on. The id is in close touch with the body’s needs; these needs produce psychic energy, which is experienced as uncomfortable states of tension. A newborn’s personality is almost pure id. It seeks immediate gratification of bodily urges and has no knowledge of reality or morals. The *ego* is the part of the personality that is in contact with objective reality. It directs the energies of the id toward real-world objects that are appropriate for the satisfaction of the urge and the reduction of tension. The *superego*, the last part of the personality to develop, is the internal representative of the values, standards, and morals that the child is taught.

Anxiety is a state of tension that results from an apprehension of impending pain or danger, whether physical or psychological. Anxiety reduction is a drive like hunger or thirst, the difference being that it results from psychological rather than bodily discomfort. When its intensity

World War II by a group of psychologists who sought to identify potentially antidemocratic individuals—those whose personality structures render them particularly susceptible to authoritarian appeals. The central attitudes of authoritarianism are *dominance* and *submission*—dominance over subordinates in any power hierarchy and submissiveness toward superiors. Authoritarians are highly ambivalent in their attitudes toward authority. They are outwardly servile toward those they perceive as their superiors, but in fact they also harbor strong negative feelings toward these same people. Their repressed rage toward their superiors is redirected into hostility toward the weak and inferior.

Authoritarians are *oriented toward power*. They tend to think in power terms, to be acutely sensitive in any situation to questions of who dominates whom. They are very uncomfortable when they do not know what the chain of command is. They need to know whom they should obey and who should obey them.

Authoritarians are *rigid*. They are “intolerant of ambiguity.” They like order and are uncomfortable in the presence of disorder. When matters are complex, they impose their own rigid categories on them. Their thinking is therefore largely in stereotypes.

Authoritarians show *exaggerated concern with strength*. Feelings of personal weakness are covered with a facade of toughness. They are unusually preoccupied with masculine virtues, and they stereotype women as feminine and soft.

### characteristics of the authoritarian personality

dominance and submission

orientation toward power

rigidity

exaggerated concern with strength

## MASTERS OF SOCIAL THOUGHT

and nature are appropriate to the real situation, the anxiety is normal. When there does not seem to be adequate cause for it in the real world, when it is caused by unconscious or irrational fears, and when it interferes with the person's functioning, the anxiety is neurotic.

The most important of the defense mechanisms that the mind uses, often unconsciously, to reduce anxiety and tension is repression: The ego protects the individual from unbearable impulses by forcing these impulses out of consciousness. This defensive maneuver may occur when an impulse would endanger life, risk punishment, or risk feelings of guilt. But there are costs to repression. A severely repressed individual who has denied many strong impulses may suffer fatigue, nervousness, or depression. Freud's seeming emphasis on sex was a product not of his belief that this drive was any more powerful than others but of his view that it was the most repressed and therefore the source of many personality disorders.

Perhaps no other social science theory has been subjected to such searching and bitter criticism as Freudian theory. One criticism centers on psychoanalytic therapy: It can be long and costly, and it is not always successful. Drugs and behavioral therapy frequently produce more complete results in less time and at less expense. Another criticism is that Freud's observations were based on abnormal, clinical cases rather than on normal adults; most of his patients were middle-class Europeans; and he worked in a cultural period when sexual repression in society was much greater than it is today. Another problem with Freudian theory is that it is difficult to test scientifically.

Freudian explanations proceed from observed behavior back to unconscious feelings and childhood experiences, but they do not permit exact predictions of future behavior from these factors.

Authoritarians are *cynical*. They distrust the motives of others and are generally pessimistic about human nature. They are disposed to believe that the world is a jungle and that various conspiracies exist to threaten them and their ways of life.

Authoritarians are *ethnocentric*. They view members of social groups other than their own as outsiders who are different, strange, unwholesome, and threatening. They hold an exalted opinion of their own groups. They reject outsiders and project many of their own aggressive impulses onto them. They place stereotyped labels on outsiders.

## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

**Social psychology** is concerned with the individual's relationships with other individuals and groups as they impact individual behavior. Social psychologists study social cognition, social influence, and social relations, or how we think about, influence, and relate to one another. Social psychologists examine power relations between individuals. They study the whole person and the impact of the social world on the person—the world of social interaction and group life, which constantly shapes and modifies the individual's goals, perceptions, attitudes, and behavior. The social-psychological approach to personality emphasizes the individual's **socialization**—the development of individual identity

through interpersonal experiences and the internalizing of the expectations of significant others.

### characteristics of the authoritarian personality

cynicism

ethnocentrism

### social psychology

the study of the individual's relationships with other individuals and groups

### socialization

in psychology, the development of individual identity through interpersonal experiences and the internalizing of the expectations of significant others.

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## Power and the Study of Psychology

In examining the various approaches in the field of psychology, we can see that there are numerous and competing explanations as to how personality develops and the causes of human behavior. Each perspective, however, sheds light on power relations between individuals. Personality is defined by genetics and the environment. Our relations with others, how we learn, and how we have evolved—all impact what we think, feel, and do. Each perspective contributes to our understanding of power relations between individuals. In looking at the theme of power in psychology, mental illness also warrants examination as a determinant of structure of power relations.

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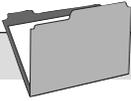
## Treating Mental Illness

It is not always easy to distinguish mental health from mental illness. Generally, people are said to have a mental disorder when they feel distressed by their condition *and* it impairs their ability to pursue their normal functions in life (see “Case Study: Diagnosing Mental Illness”). Brief stresses and strains of daily living usually do not require treatment, but severe, lasting, and incapacitating mental suffering clearly does so. Most symptoms of mental illness, however, are less than completely incapacitating. How much sadness indicates depression? How much suspicion indicates paranoia? How much self-confidence indicates mania? Most of us bear some mental stress without seeking professional help. But some people do not recognize their need for treatment even in the midst of acute mental illness.

### CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

**Clinical psychology** focuses on the treatment of psychological disorders. It is closely related to psychiatry in that both clinical psychologists and psychiatrists deal with the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders. (The psychiatrist, however, is also a medical doctor.) Clinicians deal with real people with real psychological problems. They enter the patient’s world and concern themselves with the subjective human experience, including wishes, fears,

**clinical psychology**  
focuses on treatment of  
psychological disorders



## ***Diagnosing Mental Illness***

The American Psychiatric Association has tried to increase public awareness of the symptoms of mental illness as well as to remove the social stigma that surrounded mental illness in the past. Mental illness is not a character weakness but a treatable illness. Increasingly, psychiatrists are having great success in treating a wide range of psychiatric illnesses.

### **Addiction Disorders**

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Addiction disorders are one of the most common forms of mental illness. Addiction occurs when an individual cannot control their behavior. A wide variety of substances and behaviors can be addictive, including drugs (for example, alcohol or nicotine), opiates (for example, morphine or heroin), and stimulants (for example, amphetamines or cocaine). Behaviors such as using the Internet or video games, gambling, shopping, and having sexual relations also can be addictive. Because of the wide variety of addictions, estimates of the number of individuals addicted to substances and behaviors vary widely. Symptoms of addiction include the following:

- An overwhelming, destructive pattern of compulsion for the substance or behavior
- Greater tolerance required for satisfaction (particularly with substance addiction)
- Withdrawal symptoms when the behavior is stopped
- Secretive behaviors to mask the addiction
- Denial of the problem

### **Schizophrenia**

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Schizophrenia is one of the most debilitating mental illnesses. Often characterized by distorted thinking, hallucinations, delusions, and a dulling of normal emotions, schizophrenia is considered a brain disease. An estimated 2.4 million Americans suffer from this mental illness.

The following symptoms are sometimes associated with schizophrenia:

- Hearing nonexistent sounds
- Seeing nonexistent images
- Thoughts that dart uncontrollably from subject to subject
- Unfounded fears that one is being plotted against or watched
- Loss of self-esteem
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Inappropriate emotions/reactions to situations
- Deteriorating work and school performance
- Neglect of social relationships and personal appearance

### **Depression**

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The most common and treatable mental illness, major and minor depression affects 8 million to 14 million Americans each year. Characterized by feelings of sadness, helplessness, hopelessness,

and irritability, depression affects one in four women and one in ten men at some point during their lifetime.

If four or more of the following symptoms persist for more than two weeks, an individual should seek professional help:

- Change in appetite (significant weight loss or gain)
- Change in sleeping patterns
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Loss of energy; fatigue
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Feelings of inappropriate guilt
- Inability to concentrate; indecisiveness
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide
- Melancholia (overwhelming feelings of sadness and grief)
- Disturbed thinking (out of touch with reality)
- Physical symptoms (headaches or stomachaches)

### Manic Depression

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Manic depression (bipolar illness) is a more severe form of depression. An estimated 2 million to 3 million people will suffer from this disorder at some time in their lives. People with manic depression experience mood swings from euphoria to depression.

All symptoms of depression can also be symptoms of manic depression. These are some of the typical symptoms of the manic (euphoric) phase of the disorder:

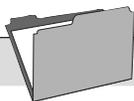
- An “on top of the world” mood that appears overly euphoric
- Expressions of unwarranted optimism
- Lack of judgment
- Grandiose delusions of connections with God, celebrities, or political leaders
- Hyperactivity and excessive participation in numerous activities
- Racing, uncontrollable thoughts
- Decreased need for sleep
- Attention easily diverted to inconsequential or unimportant details
- Sudden irritability, rage, or paranoia

### Postpartum Depression

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Postpartum depression is a severe form of depression that occurs in some women after the birth of a child. Nearly all women who give birth experience the “baby blues”—a period of a week or two of depression—but postpartum depression lasts longer, and the symptoms may be more severe. In many cases, postpartum depression is caused by hormonal changes or imbalances.

*(continued)*



## CASE STUDY

Symptoms include the following:

- Irritability
- Sadness
- Crying
- Appetite changes
- Changes in sleep pattern
- Lack of energy
- Loss of interest in activities

In its more severe forms, those who suffer from postpartum depression may entertain thoughts of harming themselves or their babies. Those suffering from postpartum depression should seek help from a physician.

### Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety disorders are very common, affecting an estimated 10 to 15 percent of the population. There are several types of anxiety disorders, each with somewhat different symptoms:

- *Social phobia*: an intense fear of being scrutinized or evaluated by others
- *Simple phobia*: an intense fear of a particular object or situation
- *Posttraumatic stress disorder*: undesired recollections or re-experiences of a prior intense experience, often accompanied by chronic anxiety, angry outbursts, sleep disturbances, and emotional distress
- *Panic disorder*: repeated bouts of intense anxiety not necessarily related to any particular situation, often causing shortness of breath, dizziness, sweating, fainting, vomiting, racing and pounding heart
- *Obsessive-compulsive disorder*: obsessions are recurrent and persistent ideas, thoughts, or images that cannot be ignored or suppressed or stopped; compulsions are repetitive and persistent behaviors usually performed in a ritualistic manner that are not connected in any reasonable fashion with subjective circumstances
- *Generalized anxiety disorder*: generalized anxiety experienced for six months or longer that is not associated with life circumstances or a particular stimulus; symptoms include shakiness, restlessness, fatigue, shortness of breath, heart palpitations, sweating, dizziness, hot flashes, difficulty concentrating, and irritability

#### psychiatrist

an MD who specializes in the treatment of mental disorders

#### clinical psychologist

a therapist with a PhD in psychological treatment and testing

anxieties, and ambitions. Clinical psychology stresses therapy, ranging from chemical therapy and shock treatment to various behavior therapies and insight therapies.

### PROFESSIONAL CARE

Professional assistance can be rendered by a **psychiatrist**—a medical doctor (MD) who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders; or a **clinical psychologist**—a therapist with graduate training, usually a PhD in

psychological testing and treatment; or a **psychological counselor**—often a person with graduate training in psychology, marriage and family life, alcohol and drug-abuse treatment, social work, or related fields.

**psychological counselor**

a therapist with graduate training in psychology or related fields

Diagnosing mental illness requires psychiatrists and psychologists to recognize a pattern of symptoms that correspond to an illness. This is often done by asking questions or giving written tests concerning a person's mental state. The American Psychiatric Association publishes *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)*, which defines various mental disorders, describing typical observable behavior and responses to examiners' questions. Although the DSM can be very helpful in the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders, seldom do patients' symptoms and responses fit perfectly with a recognized disorder. Indeed, sometimes fully qualified professionals render very different diagnoses of the same patients.

Treatment may come in the form of psychotherapy, drug therapy, or some combination of the two. (See "Focus: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Not Just a Soldier's Disease.") **Psychotherapy**, or "talk" therapy, involves communication between patient and therapist designed to help the patient better understand and deal effectively with troubling feelings and behavior. Psychotherapy includes a wide variety of techniques—some that depend on developing the patient's understanding of deeply ingrained motives and conflicts and others that help patients cope with their problems without necessarily exploring their underlying causes.

**psychotherapy**

"talk" therapy, involving communication between patient and therapist; includes a wide variety of techniques

## PSYCHOANALYSIS

Traditional psychoanalysis is a therapy based on the Freudian notion that mental illness is most often a product of unconscious conflicts. If patients can acquire an insight into their own motives and needs, presumably they can develop more effective ways of handling their problems. When patients can freely express previously repressed emotions or relive intense emotional experiences, they are believed to be better equipped to face their current problems effectively. Sometimes insights are found in spontaneous talk or "free association," in the interpretation of dreams, or in hypnosis. But psychoanalysis is very time consuming and expensive. It may require weekly sessions over several years and thousand of dollars spent over that time.

## BEHAVIORAL THERAPIES

Behavioral therapy assumes that disturbed behavior has been learned and that it can be unlearned or modified by a variety of conditioning techniques. Behavioral therapists are more concerned with changing specific behavioral patterns than with understanding or analyzing a patient's underlying personality. For example, in relaxation training, people learn to relax various muscles and eventually learn to relax their entire body. After learning to relax, they may be asked to confront a previously anxiety-producing stimulus. *Desensitization* occurs when people are able to maintain their relaxed condition while gradually encountering fears and phobias. *Assertiveness training* is another form of behavioral therapy in which people are taught to "speak up" or "say no" when others try to take advantage of them. *Positive reinforcement* is sometimes employed in



### *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Not Just a Soldier's Disease*

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is the psychological consequences of having experienced an extraordinarily stressful event—typically the fear or threat of one's death, the witnessing of the death of another, or the threat or occurrence of physical or psychological harm. PTSD was once thought of as a “combat” disease afflicting those on the frontlines—for example, soldiers seeing war-time battle or police officers on the frontlines of crime fighting. But today, psychologists are just as likely to be diagnosing PTSD in the civilian population.

Among the first episodes prompting widespread PTSD diagnosis among civilian populations was the aftermath of the April 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. In that domestic terrorist attack, at least 168 people, including 19 children attending a child-care facility in the building, were killed, and another 800 people were injured. The enormous rescue efforts that occurred in days following the attack—an estimated 12,000 people volunteered to help the efforts—meant that many people, both those trained as first responders to a disaster and untrained civilian volunteers, were exposed to a horrifying situation that frequently led to PTSD.

Many of those who survived the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC, also were diagnosed as suffering from PTSD. Symptoms of PTSD include insomnia, irritability, nightmares, flashbacks, memory loss, dissociation (separating thoughts of the trauma from the rest of the psyche), detachment (distancing oneself emotionally from people or situations), avoidance of triggers (reminders of the trauma), extreme stress response to triggers, and extreme startle response (to loud noises, or sounds or smells associated with the event).

In 2005 Hurricane Katrina fell on New Orleans and devastated it as well as other communities in Louisiana and Mississippi. Psychologists have seen many diagnoses of PTSD stemming from this natural disaster as well.

But combat, war, terrorist attacks, and natural disasters are not the only traumas that can result in PTSD. The American Psychological Association lists childhood abuse and/or sexual assault, adult rape, and assaults as events that could prompt a PTSD reaction.

What can be done to treat PTSD? In some cases, the symptoms disappear on their own. But if someone suffers from symptoms of PTSD for more than two weeks, he or she should consult a doctor. Two primary methods of treatment include exposure therapy whereby a victim of PTSD is taught to process the memories of the events in a manageable way so that the event can become part of the past rather than a continually recurring event. Sometimes antidepressant medications also have proven effective in treating PTSD.

mental hospitals when patients are rewarded for socially acceptable behavior. *Negative reinforcement*, or adverse conditioning, also can be effective in modifying alcohol and substance abuse.

## HUMANISTIC THERAPIES

Humanistic therapies tend to emphasize client-centered solutions to individual problems. The humanistic therapist does not try to interpret patients' behavior (as would a psychoanalyst) or modify it (as would a behavioral therapist) but, rather, allows patients to develop their own self-actualizing solution to their problems. The therapist does not render judgments or opinions but instead tries to create an open and accepting atmosphere for the patient's self-expression. The goal is to enable patients to clarify their feelings. Group therapy is a means of encouraging people to express their feelings in the presence of others with similar problems. Group therapy saves time and money because one therapist can work with six to twelve patients at once. People may derive some comfort and support from observing others with similar or perhaps even worse problems. And people may learn vicariously—by watching how others deal with their problems.

## DRUG THERAPIES

Drug therapy has had a revolutionary impact on mental health care. Beginning in the late 1950s, psychiatric drugs dramatically improved the effectiveness of treatment for a vast array of disorders. Prior to the advent of drug therapies, mental hospitals were very dismal places; physicians were able to offer little more than custodial care. Hallucinating patients talked to “voices”; catatonic patients sat in stupors; and manic patients paced the floors. The most agitated patients were sedated or placed in restraints. There were few “cures.” But drug therapies changed these scenes. Currently, hospital stays are relatively brief; patients are medically and psychologically evaluated; drug therapies are initiated and are closely supervised. Patients who pose no danger to themselves or others are treated as outpatients.

The impact of the drug revolution is apparent in the depopulation of mental hospitals. During the first half of the century, the number of mental hospital patients rose steadily. But the introduction of drug therapies reversed this trend, and mental hospitals were emptied of all but temporary patients and a few very severe cases.

Indeed, the drug revolution was exploited as a means of reducing public spending for mental health care. Many patients are being released into the community with instructions for drug therapies and outpatient care. But they often have been unable to follow their instructions, and community care frequently has been lacking. It is estimated that one-quarter to one-third of the nation's street-wandering “homeless” population suffers from serious mental illness.

Schizophrenia, mania, and depression are the categories of mental illness that are frequently and successfully treated with drugs.<sup>13</sup> Four classes of drugs are commonly used in psychiatry today: antianxiety drugs, antipsychotics, antidepressants, and mood stabilizers. These drugs can provide immediate and

**Table 6-2** THE SOCIOLOGY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

	Gender			Ethnicity		
	Total* %	Men %	Women %	White %	Black %	Hispanic %
Alcohol Abuse	14	24	5	14	14	17
Anxiety	4	2	5	3	6	4
Phobias	14	10	18	10	23	12
Mood disorder	3	5	10	8	6	8
Schizophrenia	2	1	2	1	2	1
Antisocial personality	3	5	1	3	2	3

SOURCE: Data derived from L. Robbins and D. Regier, *Psychiatric Disorders in America* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 564–565.

\* Percentage of Americans who have ever experienced a disorder.

effective relief for those who suffer the discomfort of mental disorders. Patients are medically monitored for potential unwanted side effects, but the newer drugs have proven very effective with only minimal side effects.

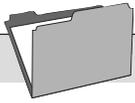
## THE SOCIOLOGY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

Psychological disorders appear to vary by ethnicity and gender (Table 6-2). Men are much more likely than women to suffer alcohol abuse and dependence. Women are more likely to report mood disorders (see “Case Study: Dying for Power”). Men are more likely to develop antisocial personalities (see “A Psychological Perspective on Crime: The Antisocial Personality” in Chapter 12). Psychological disorders of various sorts are somewhat more prevalent among minorities in America. Minorities are also more likely to experience poverty (see “Focus: Who Are the Poor?” in Chapter 11.) Poverty may therefore be the real factor affecting ethnic differences in disorders. The stress of poverty may precipitate psychological disorders, especially depression among women and alcoholism among men.<sup>14</sup>

## Powerlessness and Mental Health

There is a common adage that “power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” It reflects our negative view of power and our association of power with abuse. But the distinguished psychologist Rollo May, whose contributions to the humanistic movement are highly significant, contends that power is a fundamental aspect of the life process. Indeed, he believes that *powerlessness* corrupts the human personality by robbing the individual of a sense of meaning and significance.

May’s argument is that power occurs in an individual’s life in five functional forms.<sup>15</sup> The first is the *power to be*. The word *power* comes from the Latin root meaning “to be able.” The newborn must have the power to make others respond to his needs: He cries and waves his arms violently as signs of his discomfort. An infant who cannot elicit a response from others fails to develop as



### *Dying for Power*

Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia, and binge eating affect an estimated 10 percent of all college-age women. *Anorexia nervosa* is an eating disorder in which people starve themselves, often by eating only small amounts of food or severely restricting the foods that are “safe” to eat. Sometimes anorexics exercise compulsively in an attempt to burn calories. Death, usually by cardiac arrest or kidney failure due to malnutrition, can occur if anorexia is untreated. People with *bulimia* are involved in a binge–purge cycle of trying to control their weight and food intake. Bulimia is characterized by eating large amounts in a short period of time (bingeing). This is followed by guilt, which results in an attempt to purge the food, usually through vomiting, laxatives, or exercise.

Eating disorders are sometimes related to issues of power and control. Individuals may try to control their body size and food intake to compensate for the lack of control that they feel in other areas of their lives, such as school, work, or family life. Eating disorders can be found among both men and women and across racial, ethnic, and economic groups, but some groups, especially upper middle–class white females, are more prone to suffer from the disorders. Sometimes those with eating disorders, particularly anorexia, are involved in such careers as modeling and ballet dancing where thinness is emphasized and oftentimes is a prerequisite for employment. Sometimes sufferers of eating disorders have been victims of physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse, and the eating disorder represents a method of taking charge of their lives. They may also attempt to starve themselves in an effort to revert back to childhood size, a time that may have felt less out of control and more comfortable. Or they may attempt to “pad” their bodies from injury or starve themselves to make themselves “less attractive” (that is, womanly) to their abusers. Indeed, one of the symptoms of anorexia nervosa is amenorrhea, or the absence of menstrual periods. By controlling their bodies, some people with eating disorders may be attempting to exercise what they see as the little power they have over their destinies.

Physical symptoms of eating disorders include marked weight loss or weight gain, amenorrhea, menstrual cycle irregularities, sore throats, stomach problems, tooth enamel decay, chronic fatigue, hair loss, or the growth of a fine downy hair on the body. Emotional and behavioral symptoms include preoccupation with food and calories, avoiding situations where food is served, compulsive exercise habits, depression and/or anxiety, isolation or withdrawal from family and friends, and a denial of eating problems or weight loss. Left untreated, eating disorders can be dangerous and deadly.

a separate personality. *Power as self-affirmation* is the recognition of one’s own worth and significance in life. Some power is essential for self-esteem and self-belief. Power as self-assertion makes it clear who we are and what we believe. It gives us the potential to react to attack and protect ourselves from becoming victims. Power also occurs in everyone’s life as *aggression*—striking out against a person or thing seen as an adversary,

The constructive aspects of aggression include cutting through barriers to initiate relationships; confronting another person, not with the intent to hurt but to penetrate that individual’s consciousness; and actualizing one’s own self

in a hostile environment. The destructive side of aggression includes thrusting out to inflict injury and taking power simply to increase one's own range of control. Finally, power occurs as *violence*. May believes that violence is an attempt to exercise power. Violence may result from a failure at self-affirmation or self-assertion, or it may accompany aggression. Nonetheless, it can be regarded as functional to the individual if there is no other way for that person to gain significance in life.

## EXPLORING POWER AND PERSONALITY

It is May's belief that modern mass society impairs the individual's self esteem and self-worth. The feeling of personal powerlessness is widespread:

To admit our own individual feelings of powerlessness—that we cannot influence many people; that we count for little; that the values to which our parents devoted their lives are to us insubstantial and worthless; that we feel ourselves to be “faceless others,” insignificant to other people and therefore not worth much to ourselves—that is, indeed, difficult to admit.<sup>16</sup>

May believes that much irrational violence—for example, riots, assassinations, and senseless murders—is a product of feelings of powerlessness.

## About This Chapter

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An understanding of personality, of individual behavioral responses and their determinants, is essential to a full understanding of power in society. In this chapter, we have explored the meaning of personality and various psychological theories regarding the determinants of personality. We also saw what various schools of psychology have to say about the relationship between personality and power.

Now that you have read this chapter, you should be able to

- Describe the nature-versus-nurture controversy in the shaping of personality.
- Discuss how psychoanalytic (Freudian) theory views personality and its development

and how this theory interprets individual responses to power and authority.

- Discuss behavioral psychology's use of learning theory in its approach to the study of personality and B. F. Skinner's ideas for the control of human behavior.
- Describe humanistic psychology's view of the self, Abraham Maslow's construction of a hierarchy of needs, and Rollo May's concept of powerlessness.
- Discuss how power in the form of authority and legitimacy can command obedience and the implications of such obedience.

## For Discussion

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1. Describe the nature-versus-nurture controversy over the determination of personality. How does research on the personality characteristics of identical twins help us learn more about the relative effects of heredity versus environment on human behavior?
2. Discuss the psychoanalytic (Freudian) view of the determinants of behavior. Identify the

three major systems that Freudians believe compose the personality and describe the roles played by each of these systems. Differentiate between normal and neurotic anxiety and describe the functions of identification.

3. Describe the authoritarian personality. What are some psychoanalytic explanations of the authoritarian personality? Discuss the criticisms of the authoritarian personality study.
4. How would a behavioral psychologist define personality and the goal of psychology? Describe how a linkage between a conditioned stimulus and response is established.
5. Describe how a social psychologist would approach the study of personality. Identify the processes that social psychologists believe are critical determinants of personality development.
6. Describe the methodologies used by cognitive psychologists. What has been the contribution of Albert Bandura? Can you think of an example of Bandura's premise?
7. Discuss humanistic psychology's view of the individual, Rollo May's formulation of the functions of power, and Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
8. What examples of classical conditioning can you describe from your own experiences?
9. If you were interested in becoming a clinical psychologist, which type of therapy do you think that you would want to practice—psychoanalytic therapy, behavioral therapy, a therapy based on the principles of interpersonal-interaction theory, or one that uses the approach of humanistic psychology? Describe how the theory you would choose views "personality disorder."
10. Which of the theories studied do you think provides the most cogent view of personality and the relationship between personality and power? Discuss your reasoning, including any criticisms you may have about any of these theories.

## On the Web

### EXPLORING PSYCHOLOGY

The website for this textbook (<http://www.thomsonedu.com/login>) offers resources on the Internet for exploring power and personality. Psychology encompasses a wide variety of subjects. The official site of the American Psychological Association lists fifty-two "branches" of psychology, most with their own websites.

- **American Psychological Association** The best place to begin your exploration of psychology is the official site of the American Psychological Association (APA; [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)). It provides information for students, parents, teenagers, the media, and others about a wide variety of topics related to psychology, including common psychological disorders. For students, this site provides career-planning information, employment data, programs and degrees in graduate education, financial assistance, and more relating to psychology. Student membership in the APA is inexpensive and includes subscriptions to *Monitor on Psychology* and *American Psychologist*. The APA site includes links to some fifty-two fields of psychology, including developmental, personality, clinical, educational, behavioral, experimental, and humanistic psychology; psychoanalysis; psychopharmacology; and sport. A search engine at the site provides an index of topics from "addiction" to "women."
- **Psychology of Addictive Behaviors Division, APA** This division within the American Psychological Association provides information, including the latest research, on a wide variety of addictions, including addictions to alcohol, drugs, and nicotine and disorders involving eating, sexual behavior, spending, and gambling. The website ([www.apa.org/divisions/div50/](http://www.apa.org/divisions/div50/)) provides links to a wide variety of resources.

- **Psychology.com** Several commercial sites invite browsers to view topics in psychology. Psychology.com ([www.psychology.com](http://www.psychology.com)) contains current articles, psychological tests, the directory of therapists, and even an “Ask a therapist” interactive link. Another commercial site, Evolution Voyage ([www.evoyage.com](http://www.evoyage.com)), focuses on evolutionary psychology.
- **Personality Theories** A professor of psychology at Pennsylvania’s Shippensburg State University has compiled an online introduction to the theories of many prominent psychologists, including those mentioned in this chapter—Freud, Skinner, Maslow, and May ([www.ship.edu/~cgboeree](http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree)).
- **DNA Learning Center** The Dolan DNA Learning Center ([www.dnalc.org/resources/resources.html](http://www.dnalc.org/resources/resources.html)) provides introductory information for students, teachers, and nonscientists who wish to learn more about genetics. It is sponsored by the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, the center for molecular genetics research.