



Critical Adolescence & Youth in Context

Critical Adolescence & Youth in Context

A multidisciplinary perspective

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

SUNY OR
ALBANY NY



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Introduction

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN



*Young People of all Ages Playing by
Ajay Guduru*

This book is an homage to the complex world that young people today live in. The term adolescence was introduced and largely defined in the early 1900s. It took its more recent form that we know it after World War II and the prosperity that it brought to the USA. Since the introduction of the concept, explorations in other cultural, social and economic contexts have shed new light on

the nature of not just adolescence but all of the life span. This books hopes to introduce readers to the complex, multidisciplinary and contextual research conducted in this area of study and the boundaries that mark the different ways in which youth and their lives are shaped by the social and political arrangements they live in.

Dedication

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

To my children Adityan and Ananthan, my parents Parameswaran and Sulochana and my partner Daniel who represent all the rich possibilities that a life offers.

About the Author

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Gowri Parameswaran (pronouns used: she/her/hers) is a professor of education at the State University of Education at New Paltz where she teaches adolescent development and child psychology at the graduate and undergraduate level for over 20 years. She has been chairing



the Department of Educational Studies and Leadership for the past 10 years. Prior to teaching in New Paltz, she was a professor in Missouri State University and instructor at Rowen State College in New Jersey.

Parameswaran has published widely in the areas of diversity, equity and cognitive development. Her early years of research included explorations into the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky and the ways they could be synthesized when understanding learning and development. She works on cross-

cultural comparisons of developmental issues were published in peer reviewed journals. She co-edited two books on culture, equity and education. She also co-edited a collection of essays on women and activism which is widely used in college classrooms across the country. She has written and published articles about teaching issues in diversity, social justice and pedagogy. Her chapters and essays have included ideas for teaching about gender, racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. More recently, she has explored the theoretical and historical issues behind life-span development, adolescence, childhood and developmental psychology as a field of

study. She has problematized the notion of unidirectional growth as outlined in mainstream developmental theory. Parameswaran is active in initiatives that center communities of color and their struggle for justice. She is active in her professional union and serves as the vice-president of academics. She has explored the history of labor activism as both theory and praxis. She is a member of the Movement for Black Lives in her community and belongs to several organizations that support equity-oriented groups in her community.

Personal Note to Reader

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

I've been teaching issues related to lifespan changes for over 4 decades. I was moved to write the book because I found that there was no textbook currently available in the market that I felt covered the topics from a broad multi-disciplinary, multicultural and critical perspective. There are some good textbooks that I've used in the past, but they mainly covered the important issues affecting young people from a dominant biological-psychological framework. Thus, adolescence is typically considered universal and if there are manifest differences in how young people live out their years, the differences were in social factors that influences the trajectory but did not change the essential qualities of being an adolescent. This was deeply unsatisfactory to me. There were researchers currently working in the social sciences who questioned these assumptions and offered other frameworks to engage with the topic of adolescence. In addition, my personal experiences growing up in India made me question some of the theories proposing universal trajectories of growth.

Historians of childhood were exploring the major historical factors that influenced the concept of childhood and adolescence and the frameworks established to understand them. Sociologists were engaging in ethnographic research with youth participants in the many settings where they were living and functioning and were discovering that adolescence is not one phenomenon but multiple experiences. While cross-cultural researchers within psychology were asking these questions, they did little to interrogate the concept of adolescence itself. Political scientists were exploring the role of youth as citizens and as populations that one term as oppressed, in that they had few rights that adults had and few protections that children had. Poststructuralists used theory and language to interrogate the notion of adolescence itself and

established that the term was a product of industrialization, especially the early years of the industrial revolution and colonialism. They wrote about how language that framed adolescence was often used to control a vulnerable population at a time when science served as a colonial project to subdue whole populations.

All these new questions and frameworks were missing from the standard account of adolescence in major textbooks. I started writing the essays you are about to read for my own students. I had been using them for a few years and my students loved what I had introduced to them; I felt it was time to formally publish for others who were seeking a more comprehensive framework to view adolescence but who had no time to write a book for their students. I hope you enjoy reading the book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Acknowledgements

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

I wish to acknowledge my students over the years who willingly engaged with my essays in class, enthusiastically discussing them, giving me feedback and calling me out when I made mistakes. Writing my own textbook allowed me to be my most passionate and engage with my students in an authentic fashion. I was able to introduce concepts from a wide variety of fields and it was indeed a gift to be able to see students connect the dots and form a comprehensive picture of the world around them. Students today stand at the edge of great changes both personally and as subjects and actors in the larger world. My desire in writing the book was to help students articulate their experiences with clarity and engage in constructing a vision for the future with each other. I am grateful to my students for providing me with encouragement and feedback in this journey.

I stand on the broad shoulders of the many giants that helped shape the edifice of the various disciplines that I have drawn from in trying to understand the experiences of young people. The great theorists in psychology, from Sigmund Freud, Uri Bronfenbrenner, to Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky have always drawn me to their work. Some of the philosophers who had a deep impact on me and on society in general include Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Michel Foucault, Edward Said, John Rawls and Hannah Arendt all of whom I have introduced in the book. The number of theorists and philosophers who inspired me to think more deeply about the subject and weave them into holistic understanding are too many to mention in this page.

I am grateful to my colleagues and co-workers who make my workday rich and fulfilling. The State University of New York at New Paltz has given me the space and autonomy to dabble in creative thought and writing; I often think of my good fortune in being able

to come to work excited to be engaging in the work that I do. Too many workers in the American economy are left to feel like cogs with few rewards for the effort they put in. My departmental co-workers inspire me to be the best teacher and writer I can be. A special shout out to the departmental administrative assistant Terri Maphis who is the backbone of the department. She has been a friend, a guide and an assistant for so many years and makes my work life possible. I am so obliged to my research assistant Laura Arias who has helped with research, writing, proof-reading, providing charts, graphs and photographs. Her boundless enthusiasm for social justice and transformational change is so infectious, she takes me right along for the ride.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for inspiring me in their special ways. My parents loved learning and impressed upon me the value of a creative life. My father was himself so well read in many different areas that before the age of the internet he was called by friends a walking encyclopedia. My mother made sure her two daughters understood the need for a career and independence. My children Adityan and Ananthan with their critical political sensibilities, provide me with unique insights about growing up in the margins of a settler colonial country. My partner Daniel James keeps me laughing even when I feel discouraged. Thanks.

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Critical Adolescence & Youth in Context

PART I
MAIN BODY

I. Chapter I- Introduction to the Study of Adolescence

A Multidisciplinary Exploration

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Goals

- Comprehend the biological and psychological frameworks used to understand adolescence
- Learn about the historical framework for understanding adolescence
- Explore the postmodernist critique of social constructions of adolescence
- Explore how social location affects adolescence
- Understand the differences and similarities in the frameworks used to understand youth lives

Chapter Outline

- The Teenage Mystique: Neither Child nor Adult

- Raging Hormones: A Biological View
 - Problems with Brain Analysis
- The Psychological Perspective
 - The Psychoanalysts
 - Cognitive View
 - Ecological Theories
- Recent Critical Perspectives
 - Historical Framework
 - Sociological Perspective
 - Aesthetic-Literary View
 - Emancipation Theories
 - Postmodernist Critique
 - Political Perspective
- Conclusion
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The Teenage Mystique: Neither Child nor Adult

My ancestors were Tamil Brahmins from a small town in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. We belonged to the highest caste in a very unequal and rigid social system. Although caste discrimination was officially banned after India gained independence, traditions like child marriage continued in rural areas for a long time. My grandmother

was married at just 8 years old and had her first child at 13. My grandfather was only 16 when they married. Together, they raised six children, five of them daughters. My eldest aunt was married at 13 and became a mother at 14. In contrast, my mother was married by arrangement at what was then considered the “old” age of 21. One generation later, my sister and I didn’t marry until our late twenties and early thirties, and we chose our own partners. We both pursued higher education and focused on building our careers. My children, now grown men, were raised in the U.S. and had a fairly typical American adolescence. Still, as second-generation immigrants, they had to learn to move between two cultures—South Asian and American. I share this story to show how much the lives of young people between the ages of 13 and 18 can differ across time, place, and culture.

Many people, especially in popular media and everyday conversations believe that adolescence is mostly shaped by biological changes. However, among scholars, there has long been debate about what adolescence really is and where it comes from. This chapter introduces several key ways researchers and thinkers have tried to understand adolescence. These include: **(a) biological and psychological approaches, (b) ecological frameworks, (c) poststructuralist and postmodernist theories, (d) historical perspectives, (e) sociological analyses, and (f) literary interpretations.** Each of these frameworks will be explained in detail, along with the kinds of evidence used to support their claims. Where relevant, we’ll also highlight gaps in our current understanding. As you’ll see, the ideas in each school of thought are not fixed; they continue to evolve and spark discussion.

In the discussions of gender and puberty in this text, we

will most often use the terms “girls” and “boys” to refer to the unencumbered physical maturation of children assigned female at birth and those assigned male at birth respectively. This is intended to provide general information about the existing knowledge and research. Though often based on assumptions of a gender binary, it is not intended to negate or erase the spectrum of possible gender identities that are increasingly prevalent. As new research emerges, relevant sections of the text will be updated.

In today’s industrialized societies, the average girl reaches puberty around age 12.5. Just a couple of hundred years ago, it was closer to 16 (Chumlea et al., 2003; Evelith, 2017). While the age of sexual maturity has been falling, the average age at which women have their first child has been rising; it’s now just over 26 in many developed countries. This growing gap between physical maturity and starting a family is largely due to modern economic demands. In today’s global economy, young people often need many years of education and training before they can think about settling down (Whelpton, Campbell & Patterson, 2015).

The concept of “adolescence” itself is relatively new. Historians trace its origins to the early 1800s, during the rise of industrial society. The term first became widely known through the work of psychologist G. Stanley Hall in the early 20th century (1904; 1916). His influential books helped launch the field of adolescent studies. At the same time, the spread of European empires and the rise of scientific thinking pushed societies to classify people in new ways, by age, gender, race, class, and place of origin. Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution gave these efforts a powerful framework. He argued that life evolved in a single direction: from simple to complex, from less specialized to

more differentiated. This idea supported the belief that societies, and even individuals, could be ranked by how “evolved” or “advanced” they were, which had lasting effects on how adolescence and other life stages were understood.

Early thinkers who studied human development borrowed ideas from Darwin, but in a simplified way. They believed that life forms that appeared later in history were better suited to survive than earlier ones (Charlesworth, 1992; Morss, 2017). These early scholars drew comparisons between how species evolve over time and how human societies developed through history. Those who used Darwin’s ideas to explain social change were called *social Darwinists*. They argued that early human societies were simple and, over time, became more complex, eventually leading to modern industrial societies. For example, they saw hunter-gatherer groups as less advanced than farming communities, and farming societies as less developed than industrialized Western nations (Paul, 2003). Social Darwinists also applied this thinking to individual human development. They saw a person’s life as moving from a simple stage in childhood, through a more complex phase in adolescence, to full maturity in adulthood. In this view, adolescence became an important turning point, a stage where young people were expected to make decisions that would shape the kind of adults they would become (Arnett, 1999).

According to Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, adolescence is the period of transition between childhood and adulthood. While this definition sounds straightforward, experts from different fields have debated what it really means. Many theorists, philosophers, and cultural

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nce

critics, especially in sociology, history, and postmodern studies, argue that adolescence is not just a natural stage of life. Instead, they believe it is a social construct, something shaped by culture, history, and society rather than biology alone.

On the other side of the debate, many researchers in biology and psychology believe that adolescent behavior is largely shaped by real biological changes, such as shifts in hormone levels and brain development. Whether a researcher sees adolescence as a social construct or a biological fact has a big impact on the kind of research they do, and the policies they recommend. Before we begin to explore adolescence in depth, it's important to understand the reasoning behind these different perspectives and the kinds of evidence each one uses to support its claims.

Raging Hormones: A Biological View

Most mainstream psychologists agree that puberty marks a major turning point in a person's development. In the U.S., biological sexual maturity usually begins around age 12.5 for

individuals assigned female at birth (AFAB) and around age 14 for those assigned male at birth (AMAB). A key sign of puberty in AMAB individuals is the first ejaculation, while in AFAB individuals it is menarche, or the first menstrual period (Evelith, 2017). Biologists explain that the physical changes of adolescence are largely driven by a surge in sex hormones, triggered by increased activity in the hypothalamus. In AFAB individuals, the ovaries release two main hormones: estrogen and progesterone. Estrogen is responsible for changes like breast development and the functioning of the uterus and vagina. Progesterone helps regulate the menstrual cycle and prepares the uterus for pregnancy. In AMAB individuals, the testes produce androgens, mainly testosterone, which drives the development of male sexual characteristics and supports the function of male reproductive organs. It's important to note that both estrogen and testosterone are present in all developing bodies, just in different amounts depending on biological sex.

The discovery of these biological changes has led many experts to describe adolescence as a time when impulses often take over teen behavior.

Brain Imaging and Teen Behavior

In recent years, advances in brain imaging, especially functional MRI (fMRI), which allows scientists to take “live” pictures of brain activity, have helped researchers learn more about how the adolescent brain develops. One widely accepted idea among brain scientists is called the **dual systems model**. According to this theory, the parts of the brain involved in emotions and social rewards develop faster during adolescence than the parts responsible for careful, long-term thinking. As a result, teens may be more likely to seek out rewards and focus on success, while

underestimating risks or the chances of failure (Steinberg, 2010; Goodenough & Freeman, 2017). The area of the brain responsible for planning and decision-making is the prefrontal cortex, located at the front of the brain, which develops more slowly. This part is essential for goal-setting, self-control, and problem-solving, and is often seen as what makes human thinking distinct. Picture: [Dual systems model](#)

There has been some criticism leveled at this model in studies that show that teens tend to engage in risky behavior more often when their peers are around. So, the capacity to engage in risky behavior may be a regulated action in order to win approval or admiration by their friends. In addition, adults can behave in risky ways as well; for instance, when speculating on risky stocks that have a higher than average rate of tanking but might have quick short-term gains, adults exhibit a similar propensity as adolescents.

Brain researchers explain youth behavior with something called **neural pruning**. This means the brain gets rid of connections between brain cells (neurons) that aren't used much, and makes stronger connections for thinking better and connecting different parts of the brain. During the adolescent years, the front part of the brain (called the prefrontal cortex), which helps with planning and making decisions, loses about half of its connections. At the same time, important pathways get stronger. Some scientists think this rapid brain change can make teens' thinking less steady. Youth start to think in more complicated ways, which brings new and sometimes confusing feelings and ideas. Because of this, youth might act in ways adults don't always understand (Siegel, 2015). Picture: [Neural pruning at 3 ages – 1, 8, 13](#)

Researchers say another important brain change happens in areas that make chemicals like dopamine and serotonin. These chemicals affect mood and behavior. A gene on the X chromosome makes a protein that lowers dopamine and serotonin levels. Since boys have only one X chromosome, any problems with this gene show up more strongly in them. This can lead to behaviors like starting drug use early and having trouble controlling impulses. During the adolescent years, brain circuits that use dopamine become more active, making teens want more excitement and adventure. Because of this, thrilling experiences can feel addictive, providing a powerful rush of the pleasure hormone, dopamine. Thus, negative outcomes are undervalued in their rush to seek new experiences and excitement (Casey, 2015; Janssens et al., 2015).

Similarly, scientists think that having too little serotonin, a chemical that acts as both a neurotransmitter and a hormone in the human body, can affect mood, lead to impulsive actions, and make people take more risks. In adults, low serotonin levels were believed to be linked depression and emotional imbalance. But in teenagers, researchers say it's more about the balance between two chemicals: serotonin and dopamine. Serotonin levels are highest in childhood, but the system that controls dopamine is still developing during the teen years. This means teens have a harder time managing their emotions, while also wanting more excitement and rewards, which can lead them to take more risks (Walker et al., 2017).

Brain scans have been used to show that there are real biological differences between adults and teenagers (Somerville, 2016). In one common experiment, researchers showed pictures of faces with



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different emotions to both teens and adults while watching how their brains reacted. Some studies found big differences in which parts of the brain were active, while others didn't. In one study, most teens saw a scared face and thought it was angry, while most adults saw the emotional expression on the face as fear. The researcher explained this by saying teens were using the older, emotional parts of the brain, while adults were using the front part of the brain that helps with thinking and judgment. Based on this and other studies, scientists believe teens may be less logical when reading emotions, which can cause misunderstandings with adults (Crone & Elzinga, 2015; Silveri & Sneider, 2014).

In short, a common idea in research about the teenage brain is that teens go through major changes in their bodies before their brains are fully developed. Their sexual hormones are fully active by the teen years, but the part of the brain that helps with decision-making and self-control, the prefrontal cortex keeps growing into their twenties. Because of this, teens are often seen as having adult desires but child-like emotions. Brain scientists say teens may feel ready for sex and independence, but they still need support from adults to handle these things responsibly. They enjoy excitement and

new experiences, but they often struggle to set limits and think things through carefully.		to be very small.
Problems with Brain Analysis	Theories of Brain Development	
Problems with Using Brain Scans to Make Generalizations About Age-Related Changes	'Explaining' Adolescent Behavior	
1. Brain scans show patterns, not causes: Brain scans can tell us which parts of the brain are active, but they can't tell us exactly why someone acts a certain way. Just because a teen's brain looks different doesn't mean that's the reason they take risks or feel strong emotions.	<u>The dual systems theory of adolescent brain development states that the social-</u>	
2. People develop		

emotional areas of the brain develop much more rapidly than the planned thinking part of the brain. This is proposed as one reason as to why adolescents may not always behave rationally or in a

at different rates: Not all teens or adults are the same. Some teens may develop certain brain areas earlier or later than others. So it's not accurate to make big claims about all teens based on average brain scan results.

3. **Behavior is shaped by more than the brain:** Things like family life, culture, school, and personal experiences all influence how people think and act. Looking only at brain scans leaves out these important factors.
4. **Brain scans have limits:** Brain imaging tools like fMRI are helpful, but they don't show the full picture. They can be hard to interpret, affected by small movements, and may not fully reflect what's really happening in the brain.
5. **It can lead to unfair labels:** If we use brain scans to say teens are always emotional or not thinking clearly, we might underestimate their abilities or ignore their opinions. This can lead to unfair treatment and limit their chances to grow and learn.

Some researchers argue that the teenage brain is shaped by the life experiences and environments of teens, so just seeing a link between brain activity and behavior doesn't prove one causes the other (Wright et al., 1999). The idea of

neuro-realism means that people are more likely to believe a study if it includes brain scan images even if the study has problems (Gruber, 2017). Critics warn that brain development is a lifelong process. Our brains keep changing from childhood all the way into old age. New brain connections are always forming, and older ones are being removed (Baltes, Reuter-Lorenz & Rösler, 2006; Eisenberg, 1995). For example, research shows that the **Corpus Callosum**, the thick bundle of nerves that connects the left and right sides of the brain keeps growing even into adulthood (Pujol et al., 1993). One of the strongest criticisms of using brain science to explain adolescence is that scientists still cannot accurately predict how teens or adults will behave just by looking at brain activity.

For a long time, scientists have tried to explain group differences, like between teens and adults, or between males and females by pointing to the brain. This has often involved reinforcing stereotypes. Some brain researchers say that teen brains are immature because teens are more likely to take risks or act impulsively. They suggest that this risk-taking is a sign that teens are less developed or less capable than adults, and that this difference can be seen in the brain. About 30 years ago, another trait, **youth**

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violence, was also seen as a mainly teenage problem. Some lawmakers believed that violent teens had something wrong in their brains and wouldn't change, so they pushed for harsh punishment (Dumit, 2014). Throughout the history of science, people have often accepted research findings simply because they confirm what society already believes. For example, claims that men have more brain areas for math have been popular because they match social stereotypes. Many people only trust findings about behavior if they can be shown in the brain, even

though brain scan data (like fMRI) is complicated and often debated. Experts say that brain data should be backed up by other sources to be trustworthy (Racine et al., 2005).

When the brain is looked at in isolation and divorced from the social, political, and historical context, any finding is automatically ascribed to the neurological makeup of the individual and therefore considered biological (Harding, 2016). Let's look at the finding that adolescents and adults tend to ascribe different emotions to the same face, anger and fear respectively. There are several problems with the conclusion that the authors draw. They do not discuss intra-group differences. In other words, how did brain functioning within the two groups (adolescents and adults) affect responses? Did the adults in the sample whose amygdala was active misinterpret facial expressions? For a theory to be substantiated, it is not enough for there to be broad group differences, but the theory must be able to explain individual differences. Secondly, expressing and judging emotions is also laden with social significance.

How emotions are identified and responded to depends on the social status of the people who are attempting to communicate to each other. For teens, their conclusions about adults' emotions are based on their experiences with significant adults around them.

Adults hold a great deal of power, especially over teenagers. When they feel fear, whether for the youth under their care, or for their own safety, it often comes out as anger. For example, when my husband and I punished our son for driving recklessly, he responded bitterly, accusing us of taking the car away just because we were angry. We tried to explain that we were actually scared for his safety. This kind of misunderstanding is common in relationships where there's a power imbalance. People often misread each other's emotions, and these misreadings aren't always about brain differences. Research shows that behavior is shaped by many influences beyond biology. One study, for instance, found that people with insomnia often misinterpret emotions because they don't scan both the eyes and mouth at the same time, something non-insomniacs usually do. While biology plays a role in adolescent behavior, it's only one part of a much larger picture. The brain, hormones, and neurochemicals are all shaped by environmental factors as well.

Thus, as critics of brain research point out, perceived and stereotypical behavioral differences between adolescents and adults are automatically ascribed to brain differences in structure and function; other social, political, economic, and familial factors are underemphasized by biological researchers. Good scientific methodology requires that researchers have a hypothesis backed by theory before they begin their study; brain research exploring group differences often ends up being a fishing expedition for

patterns that reflect prevailing views about the groups. Data from fMRI studies, impressive as they may look, are a result of complex data analysis and processing, and only as good as the objectivity of the researchers who conduct the study. There are drawbacks with using the fMRI as a standalone measure of brain activity. Some researchers recommend triangulating the results with other ways of obtaining brain information that rule out researcher bias and methodological errors (Eklund, Nichols & Knutson, 2016). There is evidence, for instance, that the same areas are activated when very different stimuli are presented, or where different outcomes, i.e., pleasure or fear, are expected from the participants (Hommer et al., 2003).

Neurorealism

Neurorealism is the notion that people believe the results

One concern that critics have raised is that brain scans can't reliably predict how someone will behave (Helfinstein & Casey, 2015). For example, you can't look at a teenager's brain and know if they'll be impulsive or take risky actions unless the case is very extreme (Rosenberg, Casey & Holmes, 2018). Most people fall within a normal range of behavior, so predictions based on brain structure aren't very accurate. Also, the emotional situation matters a lot. Teens are more likely to act impulsively in emotionally intense situations. So, it's hard to say that a person's behavior is caused just by how their brain is wired. In many cases, the brain itself is shaped by the environment and experiences a person has (Bettencourt, 2017).

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. What are the areas in the brain that change during puberty?
2. How does an adolescent's environment impact their behavioral patterns?
3. What are some strengths and drawbacks with understanding adolescence from a biological framework?

REFLECT

1. How would you describe your emotional patterns as an adolescent? Have your emotions changed? If so, in what ways are your emotions different?
2. What was your environment like growing up? How were you influenced by your cultural and social context?

of studies if the studies are accompanied by brain data, even if they are methodologically flawed.

There has been a long history in science of describing traits that are associated

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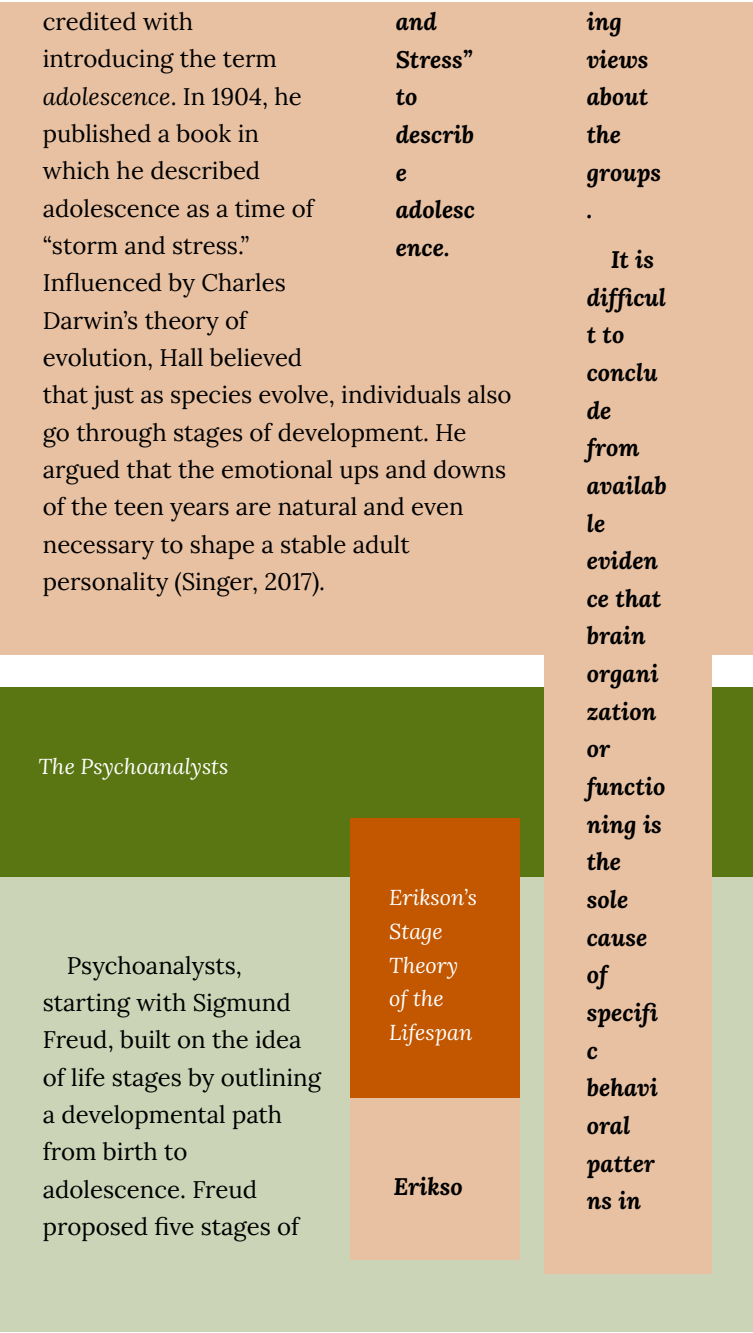
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Psychological views of adolescence generally align with biological views. Both see adolescence as a universal, biologically based stage of life marked by major changes in thinking, emotions, and behavior. They also share the belief that human development happens in clear, separate stages, from being immature and not fully developed to becoming more mature and fully formed. This way of understanding adolescence has shaped how most experts think about teenagers. Because psychological theories have had a big influence on how we think about and make policies for adolescents, it's important to look at how these ideas developed and what schools of thought they come from.

Stanley Hall is often



contrast to the influence of the context in which a person lives in.	nonconceived of development as lasting through the entire lifespan; however, the issues and dilemmas as facing individuals varies based on one's age and culturally appropriate tasks	childhood, each focused on sexual or pseudo-sexual feelings tied to different areas of the body, ultimately leading to heterosexual attraction in adolescence (Freud & Bonaparte, 1954). His theory reflects a clear heteronormative bias. Freud also introduced the idea of <i>individuation</i> , the process of separating from one's parents, as a key task of adolescence (Freud, 2018). His daughter, Anna Freud, emphasized the role of sexuality in adolescent development, arguing that teens often behave in contradictory and unpredictable ways due to emerging sexual needs. She described adolescents as torn between extremes: selfishness and generosity, social belonging and solitude, optimism and pessimism, laziness and ambition. According to her, it is
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normal for teens to temporarily regress to earlier stages of development, letting their desires dominate their behavior (Freud, 1946).

One of Freud's most prominent students was Erik Erikson. Like Freud, Erikson believed that there are certain universal, inherent, age-related needs that all humans share no matter where they live or how they live. However, unlike Freud, Erik Erikson underemphasized instinctual needs like sexuality and aggression; he spoke about the importance of our conscious thoughts and decision-making skills (Erikson & Erikson, 1998). Erikson conceived of development as lasting through the entire lifespan; however, the issues and dilemmas facing individuals varies based on one's age and culturally appropriate tasks for that age. During adolescence, the biggest challenges facing individuals revolve around an appropriate defining of one's identity, these include choosing one's values, beliefs, career paths, life goals and life mission. The decisions individuals make during these years can affect the rest of their lives (Erikson, 1994).

Erikson's students built on his work and identified four common ways that adolescents respond to the challenge of figuring out who they are. Two of these responses are considered healthy: **identity formation**, where teens make thoughtful decisions based on their own values and needs, and **identity moratorium**, where they continue exploring and questioning before committing to a clear identity. Less healthy responses include **identity foreclosure**, where

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teens adopt identities based on their family's expectations rather than their own choices, and **identity diffusion**, where they feel confused or overwhelmed and stop trying to define themselves. Identity diffusion and role confusion can sometimes lead to harmful or self-destructive behavior (Marcia, 1966).

The Cognitive View of Youth

Jean Piaget, a highly influential psychologist, significantly shaped how we think about adolescence, especially in education. Like Freud and Erikson, Piaget believed children develop through universal stages from infancy to adolescence (Labinowicz, 1966). While Freud and Erikson focused on emotional development, Piaget studied how children's thinking, particularly logical reasoning develops over time.

Piaget believed that children are born with an instinct to organize their experiences into mental frameworks, or *schemas*, which evolve as they interact with their environment. He outlined four stages of cognitive development:

1. **Sensorimotor Stage (birth–2 years):** Infants learn through physical interaction with the world. They lack *object permanence*, the understanding that things still exist even when out of sight until around 18 months.

2. **Preoperational Stage (2–7 years):** Children begin to use language and symbols to represent experiences. However, their thinking is still dominated by perception and lacks logical structure.
3. **Concrete Operational Stage (7–12 years):** Children develop logical thinking but are limited to concrete, tangible situations. They can classify objects, arrange them in order (seriation), and understand *conservation*, that quantity remains the same despite changes in shape or appearance.
4. **Formal Operational Stage (12 years and up):** In adolescence, abstract and hypothetical thinking becomes possible. Teens begin to use propositional logic, understand concepts like truth and justice, and are able to form theories by synthesizing information (Inhelder & Piaget, 2013).

Piaget viewed the abstract thinking that emerges in adolescence as the highest form of human reasoning. He and his followers emphasized that teenagers are capable of thinking about complex moral issues, such as truth and justice. They can imagine an ideal, fair world and are often motivated to take action to help create that world. Historically, young people have often led social justice movements, especially when older generations have accepted inequality as long as it doesn't affect them directly. Research by Piaget and his students found that adolescents often score higher on moral reasoning than adults (Kramer, 1983). By age 12 and

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operational stage during, youth begin to think in an abstract fashion, using propositional logic, grasping complex concepts like truth and justice, and synthesizing varied facts together

beyond, young people can also think scientifically, controlling variables, testing hypotheses, and drawing logical conclusions. This kind of thinking is used in scientific experiments and requires **combinatorial logic**, or the ability to systematically generate and consider all possible combinations of a set of factors (Bart, 1971).

Piaget's theory has faced several criticisms. Some studies have shown that children can complete Piagetian tasks at much younger ages than he proposed, especially when the tasks are made more familiar or relevant to their everyday experiences (Myers & Ahmed, 2016). Other researchers have questioned the idea that Piaget's stages are universal. They argue that factors such as culture, gender, and ethnicity play a significant role in how cognitive abilities develop. In particular, critics point out that Piaget's stage sequence often does not hold up in cultures where Western-style education is limited or absent (Brubaker, 2016; Perrucci, 2017). To his credit, Piaget remained an active researcher and writer into his later years and welcomed critical engagement with his work.

Ecological Theories

Throughout much of the 20th century, biological and psychological theories of adolescence have held sway over social policy, education, and parenting practices. Educators and parents alike were encouraged to align their methods with the developmental stages, biological, emotional, and cognitive, articulated by theorists such as Piaget (Furth, 1970). A prevailing consensus among child development experts maintained that children progressed from undifferentiated behaviors to increasingly sophisticated forms of thought, with these transformations understood to follow a biologically timed sequence of brain and bodily maturation. While some theorists nominally acknowledged the role of social influences, such factors were largely peripheral and seen as having little bearing on the core developmental trajectory. Human development, in this framework, was presumed to follow a universal, context-independent path, with any deviations from this norm dismissed as anomalies or errors (Ertem, 2017; Boss, 2016).

A new generation of researchers began to challenge the idea that child development is the same across all contexts. One of the most influential

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voices in this movement was **Uri Bronfenbrenner**, who proposed that development is shaped by a complex system of relationships and environments. He introduced the **Ecological Systems Theory**, a dynamic model made up of concentric circles, each representing a different layer of influence on the child's growth:

1. **Individual:** At the center are the child's inborn traits such as temperament, genetic predispositions, and physical features.
2. **Microsystem:** This includes the child's immediate environments where direct interaction occurs, such as the family, school, peer group, and neighborhood.
3. **Mesosystem:** This layer describes the interconnections between different parts of the microsystem; for example, the relationship between a child's parents and teachers, or between home life and school experiences. These connections can be either supportive or conflicting.
4. **Exosystem:** These are external environments that indirectly affect the child, even though the child is not directly involved in them. Examples include a parent's workplace, local government decisions, or community health services.

5. **Macrosystem:** This is the outermost layer, encompassing the broader cultural values, laws, customs, and ideologies that shape all the inner systems. It includes social norms about education, gender roles, economic policies, and other large-scale influences.

6. **Chronosystem** (added later): This dimension accounts for the role of **time** in development, both in terms of a child's personal timeline (e.g., the impact of parental divorce or the COVID-19 pandemic at a particular age) and historical time (e.g., growing up in a time of war or rapid technological change).

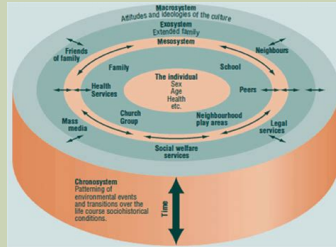
Bronfenbrenner's theory helped shift the focus from the child as an isolated individual to a view of development as deeply embedded in and shaped by a web of social, cultural, and environmental contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 2009; Kochtitzky & Cracchiola, 2016).

Here are **concrete examples** for each layer of **Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory**, showing how different environments influence a child's development:

Individual: The child's own biological and psychological traits such as a naturally shy temperament, a child born

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with a learning disability, having high energy levels or a strong memory, children's physical health or chronic illness.



(Courtesy Kochtitzky & Cracchiola, 2016)

A Dialectical Materialist Psychology:

While Piaget was developing a psychology of children's development based on the growth of their logical and conceptual 'abilities', a parallel psychology was being developed in the Soviet Union based on children's lives as it intertwines with the material, social, economic and political world in which they are raised in. While Bronfenbrenner theorized that children were influenced by the many

circles of influence them, Soviet	:
psychologists proposed that the very	I
trajectory of childhood is determined by	n
how history and the socio-economic	t
systems led up to the moment. In their	e
view, the elements of what constitutes the	r
individual is related to the context, in	a
influenced by the context and changes the	c
context in turn. This complex relationship	t
is dialectically related but unlike Piaget's	i
theory, the source of the change is the	o
material and social context. Thus, material	n
history pervades every sphere of the	s
child's life provides . The cognitive	b
psychologist who probably is most closely	e
aligned with historical dialectical	t
materialism is Lev Vygotsky (1896- 1934)	w
who in his short life transformed how	e
cognitivists and educational practitioners	e
viewed learning and development (Rattner	n
& Silva, 2017). Today, however, few	t
western educational experts recognize his	w
theory as being influenced by HDM	o
(principally Vladimir Lenin), even though	o
along with Jean Piaget, his works form the	r
fundamental basis of educational praxis in	m
Europe and North America. Vygotsky	o
grew up in Tsarist Russia and as a person	r
of Jewish origin, witnessed first-hand the	e
discriminations and biases faced by	m
national minoritized communities under a	i
dictatorial monarchy. He was a brilliant	c
student; however, many opportunities	r
were closed off for him because of the	

antisemitism under Tsar Nicholas. Admission to university was limited for Jewish students, who were mostly chosen via lottery. It was good fortune for the world therefore that he was able to find a place in Moscow University right before the Bolshevik revolution (Yasnitsky, 2018). Vygotsky was deeply influenced by the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin and much of his work as a learning theorist was inspired by Marx's framework for understanding exploitation and the *liberatory* engagement of the oppressed (Au, 2007b; Packer, 2008). The first translations of Vygotsky's work appeared in the west in the 1960s, and by then there was such anti-Marx fervor that all his references to Marx or Lenin were deliberately removed by the translators (Kozulin, 1986; Vygotsky, 1962)

There are enormous parallels between Vladimir Lenin's work on imperialism and the famous learning theorist Lev Vygotsky's work in the area of education on how children learn. Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist who is now very popular in educational circles all over the world. When his works were first translated into English, all references to Marxism were left out because the authors decided this would make his work less palatable to western readers. In fact, much of Vygotsky's learning theory was

based on Lenin's writings and today there is a rediscovery of the connections by academics. Vladimir Lenin was the leader of the Bolsheviks who overthrew the Czar in Russia in 1917. He was also a prolific writer even as he was organizing workers and peasants in Russia. So, much of his own theory on working class consciousness was based on his own experiences. He proposed that workers who are routinely exploited under capitalism develop a spontaneous knowledge about their exploitation and suffering. They are able to articulate all the ways in which their lives are unstable, but they are not able to put it all together in a way that promotes social change; that requires collective action. The work of an educator/organizer is to develop that into a scientific understanding of their lives. Vygotsky similarly spoke about how children have a spontaneous understanding of how the world works around them; the role of the educator is to be sensitive to where the child is at and move them to a more advanced understanding of the world. A teacher has to stay within the zone where the child can do a level of work on their own and the level where they require the help of an advanced leader/teacher/collective to complete the task.

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For Lenin the zone consisted of the level

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p and uncoordinated in their response and a
l higher level where their consciousness
e was now social and collective (radical
i subjectivity) and where everyone in a
n movement shared a consensus on
t systemic problems that resulted in their
h plight and how to move forward in the
e movement. For both Vygotsky and Lenin
c consciousness and knowledge building is
h always a social collective enterprise and
il there is no such thing as individual
d emancipation or individual knowledge that
's is unmoored from society-group. If a
m leader or educator introduced concepts
i too early or urged action prematurely
c (adventurism such as individual vigilante
r violence) both the movement and learning
o are set back. If the leader delayed learning
s and action (opportunism by making small
y changes that don't affect the real goal of a
s workers' state), collective consciousness
t withers away. If you've watched the movie
e Joker, you will see an example of
m spontaneous anger that is not moored in
a proper consciousness. Joker is abused by
n society, and he engages in undisciplined
d rioting and destruction. In a proper
s movement, the consciousness of the
o workers is aligned with the larger goals of
m the group, thereby ensuring a change in
e social order and thinking.
o Marx had proposed that all successful

struggles were based on class solidarity and not ideological solidarities (such as race and gender). He reasoned that ultimately how humans interact with this world is material; humans have always worked to bring nature under control to suit their needs and all social formations, past and present, were designed to aid this process. This process of working as a group to aid in survival may be based on gender or race, but they are biproducts and therefore their meanings are always in flux throughout history. Social class, however, is rooted in the material engagement of a community with the world and therefore most social change has to begin there. As an illustration, in hunting gathering communities there was enormous gender equity because the mode of production did not lead to a lot of surpluses (savings) by the community; so, there was nothing to protect. With the coming of agriculture, feudalism became the social arrangement to mediate work, leading to increased land, grain surpluses and things that needed protection; there were a group of people who became more powerful, and women now were considered inferior and their sexuality had to be controlled so the land and property remained within the family or clan. Similarly, under capitalism, racism and slavery became a way to increase capitalist profits. Thus, the social

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formation and its associated class structures undergird all other exploitations. In Au's conception, "In the most general sense, to be "conscious" in Lenin's terms means to be thought-out, planned, self-aware, and using systematic analysis to develop strategy and act as part of a larger working-class movement against a system that is not operating in the interests of workers." For Lenin, and Vygotsky, the ultimate teacher is a solidarity party that guides and directs its leaders to engage with the masses to bring about change, while at the same time, improving and clarifying the changing social circumstances on the ground. In the Russian case, it was the Bolshevik communist party that formed the highest level of consciousness and knowledge production. In China, it was the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

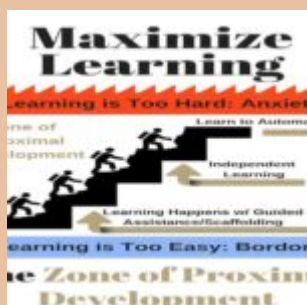
According to Lenin the political workers party leadership ought to be totally dedicated to both growing their own knowledge of the contradictions of the society they live within, in the company of their fellow leaders while at the same time engaging in teaching and educating the masses about how their personal life is related to the larger struggle. That is one reason why, most revolutionaries after they take over the power of the bourgeois (capitalist) state, enact mass political

education for the masses. As more
workers advance along the Zone of
Proximal Development, they can do the
leadership work themselves. Xi Xing Ping,
the current premier of China was one of
those youth. He came from a privileged
family and was sent to a village for most of
his youth to learn about the struggles of
peasants. He also failed his communist
party entrance exams several times before
passing the exam. You see how the idea of
Lenin's idea of social transformation works
on a social and national scale. Both theory
and Practice are central to knowledge
development

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Vygotsky proposed that like physical
tools used by humans to mediate their
relationships with nature, thought and
mental symbols are instruments that
society devised to mediate and negotiate
human functioning within the natural
world. Initially, actions by infants are
disconnected from their thinking;
however, actions increasingly lead to
sophisticated thinking and symbol formations leading the
two processes to align, but always these cognitive
processes are dialectically related to the material contexts
of existence. Teaching is therefore always flexible and
contingent on the learner and the context. For Vygotsky,
language was the most important tool of them all and the
way in which language is conceived and used is mediated
by society. He criticized Piaget's theory of universal stages
and countered that in fact learning with an expert adult can

influence the course and rate of development of children's cognition. Vygotsky in his own cross-cultural work found that all societies have devised unique ways of teaching their young and the tools that they would need to adapt to their environment (Vygotsky, 1978; 1980).



The Zone of Proximal Development

One of the central concepts introduced by Vygotsky is the Zone of Proximal Development. The concept of the ZPD is borrowed from Marx's pedagogical ideas of inquiry and presentation and Lenin's ideas regarding the need for flexibility of the workers movements in terms of strategies but not of its

principal. Vygotsky defines the difference between the levels of performance when a novice does a task by themselves and their level of achievement when they can do the same task with an expert guiding them. For him, a good teacher is one who stays within the zone and leads the child to increasing proficiency in a task. The most effective way to enable children to learn a skill and to problem-solve is to constantly introduce them to a task that they may not be able to do by themselves but can do with the help of an expert. The expert will find that children are performing increasingly complex tasks that they may not have been able to perform if they were left to learn for themselves. Thus, Vygotsky differs from Piaget in the importance that he attaches to language and the role of expert adults in learning and development (CPD, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978; Parameswaran, 1994). Vygotsky died at a relatively young age and his work was rediscovered in the

west in the 1960s when some of his seminal writings were published in English. Piaget read some of his writings and expressed great appreciation for the unique insights that Vygotsky provided (Parameswaran, 2006).

Review and Reflect:

REVIEW

1.What are some ways adolescents can respond to an identity crisis?

2.What is the Zone of Proximal development?

REFLECT

1.How did your experiences in and out of school have an impact on your identity?

2.How can you use the cognitive/ecological theories to better respond to youth's needs?

Recent Critical Perspectives on Adolescence

Contemporary Perspectives

The theories about adolescence discussed earlier, focused their inquiry on organismic, bodily changes that occur in adolescence to a greater or lesser extent. Thus, the biological theories of adolescence explored brain and hormonal changes in the body while the psychological theories focused on the consequences of bodily changes during adolescence on the behaviors of individuals. The following sections of the chapter outline more recent discussions about “adolescence” that center on its social construction and its historical specificity. Many of the new schools of thought about youth were a direct critique of the psychological and biological view of teenagers.

Historical Perspectives of Adolescence

The lives of youth have varied enormously historically in the US and in other cultures. A historical exploration of the written records of the early Puritans in New England reveals that there was very little distinction made between children and youth at that time. A 10-year-old and a 17-year-old were both perceived very similarly in terms of their maturity during the early colonial period in the USA; they often studied together, played together and performed household duties side by side (Mintz, 2004). There were strong relations of dependence between adults and children living within families; even when children worked away from home, their earnings were sent home as

supplemental income. Most middle-class youth were sent to work under master craftsmen as apprentices. The masters treated them like they treated their own children. Later during the early industrial era, as many of these masters' establishments turned to factories, there was mass exploitation of young people where the masters refused to train them completely but would make them work on one part of the creative process. Slave children could do minor work until age 14 after which their responsibilities towards their masters increased dramatically and they were exploited with little regard for their welfare.

The industrial revolution brought enormous changes to the American population. Young men and women were employed in large numbers in factories where they spent time together for extended periods of time away from family control. Their lives were hard, and they often had to work for over 13 hours a day (Humphries, 2010). In 1846, the Irish potato famine brought in a flood of immigrants into the USA. Several of the large northeastern cities were more than a quarter filled with immigrant population. The new immigrants were poor and, more importantly, culturally different from the earlier immigrants. Cities had high concentrations of youth who visibly posed a threat to the elite families who in turn attempted to move and live further away from poor immigrant communities (Katz & Davey, 1978).

In the 19th century, well-to-do families began supporting high schools to isolate their teens from children of immigrants, street kids, vagrants and deviants (Katz, 1976). However, schools were still not the normal experience for most children until the Great Depression. The idea of 'Education for all', did not take place until World War II (Savage, 2008). Initially, girls were sent to school at greater

frequency than boys because it was looked at as a route to a teaching career; also, within families, boys' income was less dispensable than girls. For a while, schools and colleges existed side-by-side and as alternatives for students. The most popular colleges were the ones teaching agriculture because the population was still predominantly rural. As colleges began to be perceived as being more useful than high schools, the latter became feeders for colleges (Hine, 2000).

In the late 1800s, high schools became places to train children in nationalism and patriotism. As the communist movements took hold among people around the globe, high schools became spaces to train students to resist it. Initially, as child advocates demanded better access to public schools, industry leaders resisted those calls because of their need for cheap labor (Hine, 2000). However, as machines took over human functions more and more in factories and the need for workers shrank, industrialists warmed up to the idea of high schools to avoid rioting and other antisocial behavior on the streets. After the crash of 1929 when joblessness among adults was rampant, youth labor reforms gained a foothold in society (Sommerville, 1990).



*Popular Stereotypes About
Adolescence After World War II*

Several social reform measures in the early 1900s changed the scenario for youth, labor and schooling dramatically. The Juvenile Justice System now took over the role of disciplining, which parents and families were typically responsible for (Empey, Stafford and Hay, 1982).

The method of justice within the system was arbitrary and mimicked middle-class parenting styles. The laws surrounding youth sexuality became increasingly rigid. The minimum age that youth could have sex was raised to 18, with a special eye towards curtailing girls' sexual activity (Champion, 2001).

It was not until the Depression years of the 1930s when adolescence was codified and regimented by the government. As large numbers of workers became unemployed, the government passed laws that prevented people below the age of 18 to seek work. The New Deal prioritized work for the adult male members of households so families can tide over the difficult times. This resulted in large numbers of youth enrolling in high schools for the first time where they spent enormous amounts of time with other people their own age. The word teenager was coined around World War II, signifying all that it means today for us (Medovoi, 2005). As adults went off to war, teenagers got back the jobs that they had lost during the great depression – and more. They were making as much money as adults were because of great shortages in the workforce. Most youth, however, chose to stay in schools because of

laws that deferred military service for students enrolled in high schools. Thus, youth were isolated from adults and they had a lot of spending money – the two elements that gave birth to the modern youth culture (Hine, 2000).

The post-war prosperity, the universalization of high school and Hollywood narratives later dramatically spread the experience of adolescence for youth around the country. Teenage hood became synonymous with youth subcultures, fashion trends and innovation in music, dance and the arts. As historians note, five decades ago there were no clearly identified cliques among teens; today, from the kinds of clothes worn to music listened to, teenagers are defined by their groups (Rotundo, 1993). There are still youth left out of the teen experience as we now know it – immigrant and ethnic minority youth, sexual minorities and lower-class youth experience very different ‘adolescence’ as compared to white middle- and upper-class youth. In the 1990s, several legislations were passed ostensibly aimed at protecting poor and minority youth, but they ended up being exceedingly punitive and restrictive; the hysteria generated by adult fear of youth affects disadvantaged teens much more than they do middle-class adolescents (Cohen, 1997).

Postmodernist Critiques

Some of the most profound critique of the psycho-biological frameworks of adolescence has come from the

poststructuralists and postmodernists. They go beyond claims of historians that adolescence is a recent phenomenon to asserting that the language around adolescence and teenage hood arose from colonial science and has been used as a form of power to manage the population (Lesko, 2001). Some of their major thesis include:

Social-Darwinism and Colonialism: Darwin's theory of evolution was reinterpreted by social scientists to justify the colonialist ambitions around the globe. Social science early on used his theory to classify cultures and communities from very primitive to the very advanced, with European white male society representing the very pinnacle of the realization of human possibilities (Paul, 2003). The project was extended to individual human lives by classifying people of different ages as being differentially advanced, moving from the savagery of children to the barbarism of adolescents and finally the civilized behavior of adults (Loomba, 2007).

Fear of Loss of European Masculinity: At a time when colonialism was being overthrown everywhere, a fear for the manliness of the European white male led policy makers to propose adolescence as the great turning point for individuals and societies; youth was the period when the greatest care had to be exhibited in grooming and training, so citizens can become productive and responsible towards the state (and in capitalist societies, to capital) (Moses & Stone, 2013).

Marking of Youth Bodies and Minds: In the last century there has been an intense effort to scrutinize, mark, label, measure and evaluate youth and young adults for signs of deviance. Normal standards of behavior were established through studying and analyzing youth bodies and behavior

that was highly gendered and racialized. These norms ignored the specific social and cultural contexts in which people lived in (Saltman, 2005).

Surveillance and the Panopticon: Like the panopticon prison (pictured to the right) where prisoners internalize prison regulations because of the mere ‘imagined’ gaze of a guard placed at the center of the prison, adolescents learn to regulate their behavior in accord with societal expectations (Foucault, 1979).

Essentializing and Normalizing Adolescence: Certain stereotypical exhibited behaviors of young people are conceived of as intrinsic (essentialized) and popularized (normalized). The constant push to label makes it easier for teenage specialists to consume information about youth quickly and detect any deviation from the normal and thus to intervene in youth’s lives rapidly to enforce rules of normality (Raibbale & Irizarry, 2010). Therefore, while much diagnosis and measurement around educational achievement is purported to be good for students, the real purpose is to reduce any variance from normal behavior.

Age-wise Classification: What followed were a series of steps to organize society in general and schools along ages, so both the administrator and the administered had a clear understanding about what was expected of them in terms of behavior, feelings and thinking.

High Schools as Training Spaces: High schools are particularly important settings to train youth in the external corporate culture that students will eventually be members of. Schools tend to be hierarchical with scarce rewards going to the children who buy into the system and whose families are privileged enough to be able to envision the possibilities that an unequal system offers their

children (Willis, 2017). High schools are highly competitive, isolated from the outside community with an emphasis on role-oriented individual identity (Spring, 2005).



Nationalism in American Schools

Prioritization of Future Over Present: Since early conceptions of adolescence is rooted in an 'evolution theory', the future is prioritized over the present; thus, teachers and policy makers grapple with shaping teenagers into compliant adults, over the fulfillment of the potential during the period of

adolescence.

The history of adolescence demonstrates that it was conjured up within a historical time, space and context in order to serve functions that were and continue to be nationalistic, militaristic and anti-feminine. These conceptions according to postmodernists were further refined and solidified by disciplines like psychology, anthropology and criminal justice. Once the basic framework was laid down, the stereotypes and prejudices against youth were further 'substantiated' and popularized by the sciences. The consequence of an unexamined notion of adolescence today has been a view of adolescence that is race, class and gender based; thus, conceptions of maturity are Eurocentric, male-centered and biased towards the upper-class.

Since the 1960s, there have been a flood of ethnographic studies exploring adolescent lives in different contexts. They demonstrated convincingly that adolescents do not live uniform lives and in fact, sociologists term this period 'Adolescences' because of the vast differences in the experiences of youth based on gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities, religion and social class (Lesko, 1996). Of these, race and social class have been the most studied.

Social class has an enormous impact on teenage experience. Poor teens tend to be pushed out of school at higher rates, work full-time more often and have fewer resources when they attempt to advance their career aspirations. The digital divide between lower class and middle- and upper-class youth, white and minority youth has grown wider (Lareau, 2002). Youth of color experience a very different adolescence from white middle-class youth (Dubos, 2017). The former has fewer opportunities for advancement in schools, are discriminated against by institutions in society, tend more likely to live in poorer neighborhoods and are less likely to go on to higher education at lower levels. Both poor and minority youth have higher identification rates of physical and mental health issues, adding to the discrimination that they face from social institutions (Hogan, 2017).

Gender and its impact on youth lives has been widely explored; many writers have observed how girls' self-

esteem plummet when they move from elementary to middle school. Some have even called the phenomenon, the silencing of girls. While boys tend to get louder and more confident as they go through middle school, girls do not feel like they have the permission to voice their opinions (Arnett, 2014). This is especially true of white and Asian girls among whom passive femininity is valued. Individuals with various disabilities are increasingly labeled and isolated in schools leading to their exclusion from social cliques and groups in school (Rose, Simpson & Moss, 2015). Transition into adulthood is fraught with difficulties for many people with disabilities and they are offered few services to help them with finding employment (Wei et al., 2015). Many writers have documente

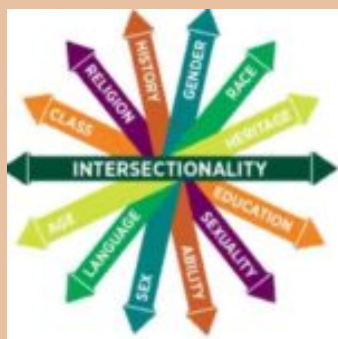


Chart Depicting Intersectionality and Adolescence

d how youth with disabilities are perceived to be asexual (Davis, 2016). With increased profiling of youth belonging to minority religions, people from these communities face harsh treatment in schools and in communal spaces. Youth from non-normative sexuality and gender groups have talked

about their intense loneliness and confusion as they navigate adolescent issues. Unlike youth from other minority and disadvantaged groups, homosexual and transgender adolescents have few familial and community resources. It is no wonder they are represented disproportionately among those who drop out of school,

commit suicide and abuse drugs and alcohol (Lucassen et al., 2017).

The experiences involved with “coming of age” among youth is different based on their family and individual group memberships. Their membership does not just influence their adolescent experiences but changes the very passage through this period for them – the age they enter adolescence, the dilemmas, challenges and the developmental goals they are confronted with, the support they receive and when they transition into adulthood. It may shorten or lengthen traditional adolescence and change their psychological and physical makeup as they go through teenage hood. All of these social and political factors based on one’s social identity have a combined and complex influence that is termed ‘intersectionality’ (NAIS, 2018).

Political Perspectives

Since the last 20 years, there has been a growing group of youth advocates and researchers who have claimed that adolescents are really an oppressed minority group that need to organize to demand their rightful place in society (Males, 1996). Political advocates of young people claim that as the proportion of children of color grew in the 1980s and 1990s, the white majority population responded with fear and loathing towards these youth. Lawmakers responded to white fears by cutting social services and

safety nets for communities of color and for poor people the majority of whom are white. The result was that the poverty rate among children and adolescents grew even during the economic prosperity of the 1990s. Advocates argue that while adults (especially wealthy ones) are paying some of the lowest taxes in this country's history, the proportions of children in poverty has grown (Males, 2015; Males & Brown, 2014).

There have been hysterical discussions about youth violence in the public sphere and demands for ever more stringent punishments against minor infractions, even as youth violence continued to drop (Schissel, 2016). There is evidence that when there is violence involving youth, it is often inflicted by adult members of a family against children and youth in the family. Youth on adult violence is less common than adult on youth aggression (Wekerle & Kerig, 2017). Instead of responding with social policies aimed at increasing communal harmony, mental health help and reducing poverty in communities, policy makers have responded to this dire situation in the living conditions of youth with force and punitive discipline like zero-tolerance in schools (Wilson, 2014).

The US has the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the developed world. Again, the public discourse around this issue has been harsh, blaming teen girls for the situation. There is strong evidence that in more than 60 % of cases where teen girls get pregnant, adult men are the impregnators and yet there is silence around this latter issue (Delios, 1996). Similarly, teenagers form a miniscule fraction of the cases of drug overdose and drunken driving in communities. Yet, policy makers have imposed harsh penalties on children for minor infractions around possession of alcohol or drugs while they let privileged

adults get away with repeated abuse of alcohol and drugs. According to Males (1998), aspirin is the most abused drug by teens and most often lands them in emergency rooms – and these are often given by parents or prescribed by family physicians. There is inherent racism and class oppression in the way public policy and perceptions are crafted towards young people. One example is the case study of public policy around the crack epidemic in the 1990s versus the opioid epidemic in the early decades of the 2000s. While the crack epidemic predominantly affected Black and brown communities, the opioid epidemic affects white communities. Victims of the crack-cocaine epidemic were criminalized and imprisoned in large numbers. Victims of the opioid crisis are looked at as mentally ill and needing therapeutic help. Even the way the public framed the problem (epidemic versus crisis) is tinged with differential judgement and values.

Over the last 40 years there has been a stripping away of youth rights, replaced by harsh conditions under which youth infractions will only tend to increase as abuse and other socially unacceptable behavior goes underground (Johnston et al., 2016). The irrational basis for juvenile curfews in the USA is one symptom of societies scapegoating youth. Resources for public schools and colleges have been whittled away and funding for prisons have increased proportionately. With economic strain, there are fewer jobs for young people and fewer community resources to keep them engaged (Mitchell, Leachman, Masterson, 2016). Youth advocates demand that teens should be given a voice in government including voting rights so they can influence their future (Merry & Schinkel, 2016). The political view maintains that youth are discriminated against like other minority groups, especially

as the proportion of people of color have increased in the US.

Aesthetic/Literary Perspectives

Writers and artists have celebrated youth as a time of transitions, new beginnings, insights and lost loves. Many have captured the pain, alienation and insecurities that plague that time of life with vividness and sensitivity, in a manner that theories and abstractions cannot. Immigrant writers have written eloquently about growing up in America with its accompanying feelings of alienation, longing for a safe space where they will be accepted as one among others and some capture the sentiments around the “coming of age” experience and learning to live holistically with all of their different selves (Ames & Burcon, 2016). Adolescence has signified turning points and changed perspectives in US society and writers have recalled the struggles with family, friends and society during this time both with horror and longing (Cart, 2017).

Within the literary views of adolescence there are two different kinds of writings, depending on the readership – either adults or ‘young adult’ readers. Much of the writings aimed at youth themselves tend to reflect the challenges that the protagonists in the novels face and the final overcoming those challenges either by “coming of age” or a point in the story where an experience forces the protagonists to view their lives and challenges differently

(Coats, 2010). The aim of most young adult literature aimed at young readers is to help “grow up” the adolescents themselves. The other stream of writing aimed at adults (with adolescent characters) tend to be a lot more realistic about the possibilities and limitations of adolescent experiences in pushing the protagonist towards a new direction of change. In keeping with the general ethos of the 20th century adolescence, books aimed at youth are future oriented while those about young people aimed at an adult audience are more likely to depict in a realistic fashion, the challenges that adolescents face. In addition, some writers suggest that the YA novel is a 20th century marketing phenomenon – in many countries YA novels are called “jeans prose” because of their emphasis on the material culture of adolescents (Cole, 2008).

Both adult literature with an adolescent character and adolescent literature share certain common features but often teen literature aimed at an adult readership focuses on *Entwicklungsroman*, where an adolescent protagonist grows but does not reach a new stage of development. On the other hand, Young adult literature read by teens emphasize the experience of *Bildungsroman*, where an adolescent reaches adulthood and where they gain new freedoms and responsibilities (Iverson, 2010). The majority of modern adolescent and YA novels has an *Entwicklungsroman* narrative because the adolescent has grown a little bit but never enough to qualify as an adult. Postmodern theorists would point to this as evidence of the surveillance and controlling nature of society’s conceptions of adolescence (Gruner, 2010).

One issue that is often under-explored in YA literature is the power inequities embedded in the very telling of youth stories. Young adult literature often tended to be

gendered. The stories predominantly featured girls and women in the form of short stories in magazines because girls read a lot more than boys. The narratives depicted girls moving from gender-neutral childhoods to more feminized adulthoods. While the gendered nature of the narratives has changed in recent years, critics point out that growth is often used to communicate to adolescents that appropriate maturity requires coming to terms with inequity and lack of power. According to Trites (1998), “Power is everywhere in adolescent literature.” The various institutions that youth interact with serve to define adolescent powerlessness in YA literature. Often, the culmination of the novel results in adolescents learning that institutions are important and possess more power than individuals.

There is great discussion today about whether books are appropriate ways to reach adolescents because of all the technological innovations that have dramatically altered adolescents’ use of media. As several researchers have suggested, children learn to use the computer before they learn to read. This has forced publishers and authors to be creative about coming up with interesting material for teenagers. Young adult fiction has become more edgy, hard-hitting and today explores profound issues like rape, sexual abuse, racism, gender discrimination (Behrman, 2006).

Conclusion

In conclusion, as this brief introduction to adolescence demonstrates, researchers and advocates differ widely in their thoughts on the phase of life that is commonly referred to as adolescence or teenage-hood or youth. The most profound difference lies in whether researchers view it as biologically created or socially constructed. Thus biologists, brain scientists and psychologists view adolescence as a natural phase of life with its specific universal traits and essential behaviors. Sociologists, anthropologists and historians dispute that adolescence is characterized by universal characteristics and point to cultural and social differences in what constitutes adolescence. Postmodernists extend that argument further by pointing out that all social phenomena are constructed and overarching theories often a creation of specific historical needs and become self-fulfilling. Political theorists argue for thinking of adolescents as an oppressed group while literature often reflects prevailing views of the society that adolescents live in. These varied conceptions have had an immense impact on how experts think about youth problems, strengths and the solutions to the problems.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1.What changes did the industrial revolution bring to the life of teens? How did this spark the beginning of teen culture in the US?

2.How has Hollywood shaped ideas about adolescence?

REFLECT

1.What social concepts or influences affected your adolescence? In what ways do social influences still impact your life?

Glossary of Terms

androgens
anna Freud
Bronfenbrenner
concrete operational stage
Darwin's theory
depression era
digital divide
dopamine
dual systems model
entwicklungsroman
Erik Erikson
estrogen
exosystem

formal operational stage
industrial revolution
intersectionality
Jean Piaget
Lev Vygotsky
macrosystem
mesosystem
microsystem
nationalism
neurorealism
panopticon
patriotism
preoperational stage
progesterone
pruning
psychoanalysis
puritans
sensorimotor stage
serotonin
Sigmund Freud
social Darwinism
Stanley hall
testosterone
zone of proximal development

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2. Chapter 2: Methods in Adolescence Research

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Goals

- Understand the history of science and research methods
- Learn the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Know the special tools and designs that are specific to disciplines that explore adolescence
- Know how raw data is framed and understood by different disciplines
- Explore how the same problem is studied differently by different fields

Chapter Outline

- Introduction
- Ideological Difference in Research Methodology

- A History of Research Methods
- Research Strategies in the Social Sciences
 - Systematic Observation
 - Self-Report/Interviews
 - Surveys
 - The Case Study Method
 - Experimental Studies
 - Time Frames for Conducting Research
- Tools and Techniques Specific to Disciplines
 - Biological Psychology
 - Historical
 - Postmodern Methodology
 - Sociology & Cultural Anthropology
- Data Collection & Analysis
 - Quantitative Data
 - Qualitative Data
- An Illustration of Research Methods Used to Explore One Problem
 - Problem
 - Examples of Studies on Recycling
- Glossary of Terms
- References

Introduction

In the first chapter we explored the widely diverging ways in which experts view adolescence. Experts' frameworks may vary greatly depending on their field or the ideas they consider important. However, there is little disagreement that the theories and methods they use to interpret phenomena must be ones that their peers agree are reliable. In other words, every field has a set of accepted practices that help determinetwo key things; the validity of explanations, and the predictive capacity of research studies. To critically consume information, one must understand the methodological choices behind the research, as well as the inherent strengths and weaknesses of each approach. The scientific community can then participate in ways to replicate, generalize, or expand the findings.

Hypothesis

Ideological Differences in Methodology

As we will see, the social sciences differ not only in the methods used to conduct science, but in the goals and purposes of conducting research. Most research studies begin with a hypothesis. A hypothesis is an assertion or prediction

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drawn from a theory for which substantiation is sought by the researcher. Several competing hypotheses are often used to test the validity of larger theories about phenomena. When there are no theories about a specific phenomenon, researchers may begin with fresh research questions that they use to lay the groundwork for further studies. As consumers of knowledge it is important to know about the research methods that experts use in order to be informed about appropriate processes and to critically engage with what we read about various phenomena (Moghaddam & Moballeghi, 2008). Knowing about valid research

methods in different disciplines also helps with implementing strategies to address social issues that have an impact on individuals and communities (Singh, 2006).

A History of Research Methods

Researchers employ a spectrum of frameworks that are guided by their own philosophical values about what constitutes good research. It is important to understand the history of science in order to comprehend why there is such a plethora of methods to study and explore the world around us. Many experts point to Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) as one of the earliest propagators of science in

Europe. While Aquinas was a Catholic priest, unlike many theologians of that time, he believed that God could only be known by studying the material world. According to him, observing and measuring the observed world (empirical science) can point the way to an accurate picture of the God's workings in the material sphere. Under his influence, positivism was born. Today its principles dominate the sciences. Positivists within the social sciences believe that research should operate along similar principles as the natural sciences, i.e., physics and chemistry. The principal approach involves using the hypothetico-deductive method. In this method, researchers come up with a hypothesis and then test the hypothesis to see if it correctly predicts real world events. Positivist scientists typically select quantitative data as the basis for their work.

Positivists argue that social processes, despite being far more complex than physical objects, must nonetheless be studied through overtly measurable, quantitative data. They believe that using any non-measurable phenomenon as object of study will lead to unreliable findings. Within the field of psychology, behaviorists like B. F. Skinner, and biologists who study the relationship between the brain and behavior, underscore the importance of measurement. One example of subjects that positivists might shy away from exploring might be the mind or the consciousness of individuals. Since these cannot be observed except through self-

Empiricism and Positivism

Empirical research is the acquisition of

knowledge based on direct or indirect observation and experience. Positivism refers to the broader scientific paradigm that asserts that only phenomena that can be observed

reports, positivist researchers avoid questions that might involve individuals' consciousness.

As researchers became interested in the functioning of the psychology of individuals, and this was difficult to explore with simply using quantitative measurements, some researchers began using qualitative data. This kind of research is often termed interpretive. Over the last several decades, there has been an attempt to systematize and standardize qualitative research. Researchers who use interpretive methodologies assert that social phenomena are particularly hard to capture with reductive techniques (like numerical measurements) because they involve many factors and are complex systems. The most commonly used methodologies by the interpretive researchers are in-depth interviews, participant observations, and textual analysis. Today, there are a host of accepted practices in qualitative research and available software that help researchers with the analysis of qualitative data.

In the last sixty years, with the rise of existential philosophy and postmodern thought, researchers have questioned the very nature and objectivity of the scientific endeavor. Postmodern theorists

and researchers assert that all human lives are situated within specific moments in history, and this has an impact on the very nature of science, how it is practiced, and the trajectory of a field. The hermeneutic method is a type of interpretive method that attempts to interpret textual and oral data. It abandons the idea that science should be totally objective. Instead, hermeneutic researchers attempt to bridge the gap between the intentions of the author of a text and their own intentions as a reader of the text.

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Today, there are a plethora of strategies of research and methodologies. Experts use them to challenge each other to do better science and offer a more accurate picture of any phenomenon. All these various research pathways do not offer clear-cut distinctions. More and more, practitioners use both qualitative and quantitative research methods and data analysis within a single study.

Research Strategies in the Social Sciences

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Most studies on adolescence are conducted within the broader field of social science, though there are extensive explorations of youth in the arts and literature as well. The major social

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sciences include the fields of anthropology, sociology, economics, history, law, political science, and psychology. In addition to the social sciences, the biological sciences and postmodern theory are two other ways of comprehending the phenomenon of adolescence. Researchers use a variety of strategies depending on the field and the questions asked, the data used and the kinds of analysis that are expected to be performed on the data. Much of the research conducted in the social sciences is empirical. The data may consist of actual human participants or they may involve documents, images etc. that are in the public domain. When human participants are involved, there are several strategies for gathering data. The specific strategy and type of methodology employed depend on the kind of problem under scrutiny, the availability of participants, and the results sought. In addition, the philosophical persuasion of the researcher and values they bring to the study play a huge role in their choice of methodology. Below are some of the methods of inquiry that are most common in the study of adolescence.

Systematic Observation

This method foregrounds observing children and adolescents without intervening in any way in the study. The two main ways in which observational studies are conducted is by using naturalistic observation and through structured observation. The first method is when people are observed in their natural context without the researcher introducing any new element to the study, while in the latter method participants are invited into a constructed context like a lab and then observed without controlling for specific factors.

Self-Reports/Interviews

In this research method, participants are interviewed about their experiences or attitudes. The items used may either consist of a flexible set of questions that may be continually adapted based on participant responses or the researcher may decide to use structured questionnaires, question scales, and tests that are inflexible and the same for all participants. In the latter instance, the

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questions are decided by the research team before the study begins.

Survey Studies

This method involves using questionnaires that are administered to a large group of participants. It provides rich quantitative data that is amenable to statistical analysis and modeling. The data collected in survey studies provide a glimpse into processes that may operate among larger groups of people. The sample of people to whom the survey is administered must be representative of the population to which the researcher wants to generalize their findings. In order to get results that are meaningful and statistically significant, the researchers have to identify a large sample of people who fit the criteria that they intend to study. Participants are often chosen by random selection.

The Case Study Method

In research conducted using the case study method, the number of participants is small. Sometimes, a study may even consist of just one case. The research technique often consists of examining a phenomenon in its social and cultural context. The advantage of this method is that it is holistic and might provide a rich insight into the various aspects of the phenomena under study within a specific context. While surveys offer a glimpse into the principles governing the behavior of a large group of people, the strength of case studies is that it offers great depth of understanding about the phenomena being explored. The data for case studies might include a range of sources, including; documents, interviews, and participant observation.

Experimental Studies

This is the only method that can clearly communicate to the researcher that one or more factors are causally related to the behavior under study. The experimental method, if well designed, can offer the field a way to establish cause and effect relationships. The key element of an experiment is the idea of manipulating the situation by tightly controlling for the variables that might affect the consequences. Experiments are thus able to make the connections between cause and effect, at least in the sample on whom the experimental manipulation is being employed. In an experimental design, participants are randomly assigned to groups that are then treated differently by the experimenter. In controlled experiments, all the groups have an equal probability of being subjected to experimental treatment and the groups are similar in the most relevant characteristics. One or more groups serve as the control groups; participants in the control group do not receive the experimental intervention. The other group or groups serve as experimental groups and they are given the experimental intervention, sometimes at varying levels. The intervention is the factor whose influence the experimenter wants to study; it is called the

Independent & Dependent Variables

The intervention is the factor whose influence the experimenter wants to study; it is called the independent variable. The

observed or measured responses of the participants as a result of the experimental intervention is called dependent variable.

independent variable. The observed or measured responses of the participants as a result of the experimental intervention is called dependent variable. Thus, if the experimenter wants to examine the impact of practice on a spatial reasoning test, they might have randomly selected groups, some receiving the opportunity to practice and the others not receiving the same opportunity. The opportunity to practice spatial reasoning is the independent variable and the score on the test would be the dependent variable.

Time Frames for Conducting Studies

Researchers must make choices about how long they would like for their studies to last. The study may last for only one experimental session or they may track their participants over many years. The longitudinal study design offers the advantage of being able to trace how individuals and communities change over time; it produces in-depth knowledge about the topic in question. However, longitudinal studies are expensive to conduct, and they often exhibit a high attrition rate as people drop out of the study. In addition, if there are interventions instituted periodically, participants may change their natural responses because of practice or exhaustion.

In addition, the impact of being a member of a particular cohort or generation may be mistaken for age related effects when scientists generalize from a single longitudinal study. Thus for example, if a group of adolescents born in 1995 are followed from 2000 through 2011, and the researcher observes that there was a higher frequency of mental health issues in 2010 in this sample, it would be hard to attribute that to their simply being adolescents (i.e., that the mental illness is related to their age). It could be that the recession of 2008 altered their life conditions that led to an increase in mental illness. A research study would have to include cohorts from several generations in order to be able to make the determination that being of a particular age leads to a higher probability of mental illness. Short term studies are less expensive, but they have drawbacks as well; it is harder to generalize across several time spans or cohorts of participants. If there are interventions made by the researcher, it would be difficult to conclude that they would last beyond the scope of the study or that they would hold for other age groups.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

- What are the methods of inquiry that are most common in the study of adolescence? How do they

differ? How are they similar?

- What is the principal approach in positivism?

REFLECT

1. Given the different methods of inquiry that are most commonly used to study adolescence, if you were still between the ages of 13 and 18, which of the methods do you think would give researchers the best idea of your experiences, attitudes and behaviors?

Tools and Techniques Specific to Disciplines

All disciplines within the social sciences use the logic, reasoning, and evidence to judge the validity of explanations. Surveys and observations are commonly used by researchers in the several disciplines that make up the sciences that deal with people (and in the case of biology, with all living organisms). However, each specific discipline tends to value some methods over others because of the nature of the questions asked and the data sought. The following are some methods, techniques and tools that can be specific to disciplines.

As discussed in the first chapter, the biological view of adolescence is one of the dominant frameworks for studying the lifespan. Both biologists and psychologists assert that it is possible to study the individual in isolation from the context in which they live. Researchers in these disciplines are more likely to believe that individuals across social contexts share certain characteristics based on their group membership. Thus, they would assert that the normal functioning of a 16-year-old in the USA and a 16-year-old in Morocco would be the same. Bio-psychologists generally assume that any variation from the norm is the result of an external influence that has interrupted expected progression. Thus, biological and psychological researchers 'essentialize' groups of humans based on race, gender, age etc. Biologists and psychologists are more likely to assert that there are universal traits that people from the same group share. Research studies are conducted to identify these characteristics. The focus of psychology as a field is typically the immediate environment of the child. While sub-disciplines like social psychology and organizational psychology deal with larger environments and institutions, the center of action in a sense, is the individual and the responses of the individual to external and internal factors.

Biologists and psychologists use a variety of strategies common to other disciplines but are likely to focus on the individual or the family functioning in order to make meaning of an event. The biological tools available for the

study of adolescents has increased at a dramatic pace in the last two decades, giving scientists an unprecedented glimpse into the structure and functioning of the brain. Some of these include:

Contrast Radiography: This tool allows for a radioactive material to be injected into the blood vessels in the brain to observe for any brain abnormalities.

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The fMRI machine is used today to capture both the structure and the functioning of

Computerized Axial Tomography Scan (CT scan): This makes the whole brain structure visible to the scientist in the form of 3D images.

Positron Tomography Scans (PET scans): Captures the function of neurons and the brain by marking neurons that are active.

Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI): This is perhaps the most important of all the tools developed in recent years. Scientists use this to study both structure and function of the brain without having to inject the patient with radioactive substances. However, since it is very expensive to employ, studies using fMRI data tend to have small sample sizes and this has an impact on the generalizability and validity of the findings.

Historical Method

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The growth of historiography (the study of history as an academic field) was pioneered by the German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) who professionalized the teaching and the study of history. He fought against the prevailing notions of that time that suggested that societies always evolved from primitive to advanced. He proposed that each era should be studied for its own sake. French historians in the 19th century moved the focus in history to exploring the social history (i.e., the lives of individuals and communities) of any era from the previously popular study of political history. They emphasized the usage of materials that ordinary people used and the psychological environment within communities over governments and political institutions. The historical method of interpreting data is typically qualitative. Historians study a phenomenon, the various factors that led to the occurrence of a historical event and the interpretation to which that the data lends itself. Some of the best historical studies involve the study of primary documents and artefacts including those from archaeology. An important aspect of the historical method involves source criticism. This is the practice of evaluating the reliability, credibility, and relevance of a piece of historical material.

One chief source of data for a historian is eye-witness testimony; it is crucial for historians to make accurate judgements about the credibility of eye-witness documentation. The criteria for judgements of accuracy is the plausibility

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non Matters	of the statements, the time period of the account, the internal contradictions in the data, and other corroborating evidence. Sometimes, the information obtained by a historian may come from secondary sources. In such cases, the researcher has additional judgements to make about how much to rely on the source. Some factors they might consider include; how close to the event the testimony was given, how complete the account is, and what was left out. In many cultures, especially those without written artefacts, oral traditions form a significant source of information about events and historical phenomena. Historians must put these oral traditions through additional credibility tests to ascertain their validity. As part of our study of adolescence, we will explore the historian's view of youth experiences over the ages.
Hist orians study a pheno menon or a concep t, the various factors that led to the develo pment of a concep t and the interpr etation that the data lends itself to. It	<i>Postmodern Methodology</i> Postmodern theorists argue that there is not just one way to interpret our world but many. In earlier times, postmodernists argue, every society had one dominating story (meta-narrative) that gave meaning

to existence. Some examples would be the Bible for Christian societies and the Koran for Muslim societies. In modern times, with the number of images and texts that we are exposed to, meta-narratives have given way to multiplicities of stories that depict our relationship with the world.

According to Foucault (2012) one of the main proponents of postmodernism, there is no one truth and everything is subjective or relative. In contrast to opinions held in other social sciences, postmodernists do not subscribe to the idea that life and society move toward endless progress. Sociologists, for example, argue that with the help of

scientific methods we can build better societies while psychologists argue that their research can lead to superior ways to address mental health issues. Postmodernists would argue that it is impossible to know the essential nature of reality and that all renditions of reality should be celebrated. They call this the democratization of truth. One of the strengths of this view is that frameworks from the margins and the disenfranchised are given a great deal of validity.

denaturalizes all concepts and places them within a historical context.

Jean Baudrillard (1994) offered the term 'simulacra' (a copy with no original) that signifies the notion that material objects are no longer important in exchanges between people. According to him, ideas and representations have equal validity. In terms of life-span theory, Disney land

Deconstruction & Simulacra

Deconstructionist asserts that no sign or word (i.e., adolescence) has an essential meaning except one that is artificially imposed by language.

Baudrillard refers

would be a simulacrum because there is no such land and no Disney characters in real life. The fact that the Disney Inc. is one of the most successful of corporations demonstrates the power of symbol over substance. In modern society, the media produces an ever-changing stream of images and ideas that are often perceived as more real than our offline lives. Postmodernists would assert that in today's fragmented setting, we are what we consume and are therefore highly changeable.

Deconstruction is therefore one of the important methods of inquiry within postmodernism; Derrida (1997) was one of its principal proponents. He asserted that the workings of institutions today can be understood by taking apart the assumptions underlying the traditions of the institution, especially nations and nation states. In addition, for Derrida, the major ideas or traditions in modern life are built around the concept of the binary where ideas are divided into opposites (male/female, day/night etc.) and where one of the terms is given more importance or is considered more of an ideal state than the other term. Deconstructionists thus do not locate meaning either in the author of the words, the words themselves, nor in the objects the words are supposed to represent. The word

'woman' on the surface might point to a person with similar characteristics that we can all agree on. However, as we probe further the meaning that we had construed for the word falls apart and each of us ascribe different images or traits to the same word. For our purposes, the same could be said of the word adolescence. While developmental psychologists would assert that adolescence has a common set of traits that people who use the word can agree on, when we dig deeper into its origin and explore its function today, the common understanding of adolescence falls apart. Thus, deconstructionists assert that no sign (word) has an essential meaning except one that is artificially imposed by language. The role of postmodern theorists is to identify the tensions inherent in concepts and phenomena, especially as they are constructed in a binary fashion.

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Sociology & Cultural Anthropology

Both sociology and anthropology deal with people, structures, and institutions. They study societies and hierarchies, people and their contexts. Some

methodologies that are perhaps unique to sociology and cultural anthropology is the principle of holism: that it is important to understand the relationship between elements of a phenomena in order to understand the whole. Cultural anthropology emphasizes relativism and cross-cultural contexts with a focus on marginalized populations. Fieldwork is an important method to uncover these patterns and engage with people in a real-world setting. Thus observational studies are used extensively to help explain events. Unlike in psychology, there is little research conducted in laboratories. Thus, researchers in these fields, especially anthropology, spend considerable time learning new languages and understanding rituals and practices they may not be familiar with. Both sociologists and anthropologists attempt to understand people and societies in their own terms rather than comparing them to the social order of the Global North. Ethnographies are very important tools to test theories; while a previously constructed hypothesis may be used, in sociology and anthropology it is often used flexibly depending on new information that is being uncovered by the researcher as a study progresses.

Today, in the social sciences generally, and in sociology and anthropology in particular, there has been a big push to make research collaborative and to include participants in the designing and the implementation of a research project. Some indigenous researcher/activists have called for decolonizing research and use locally meaningful methods to explore social phenomena. The participating researcher observes the community, striving not to evaluate from an externally imposed lens but instead to perform the role of the interlocutor, collecting and interpreting information and providing a framework to interpret the information.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. Which is the most important biological tool available for the study of adolescents.
2. What are some of the similarities and differences between research in sociology and anthropology?

REFLECT

1. Do you think that advances in technologies that access adolescents have impacted how adolescence is understood in the US?

Data Collection and Analysis

As we have seen in the previous segments of this chapter, researchers may use both primary and secondary data to substantiate their theories and hypothesis. The data themselves come in either quantitative or in qualitative form. Some philosophers of scientific experiments would assert that, ultimately, both kinds of study fold into each other. Quantitative data often use numbers to tell their story while qualitative data use verbal descriptions to summarize the findings.

Quantitative Data

The aim of quantitative research is to classify data, organize them, perform statistical analyses, and derive mathematical models from the evidence. When using quantitative data, the researcher must know what they are looking for and actively look for the relationships they are hoping to find, even before beginning the study. The research plan is highly designed. Thus, quantitative methodology works best; when a phenomenon has already been explored and there is consensus among researchers about the basic principles at work and the factors that may be involved in the target phenomena. Thus, in order to conduct a statistical data analysis a researcher would need to fulfil certain conditions. Firstly, there must be a hypothesis that is an outcome of theory or previous research studies. Secondly, the participants of the study would have to be randomly selected and would have to be representative of the population to which the findings are to be generalized.

For studies that have not been controlled in the form of an experiment, a causal connection cannot be established. Thus, one of the simplest data analyses that establishes a relationship between 2 factors without establishing a causal connection is a simple correlational study. One example would be the relationship between smoking and lung disease; until the biological effects of tobacco were finally demonstrated in recent years, it was impossible for

researchers to identify a causal connection between smoking and lung disease. The reason for this is that it is unethical to force random samples of participants to smoke.

In an experiment every part of the study is tightly controlled by the experimenter. Every experiment consists of manipulating variables or factors that the experimenter is interested in. The independent variables are those that the experimenter chooses to control themselves, while the dependent variable(s) are those that change as a result of the manipulation. For instance, if the experimenter wanted to study the impact of practice on test results, they would manipulate the amount of practice the participant was allowed (IV) and measure the test results (DV) after the various levels of practice. The participants are randomly chosen with the sample size large enough to perform a robust statistical analysis. When the study uses well designed experiments, researchers can perform more complicated statistical tests where the independent and dependent variables under exploration can be subjected to regression models that may be better at predicting the value of the dependent variable given a combination of independent variables. Some studies use statistical meta analytic techniques, where the results of several quantitative studies are combined to see if the relationship between variables are still valid across several studies.

Under this numerical system of data gathering and analysis, anomalies are set aside as outliers and left out of the analysis. Thus, quantitative research is more interested in patterns than in the cases that do not conform. The tools that

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that one or
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are used consist of surveys, questionnaires, experiments, biological testing tools – any instrument that collects quantitative data in the form of numbers and statistics. Since the inception of the social sciences, quantitative data is often touted as being more objective and having less bias. Proponents' reason that the answer is revealed by the numbers and not by the researchers who are said to simply implement the design. However, critics point out that quantitative studies may be biased and lead to substantiate the prejudices of the researcher. The study investigator must make judgements about what phenomena they are going to measure and how it will be measured.

Qualitative Method

Qualitative methods attempt to get at the 'whole picture' and present a complete detailed description about the topic under examination. The data might consist of words, images, documents, and objects. This form of research is very useful when a field is very new and has not had an opportunity to have a groundwork of studies done to establish basic principles; thus, it is ideal for conducting preliminary research. It is typically more flexible and amenable to change. As researchers begin a qualitative study they have the flexibility to change the framework or the lens

through which they are examining an event. The researchers themselves are key components of the data collection process since they are making judgements throughout the study about what needs attention, the methods that might be most appropriate, and how they might want to analyze the data. The resulting product is a very rich tapestry of information about a phenomenon.

Qualitative data analysis begins with the researcher or team of researchers coding the data systematically. While the analysts may have some codes (terms for key ideas in the data) when they begin the analysis, coding is an ever-evolving process as the study continues and new data is introduced. Code structures are large conceptual frameworks and questions that the researchers have before they begin the study. Codes can also be amended after they have started data collection. Codes and code structures may arise from the study itself; this is the inductive method. In this way, the data reveals new questions to be explored. Many studies integrate both preexisting code structures and inductive methodology; large ideas are derived from earlier studies, but specific concepts are derived from the process of the study itself. Once the data is gathered, the researcher goes through an iterative process where, after coding a

variables cause another variable to change.

When the various factors are not tightly controlled, only correlations can be asserted. The independent variable(s) (IVs) are those that are

hypothesized to change the phenomenon under study. The dependent variable(s) (DV) are the ones that change when the IVs are manipulated.

few of the responses, they might go back to check the validity of the framework and try to reduce the numbers of codes to larger categories. They may work with other researchers as a team to test the validity of the codes and the frameworks used. Today, researchers have sophisticated software that facilitate the process of data compilation and analysis for both quantitative and qualitative data.

What Makes a Qualitative Study

Qualitative methods attempt to get at the 'whole picture' and present a

The strengths of this method of study is that it tends to be less reductive and provide a richer picture of the topics under study. Some drawbacks with this method are that the study may be time-consuming, the results of the study less generalizable if the sample size is very small, and the researcher may get drawn into the lives of the participants to the extent that they lose their objectivity. Researchers may become active in the life of the person or community under study. While both

qualitative and quantitative methods have the problem of observer paradox (where the results are altered simply because the phenomenon is being observed), there is a higher likelihood of this problem occurring in a qualitative study.

complete detailed description about the topic under examination. The data might consist of words, images, documents, and objects.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. What are the main differences between quantitative and qualitative data?
2. What are some main strategies in how these research methods are performed?

REFLECT

1. Have you ever conducted research?
2. What methods did you use for collecting data?

An Illustration of a Problem and its Exploration in Various Disciplines Problem

In the face of environmental degradation and climate change, the importance of recycling is an important issue that individuals, communities and governments are looking to address. There are many dimensions to explore the issue, from the individual behavioral level to community factors and to governmental policy. Clearly, there are many questions that researchers could ask pertaining to this problem. What are some traits of people who are likely to engage in recycling behavior? How is recycling behavior related to brain functioning? How can we educate people to recycle? What are some social factors that lead to recycling behaviors? How do economic factors and government policies contribute to recycling? The study method would depend on the questions that researchers ask as well as their judgment about how best to get answers to their questions.

Examples of Studies on Recycling Behaviors

McCarthy & Shrum (1994) working from within the discipline of psychology hypothesized that values must have a strong relationship to recycling. They used a values scale that had been pretested and they collected self-reports of undergraduate students' recycling habits. Thus,

this research is a survey since the questions were all filled out by the interviewees. Oskamp et al. (1991) conducted phone interviews and asked their 221 respondents from one city about their recycling behaviors. Since they had oral interviews, but the questions were unchanged from one participant to another, the method would be called an interview survey. Hopper & Nielsen (1991) conducted a survey initially but followed up with an experiment where they had neighborhood leaders encourage community members to recycle. They found that peer encouragement increased recycling behavior. The authors used two strategies – survey and experiments. Schultz (1999) observed a neighborhood of 605 families and then conducted experimental interventions in recycling behavior giving families feedback on their recycling. They found that interventions helped increase recycling. The authors used both naturalistic observation and used the results to guide the next stage of their study which was an experiment. Miyafodzyeva & Brandt (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of 63 published studies to understand the factors that contribute to recycling behavior. They concluded that convenience, moral norms, environmental concern, and information as the most important factors that affected recycling behaviors. Annamalai (2015) explored the issue of recycling from a biological framework; he examined the impact of recycling on the health of the workers in the field.

The methods described above are mainstream social science research methods that involve human participants. Some examples of deconstruction and historical research studies also demonstrate the richness of those methods. Cooper (2010) did a study of a historical view of treating waste in Europe questioning the very notion of what is considered 'waste', as it varies from one time period to

another. Hyatton & Burns (2007) used deconstruction methodology to analyze governmental policies towards wildlife management and noted how human relationship to environmental conservation is socially constructed. Similarly, Lee & Ha (2019) explored recycling as a culturally embedded activity with the social context determining the what, the how and the why of recycling as they are determined by cultural variables and values. They use the postmodern deconstruction method to explore their topic.

The reader can see that there are a variety of ways to conduct research depending on the questions the researcher asks, their disciplinary backgrounds, research training, the kinds of data that are feasible to be gathered, and the kinds of data analysis tools that the researcher has. One of the most important factors that is often underemphasized in the dissemination of the results of research studies are the values that researchers hold about the nature of knowledge itself as well as what kind of society the researcher might want to help build. Many of the disagreements between researchers can be traced to these values. However, some criteria that all researchers hold dear is the value of being methodical in their analysis and allowing other researchers to test the validity of their findings through discipline appropriate methods.

Exercises

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. What specific methods were used to conduct research regarding recycling behaviors in this study?

REFLECT

1. How might the research methods used to study recycling behaviors be used to study other social issues you deem important?

Glossary of Terms:

androgens
Anna Freud
Bronfenbrenner
concrete operational stage
Darwin's theory
depression era
digital divide
dopamine
dual systems model
Erik Erikson
estrogen
exosystem
formal operational stage
industrial revolution
intersectionality
Jean Piaget
Lev Vygotsky

macrosystem
mesosystem
microsystem
nationalism
neurorealism
panopticon
patriotism
preoperational stage
progesterone
pruning
psychoanalysis
puritans
sensorimotor stage
serotonin
Sigmund Freud
social Darwinism
Stanley Hall
testosterone
zone of proximal development

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3. Chapter 3 - Physical Development and Embodied Gender

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Goals

- Understand brain development during adolescence
- Learn about physiological and hormonal changes in adolescence
- Understand body dysmorphia and eating disorders
- Learn about the social construction of disability
- Explore gender, sports and its impact

Chapter Outline

Brain Development and the Role of Toxic Stress

Puberty

Changes in Physical Stature

The Timing of Puberty and its Impact
Puberty and Gender
Silence Around Menarche
Youth and their Bodies
Body Dysmorphic Disorder and Eating Disorders
Factors that Lead to Disordered Eating
Interventions
Obesity
Postmodern Perspective on Youth and Bodies
Critical Disability Studies
Sports and its Impacts
Glossary of Terms

Brain Development and the Role of Toxic Stress

The brain is a very dynamic organ constantly forming new connections and, padding the connections with myelin or fat, and pruning off connections that are not used. The connections that form early in life provide the foundations for growth in later life. In recent years, there has been mounting evidence that both genes and experiences are equally important in building the architecture of the brain. Experts use the term *serve and return* (Center on the Developing child at Harvard, 2011) to signify the interaction between individuals and their environment. When

individuals are not responded to appropriately by the environment, the brain does not grow as predicted. Thus, this back and forth between adult caregivers' (and general environmental) responses to children and the latter's reactions to their caregivers, form the very basis of the architecture of the brain.

Another finding that is very relevant for brain growth at all ages, especially during childhood and adolescence, is the presence of toxic stress. This is a term used to describe consistent and high stress levels in individuals with little social support can lead to compromised brain development. Stress is a normal part of life for people of all ages. However, when the stress level of a child or an adolescent is activated, and there is social support to buffer and bring the levels back down, children grow from the experience. Temporary increases in stress levels like during a child's first day in preschool, can lead to positive learning and adjustment. Stress responses that are intermediate as when the child loses a loved one, can be buffered by loving social support and interactions. However, repeated toxic stress levels like when a child is physically and emotionally abused, can create permanent damage to the brain that may well last into one's adult years. The earlier these stresses occur, the more severe their impact is in terms of development delays and other physical health issues.

In the early years of a child's life, fear and anxiety are common. Between 6 to 12 months of age children begin to express and differentiate fear from other emotions. This often coincides with stranger anxiety that is one of the milestones of children's emotions currently. This is followed a little later by a fear of monsters and other imaginary creatures. As kids grow older, they begin to understand the

difference between fantasy and reality and begin to exercise control over both their emotions and the circumstances that produce these fears. Two extensive structures in the brain are involved in the experiencing of fears and anxieties in people – the amygdala and the hippocampus. The amygdala helps identify fearful situations and people, while the hippocampus registers the response needed to react to fearful situations. Consistent prolonged situations that invoke fear and extreme anxiety lead to the disruption of the functioning of both the amygdala and the hippocampus.

Serve &
Return
And
Toxic
Stress

**Serve
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The excessive levels of cortisol and adrenaline in the brain that accompanies stressful situations leads to the formation of strong memories around the anxiety-inducing event which further impedes unlearning those fears. Every encounter with the similar situation even if not inherently fear-inducing, can lead to a flood of cortisol leading to intense stress and anxiety. In addition, prolonged fear disrupts the architecture and the functioning of the prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex is responsible for making thoughtful plans, focusing attention, and inhibiting impulses. Chronic fears in a situation leads to children associating threat with people and situations around the original fear-invoking situation, leading to the formation of phobias. Therapy involves the active unlearning of the fears by introducing the aversive

stimuli in a safe environment and allowing the prefrontal cortex to offer rational explanations for the consequences. Evidence indicates that a significant source of stress and anxiety is in homes where the parent or parents have mental health issues or are addicted to illicit drugs. In such homes, the child is surrounded by unpredictable events, sometimes accompanied by neglect and abuse, all of which produce stress.

There is evidence that supportive relationships even amidst a very toxic setting can lead to ameliorating some of the impact of stress on the brain. Thus, social policies that provide families with appropriate financial, physical and emotional support go a long way towards reducing children's sense of insecurity. In addition, in late childhood and adolescence it is important to focus on the impact of chronic stress on children themselves. One under emphasized source of stress is neighborhood poverty and violence. Living in poverty-stricken environments has an impact on children's cognitive development, sense of well-being, feelings of empathy and self-esteem. Governmental intervention to reduce poverty and increase safety in poor communities goes a long way towards reducing antisocial behavior, violence and physical impairments.

between the growing individual's brain and their environmental feedback loop.

Toxic stress refers to enduring stressful conditions of high stress in a child's life. These conditions

ons can lead to impaired brain growth , especially in the region s of the hippocampus and the amygdala. Two common examples are long-term poverty and repeated child	<i>Puberty</i> In popular media and culture there is consensus that puberty is a time of unprecedented growth and development. Adolescents themselves first notice and acknowledge the growth and respond with intense self-consciousness about their changing bodies. Puberty is marked by a rapid acceleration of growth in both height and weight, the growth spurt. In addition to the dramatic overall physical development, there is the development of primary and secondary sex characteristics. Primary sexual development refers to the development of the gonads leading to maturation (the gonads take the form of testes in males and ovaries in females) and secondary sex characteristics include pubic hair, face and body hair and the changes in genitals and breast tissue. There is great variability among adolescents both in the timing of pubertal changes as well as the time it takes for the physical changes to manifest themselves. (American Psychological Association, 2002).
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There are changes in the secretion of hormones by various endocrine glands around puberty that affect the development of sex organs and sexual functioning. Endocrine glands secrete hormones directly into the blood. The glands in the endocrine system that play a major role in pubertal changes are the pituitary gland, the thyroid gland and the adrenal gland. The process begins in the hypothalamus which is a small organ in the brain that is responsible for regulating hormone levels in the body. Certain neurons in the hypothalamus called Gonadotropin Releasing Hormone (GnRH) send signals to the pituitary gland. The pituitary gland is responsible for hormone secretions by other glands like the	Primary Sexual Development Primary sexual development refers to the development of the gonads leading to maturation. The gonads take the form of testes in	maltreatment
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males
and
ovaries
in
female

gonads. The gonads in turn adjust the circulating androgens and estrogen hormones in boys and girls. The thyroid and the adrenal glands also increase their hormone production right before puberty leading to psychological changes and increased vulnerability to stress. The adrenal glands release 'cortisol' which is a stress hormone and when a developing person is subjected to excessive stress, the circulation of 'cortisol' in the blood increases dramatically leading to a cascade of negative mental and psychological transformations in the adolescent (Wheeler, 1991).

Changes in Physical Stature During Adolescence

Adolescents grow through a period of growth spurt just preceding sexual maturation. Girls typically begin their dramatic growth spurt at 11 years and boys begin theirs at 13. Thus, during early adolescence, the early-maturing girls are taller than the late maturing boys. At their peak growth period, adolescents are growing at a rate faster than at any other time during the lifespan except during toddlerhood. The growth spurt is uneven throughout adolescence with limbs growing faster initially and the torso catching up later. This accounts for the gawkiness that many adolescents feel during their early adolescent years. By the end of adolescence, both boys and girls are often done with

growing. This is usually achieved by the closing of the ends of their long bones.

The muscle-fat ratio which is the proportion of muscles to the proportion of fat in the body changes for boys and girls during adolescence. Before puberty, gender differences are minimal in muscle and fat and for both boys and girls there is an increase in both fat and muscles during adolescence. After puberty, boys' evidence significant increases in muscle weight over fat content while girls add more fat cells relative to muscles. This gender difference is exaggerated with girls participating less in sports and having access to poorer nutrition compared to boys. The increase in fat is one of the many reasons that girls are more likely to suffer from negative attitudes towards their bodies in adolescence. This phenomenon is accentuated by a society that objectifies girls and where popular media emphasizes thinness as an essential aspect of being attractive while at the same sexually objectifying and fetishizing breasts and hips.

The Timing of Puberty and the Secular Trend

There is a wide age range when the events leading up to puberty arrive for both boys and girls. There is a 2-year gender difference in pubertal changes, beginning at age 9 in boys and 7 in girls. In addition, there are ethnic differences in the ages at which children achieve sexual maturation – African American and Mexican girls achieve

puberty earlier than white girls. There are several factors that affect the age of sexual maturation and the rate of pubertal growth. There have been studies that demonstrate the importance of genetics in sexual maturation. However, environmental factors play a role as well. Girls who are taller or heavier mature earlier. Better nourished individuals and those who are free from chronic illness also tend to go through puberty earlier than malnourished and unhealthy girls. One significant finding has been that girls who engage in excessive exercise achieve sexual maturation later in their adolescence (Dusek, 2001).

In many countries, the nutritional situation has improved for much of the population over the last 150 years. This has led to a lowering of the age of menarche in girls. This trend towards early sexual maturity has been termed the 'secular trend.' In addition to better nutrition, increased hygiene and a drop in infectious diseases has contributed to the trend of lowered menarche for girls. The decline in the age of sexual maturation is less obviously dramatic for boys mainly because of the difficulties in measuring sexual maturation in boys. The secular trend has been demonstrably more noticeable in some communities, for example among African American girls. In recent years the trend towards lower menarche has been slowing down as compared to the early decades of the 1900s when the reduction was dramatic. Just as in other areas of development, chronic stress in children has a huge impact on pubertal timing and pathways. Some biologists assert that adolescence because of the cascade of changes that occurs during this period, may offer a window for advocates to help recalibrate the endocrine system to allow for more emotional regulation in youth (UMN, 2019).

Some experts point not just to increased nutrition but other changes in the lifestyles of children today that has led to lowered ages of sexual maturity, the major factor being the enormous increase in endocrine disruptors in the air and the foods we consume. Endocrine disruptors are environmental chemicals that disturb the delicate hormonal system of the body. Almost 90% of endocrine disruptors like Polychlorinated Biphenyl and dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane come from the food we eat. Bisphenol A which is commonly found in plastic containers, receipts and linings in cans are also known endocrine disruptors. Another common disruptor, parabens, is found in cosmetics and household cleaning products. In one study, the authors conclude that between all the household cleaners, soaps, shampoos and cosmetics, an average American is exposed to almost 19 endocrine disruptors (Dodson, Nishioka, Standley, Perovich, Brody, Rudel, 2012). In 1998, the Environmental Protection Agency set up a program to screen over 35,000 chemicals. Critics charge that the screening process is influenced by the chemical industry and manufacturers of these dangerous chemicals influence policies by their lobbying efforts in congress (Ambrose (2007). There are

Secular
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The trend towards early sexual maturity has been termed the 'secular trend'. Endocrine disruptors are environmental

chemicals that disturb the delicate hormonal system of the body

other factors that affect the age of sexual maturation – genetics, the amount and frequency of intense physical activities that the adolescent engages in, and illnesses during teen years. Girls reach their adult height about 4 years after puberty starts but boys reach their full height about 6 years after puberty starts.

Puberty and Gender

“Kitty has a nosebleed, on the rag, aunt dot, aunt flow is coming for a visit, falling to the communists, closed for maintenance, my little friend, surfing the crimson wave, bleedies, at high tide, my moon cycle, moon time, that time of month, friend from the red sea, the curse... There are many names for menstruation that are reflective of our culture’s attitude towards the period. “The curse” is perhaps the most telling as it defines the period as a horrible affliction rather than a natural part of a woman’s monthly cycle. Instead of celebrating women’s cycles we are taught to resent menstruation and even feel ashamed of it.” (courtesy: feminisms.org, Jan 30, 2013)

Girls today appear to have a more positive attitude towards menstruation and menarche (the first period in a girl’s life) than girls in previous generations. Many girls however still hold mixed feelings about their menstrual period; this is often related to lack of appropriate

information, or adults communicating negative feelings about the physical and emotional changes around this milestone event. Girls first communicate to their mothers and a little later to their friends when they start menstruating (Martin, 1996). Boys however, at least in the USA, express little emotion when they first ejaculate (spermarche) signaling their journey to sexual maturity. Self-reports suggest that most boys experience their first ejaculation as nocturnal emission and less commonly through masturbation. Adolescent boys tell very few people if any about the internal changes in their bodies. Negative attitudes towards masturbation may contribute to this silence. Some of the fears that boys express around bodily changes have to do with being shorter than girls, not acquiring enough muscles compared to other boys, thinking too much or too little about girls, body odor and having too much or too little body hair.

The timing of the onset of puberty has an impact on girls and boys in very different ways. Girls who achieve sexual maturation at an earlier age than their peers are undergoing precocious puberty. Early sexual maturation for girls implies that they mature far earlier than is typical for their age; this has long-term implications for both their mental and physical health (Ge, Conger, Elder, 1996; Martin, 1996; Mendle, Harden, Brooks-Gunn & Graber, 2010; Phinney, Jensen, Olsen & Cundick, 1990). In the US, studies have demonstrated that girls who go through precocious puberty have lowered

Emotions During Early Puberty

For both girls and boys,

puberty is accompanied by mixed emotions and silence around girls' first period (menarche) and boys' first ejaculation (spermarche)

self-esteem, feel negatively about their bodies leading to disordered eating, and have higher rates of depression and anxiety. There is a greater pressure on early maturing girls to date and engage in sexual relationships with older boys and men. This leads to both positive and negative consequences in that early maturing girls are both more popular and at the same time they are sexually objectified. Thus, precocious puberty has been associated with increased drug use, higher levels of depression and lower academic achievement. Late maturing girls have a longer time to adapt to the physical and emotional changes that adolescence brings and hence weather the storms of adolescence in more positive ways (Harden & Mendel, 2012).

The differences in the personalities and development trajectories of boys who mature very early or very late seem to be rather minimal at least in mainstream society, compared to differences between girls who mature early and those who mature late (Martin, 1996; Huddleston & Ge, 2003). In boys, earlier sexual maturation is associated with being bigger, taller and more socially mature. They are often perceived to be leaders of their peer groups and are popular. However, early maturing boys, like their female counterparts tend to associate with older boys and girls and engage in behaviors that may not be considered appropriate for adolescents in their early teen years

(Mendle, Harden, Brooks-Gunn & Graber, 2012). This may include engaging in socially deviant and risky behaviors including substance use and abuse and sex. Late maturing boys exhibit more tolerance of ambiguity, are more empathetic and are intellectually curious. When studies have followed boys into their adulthood, late maturing boys tend to be inventive, impulsive and creative. Early maturing boys grow up to often be more conforming, cooperative, self-controlled and sociable (Lindfors, Elovainio, Wickman, Vuorinen, Sinkkonen, Dunkel & Raappana, 2007).

Several studies point to the importance of sexual maturation and the construction of masculinity among boys in working-class and immigrant communities (Ahmadi, Anoosheh, Vaismoradi & Safdari, 2009). Among working class boys, there are often physical displays of corporeal strength and tolerance for pain to publicly mark the transition and as a preparation for life in a physically competitive world. Since many of them will likely transition into low end jobs with little autonomy, physical prowess assumes increased salience as a sign of their adult status (Mora, 2012; 2015). Among Chinese boys, peer acceptance was much higher for early maturing boys but connections to one's family was higher for late-maturers (Li, Ling, Zhang, Si & Ma 2013).

Silence around Menarche

In one study, post-menarche girls produced a much more sexually differentiated drawing of their bodies than the pre-menarche girls. They accentuated the breasts and hips, and portrayed figures with narrow waists. Girls are likely to believe that the achievement of menarche would bring about momentous changes in their lives (Unger, 2001). So, while most adolescents seem to recognize the importance of the milestone, few speak about it in public. There seems to be a sense of shame associated with both the mention of female genitals and with menarche (Tang, Yeung & Lee, 2003). Research substantiates that few girls are taught about their genitals nor can most girls identify the parts of their genitals accurately. In addition, society deems menstruation a crisis of hygiene and there is therefore little open dialogue about the significance that menarche and menstruation have for young adolescent girls between adults and youth.

Pubertal Timing Impacts

Many popular depictions of menstruation illustrate the public's fear of blood and its association with negative events. In 1978, Gloria Steinem wrote a stinging satire called 'If Men Could Menstruate' in which she explored all the different ways in which menstruation

would be treated as a source of great pride if men were the ones menstruating. This has been substantiated when studies are conducted exploring girls' attitudes towards puberty. The conversations reflect the shame that girls feel about menstruation. Women express a desire to make sure that there is no evidence of it anywhere – no stains or smells. Girls often display great embarrassment at having to manage their menstrual periods in school, going to great lengths to hide all signs of their bleeding. Their strategies include hiding their tampons or sanitary pads in their sleeve or pocket or tucking them into their socks. All of these make it harder for girls to manage their periods in a healthy fashion (Unger, 2001).

Early maturing girls are more likely to have pressures that relate to sexual activity and other adult-like behaviors than late maturing girls. Early maturing boys

Review and Reflect: Learning Goal 1

REVIEW

1. In a child's early life, what 2 main components are responsible for establishing the architecture of the brain?

2. How can toxic stress impact brain development of a child or adolescent?

are perceived to be natural leaders. Late maturing boys are more empathic and tolerant.

3.How do genetics and environmental factors impact sexual maturation?

4.How does gender affect the experience of puberty?

REFLECT

1.When did you experience puberty? What were some of the main changes that you noticed in yourself both physically and emotionally? How did the adults in your life respond to the change?

Youth and their Bodies

Puberty signals enormous changes in the physical development of both boys and girls, however, these changes do not occur in a vacuum and people's attitudes towards their bodies are connected to larger social, political and economic forces. Social norms and practices influence both the transformations in youth and how these changes are experienced (Ricciardelli & Yager, 2016). For girls, the changes begin at a younger age when many are unprepared for the visible transformations in their bodies and its social impact. At the same time, girls are sexually objectified in many societies and that exacts its own toll (Jones & Newman, 2009). Contradictory social messages about girls' bodies lead to feelings of negativity and

confusion. In one study, it was found that for both girls and boys the extent of social media site use and peer feedback on appearance increased the dissatisfaction that youth felt towards their bodies (de Vries, Peter, Graaf & Nikken, 2016).

During adolescence, the development of breasts poses a great deal of embarrassment for young women. They are often teased by both friends and family. This often leads young girls to wear baggy pants and loose shirts in order to hide their changing bodies. At the same time, society considers visible breast development as a mark of an attractive body for girls and women. Girls struggle to reconcile these contradictory demands from people around them (Unger, 2001). In one study, the authors found that parents' attitudes towards their children's bodies correlated strongly with body dissatisfaction among girls (Sinton & Birch, 2006).

Girls who achieve sexual maturity early often feel very negatively about their bodies for all the above reasons while boys who mature early feel positively about their bodies. For girls, sexual maturation is accompanied by sexualization and objectification while for boys, sexual maturation signals leadership and maturity (Furnham, Badmin & Sneade, 2002). Girls in general are less satisfied with their bodies, perceiving themselves as overweight; they try to lose weight in much larger numbers and in more destructive ways as compared to boys in adolescence (Davidson, 2012). In fact, being underweight is associated with the highest levels of satisfaction among girls. In one study, a historian found that 100 years ago girls defined self-improvement as having achieved more rigor in their studies or being able to get along with their parents. Today girls are more likely to think of self-improvement as a project related to their bodies (Unger 2001). Studies have

found that girls might even resort to self-destructive physical habits like skipping insulin prescribed for diabetes and smoking cigarettes to keep their body weight down (Timke & Kilbourne, 2018).

There are ethnic, race and class differences in girls' attitudes towards their bodies and the incidence of eating disorders that follows from dissatisfaction with their appearance. Girls from white, upper-class backgrounds feel the most negative about their bodies and wish they could lose weight while African-girls tend to exhibit body-positive attitudes. Latino girls have high self-esteem and tend to feel positively about their bodies in elementary school; the transition into middle or high school sees a plummeting of their self-esteem along with increased feelings of negativity about their weight (Hayward, Gotlib, Schraedley & Litt, 1999). One explanation for the positive attitudes that Black girls exhibit towards their bodies is related to the paradoxically negative attitude that mainstream society assigns to Black bodies (Tate, 2007). Since standards of beauty often adhere closely to white upper-class characteristics about facial features and skin tone, girls from other ethnic groups do not quite feel they can even attempt to reach the bar set by society for being beautiful. Hence, they often escape the harshest impositions of the beauty mandates in our society.

Body Dysmorphic Disorders and Eating Disorders

“Hey people I’m a transgender female, and a recovering bulimic. Last time I purged was around 5 years ago and I’m proud that I haven’t since. But I’ve been having this serious issue where I can’t eat because the food that I try to eat tastes really really bad to me and if I try to force it I vomit. I’ve been consuming a lot of liquids for this whole week, because I literally just can’t eat food. And I don’t understand why because I’m not feeling guilty about it or anything else. Does anybody have any ideas as to what’s causing this? I’m just so confused and lost right now.” Courtesy: Stardustsparkle (2016)

“I’m in recovery from anorexia, and I’m finding it hard to let go of control. Initially, I was bulimic, but would starve myself throughout the day and then binge at night. When I transitioned to anorexia, I would eat periodically, but it would be very small amounts, and not enough to sustain me. Now that I am in recovery, I find it hard to eat throughout the day, for fear that I will feel the need to binge at nighttime, as a result, I end up having to eat massive amounts at night (or what seems like it) but then end up still not reaching my nutritional goal. I also have the tendency to take an EXTREMELY large amount of time to finish food (my friends make fun of me sometimes because it can take me up to an hour to finish eating).” Kim 1811, Courtesy: National Eating Disorders Association (2016)

Body dysmorphic disorder is an excessive preoccupation with an imagined or real slight defect with one’s physical appearance. It is usually most evident in adolescence and may turn into a chronic condition through adulthood. The result of the equation of thinness with beauty in society results in many girls and women, and to a lesser extent,

boys and men, having a distorted view of their bodies (Lampard, MacLehose, Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer & Davison, 2014). Muscle dysmorphia or the notion that one's body is too small or one's muscles are not well-developed is especially common among boys. One survey of literature found that boys suffered from dissatisfaction of their bodies in significant numbers and wanted to attain bigger bodies. Being small for one's age was usually tied to low self-esteem and distress among boys (Cohane & Pope, 2001).

Eating disorders are characterized by abnormal eating that results in physical and mental negative consequences for the sufferer. It includes binge eating, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, pica, and restrictive/avoidant eating disorder. Binge eating refers to eating a large quantity of food in a very short time. Anorexia nervosa causes its sufferers to severely restrict their food intake while Bulimia Nervosa patients eat a lot and then throw up the food. Pica sufferers eat non-edible items, and people with restrictive eating disorders lack an interest in food and are overly selective about what they eat. Some of the unhealthy ways that sufferers control their weight is by over-exercising, manipulating the levels of insulin prescription, purging, and consuming diuretics. The symptoms can be of a wide variety and must be taken into consideration along with visible behavior patterns when making a diagnosis of an eating disorder. Sufferers can exhibit weight loss weakness, sensitivity to cold, amenorrhea or the cessation of menstruation (among girls), hoarseness of voice due to repeated purging, tooth loss and osteoporosis.

Underlying all eating disorders is a distorted body image and a need to measure up to very strict standards of bodily proportions. For boys, it often means a muscular ideal and for girls, it is a thinness ideal. These ideals are culturally

rooted and is specific to modern industrialized societies. Epidemiological studies implicate the increasing idealization of thinness over the last century to the increasing incidence of anorexia nervosa and bulimia in the US and in Europe (Rodgers, Paxton & McLean, 2014). There is evidence that among Caribbean youth, when individuals had spent time in an industrialized country, the chance of developing disordered eating increased (Waters, 1996). In the industrialized countries of the west, thinness is elevated to a virtue. In one study, it was found that most college age girls and a significant minority of men had gone on a diet. In addition, while Caucasian women were likely to be thinner on average than Latina and Black women, they were much more likely to perceive themselves as overweight. Thus, white women were much more likely to go on a diet, use pills and engage in vomiting, and used vigorous exercise for weight management (Godley, 2004; Gonzalez, 2008).

Epidemiological studies point to a sharp rise in eating disorders among prepubescent girls of all ethnicities and classes in the USA and globally. About 90 -95% of all reported incidence of both anorexia and bulimia occur in women though some researchers claim that there is an under-reporting of both disorders among men. In one study in a Minnesota suburb with Caucasian girls (Leon, Fulkerson, Perry & Early-Zald, 1995), there was more acceptance among girls of the kinds of behaviors that meet the criteria for a diagnosis of eating disorders. Most studies also demonstrate that white girls and women are overrepresented in those who make the criteria for disordered eating. Research studies confirm that this may be somewhat accurate with reference to anorexia but not about bulimia or binge-eating disorders. Bergeron and

Senn (1998) found that of all the groups organized around sexual orientation, homosexual men and heterosexual women were most at risk for eating disorders while lesbians and heterosexual men were least likely to be at risk. They hypothesize that the need to please men in a world where being thin is equated with attractiveness is a factor in all eating disorders. Among adolescents, it is especially difficult to explore the relationship between sexual orientation and eating disorders because of the vulnerability of the population and the secrecy around sexual orientation.

Factors that Lead to Disordered Eating

In terms of psychological factors, studies have indicated that girls who are perfectionists, have unrealistic expectations and ideals and a low self-esteem are more likely to exhibit eating disorders. In girls with anorexia, there is often delusional body image beliefs while this is often absent in patients with other forms of eating disorders. It seems many of the unhealthy eating is a result of long-established habits and the reinforcement of those habits by those around us. In one interesting paper, the authors point to peer groups as a significant factor in disordered eating (Kirsch et al, 2016). Not all students in the same school share similar environments. Girls who are perfectionists and have similar concerns about body weight may be drawn to each other. In another study that tracked college students, dieting habits of the same sorority

became more similar, the longer the women lived together (Mitchell, deZwaan & Wonderlich, 2018). Similarly, rates of bulimia declined when a roommate of a person with disordered eating had few weight concerns. The impact of peers is facilitated by social networking sites and the social comparison that may result from the excessive use of these sites (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). Body dysmorphia may result from excessive peer teasing in routine interactions (Fairweather-Schmidt & Wade, 2017). Thus, one way to interrupt the habit of disordered eating is to intervene at the level of the peer groups.

Globally there is little research into disordered eating among girls but in one study by Lee and Lee (2000) in China, the researchers found that even though girls in Hong Kong were thinner than girls in both rural Hunan and Shenzhen, they exhibited higher levels of dissatisfaction with their bodies and were more at risk for eating disorders. The authors propose that westernization was a factor in the susceptibility of girls in Hong Kong to disordered eating. Similarly, better educated ethnic minorities in the USA exhibit higher levels of anorexia and bulimia than their less-educated, poorer peers from similar backgrounds. In countries that are less influenced by the ideals of the industrialized west, anorexia and bulimia occur among fewer women and as cultures become more exposed to western media and values, incidence of eating disorders rises.

Popular media has played a big role in the disordered eating habits of young people. Commercial media promotes the ideal beauty as thin and tall, a body type that few girls possess. Media messages convey the myth that the body is 'malleable' and can be shaped through discipline and rigor. Youth who consume the most media also tend to have the

most negative view of their bodies. Becker (1999) studied youth in Fiji before and after the introduction of television in the country and found that there was a sharp increase in the number of girls who induced vomiting after the introduction of television. Women from historically underrepresented groups may feel additional pressure when asked to conform to white standards of beauty leading to low self-image and self-destructive behaviors.

Among boys, body image issues are often associated with wanting to be bigger than average. In muscular dysmorphia for instance, large muscular boys see themselves as small and thin and want to bulk up even more (Sreshta et al, 2017). The presence of a distorted body image in boys is associated with poor self-esteem and distress, anxiety, eating disorders and a high prevalence of anabolic steroid use (Collis, Lewis & Crisp, 2017). Among young boys and youth, half of the boys with body image issues want to be heavier and the other half want to be thinner (Lavender, Brown & Murray, 2017). The predominant concern of these boys regarding their body shape is that it is not developed. Like girls, boys' body image, their BMI and their eating habits tend to cluster in similar ways among peer groups.

Interventions

A review of some of the interventions of eating disorders highlights the fact that help with youth engaging in disordered eating cannot simply include physiological measures like achieving a target weight. When adolescents

discontinue therapy, they are likely to fall back into their old eating habits. For many of the sufferers of anorexia and bulimia, the illness becomes part of their identity making it difficult for them to recover from the disorder. Youth suffering from eating disorders find it very difficult to give up the control over their bodies as it is central to who they are. It is important for youth advocates and caregivers to help maintain a sense of normalcy as clients transform their attitudes towards their bodies and the changes in their eating habits. Current governmental and community supports are inadequate for many young people to make a full recovery from a disease that has the largest rates of deaths as compared to other mental illnesses like depression and schizophrenia (Arcelus et al., 2011).

Review and Reflect: Learning Goal 2

REVIEW

- 1.What are some factors that underlie all eating disorders? Which population is most at risk of developing an eating disorder?
- 2.How does our culture contribute to disordered eating and body dysmorphia?

REFLECT

- 1.How common was disordered eating in your school?
- 2.What were some steps your school took to facilitate healthy eating?

Obesity has increased enormously in the last 20 years along with its negative health consequences in childhood and later during adulthood. One out of 6 adolescents in the USA is now overweight. Being obese is described as in the 95th percentile (or above) of the calculated Body Mass Index and being overweight is when someone falls between the 85th and 94th percentile (Sutin, Stephan & Terracciano, 2015). The obesity problem is so severe that some officials claim that today's generation of youth will not live as long their parents because of the many negative health consequences of youth obesity and other mental health issues like stress and drug dependence (Case & Deaton, 2015). In addition, in a culture where thinness is considered a virtue, people who are obese face enormous stigma and a compromised quality of life. They face discrimination in jobs, relationships, and access to services (Spalholtz, 2016).

The factors that underlie the spike in obesity in the US and across the globe are varied and are rooted in the individual, the family, the neighborhood, the community and most important, the social policies around food and food consumption. The impact of food on weight gain varies from one individual to the next based on genetic makeup and environmental factors. Schools play an important role on obesity rates. Children spend most of their time in schools outside of their house and when the food offered at the school cafeteria is unhealthy or there are vending machines stocked with snack foods that are calorie rich, children often have little option but to

consume them. In addition, most states in the US mandate little daily physical education for children in public schools offering children and youth few opportunities to expend energy. The American Academy of Pediatricians advocate for the formation of school wellness councils that would include doctors, counselors, parents, community members and nutritionists to offer input into the barriers to maintaining a healthy weight for children and how best to overcome them within specific contexts (Wilfley et al, 2017).

Socioeconomic status is a major factor in obesity. The zip-code that a person lives in is significantly related to their weight. Experts point to poor neighborhoods' lack of fresh food stores as a big factor in the high rates of obesity among families who fall in the lower socioeconomic stratum (Lippert, 2016). There are few open areas for children to play in, and the air quality in lower income neighborhoods tend to be poor. Economists point out that processed food manufacturers mark down the prices of products in stores in low income neighborhoods and make up for it by the volume sold. Poor families often buy from these stores because they can make their income last longer by living off processed foods (Zhang & Ghosh, 2016). One of the possible policy solutions offered by social scientists is to provide tax credits for the operation of fresh grocery stores in poor neighborhoods and to create an incentive to promote the growing of fresh foods. In addition, youth in poor neighborhoods engage in less physical activity. Impoverished areas tend to have little recreational opportunities for children and tend to be unsafe making caregivers fearful about allowing young people to spend time outdoors. The air quality in low income localities in cities tend to be of poor quality leading to illnesses among children, preventing them from being

outdoors (Althoff et al, 2017; Côté-Lussier et al, 2015). Thus, effective implementation of policies regarding the health of individual adolescents need to shift away from the family and examine the many interacting factors that facilitate the rapid rise in obesity among children and youth.

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Much of the effort to reduce the incidence of obesity among children and youth has been undermined by the stigma against overweight. In the US, unlike other forms of discrimination, the one against overweight individuals is tolerated and even encouraged in public spaces like schools and workplaces. Popular media similarly portrays overweight individuals as cartoonish creatures with little success in work and in relationships. Studies have demonstrated that most people believe that weight is controllable and therefore if one is overweight or obese it is entirely one's fault and is indicative of a weakness of character and laziness. Ironically, when overweight individuals try to lose weight and they are unable to, others hold even more negative views of them. Overweight children internalize these powerful messages. Unlike race or gender, there is little support for the victims of fat discrimination even within their own families or in-groups. The internalized stigma that overweight and obese children endure prevents caregivers and adult advocates from helping them in a

constructive fashion. Schools can often perpetuate the stereotypes by engaging in parent-blaming (Flint et al, 2016; Spahlholz et al, 2016). In one infamous instance, a school district mailed out letters to parents informing them that their children are overweight (Ruggieri & Bass, 2015). Such myopic measures do not help address the issue of obesity. It makes parents feel guilty without offering them ways to reimagine nutrition for their homes.

At a larger macro-cultural level there are very powerful forces at work to keep the obesity epidemic in place. The amount of funds expended in marketing unhealthy foods for teens has increased sharply and vastly overshadows any government spending for marketing appropriate eating habits among children and youth. There is substantial evidence that the teen years provide a crucial space for eating habits in adulthood and studies confirm that half of these obese adolescents go on to becoming severely obese by the age of thirty. Having a TV in an adolescent's bedroom has been significantly correlated to being overweight and obese (Mota et al, 2018). Initially, researchers theorized that it must be the sedentary nature of the teens' lives that contributed to the problem, but newer research seems to suggest it is

presence of food deserts, marketing of poor-quality foods, lack of mandatory physical activity in schools, fewer open areas to play and poor air quality. **Fat discrimination** on prevention

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really the advertising that these kids are exposed to that seems to make a significant difference to their weights. Food marketers spend about 1.5 billion dollars a year marketing unhealthy processed food to children and adolescents. They promote packaged foods as appropriate food choices, catering to what children want, thereby deceiving children with products that undermine their health (Lobstein et al, 2015). There has been a fierce debate between food marketers and child health advocates and pediatric associations about whether to limit marketing to children. The Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) is a food industry sponsored lobbying group that has fought governmental regulations and has insisted that the industry be allowed to self-regulate itself. Unfortunately, the processing food industry has kept the right to define what is healthy for children. Thus, manufacturers make a few industry friendly changes to packaged food for children claiming to use more whole grains and added vitamins while still not providing accurate information about calories and the hidden ingredients in the foods that are sold to children and youth (Schermbeck & Powell, 2015; Wootan et al, 2019).

Almost half the calories consumed by children is at school and not at home. Most children in the USA take part in the school lunch program. In many national surveys, most schools, especially those located in poor neighborhoods failed the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards for appropriate nutrition. The food served in public school cafeterias had far too many fats, saturated fats and salts than has been recommended for children (Powell, 2019). In addition, schools are often enticed by companies into installing vending machines that are stacked with snack foods and sugary drinks (Roache & Gostin, 2017). In 2010, The Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act was passed by the federal government. It allocated additional funds for school lunches allowing cafeterias to offer more fruit and vegetables, whole grain foods and items with less fat and salt. Food companies fought back, lobbying congress to take back many of the provisions of the act leaving it ineffective in changing menus in school cafeterias (Roberto et al, 2015). Processed food manufacturers offered to self-regulate their marketing and the choices that they offered children. They offered to reduce or withdraw the range of sugared soft drink products in schools and provide fruit juices instead, but it was a win situation for these companies since the

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same companies own both sweetened beverages and fruit juice offerings. Nutritionists recommend that children reduce their consumption of fruit juices because they contain almost as much sugar as soft drinks (Nestle, 2015). Today, the rise of energy drinks provides additional reasons for concern for children's health advocates. The marketing and consumption of energy drinks has shot up enormously since they were introduced to children and 1/5th of children drink more than 3 energy drinks a day. In 2011, The Federal Trade Commission tried to push through legislation implementing common nutrition standards in all public schools but there was pushback from food marketers and the mandate had to be withdrawn.

One much discussed reason for the spike in obesity levels among children and youth is the lack of physical activity. There have been enormous changes in the way families live now as compared to before the rise of suburban communities. Less than 20% of children walk to school and there has been a substantial reduction in unsupervised play by children in the last three decades. Parents of children and, to some extent, adolescents express great fear in allowing their children independence within their neighborhoods

because of safety concerns. In addition to fast moving vehicles, caregivers worry that their children will be abducted or subjected to violence, even though research shows that most children that are harmed are harmed by people who claim to love them. There are no national mandates for schools to provide daily physical activity and in states that do have mandates, there are few standards that dictate the quality and content of the activity.

At a governmental level, agricultural policies by the US government has contributed to the change in eating habits of the population. The government gives enormous subsidies for producers of corn, soy and wheat and the industries that process these crops. There is little support for vegetables and fruit growers. Thus, vast tracts of land are dedicated to crops that are amenable for processing and less than 2% of the arable land is devoted to growing fruits and vegetables. Commercial crops are typically grown and processed by large agribusinesses while vegetables and fruits are often grown on family farms (Friedmann, 2009). This contributes to making family farms less viable and with little reach beyond the immediate locality. Since the former are overproduced, the surplus corn and soy that are produced are converted to corn-

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syrup and saturated fats that are added to processed food to enhance the taste of these products. Researchers have called for the doing away of governmental subsidies for corn and soy to combat the obesity epidemic (Fields, 2004; Franck et

al, 2013).

At a larger community level, home visits by health workers or aids allow for feedback from parents and a more intimate knowledge about the many barriers such as financial stress, abuse or mental illness that the family might have in maintaining healthy weights. Visiting health workers could also help families identify ways to address the negative consequences of obesity like controlling diabetes among children. It is important for advocates of youth to understand the problem of obesity as multicausal and it is ineffective to talk about change simply at the familial or the individual level. It would be important for policy makers and community leaders to come up with culturally sensitive recommendations that individuals and families find easier to follow. It is thus important for everyone involved to take a larger ecological perspective when addressing both the causes and the consequences of being overweight or obese among children.

Eating disorders are connected to each other in complex ways in addition to being related to mental health. Being overweight is itself significantly related to being at risk for restrictive eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia. Often, clinicians and family members do not take it seriously when an overweight teen engages in disordered eating or smoking to reduce weight. In one study it was found that close to 40 % of girls who presented with eating disorder symptoms were severely overweight. Body

dysmorphia and its related disordered eating is responsible for a significant number of deaths in the USA. Among all mental illnesses, anorexia holds the distinction of the disease that leads to the highest number of deaths. The disorder tends to be evident around adolescence and this age group might be most amenable to help and support to overcome the disease's worst impact.

Review and Reflect: Learning Goal 3

REVIEW

- 1.How does socioeconomic status influence the rates of obesity in any given area?
- 2.What role does the media play in stigmatizing overweight individuals in the US?
- 3.How is obesity beneficial to wealthy corporations?
- 4.How does obesity influence body dysmorphia and disordered eating?

REFLECT

- 1.How would you describe your experience in your body?
- 2.How satisfied are you with your body shape and weight?
- 3.Do you feel that you have been influenced by the media or society to look a certain way?

For postmodern thinkers, social ideas about race, gender, social class, ability and sexuality are all lived out in the bodies of individual people (Gimlin, 2007). In capitalist countries the way we perceive our bodies is intimately tied with consumerism (The Atlantic, 2019) and neoliberalism (Stacey Kerr, 2015). These systems encourage the notion that individuals are responsible for their own health and their welfare. Within postmodern theory, the body is looked at as less an object and more as a phenomenon. This corresponds with their framework that symbols are often more important than reality. The body has meaning only in connection to other bodies, events and social contexts. Deleuze and Guattari (1988) conceive of individual bodies as always in a state of becoming and in connection with other bodies and society. Thus, they conceive of the body as an event. Similarly, gender is less a concept than an embodied experience. Coleman (2009) proposes that gender does not pre-exist the body but is constitutive of the body.

The new feminist perspectives began to move away from exploring eating disorders and obesity related issues to individual and familial characteristics like personality disorders but instead theorized them in relation to larger social and economic forces (Malson & Burns, 2009). In fact, feminist experts contend that eating disorders are just an expression of social norms and standards that specify what ideal bodies should be like and these are often based on class, race and gender. In traditional sciences, the body

and the mind are looked at as separate entities with the mind signifying reason and therefore associated with masculinity while the body has been conceived of as feminine and as an object to be controlled. According to feminist theorists, to live in an authentic manner in your body it's crucial to liberate oneself from exploitative patriarchal power (Hilde Bruch, 1973). Naomi Wolf (1991) calls this large-scale marketing of a particularly thin body type as a backlash against the women's rights movement and calls it the 'beauty myth.' Baudrillard (1998) used the metaphor of an anorexic person to characterize the commercialism of our era.

In recent years, as with other oppressed groups, there has been a groundswell of activist movements among overweight and obese individuals. Proponents of the fat acceptance movement organize against anti-fat bias and discrimination in society. According to fat acceptance advocates, the bias against the overweight was historically based on perceived lack of productivity by obese workers. In 1967, a "Fat In" was staged in New York City with about 500 people eating and burning diet books. One of the main arguments of fat advocates is that all existing stigma and publicized diets have led to both physical and psychological problems among fat people. They assert that being overweight is not necessarily tied to being of poor health. Having a body with higher than normative weight is often associated with

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social class, race, being sedentary and the geographical region where a person lives and functions. So, fat acceptance advocates demand allowing fat people a voice in the national dialogue around weight and health. Some experts also charge that all the stigma against overweight individuals skews public perceptions about the body and what healthy eating means as a form of public policy. Recent research has demonstrated that sizeism and fat shaming is rampant in schools and in medical clinics. Fat discrimination leads overweight youth and adults to stop seeking help and has a negative impact on the health of overweight adolescents. In addition, there is no agreement on how much weight is appropriate for individual adolescents and children.

Critical Disability Studies

Disability is a constantly evolving concept since it is related to the context and the historical period in which individuals' function. In general, there is some basic consensus about the term. Disability is defined as "any restriction or

lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being” (Ingstad & Whyte, p. 5). Handicap refers to the social consequences of having a disability in a physical and social context. Disability is a learned social role and is given meaning by society – it does not have any validity as a concept without its connections to society. Thus, its meaning, roles and definition changes with the context. Critical disability theorists assert that society’s notions of what is considered able-bodied and its conceptions of youth are closely linked (Boulter, 2010). While on the one hand, within psychological sciences and in popular discourse, adolescence is characterized as a development stage on the path to adulthood, youth is considered an aesthetic endeavor in that adults of all ages are encouraged to be youthful for mental and physical health. Adult women are excoriated for not working harder on their bodies in order to look more youthful. Youth is equated to both health and beauty, allowing it to be used as a commodity in society and is used to sell both ideas and products (Haegele & Hodge, 2016).

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Feminists and critical disability theorists would argue that the body is a cultural product laden with meaning. During the 1990s, there was a deep examination of the relationship of the cultural meanings of the body with relationship to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and class. More recently, people with disabilities have challenged ideas about

Critical
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Critical disability researchers attempt to study how institutions disable people systematically. Critical disability experts assert that the ambiguous attitude

the normal body within the sciences and popular discourse. There has been a progression to discussing youth and disability as it relates to the body. Disability leads one to have narrow views about what is normative, and it therefore constricts identity development as young people go through adolescence. Women and girls have always been mandated to discipline their bodies through personal will power. In recent years these mandates have been extended to young people with physical disabilities. In the classroom, a good body is assumed to be under the control of the individual. Children from a young age are acutely aware of what is an acceptable body and the rules of the body work that leads to inclusion and exclusion among peer groups. Slater (2012) argues that the ambiguous attitude that adults have towards the period of youth leads to a deep anxiety and disgust for an adolescent with a disability. For example, young people are considered incomplete until they become adults while at the same time adults are constantly trying to be youthful as a sign of a healthy person. Critical disability experts assert that the ambiguous attitudes that adults have towards adolescents (wanting to be youthful but regarding adolescents as

immature) have heightened and add to the discrimination and exclusion of youth with disability.

Several international organizations like the World Health Organization and the International Labor Organization have recognized the rights and privileges of people with disabilities to services and support. The movement for civil rights increased the awareness of the tremendous barriers that youth with disabilities face in the USA and there was a push to offer ameliorative services to remedy the situation.

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Sports and its Impact

Sports during adolescence is important for both boys and girls. For girls, it has been associated with self-esteem and achievement in and out of class and for boys, sports participation has been found to significantly reduce self-destructive behavior. Despite the huge benefit that sports offer, there are gender related issues that continue to hinder participation and promote positive growth in both boys and girls. There are deep-

disability. rooted prejudices and stereotypes about gender and sports participation that affect the quality and types of athletic endeavors that adolescents can participate in (Plaza et al, 2017; Xiang et al, 2018).

The percentage of girls who participate in athletics has grown 900% from 1971 to 2008. However, boys still play sports at much larger rates than girls do, and the gap has not been eliminated since the introduction of Title IX in 1972 (Wilde, 2015). The foundational Act states, in part, that “no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic, extracurricular, research, occupational training, or other education program or activity operated by a recipient which receives Federal financial assistance” (Office of Civil Rights, §106.31a). The Office of Civil Rights is responsible for implementing the provisions outlined in Title IX across the country. The law demands that schools accommodate the interests of both sexes in sports, that sporting activities should be accompanied by equal opportunity to receive training and equipment, and that there are equal publicity and schedules for boys and girls’ sports. While girls’ participation in sports has indeed gone up significantly, they still lag boys. Some observers claim that girls are not interested in sports to the same extent boys are while others argue that the discrimination and stereotypes about girls and sports prevents them from participating in athletic endeavors at the same rates.

Stader and Surface (2014) argue that girls are treated as second class citizens in athletic spaces. There has been a string of court cases that point to lack of equality in scheduling of events, recruitment of young participants,

and maintenance of athletic fields and their uses based on gender. School districts hire girls' sports coaches much later in the season than boy's coaches and less effort is made in the hiring process for girls' team coaches. If a coach is not hired, the event is discontinued. Similarly, while baseball fields are very well maintained, softball fields are used for other sporting events and are not as well maintained leading to injuries. In one case, a school district retaliated against a coach who complained about the unequal treatment that his girls' team was offered (Buzevis, 2017). Koller (2010) explored the question of whether Title IX, as it is currently set up, does the appropriate job of bringing girls into sporting activities. In other words, is the conception of equality that is embedded in Title IX enough to produce equity in sports? Koller argues that while Title IX offers girls and boys equal resources within institutional settings, they do allow for separate programs for each. Title IX also does not give girls the extra incentives they deserve after years of being left behind in terms of opportunities to engage in sports. Koller thus claims that under current regulations, it would be very difficult to eliminate the disadvantages that girls face in terms of athletic engagement in high schools.

One action that school administrators and advocates for girls can take include having regular equity audits of athletic opportunities for boys and girls. Resources and training for girls' and boys' events as well as recruitment of coaches must be equitable. It is important to schedule and publicize events when it is advantageous to the players of both sexes.

Title IX

The
Title IX

Act states, in part, that “no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination on under any academic, extrac

Recommendations also include taking a regular survey of student interests and needs in sports. If there is a critical mass of interest in a sporting activity, school administration should try to incorporate the activity into their athletic program. Finally, coaches should be informed and trained in the stipulations of the law in order to bring about gender equality in sports.

On the other end of the spectrum, there is evidence that commercialized sports have had a negative impact on high school boys across the country (Gornitzky et al, 2016). Adults who are involved in coaching and encouraging young people in athletic endeavors have also pushed youth to test the very limits of their endurance leading to unintended serious consequences for the health of the players. Often, games like football have grown from a local interest activity to drawing national audiences and passion. Commercial television has picked up on the interest and has exploited it for profit with the arrival of 24-hour sports channels. Individual players have been subjected to unprecedented scrutiny by colleges and popular media. There is also intense pressure on high school football coaches to take their teams to the top. The coaches in turn pass on the expectations to the students. The average high school

football player today is bigger and taller than they've ever been before.

Today, it is not unheard of to find football teams training twelve months a year, well before the football season even begins. Along with the intense training, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of injuries and deaths related to high school football in recent decades. It is reported that there are about 60 serious concussions in high school football every year. Studies demonstrate that repeated concussions have a long-term impact on the health of the player. The risk for dementia and brain damage goes up enormously. It is progressive and leads to behavioral issues like depression and suicide. A more worrying finding is that even when players are not formally recognized as having had a concussion, they could still be at higher risk for long term brain issues than players who do not play football. Despite the association between concussion with dementia and memory loss, more boys play football than they do any other sport. Young, growing brains are far more vulnerable to the impact of repeated physical trauma than adult brains.

High school football involves a lot more hits per child than college football even when it does not lead to a concussion. The small traumas of the minor hits are risk-producing in the long term and helmets do not

urricular,
research,
occupational
training,
or other
education
program or
activity
operated by a
recipient
which receives
Federal
financial
assistance.

protect the developing brain from these traumas. The brain is gelatinous and when the head is hit, the nerves undergo transformation and chemical changes as it tries to heal itself after the impact. It takes a few months for the nerves to repair themselves after a trauma and in the meantime if there is another trauma, the damage on the nerves might become permanent. With younger players, the repeated traumas can have more severe consequences. While helmets have got stronger and more resistant, the players are using it more aggressively as a tool to tackle opponents.

Some schools are using a test called Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing, or imPACT testing which allows school administrators to keep baseline measurements of students' cognitive performance before games. They are then retested after a game to see if there is a functional decrease in performance. If a deterioration is found, the students are kept away from the field until their performance improves. Advocates for youth suggest that there should be strict regulations for licensing of coaches which ensures they get the latest training in first aid. Currently, high school football is unregulated, and experts are calling for oversight of the people who work with children to make sure the students are not abused or cajoled into self-destructive play.

Review and Reflect: Learning Goal 6

REVIEW

1.How does Title IX aim to produce equity in sports?

2.Are the impacts of Title IX enough to produce equity in sports?

3.How does the commercialization of sports impact the lives of high school male athletes?

REFLECT

1.As an adolescent, did you play sports? If so, how did either Title IX or commercialized sports impact your life and wellbeing?

Glossary of Terms

(gender)

Adrenal

Adrenaline

Amenorrhea

Amygdala

Anorexia Nervosa

Binge eating

Body Image – Race, Class & Gender

Bulimia

Consumerism

Cortisol

Critical Disability Studies

Disableism

Early vs. Late Maturation
Fat Acceptance
Feminism
Gender differences in growth spurt
GnRH
Gonads
Governmental Farm Subsidies
Health Hunger-Free Kids Act
Hippocampus
ImPACT testing
Menarche
Menstruation
Muscular Dysmorphia
NeoLiberalism
Obesity – Factors
Pica
Pituitary
Restrictive Eating Disorder
Secular Trend
Serve and Return
Silencing of Girls' Menarche
Sizeism
The Endocrine Glands
Thyroid
Title IX
Toxic stress

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4. Chapter 4 - Cognitive Development and Schooling

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Objectives

Learning Goals

- Understand the various biopsychological theories that explore cognitive development
- Understand how cognitive theories are applied in educational contexts
- Explore the socio-historical frameworks to understand the institution of schooling
- Describe the impact of technology on cognition
- Explore the connections between social location and academic life as an adolescent

C

Chapter Outline

- Introduction
- The Biopsychological Frameworks
 - Brain Development
 - Cognitive Development
 - Piaget and the Importance of Logic
 - Assessment of Piaget's Theory
 - Vygotsky and his Theory of Cognition
 - Improvements in Information Processing
- Technology in the Classroom
- The Social Historical Contexts of Schooling
 - A Brief History Schooling
 - Public Students and Historically Underrepresented Groups
 - The New Assaults on Schooling
 - The Schools to Prisons Pipeline
 - Addressing the Schools to Prisons Pipeline
 - The New Educational Reform
 - Schooling and Privatization
- Conclusion
- Glossary of Terms
- References

Introduction

Adolescents spend a significant percent of their waking hours in school and pursuing academic accomplishments. This is unlike youth in previous generations who worked and contributed to the maintenance of their family unit. Thus, it is important to examine the growth of cognitive capacities in youth and its interactions with other aspects of their lives. As in other areas of youth life, there are numerous frameworks that attempt to explain cognition and academic performance. We will explore the major issues in this arena from different disciplinary perspectives; exploring how experts attempt to explain the phenomena we observe around us.

Biopsychological Frameworks

In the last few decades, the dominant framework used to explain cognition has been a biopsychological one. Other perspectives have often been either used to support or dispute the major assumptions about cognitive development. Foremost among these assumptions is the idea that all cognitive functions have their roots in the brain and therefore all development can be traced to changes in the structure and the function of the brain.

Brain Development

Adolescents go through brain growth at a rate that is not rivaled except that in infancy. The transformations are principally in the area of the structure and functioning of the brain and have less to do with increase in size. The arrival of functional magnetic resonance systems (fMRIs) and diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) has offered researchers access to the brains of children and adolescents as they are solving tasks or engaging in other activities. Electroencephalography (EEG) allows for exploring electrical activity in the brain. Thus, it has been possible to look at both the brain structures and functions at an individual level (Papadelis, Grant, Okada & Hubert, 2015).

The average adult brain weighs about 3 pounds. The brain has approximately 100 billion neurons and 1 trillion supporting cells. Neurons are cells that transmit information from the rest of the body to the brain and back again to the body. While they form long chains across the body, they do not individually touch each other. Instead, they release small amounts of chemicals called neurotransmitters that carry information from one neuron to the next. The rate of neuronal formation peaks at one year of age but individuals continue to develop new connections all through their lives as they acquire new skills, knowledge and information. While there are new neuronal connections being built throughout childhood, a simultaneous process called synaptic pruning (Alila Medical Media, 2019) takes place during which unused connections are cut (Chechik, Meilijson, & Ruppin, 1999; Oş, Su & Shinbrot, 2011). Synaptic pruning leads to a more efficient brain. At the same as the pruning occurs, neurons also acquire a fatty covering called myelin from birth onwards

that leads to increased speed in the transmission of information. The process of acquiring the fatty lining, called myelination, is accelerated during adolescence. Thus, most of the refinement in the brain consists of selective atrophy of certain connections in the brain while others continue to strengthen (neuroscientifically challenged, 2015).

In terms of structural changes in the brain itself, one of the most important areas that continues to grow and develop until the mid-twenties is the prefrontal cortex. This region of the brain is responsible for planning and decision-making (Caballero, Granberg & Tseng, 2016). The connections of the prefrontal cortex to the limbic system, especially the amygdala, are also strengthened during adolescence. The amygdala consists of two bundles of nuclei that lie deep within the brain. It is responsible for the control of emotional reactions and memory. When the connections are fully complete, it allows individuals to exercise greater control over their emotions. However, brain researchers assert that the amygdala develops in early adolescence while the prefrontal cortex develops later in adolescence thus making youth have an increasing capacity to feel a wide range of emotions intensely without at the same time having the capacity to exercise control over one's emotions (Stolyarova & Izquierdo, 2015). The development of the

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amygdala also facilitates awareness of other people's emotions which sometimes makes them overreact to emotions perceived in other people (Yurgelun-Todd & Killgore, 2006).

It must be noted that the connections between brain structure and functioning and its relationship to individual behavior has in no way been clearly established by current techniques available to researchers. Critics of traditional brain research caution readers that differences and changes in brain structure and function is not indicative of a causal relationship between the brain and behavior (Gallagher, 2011; Gummy, 2014; Schmitz, 2014; Schmitz, & Höppner, 2014).

They point out that the relationship could be the other way around. Adolescent behaviors and activities could also have an impact on brain structures. Some of these writers suggest that the current way of life in industrial societies are principally responsible for the exhibited behaviors by adolescents today and that schooling has played a big role in shaping the current structures and functions of the brains of teenagers (Ames & Fiske, 2010; Draganski, Gaser, Busch, Schuierer, Bogdahn, May, 2004). Studies demonstrate that behaviors and self-conceptions that are culturally situated have a huge impact on the brain structures and functioning (Ames & Fiske, 2010).

Cognitive Change During Adolescence

With the new technological improvements in brain science, it is relatively easy to mark brain development. Nonetheless, the relationship between any structural change we see in the brain and changes in behaviors exhibited by adolescents is speculative and correlational. The direction of change is difficult to determine. We do not know if it is the behavior that changes the brain structure or chemistry, or if it is the other way around. However, there are transformations in cognitive development as individuals go through childhood, at least among those who are schooled in western style educational institutions like the ones in the USA.

Piaget and Cognitive Constructivism

Jean Piaget was one of the first psychologists to point to some basic changes in the development of cognitive functioning. Piaget believed that humans try to adapt to our environment by making the most sense out of our experiences. In other words, he argued that children and adults construct their own knowledge of the world. This school of thought is called cognitive constructivism. According to cognitive constructionism, we are born with certain frameworks of knowledge, called schemas, that become increasingly complex with age and experience. Schemas are the frameworks that we use to view the world with and make sense of our experiences. Piaget thought

these transformations in our frameworks of understanding were so dramatic that cognitive development among children should be classified into four different stages. Each stage centered on modes of thinking and understanding the world. The first stage which he called sensorimotor stage is when infants use simple schemas like sucking and grasping to make meaning in the world. Thus, infants must act on the world to know it. When they cannot perceive the world with their senses, they have no symbolic means of remembering and understanding it. As they get older these actions on the world are drawn inward (interiorized) allowing for symbol formation and memories. In the next stage, which he called preoperational, young children form rudimentary symbols that allow them to exhibit simple language and imaginary play. In this stage, children have the capacity to represent their world through drawings and deferred imitation. However, they are still guided by their perceptions and cannot manipulate their mental symbols into logical operations. In late childhood, during concrete operational stage, children learn to work with these symbols in a logical fashion leading to accuracy in mapping, classification and other logical functions. Piaget asserts that at this stage, they are less guided by perceptions than in previous stages. Finally, his theory concludes, in adolescence, children enter the stage of formal operations where they can engage in abstract thought (Elkind, 1996; Lapsley, 1993).

Piaget's

During adolescence, children have the capacity to reason like scientists, using advanced logical processes (Elkind, 1996). They can think about the possible consequences of events that have not

happened. This capacity to imagine what does not actually exist is called hypothetico-deductive reasoning. They can assess the impact of one phenomenon on another by keeping all the influences constant except the one whose effect they want to test. This capacity is termed combinatorial logic. (Remember the scientific method is based on combinatorial logic). Individuals drawing on this capacity will thus approach problems in a logical methodical manner instead of going by haphazard efforts. Younger children do not know how to work on several possible solutions to a problem by eliminating them they methodically. One of Piaget's most famous formal operational experiments was called the pendulum task. Children had to estimate which was the most important factor in the speed of a pendulum. The participants were given different length strings, different weights, and the string was pushed with varying force. The participant children had to deduce which of the three was most important for the speed of a pendulum. The correct method of testing each factor was to hold two of the factors constant while the participants varied the third so they could rule out each of the factors. Younger children varied two factors at the same time and thus often lost track of what they had tested and what they had not. Children	Stages of Cognitive Development
	Sensorimotor: infants know the world by acting on it. Preoperational: Toddlers have rudimentary cognitive symbols but guided by perception

tions.

Concrete

Operational:

Late childhood brings with it, logical thought.

Formal Operations:

Adolescents are able to engage in abstract thought.

using formal operational thinking processes were methodical and used combinatorial logic to arrive at the correct answer.

As a result of the advances in abstract thought in youth, their understanding of their life and the world around them undergoes a dramatic transformation. They can think about the possibility of establishing a perfect world as opposed to the imperfect one they inhabit, and thus they become increasingly idealistic. They can perceive the hypocrisy and double standards in the behavior of many adults around them and they rebel against established rules of the institutions that they inhabit. As they go through adolescence, the capacity for abstract thought allows adolescents to formulate sophisticated arguments against blind obedience to authority.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Piaget spoke about a new kind of egocentrism that adolescents experience. Preadolescent children in the preoperational stage exhibit an inability to put themselves in someone else's shoes and perceive the world from the other person's point of view. In

adolescence, children can exhibit a capacity to look at the world from another person's position, but it is often accompanied by a feeling that no one else experiences the world the way the individual adolescent does. The egocentrism of this stage leads adolescents to feel that the world is constantly examining and judging them even in the privacy of their bedrooms. Psychologists term this phenomenon Imaginary Audience. Thus, adolescents are extremely self-conscious and highly sensitive to criticism. They are embarrassed at small slights and misadventures that may not bother either adults or a child (Smith, 1996).

A second outcome of the egocentric thinking of adolescents is that they believe that they are invulnerable to many of the influences that may affect other people. Thus, they might think that other people might get into an accident when they drink and drive, but it would never happen to them personally. The phenomenon is called Adolescent Fable and neo-Piagetian use this to explain why youth may be impervious to personal safety messages (Pulos, 1997).

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) refers to educational practices that consider the child's cognitive stage

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Assessment of Piaget's Theory and its Uses

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Piaget conceived of adolescence and the capacity for formal operational thought as the highest form of cognition. Subsequent researchers, though, have questioned the universality of this final stage. They point out that much of its fundamental architecture is derived from western style schooling where teaching higher level math and science is part of its curriculum. Despite schooling, the majority of adults in the advanced societies in the Global North are unable to reason at this stage and when they do, it is restricted to specific subjects. The capacity for formal thought does not seem to generalize across areas of study. Piaget's theory has been highly influential in schooling practices and pedagogy today. Teachers have come to use more hands-on methods and classroom practice has come to involve more student exploration of the world around them. Most important of all, Piaget's recommendations that children's developmental stages be taken into

consideration when thinking about designing lessons has been formalized and taught in higher educational institutions under the subject Developmentally Appropriate Practice or DAP (Hall, 2000; Kamii & Ewing, 1996).	as Imaginary Audience. Youth may believe that they are invulnerable. This is termed the
<i>Vygotsky and his Marxist Theory of Cognitive Development</i>	Adolescent Fable.
Lev Vygotsky was a contemporary of Jean Piaget, but he lived most of his professional life in the Soviet Union. His framework for cognitive growth borrows heavily from Marxist theory and applies Marxian/Leninist concepts to the area of cognition. Marx spoke about the mastery over tools as central to mastery over one's environment (Ratner & Silva, 2017). Thus, whoever had control over the tools to master the environment also had control over the material and social structures of society. Vygotsky translated Marxist notions of tools to include the tools of thought, namely signs, symbols, and language. For Vygotsky, all thought is essentially social/material and is rooted in the context in which the individual lives. Social interaction is therefore critical to learning and development, especially as it relates to higher level cognitive functioning (Jaramilo, 1996). Vygotsky grew up in Tsarist Russia. As a person of Jewish origin, he witnessed	

first-hand the discriminations and biases faced by national minoritized communities under a dictatorial monarchy. He was a brilliant student; however, many opportunities were closed off for him because of the antisemitism under Tsar Nicholas. Admission to university was limited for Jewish students, who were mostly chosen via lottery. It was good fortune for the world therefore that he was able to find a place in Moscow University right before the Bolshevik revolution (Yasnitsky, 2018). Vygotsky was deeply influenced by the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Much of his work as a learning theorist was inspired by Marx's framework for understanding exploitation and the liberatory engagement of the oppressed (Au, 2007b; Packer, 2008). The first translations of Vygotsky's work appeared in the west in the 1960s. By that time, there was such anti-Marx fervor that all his references to Marx or Lenin were deliberately removed by the translators (Kozulin, 1986; Vygotsky, 1962).

Vygotsky
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Vygotsky's dialectical materialist framework of cognitive growth in children has been used in universities across the world and his methodology has provided research with exciting new tools to study individuals in interaction with the material, social, and cultural contexts in which they live and work (Au, 2007b). While he read the works of Piaget quite early in his career, Piaget never got to explore Vygotsky's writings until late in life. Piaget wrote about how close he had gotten to Vygotsky's frame for understanding children at the end of his

own career (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Van der Veer, 1996). Childhood researchers today continue to derive deep inspiration from Vygotsky's conceptualizations of the Zone of Proximal Development and the social-cultural basis of thinking itself. Their constructivist methods of educational praxis have been translated into classroom practices such as reciprocal learning, cooperative teaching and using language as a tool to allow for effective instruction (Shabani, 2016; Vasilyeva & Balyasnikova, 2019).

To highlight the extent to which Vygotsky was inspired by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and others, it is useful to name the fundamental ways in which Vygotsky (and other Marxist psychologists/educators) differed from Jean Piaget's conceptions of child development. Piaget's ideas reflected the theories of romantic philosophers like Rousseau for whom children were naturally noble and would grow into enlightened adults if they were allowed the freedom to explore the world around them (Koop, 2012). Like Rousseau, Piaget similarly believed that children go through universal stages of development regardless of their context (Fabricius, 1983; Mayer, 2005). The stages finally culminate in children's capacity to think in an abstract fashion, the most unique quality that humans come to possess around the period of adolescence. Given these assumptions, it follows that the best pedagogy for teachers is to provide a variety of materials for children to

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manipulate and work with, and then, in order to respect children's capacity to learn, teachers should stay out of their way of learning, allowing children construct their knowledge on their own (Smith, 1985). Piaget famously observed, "Every time we teach a child something, we keep him from inventing it himself" (Piaget, 1972, p. 27).

Much of the learning that takes place in Piaget's hypothetical child happens within the child because of logical operations transforming the mind of the child. The external world is merely the screen upon which these cognitive changes are reflected. Piaget's entire theory of 'Developmentally Appropriate Practice' is based on the notion that teachers cannot teach a child when the students have not internally built a schema for assimilating the new information (Elkind, 2015; Saran, 2007). Thus, Piaget's theory of development gives primacy to ideology over material. Even when he utilized the theory of dialectics as in his concepts of assimilation and accommodation, the focus of action is on the child's consciousness (in the form of internal schemas). Even though children grow in their interaction with the world around them, their growth is limited by the structures of their mind. While the source of these schemas are the child's actions on the world, they lose that connection in abstract thought (Piaget, 1972).

Vygotsky, familiar with the writings of both Piaget's constructivism and Marx's dialectics, challenged the underpinnings of western European conceptions of children's development and schooling. He used Historical Dialectical Materialism (HDM) to guide his critique and shape the alternatives that he proposed as part of his research work. For Vygotsky, the basic unit of analysis in cognition was the action of children on the physical and social world around them. For Piaget, the unit consisted of

mental structures of the child divorced from the context. This was one of the fundamental disagreements between the two theorists. Vygotsky's studies with young children revealed that even the most egocentric of activities, such as talking to oneself, is intensely social in nature and allows children to exercise a range of higher-order skills such as problem solving and self-regulation that might not be possible without that speech. Unlike Piaget, who viewed self-talk by children as a demonstration of their egocentrism and incomplete logic, Vygotsky viewed all speech as a powerful tool allowing children to engage in social knowledge-making; offering them an opportunity to exercise and experiment with control over their environment. For Vygotsky, language was first and foremost social before it moved inward. Both are understood as forms of social activity for the child (Bruner, 1997; Duncan, 1997).

Karl Marx formulated his theory of historical dialectical materialism as a departure from the materialism of Feuerbach and the idealism of Hegel. Feuerbach believed that the material world shaped all human thought; Hegel developed a theory of dialecticism rooted in idealism where thought determines social realities (Pippin, 1989; Taylor, 1978). Marx's unity (interpenetration) of the opposites states that things that may appear in opposition to each other are inextricably intertwined and are components of the same whole (i.e., gender binaries, capitalists/proletariats).

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Development (ZPD)

is the difference between a learner's level of independent performance and their achievement with the help of an expert. For Vygotsky, cognitive growth was a social

Since both are sides of the same whole, the opposition gives rise to manifest contradictions that need to be resolved; for example, since capitalists want to pay as little as possible to workers, this creates a situation where workers are unable to buy the things that are produced, leading capitalists to think of ways of finding new markets for their products (leading to imperialism). The contradiction of low pay leads to an imperialist expansion of capital to new markets and new sources for raw materials. For Vygotsky, the individual and society are similarly dialectically intertwined, leading to new arrangements in the relationship between the two over time. The fundamental growth is not what happens within the individual or in the world outside, but in the connecting spaces between all the different components of the web that makes up the individual in context. Cognitive transformation is a result of the dialectical relationship between individuals, in the spaces constituting the individual and the collective, and the current moment and the historical context (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Vygotsky pushed back against behaviorist conceptions of the human being as passive absorbers of everything that is happening around them, but he also wrote about the problematic nature of viewing individuals as isolated bits of

consciousness trying to make meaning of the world on their own. For him, the ever-transforming human is a product of the continuous weaving of history, conscious human collectives and their impact on nature, which in turn, shapes everything, including material and people (Moll, 2013; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978).

For Vygotsky, transformation both large and small, happens in that special space that defines these interpenetrations of the opposites. In the context of transformational learning, Vygotsky explored extensively the dynamic space of learning that exists between the students' level of independent comprehension and what they can accomplish with the help of a teacher; he calls this the Zone of Proximal Development or ZPD. The ZPD however, is not just the space between the dyad of learner and teacher, but the individual and the collective understanding of the world, and the present moment of the individual acting on the context and their making explicit connections to the history that led to the moment. The theory of ZPD can be traced to Lenin's own framework as reflected in his books and pamphlets. For Lenin, left to their own resources, individuals do not have the time or resources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the world, such as how exploitation works under capitalism, though they may have some intuitive understanding of their own experiences under capitalism. For the learning to be effective, there must be a group of organic intellectuals, theorizing this

process and the goals are always culturally defined. Learning is more important than development.

work and ready to demonstrate the possibilities available at any historical moment (Goncharov, 1968; Welton, 2014). As Ford (2017; 2022) observes, Marx himself arranged his work in such a way that it oscillates between phases of inquiry and phases of finished presentation. In the presentation stage, Marx presented his own findings through successive elaborations. He started by elaborating on simple relationships, slowly adding details and specificities to account for particularities in economic and social systems globally, ending up with an enriched framework.

Marx's changing concepts through the progress of his major works such as 'Das Capital' reflects the ZPD of his own explorations and at the same time provides the readers of his works, a complex nuanced understanding of the complexity his finished model, expressing the ZPD between Marx the thinker and the reader (though that is always subject to further change as new spaces of growth are established). Derek Ford points out the dialectical differentiation in Marx's own explorations of political economy can be evidenced in two of Marx's works (Ford, 2017; 2022). In his words, "The Grundrisse is an endless unfolding of antagonisms of revolutionary subjectivity. Capital, on the contrary, is more limited precisely because of its "categorical presentation." (Ford, 2021, p. 34). These relationships form the very core of Vygotsky's presentation of children's learning. Wu (1998) explains it thus,

"Usually, a child learns concrete objects or actions before he learns abstract concepts in his real-life experience. In Vygotsky's terms, children learn spontaneous concepts before scientific ones. But it is formal school learning that reverses this role in the child's thinking. He learns abstract concepts or scientific concepts in school learning, and his understanding of scientific concepts, in turn, helps him

understand his spontaneous concepts better. This reverse in learning or in thinking plays a significant part in the revolutionary transformations in the child's development." (page 13)

For Vygotsky, the context was always the material and the medium which made possible thought and language, which in turn was inextricably connected with materiality and organized reality. Steiner & Mahn (1996) elaborate on Vygotsky's notions of psyche in action as the fundamental unit of study. Initially, speaking for an infant as only making sounds with little meaning but in their association with human voices these sounds begin to reflect the meanings that others give to them. Consciousness and action are thus unified in the form of languaging (words and symbols). In other words, one's consciousness has an existence only because there are other consciousness present. The psyche cannot exist without its socio-cultural context and the connection is always mediated by the social formation, tools and languaging. According to Vygotsky, the mind is burdened with matter from the very moment of its inception – the brain cells, the air used to speak, sounds and action in the physical world etc. However, all 'languaging' (all symbolic communication tools) is only as useful as the praxis it embodies. For Vygotsky, awareness, knowledge, and praxis can only exist in the spaces between people, and in collectivities; in fact, the higher the mental functions, the more embedded it is in the context and in the collective.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development follows from these principles. Vygotsky's fundamental assertion is that knowledge is always exhibited at a more advanced level when co-created with other people, especially with someone who is at the stage of presentation (as opposed to

enquiry). Even as his works were translated into English, this important assertion was divorced from its Marxist implications and treated as a technique for effective teaching. In fact, Vygotsky's intention was to put forth a theory that describes the very nature of knowledge. A good educator would thus, understand the political frameworks that the student uses, stay just ahead of this framework, and draw the student along the path of discovery that they had traversed; this does not however preclude new trajectories and possibilities. Contrary to popular constructions of Marxism, there is no predictable path to knowledge, only a commitment to test all conceptions within the material historical context and modify one's framework as needed. The Zone is always subject to change and new directions and new understandings for both teacher and student. As Mao Zedong observed in his book, "On Practice", the culmination of any learning is always an implementation of the revolutionary framework in the form of action, to test the consequences of action and modify understanding as it applies to the material situation and the possibilities for expressions of liberation (Lu, 2017).

There are few assumptions about the essential nature of the participants, both teacher and student made by Vygotsky. Teachers and students engage in a co-creation of knowledge but always in connection with the material and social context. The instructor is acknowledged as being an organic intellectual who has wandered a little farther than the student and therefore has the responsibility and the capacity to stay in that dynamic space where radical praxis can be co-created. French philosopher Louis Pierre Althusser (1918-1990) once famously remarked that without radical theory there is no radical revolution; but the

opposite is equally true – without radical revolution there is no radical theory (Hudson-Miles, 2021). Vygotsky's framework centers a radical transformation of knowledge in an educational context that is unpredictable, social and is in a constant interplay with the historical context of the moment.

Improvements in Information Processing

The Information Processing framework views the mind as a computer. Learning experiences lead to ever improved cognitive programming that allow for solving problems and processing information. For information processing theorists, childhood is not so much a set of cognitive stages as a continuous process of improvements in our thinking. Information processing researchers propose several improvements that do take place during adolescence that enhance our cognition and capacity to store and process information (Connolly, Abramson, & Alloy, 2016).

Adolescents are better able to keep out distracting information and focus on the task on hand as compared to younger children (Coneus & Laucht, 2014). Similarly, they are better able to sift important details in incoming information as compared to unimportant ones. In general, impulse control is key to

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Metacognition is the capacity to think about one's thinking. It involves self-reflection as well as some basic comprehension of what other people are thinking about us when

academic competence and this improves with age. When doing school work, adolescents can engage in more complex work than younger children because of the newfound capacity to be planful. They can break down a larger goal into smaller goals and work at these short-term objectives in order to fulfill bigger goals. As they progress through their teenage years, adolescents become better at decision-making and planning than are children, though they often lack the experience to gauge future problems that come with different courses of action (Geldhof, Bowers, Gestsdóttir, Napolitano & Lerner, 2015).

Perhaps one of the most important advances that adolescents achieve during this time is the sophistication of their metacognitive skills (Kelly & Donaldson, 2016). Metacognition is the capacity to think about one's thinking. It involves self-reflection as well as some basic comprehension of what other people are thinking about us when we engage with them. It allows for adolescents to be thoughtful about how they plan their academic work. In studies, preadolescents often misjudge how much they know about a topic while adolescents were better able to assess how much knowledge they already possess on a topic and used

selective studying to maximize their study time effectively (Dent & Koenka, 2016; Armstrong, 2017).

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While Piaget and others have substantiated that adolescents are capable of sophisticated logical thought and produce complex ideas, these cognitive abilities are not tempered by realistic expectations. Due to inexperience, they are less able to judge the consequences of risky behavior and therefore prepare for the worst possible outcomes among the many possible ones (Reniers, Murphy, Lin, Bartolomé & Wood, 2016). In addition, youth undervalue the impact of emotions on thought leading to misunderstandings of intentions and the needs of other people (Rieffe & Camodeca, 2016).

Technology in the Classroom

Anybody who has had sustained interactions with teens today would notice the deep impact that technology has in teen lives and their academic engagement. Teachers complain that cell phones intrude with the learning process in class. They note that students use cheat sheets, unacceptable resources online, and seem incapable of the deep analytical thought that is needed to produce substantive written work (Määttä, Herrgård, Saavalainen, Pääkkönen, Könönen, Luoma & Partanen, 2005; Matthew, 2017).

It is unclear how the introduction of digital technology has affected youth's capacity to attend to singular topics with focused concentration. Researchers like Sherry Turkle from MIT claim that digital technology and the increasing incidence of multitasking has affected people's capacity to do deep analysis and processing of information (Fischetti, 2014). Studies demonstrate that doing several tasks at the same time or attending to several sources of information simultaneously, leads to poor performance in each of those tasks individually. There is much recent research focusing on exploring the limits of multitasking with newer forms of available technology. Thus, while adolescents often perceive themselves as capable of completing several tasks equally well, research suggests otherwise (Cain, Leonard, Gabrieli & Finn, 2016). The challenge for teachers today is to facilitate learning in spite of digital distractions while at the same time using digital media to communicate and assess (Edutopia, 2012) student learning (Cheong, Shuter & Suwinyattichai, 2016; Taneja, Fiore & Fischer, 2015).

Multitasking

Multitasking has been shown

Classroom instructional methods have not changed in the last several decades in a fundamental way. While students are increasingly being immersed in technology, they have made little impact in the instructional methods in classroom. In general, there is a fear around the use of technology in schools. However, it is important to contend with the ubiquitous role that technology plays in children's lives today. In fact, the successful introduction of technology early on in a young person's life is a key factor in later

academic success. The uneven introduction of technology has led to children from wealthier families having an unfair advantage in terms of having ever expanding opportunities in the new work environment that involves sophisticated technological skills. Technology use is the norm in wealthier school districts around the country and its role is not limited to a specialized topic or program but is interwoven into the learning process (Monahan, 2004). One of the major challenges to facilitating access to technological knowledge is a lack of infrastructure support like high speed broadband connections, as well as the hardware needed to go online (Madeline Harbaugh, 2016).

to lead to more distractions and poorer performance among youth.

In some schools, every child's education is customized based on their goals and their achievement levels. Each student is offered their own individualized training programs (sometimes known as playlists) so they can progress at their own pace and not have to compare their achievement with other students (Dunlop, 2014). Playlists are like individualized textbooks except they are digital. Thus, technology allows for mastery learning where everyone exhibits success. The instructor then has the chance to offer special instruction to students who need the teacher's help. Having technological

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devices available to students throughout the day also allows for teachers to experiment and try new methods of imparting information. Students could work in groups or in pairs attempting to learn the material or produce new knowledge while the teacher moves from one student to the next assessing their learning. Access to technology allows for collaborative learning and assessment using platforms like Google Docs where joint writing is possible (Nowell, 2014). It is possible for students to listen to expert lectures live via programs like Google Hangouts. Technology facilitates organization and being more connected to important events and issues inside and outside of school. However, critics have pointed out that not everyone has access to these technologies and the long-term impact of these technological devices has not been studied (Xiaoqing, Yuankun & Xiao Feng, 2013).

For some researchers, the capacity for interaction between students, between students and expert others and between students and machines is central to the inclusion of technology in the classroom. Student participation in class and outside can be facilitated using technology. For example, students from a school in one country can talk to students online in another, thereby allowing for cultural and language learning by both sets of students. When classrooms are equipped with appropriate

technology, it is possible to bring in speakers from around the world lecturing on topics of global significance with the opportunity for students to interact with the speakers. Thus, technology makes it possible for students to take their learning beyond the traditional classroom contexts to the community and the world (Ferreira et al., 2012).

In summary however, the issue of the introduction of technology in the classroom has been fraught with controversy. In surveys, teachers fret that their students are easily distractible, and teachers must be entertainers in order to keep students' attention focused. At the same time, there is an acknowledgement of the ease with which students can conduct research online and have access to information that a generation ago would not be accessible to students (Howard, Nicholas, Hayes & Appelt, 2014). The latter unfortunately is a double-edged sword because learners are often confused about what makes for legitimate sources of information. The outcome is that students either become skeptical of all information, having surrendered their critical thinking skills to a vague relativism, or they seek information that confirm their preexisting biases (Greg & USA, T., n.d).

Barriers to Technology in Teaching

One of the major challenges to facilitating access to technological knowledge is a lack of

infrast ructur e suppor t like high speed broadb and connec tions, as well as the hardw are neede d to go online.	Review and Reflect
	REVIEW 1. What are some of the reasons why adolescents can have sophisticated logical thought? 2. Despite this capability, how does their inexperience in life realistically impact their thought patterns and behaviors? 3. What are some of the benefits of using technology in the classroom? 4. What are some concerns teachers pose regarding using technology in their classroom?
	REFLECT 1. How did your emotions impact logical thinking as a teenager? 2. How have you found that technology has helped you in school? 3. As an adolescent, are there certain circumstances in the classroom that would have been helped using technology?

In this segment, we will look at the history of schooling in the US as well as the current context of education. Access to schooling as well as the experience of being a student has changed dramatically over the last 150 years in the US. As with other institutions, like healthcare, the family and the criminal justice system, there have been debates and discussions whether schools as institutions have been a force for positive change or whether they keep communities in the margins oppressed with little access to power. We will examine the factors that contributed to current educational structures and the changes they have undergone in recent years.

A Brief History of Schooling in the USA

The first public schools were started in Massachusetts to teach children how to be responsible members of the community. Most of the educational practices in the USA were home-based with wealthier families arranging for private tutors. By the mid-1600s, schooling was made compulsory for all European origin boys. Students of all ages were usually in one room under one teacher (Vinovskis, 1987). Starting in the mid-1700s, girls were also offered access to public education. This began in New England region first, though it was believed that they only needed to learn to read and not to write. In the years following the American Civil War, the first schools supported by public taxes was established. Newly freed Blacks were offered an education, though in segregated schools. In most rural and impoverished areas, schooling did not extend beyond elementary school and schools for Black children received little funding at all levels. It was not until after the second World War that high schools became

widespread and most of them were publicly funded. Public schools vastly outnumbered private academies of learning (Butchart, 2010).

Early
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Initially, most teachers did not have much training and were women hired from local families. The situation changed with the advent of normal schools which specialized in training women to be teachers. By the early 1900s, most teachers were trained in these schools. Horace Mann became the secretary of education in 1837 and he did more than anyone at the time to bring about standardization. He initiated standardization both in the training of teachers as well as the curriculum taught in schools for students of all ages (Boston History, 2014). Mann believed that education involved imparting civic virtues and character building and not simply training in a trade. He also introduced age-wise grouping of grades where a cohort of same-aged students would go through the grades together (Jürgen, 1999). The first Black schools were established after the civil war and they were inspired by a zeal for justice by a few social reformers, convinced of the need to educate the newly freed slaves. Most of the teachers were white while about a third were Black. These segregated schools often went grossly underfunded

(Russ & Harris, 1994) yet they served as important hubs of community building and bonding in Black communities.

In the early 1900s, John Dewey, a professor of philosophy in Columbia College, catapulted into prominence when he wrote extensively about the need to teach students about democracy and social transformation in addition to content-related knowledge. He emphasized the importance of social consciousness in the development of individual character and touted its primacy in becoming fully educated (Solomon, 1999). By then, however, most schools had entrenched bureaucracies steeped in the existing educational methodologies, thus there was little movement towards change and transformation. Since most of the

educational policy makers and administrators were middle class professionals, they were averse to challenging the status quo within educational institutions. They did however move to make teaching more professional and brought about innovations in schools building arrangements and teaching methods. Between 1910 and 1940, there was a dramatic increase in public high schools and the populations that were being served by these institutions. In 1940, over 50% of U.S. adolescents were enrolled in public high schools, one of the highest proportions in the world. While the elite in Germany and France had access to publicly funded education, they lagged in enrolling less well-to-do students. American

educational systems were publicly funded, and attempts were made to desegregate by race.

schools also departed from their European counterparts in offering much more local control of educational institutions which were also funded with local taxes. In the 1920s and 1930s, teachers' unions began to be established to represent teachers and provide opportunities for professional development. Today the largest teachers' unions are National Education Association (NEA) which mostly started as an upper middle-class organization and American Federation of Teachers (AFT) which has working class roots.

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Public Schooling and Equity

The United States spends almost 40% more than other advanced countries on education, yet has a larger gap in achievement between groups with privilege and historically marginalized groups. In the coming decades as the number of students of color are expected to grow exponentially, the problem is expected to be exacerbated. Some of the gaps in achievement can be traced to the home and neighborhood contexts where children come from. Children of color, especially Black children are read to less than other children, they have fewer educational opportunities in their early childhood and demonstrate fewer skills that prepare them for academic success in schools. Black students are more likely to be held back when data from all the grades are examined. There is little research that demonstrates the

effectiveness of holding back students and in fact some studies show that it is damaging to their long term success in school. Black students are also more likely to be pushed out of school before they graduate. At the same time, while Black and other students of color enjoy fewer learning opportunities, they have few role models in the form of teachers and administrators who share their background and history. Almost 80% of public high school teachers are white.

On May 17, 1954 the Supreme Court in a landmark case *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* outlawed segregated schools for the first time in US history (Cantero, 2008). Today however, public schools are more segregated than they were before the ruling. The reasons relate to the differential economic status of Black and white families and consequently where the family could afford to live. Since the 1970s, courts have released school districts from desegregation obligations because of white resistance and the higher costs of integrated education. Black, Latine and Native youth tend to be concentrated in areas that are high in poverty, where schools are underfunded and where fewer teachers are certified. The consequences of the continuing segregation of schools by race (and therefore social class) is that students are not exposed to a diversity of cultures, heritage and thought; this leads to

stressed the importance of social consciousness in the development of individual character and touted its primacy in becoming fully educated.

shortchanging our students in terms of enriching experiences that the school environment can provide.

Similarly, in the area of bilingual education, the fear of an unassimilated immigrant population dominated educational policies in the USA throughout the last century. Learning and communicating in more than one language was not encouraged as it was thought to lead to divisiveness and unpatriotic behavior. Before World War I President Roosevelt in a speech referred to some areas of the country as ‘polyglot boarding houses’ that are likely to dent national unity and identity (Ramsey, 2010). Until 1974, the ideal of language unity by national leaders led to “English only” curriculum in schools. However, at the local level because of local control of schooling, when there was a concentration of immigrants in an area, schools were able to offer language choices to residents. Similarly, Native reservations were able to exert some control over language learning. With increasing governmental pressure and progressive educational reform, educational curricula became increasingly standardized in the second half of the 20th century leading to other languages only being offered as an elective. In addition, after World War II, with the increase in non-white immigrants in the country, former European origin citizens who wanted to retain their native language from their countries of origin switched their preferences and wanted “English only” education to be implemented.

Resegregation of

New Assaults on Schooling

From 1910 to 1940, there was a massive transformation in the public education system; it went from a system focused on

catering to the elite to one that was open to most citizens. Secondary school attendance jumped from 10% to 70% of all US children. Like with any other social institution, there are many layers and narratives of power that are played out in schools between administrators and teachers, between teachers and students, between faculty and staff. and among students themselves. Also, as in the case of other social institutions, one of the main functions of schools is to play the role of a sorting device that is reproduced in the larger context outside of schools (Giroux, 2017).

There is fierce debate in the US about whether schools are instruments of social mobility. Some argue that schools are structured so that any student can excel through meritocratic achievements; others assert that schools simply reproduce the inequalities in a society where children are trained through school practices to behave in accordance with their social class. The first viewpoint is called a functional perspective while the latter is termed conflict approach (Kerstetter, 2016). People in the functional camp argue that the technological demands on the workforce today is huge and education helps students equip themselves with key skills that make them more marketable. The conflict approach

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Schools are now more segregated than in the 1950s because of a lack of investment in the process, economic inequality, and the

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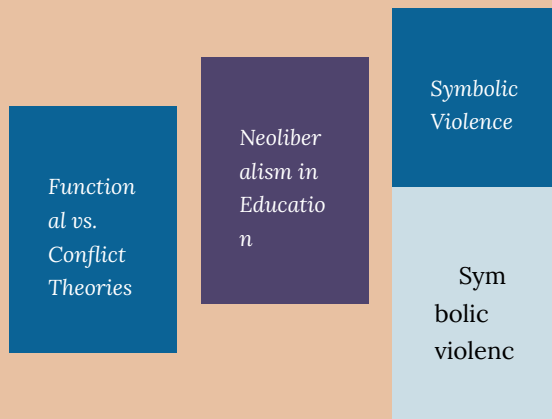
views the rituals and pedagogic practices in schools as favoring students from families that are culturally, socially, and economically privileged. From the topics that are taught and assessed, to sports that are funded and encouraged, middle- and upper-class children experience a stream of success. From their early years

of school to the end of high school, these experiences of access and success lead to increased autonomy and professional readiness for children of privilege (Nash 2010). At the same time, there is a constant chipping away at the self-esteem of other segments of society. By reducing the subjective experiences of people from historically marginalized groups to simplistic, monolithic understandings, the complex differences within the groups are not acknowledged. One example would be using the term 'the Muslim world' to refer to a large swathe of territory that spans the globe, even though the beliefs, rituals, practices, as well as the cultural and political life of groups in the category are vastly complex and different.

Children from families with privilege bring with them cultural capital. Cultural capital refers to non-financial social assets, things like style of speech, familiarity with concepts, and mannerisms, that facilitate success in a stratified society. Coined by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in the 1970s, it functions as a form of social currency. Familiarity with dominant cultural norms provides individuals with power and advantage. Having cultural capital in school settings facilitates the navigation of complex rules involved in school success in addition to the knowledge that is needed to be academically proficient.

There is evidence that from Kindergarten to high school,

poor and working-class children lag behind middle- and upper-class children in academic achievement (Payne, 2013). After each summer break from school the difference in achievement between groups grows a little bit larger with each passing year. Researchers believe that the extra educational experiences that middle- and upper-class children receive over the summer leads to the increasing gaps in achievement between poor students and their wealthier counterparts (Entwistle & Alexander, 1992). By the end of the high school years, poor children are several grades behind middle class children in both reading and math (McGee, 2013). In more recent years, critical literacy experts claim that the purpose of schooling has been subverted to reflect the dominant values of free market fundamentalism. Trends in modern liberalism (neoliberalism) aims to transfer resources from the public to private hands. In this form of social organization individual rights are valued more highly than collective good, the wellbeing of private corporations is given more weight than the workers who work in them and citizenship is equated with commercialism (Harvey, 2011).



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Critical literacy theory encourages learners to adopt a critical perspective to all texts and attempt to uncover the subtext that is embedded in any written or spoken knowledge. It encourages readers to ask, “Who benefits from certain ‘truths’ that are imparted by institutions and who loses?” Current arrangements in schooling promote the interests of groups that already have power in society according to critical literacy experts. They claim that schools have stopped being spaces of social transformation and empowerment and children are simply being taught to be compliant workers and avid consumers (Johnson, 2006). In the new neoliberal era, the frameworks of schools reflect market values and extreme individualism with students pitted against each other in destructive competitiveness. In a neoliberal society, citizenship has been equated with consumerism with little space for democracy, community and justice. The dominant values of schooling thus inculcate extreme apathy to the social context in students. In a time when there are few jobs with appropriate benefits, when wages are stagnant, when unions are being busted or prevented from being formed, the job of the educator according to critical literacy experts is to create opportunities for students to practice radical democracy and facilitate the growth of critical literacies in their students (Barlow, 2006; Johnson, 2006).	that school s perpet uate social inequal ity.	for democ racy, comm unity and justice.
One of the ways in which corporations and individuals		

with power have responded to the growing agency of groups that have been historically underrepresented is to create an audit culture for public schools that requires expenditure of resources on bureaucratic rituals that include meaningless assessments that give little information that is of value, and data collection that consumes inordinate amounts of educators' time. To stifle conversations about agency and democracy, books have been banned by school districts, especially if they make forays into spaces that are considered dangerous by those in power. For example, in the Tucson school district in Arizona, Chicana books are banned as un-American (Gershon, 2017). The craft of teaching has been reduced to one of techniques with little connection to real lives and questions centered on the context of children's lives (Giroux, 2011).

*Cultural
Capital*

Cultural capital is the accumulated cultural

Critical pedagogy experts criticize school arrangements today as 'dead zones of imagination'. Conversations are bound by narrow disciplinary interests and rarely bridge the gap between schools and the everyday experiences of students. Bourdieu (1992) characterizes this kind of education, symbolic violence on the population (Cheryl Reynolds, 2013). According to Bourdieu, when people are forced to engage in institutions without being provided with appropriate tools to negotiate the environment, it is a form of violence. As members from historically underrepresented groups began to demand more access to the construction

and dissemination of knowledge, there was a backlash from the elite who have a lot to lose in terms of both power and resources if radical democracy is practiced in educational institutions. Positioning white, male, upper-class, heteronormative frameworks as truth and demeaning other ways of conceiving of knowledge as social justice or political correctness allows entrenched power to dismiss these other epistemologies (ways of knowing) as inferior (Giroux, 2014).

knowledge that families with privilege have. It confers social power and status to its recipients

The Schools to Prisons Pipeline (SPP): is it cradle to grave?

One consequence of the current system of schooling arrangements has been the phenomenon of the Schools to Prisons Pipeline (Heitzeg, 2009). It refers to the fact that a predominantly larger proportion of Black and Brown youth are likely to

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end up in prison by the end of their school years as compared to the white counterparts. Many historians confirm that the phenomenon of the schools to prisons pipeline has strengthened over the last 40 years. The origins of the pipeline can be identified in the historical changes that happened both in schooling, the criminal justice system and the larger social economic fabric within the USA. In the 1970s, the US underwent an economic sea change from being a manufacturing powerhouse to being predominantly service oriented. Many of the manufacturing jobs were outsourced overseas for a fraction of the wages. The new jobs were human service jobs, as for example working in retail and in health services. The new jobs paid less and were not often accompanied by worker benefits like healthcare and pension. There was corresponding drop in union membership. Over the last few decades union membership in the USA has dropped from 35% in 1945 to 12% in 2013 (Schept, Wall & Brisman, 2015).

Along with these macro-level changes in the economy came more distress at the social level. People of color and other historically underrepresented groups became concentrated in areas of intense disadvantage with schools that were resource starved and neighborhoods in

poverty. Over the last few decades there has been a phenomenal growth in single, mostly female headed households, due to both changing norms as well as higher rates of male unemployment leading to a lack of eligible men in some communities.

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The War on Drugs intensified in the late 1970s leading to mass incarceration for drug offenses. There was a clamor among both the American public and politicians for more punitive means as a response to unlawful behavior. Within schools this public push for harsher punishment was and is manifested in higher rates of exclusionary school discipline. Exclusionary discipline involves removing a child from a learning environment, for example, enforcing detentions and suspensions (McNeal, 2016). In more recent decades, the push to more severe punishments has been accompanied by frameworks of academic standards-based accountability that have increased the pressure that both students and teachers feel. The new standards do not consider the context of the lives of students outside the classroom and the many barriers that students from some groups have in achieving success in schools. The increased discipline and criminalization of young people as well exclusionary school discipline has led to higher levels of students dropping out of school putting them at further risk (Peak, 2015).

Broken down by race, from 1972 to 2012, rates of suspension for white and Latinx high school aged students have doubled while for African American students it has tripled. Surprisingly during the same years, the national incarceration rates

Schools
to
Prisons
Pipeline

(SPP) & Factors	
Scho ols to Prison s Pipelin e refers to the fact that a predo minant ly larger propor tion of Black and Brown youth are likely to end up in prison by the end of	have increased by similar percentages. During those years, there has been an increase in zero tolerance policies and an increase in police presence in schools (McNeal, 2016). The presence of law enforcement officials in schools have led to an increase in more aggressive policing with higher involvement of the criminal justice system in minor infractions by students. During the 1990s, there was an overt enforcement of the broken windows policy (BRIC TV, 2017). The policy stated that that aggressively addressing minor infractions by students would serve as a deterrent to others while at the same time preventing the perpetrator from committing the infraction again. There is very little evidence that this policy is effective (Harcourt, 1998). The consequence has been however that misdemeanors were classified as felonies with little discretion for teachers and administrators to enforce their own discipline. In addition, there has been an aggressive enforcement of mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses, and higher level of scrutiny over issues likes following dress-codes (Oberman and Johnson, 2016). Once the student is suspended from school, they are at higher risk of getting into trouble again, having an encounter with law enforcement out in the streets or

even dropping out. The chances of being suspended at least for one day is significantly higher for African American children compared to Latinx children who had higher suspension rates compared to white children – at all grade levels.

However, the probability of being suspended increased with age and at a more dramatic rate for Black children.

Almost $\frac{1}{3}$ of Black children with mental disabilities are suspended for at least one day over the school year while for children of other races with mental disabilities, the rates are much lower. Thus, white children get medicated when they have a mental illness while Black children are criminalized for similar infractions (Moody, 2016; New America, 2015).

The first step in the schools to prison pipeline begins with the exclusionary discipline meted out at school (Matter of Fact, 2018). When a child is taken out of a learning context as punishment, it leads to the student falling behind academically with each episode, becoming increasingly disengaged from school, having increased exposure to police out of school and facing community violence in terms of association with illegal activities. The stage is set for further involvement with law enforcement and the juvenile justice system leading to incarceration and eventually being pushed out of school.

their school years as compared to the white counterparts.

Economic distress, the war on drugs, Broken Windows Policies, exclusionary school discipline, zero tolerance and the crimin

alization of youth of color have contributed to the SPP

With the presence of police personnel in school the cycle happens even faster (Anyon, Zhang & Hazel, 2016). If the student ends up with a felony conviction, all the traditional forms of discrimination are endorsed by society and by the government – lack of access to political participation, government housing, college loans, and access to decent paying jobs. This creates an intergenerational transmission of the negative loop and the new generation beginning the new path from schools to jails (Raeder, 2012; Skiba,

Arredondo & Williams, 2014). The US has the largest number of prisoners in the world and the largest incarceration rate (Kaeble, 2018). Youth of color with simple drug charges are overrepresented in the system.

US Prison Complex

The US has the largest number of

In 22 states, students can be penalized by law enforcement officials based on what is vaguely defined school disturbance rules which might include chewing gum or shouting a profanity. Its history can be traced to keeping women in their places during the Progressive Era when women obtained some legal freedoms in public spaces and slavery had been abolished. It was used to curb flirting in schools and keeping girls in their place. Later, the law was utilized to punish Black students fighting against segregation. In fact, the use of these laws proliferated during times when there was

a more intense movement to desegregate the country's classrooms. The War on Drugs and the fear of gang-related activities in the 1980s and the 1990s brought police officers into schools at unprecedented rates. Today it has proved to be the first brush that many young people have with the criminal justice system. Schools with law enforcement officers in the premises tend to punish youth who engage in small infractions much more frequently than schools without police officers on the premises. The charge of school-disturbance can be leveled against children as young as seven. In some states like in South Carolina, the law is used widely as a classroom management tool. Civil Liberty Associations charge that the law is vague and needs to be repealed. Advocates of teens and experts acknowledge that defiance is within the normal range of teenage behavior and should not be criminalized. Most outgrow their oppositional habits and since the laws are defined in very ambiguous terms, its application is fraught with problems related to social class, gender and race (Ripley, 2016). In 2019, an eleven-year boy was arrested in Florida for not participating in the pledge of allegiance ritual in his school. School disturbance laws were cited as the reason.

prisoners in the world and the largest incarceration rate. Schools with law enforcement officers on the premises tend to punish youth who engage in small infractions much more frequently

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Addressing the Schools to Prisons Pipeline

The various institutions in our society that address and advocate for youth all have a role to play in addressing and stopping the cyclical nature of the schools to prisons pipeline (Scully, 2015; Teasley, 2014). Here are some measures that experts outline

- •There must be a push across schools to undo some of the changes in exclusionary school discipline policies enforced over the last 4 decades.
- •School climate issues need to be addressed in a comprehensive way. The social and emotional lives of children must be strengthened, and career preparation curriculum be implemented.
- •Substitute zero tolerance for restorative justice and exclusionary discipline. Make available psychiatric services for students who are traumatized by intergenerational disadvantages and trauma related to poverty and other affiliated factors.
- •There is a need for a larger reform movement within the criminal justice system. Closing youth prisons and not trying young people in courts as adults is important to ensure that youth are not saddled with life-long stigma and discriminations. Shifting resources devoted to prisons to ensure that young people have access to health care services and trauma would go a long way to prevent passing on of the disadvantages from one generation to the next.

- It is important to push for a reclassification of non-violent crimes as misdemeanors and not felonies. Having a felony conviction often has deep long-term implications in terms of employment, political participation, access to government services and housing.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. Why are schools still segregated despite the outcome of the landmark case of Brown vs. Board of Education?
2. What is the impact of the Schools to Prison pipeline on the success of Black youth and the Black community as a whole?
3. How does the US benefit from the Schools to Prison pipeline?
4. How would changing school discipline rules impact the lives of Black youth in school?

REFLECT

1. As an adolescent, did you ever feel wrongfully or overly disciplined?
2. How did this impact your academic success?
3. Think about the ways that oppressive discipline in schools can impact the behaviors and thought patterns of

youth of color and how this will impact how they view and function in the world.

The New Educational Reform Movement

In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was passed in the Congress. Its ostensible goal was to improve the quality of education for children coming from backgrounds of disadvantage. It required states to punish schools that were not meeting goals set by standardized tests developed in individual states. The federal government was to play a bigger part in public education by having annual tests and teacher accountability. Schools were required to have annual reports about academic achievement in their schools and communicate the results to the public. While proponents of the NCLB Act pointed to the improved test scores of children since it was implemented, critics emphasized the shifting, lower standards in different states that had demonstrated improvements. Critics charged that teachers were forced to teach to tests instead of teaching student's problem-solving and critical thinking. In addition, subjects like the Arts and Music suffered because schools wanted to expend resources on subjects that were going to be tested. Schools were held to absolute standards of performance and thus even when students were making progress, they were labelled as failures and punished by having funds taken away from them. Many states with failing schools lowered their standards to demonstrate improvement among their students thus defeating the

purpose of the Act. In 2015, most of the provisions of the NCLB Act was retracted (Resmovits, 2012). But the notion that the nation can measure its way out of school failure remained.

The NCLB was replaced in 2009 by the Race To the Top Act (RTTT) which rewarded states for innovation and reform in education. It aligned in principle with many of the provisions of the NCLB, emphasizing evaluation of teachers, encouraging charter school growth and establishing common performance standards for students. In order to be competitive many states increased their cap on charter schools and adopted common standards (The Common Core). The RTTT Act has had critics who have leveled similar objections to this Act as they had to NCLB – common assessment standards weaken education and are not accurate for all populations, increasing federal control is inappropriate for locally governed schools and that the reforms have not been proven to work in the past (Sustar, 2012).

Schooling and Privatization

Since the 2008 financial crisis, an increasing array of public services have been taken over by private equity firms and corporations (Dodge, 2011). This action by many countries in the world

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sometimes called structural adjustment – the notion that governments are inefficient and private entities can perform the job better. Some examples are libraries, water providers, prisons, healthcare and increasingly, K -12 education. When a public service is taken over by a private company, the chief goal is maximizing profit. That often means that the most experienced workers are laid off, those who are left must work harder, their benefits are gutted, and people who use the service are charged for it. The results are often that the clients do not get appropriate services, and the workers in the industry suffer losses in the quality of their work environment accompanied by higher profits to the corporation that has been outsourced to take over the industry

There has been an enormous move to privatize public education in the last two decades. It goes under the euphemism of reform. The initiators of the reform movement are mostly hedge-fund managers, educational corporations, and

religious organization. Their one mantra has been that public education is a disaster in the USA and only privatization and school choice can change that. They have pushed this message in state legislatures across the country in the last two decades. States have responded with a range of laws that allows for vouchers for private schools and religious schools even though in some states

there are laws on the books that prohibit public taxpayer dollars from being used to fund religious or non-public schools. This movement has been accompanied by other laws that facilitate the growth of charter schools and the closing down of failing schools that do not meet standardized requirements (Ravitch, 2010; Ravitch, 2013). The idea of a charter school was conceived by Albert Shanker a teacher himself, but his idea was to have them be managed by the public-school system and not by private entities. They were to provide alternative modes of instruction and initiate experiments in education with fewer bureaucratic involvement. Shanker has distanced himself from the direction that the modern charter school movement took.

Public schools do not enjoy the benefits that charter schools enjoy. The former must take in all students including students with severe disabilities and students who speak English only as a second language (Erickson, 2011). Charter schools can be selective and push out students who might ruin the reputation of the school. Charter school workers are not unionized, typically working long hours and they do not enjoy the benefits that public-school teachers do (Noguera, 2014). There is a high turnover rate among teachers in charter schools. One of the earliest and the largest corporation dedicated to privatization was Edison which was started by a man named Chris Whittle. The endeavor was heavily funded

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by wealthy patrons who were convinced that privatization of public schools was here to stay (Farber, 1998). However, mismanagement and poor student performance led the share prices of Edison to drop from over \$38 a share to 14 cents a share. Today it goes by the name EdisonLearning, Inc and has moved away from managing charter schools and instead has diversified into producing and distributing school supplies like tests and tutoring. Similarly, another non-profit organization Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) has initiated a large-scale movement to start charter schools. While it has managed to survive, its critics point to a large teacher turnover rate and the funds funneled into it by private foundations sympathetic to privatization (American School & University). It has the advantage of being able to remove

students who do not meet its standards of behavior and performance.

In many states today charter schools operate with little oversight and make enormous profits for the corporations that run them (Rich & Bennett, 2014. Robelen, 2007). The movement has now grown to include online platforms as well. It is unregulated and unaudited, and investors find ways to make a profit off these schools, even though the results have been generally lackluster in terms of student attendance. Currently, there is no provision offered by states to shut these schools down if there is evidence of non-performance or mismanagement (Ramanathan &

Zoller, 1999). In most states, charter schools lack transparency and accountability and they drain funds from public schools (Paino, Renzulli, Boylan & Bradley, 2014). While the research community is clearly concerned about this trend, legislators have been overwhelmingly friendly to charter schools and it is set to see unprecedented growth (Knaack & Knaack, 2013).	
Conclusion	Privatization and Charter Schools
The institution of schooling has a deep and enduring impact on the experience of adolescence around the world. There are biological factors in the form of brain development and neuronal growth that make youth uniquely equipped to deal with abstract academic subjects. They have an increased capacity to pay attention to information that helps solve problems. They can think critically about their own thoughts and approach learning in a scientific manner. Their lack of experience however leads to decision making that are error prone. Within the larger cultural context, our society has undergone enormous changes in how adolescence is perceived, how youth are	Charter schools use taxpayer money to run schools that do not have the constraints

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studen
ts

disciplined and the kinds of work environments that are open to young workers. The neoliberal environments that schools are situated in has reduced opportunities for transformative experiences for young people within educational institutions. Schools are being privatized at an unprecedented rate and standardized assessments are being proposed as a cure for educational issues. All these forces have shaped the experience of schooling in the USA for children of all ages but especially for youth of color and poor adolescents. They are increasingly being criminalized and punished for trivial infractions using exclusionary discipline that pushes them out of high schools. The new educational reforms that involve a testing regime and

opening of charter schools using tax payer funded resources have made educational institutions even more an instrument of inequality. Critical literacy theorists propose that only a democratic and critical space within schools can allow for true learning for all students.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1.How does the privatization of schools further threaten the success of students of color in schools?

2.In what ways do charter schools differ from public schools?

3.How have the new educational reform movements remedied the achievement gap?

REFLECT

As an adolescent, did you attend schools that followed any of the new educational reform movements? Were they helpful to you? Do you think they are helpful to students today?

Glossary of Terms

“no child left behind” (NCLB Act)

‘reform

adolescent fable

black children are criminalized

broken windows policy

Brown vs. Board of Education

charter schools

co-creates

combinatorial logic

concrete operational stage

continuing segregation of schools

critical literacy theory

cultural capital

diffusion tensor imaging (DTI)

dynamic assessment
Edison
egocentrism
electroencephalography (EEG)
epistemologies
exclusionary discipline
felony conviction
functional magnetic resonance systems (fMRIs)
hypothetico-deductive reasoning
idealistic
imaginary audience
intergenerational disadvantages and trauma
knowledge is power program (KIPP)
metacognitive adolescent-friendly
metacognitive skills
myelination
nature of attention
neoliberal era
neoliberalism
pendulum task
preoperational
race to the top act (RTTT)
restorative justice
scaffolds
schemas
school disturbance rules
schools to prisons pipeline
self-regulate
sensorimotor stage
structural adjustment
support system of guided prompts
symbolic violence
synaptic pruning

the common core
the mind as a computer
zone of proximal development (ZPD)

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5. Chapter 5- Media and Technology

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Goals

- Understand the history of leisure and media
- Explore the connections between media and technology
- Describe the relationship between the negative consequences of popular media and commercialism
- Understand stereotypes and their portrayal in popular media
- Explore media literacy and youth media

Chapter Outline

- Introduction: Leisure and its Possibilities
 - Teens and Leisure Today

- The Explosion of Commercial Media
- How Media Constructs Adolescence
 - Violent Video Games, Sexism, and Aggression
 - Sexuality in Commercial Media
- Representation and Difference
 - Gender
 - Representation and Difference-
 - Race and Ethnicity
 - LGBTQIA+ Youth
 - Youth with Disabilities
 - Social Class and Popular Depiction
- Conclusion
- Digital Media and Youth
 - Cell phones, Social Media and Adolescents
 - Communication and Sexting
- Media Literacy and Youth Media
- Conclusion
- Glossary of Terms
- References

Introduction: Leisure and its Possibilities

Since the dawn of humanity, every community across the world has devised forms of enjoyment dedicated to times when people were not working or learning. In traditional

societies, childhood games served as the medium to learn adult skills and to pass on the historical memories of the community. In the Neolithic period, when agricultural communities flourished in West Asia and the Middle East, people at the top of the social hierarchy could afford to spend considerable time on leisure (Veblen, 1953). The ancient Greeks and Romans believed that play and education were intimately linked, and the purpose of play was to develop one's fullness as a human (Pauli & Mandell, 2004). During the renaissance in Europe, this idea was once again developed by writers like John Locke who said that leisure did not mean being idle but cultivating one's character (Papastephanou & Gregoriou, 2014). The protestant reformation brought an ideal of extreme work ethic and anti-play attitudes across Europe. The English puritans viewed games as a waste and as destructive to one's life but grudgingly allowed a limited number of sports to thrive. In the late 17th century, walled cities expanded outward creating opportunities for parks and public gardens where sports thrived (Luskey, 2014).

In the USA, the Puritans voiced great concern over leisure activities. Work was viewed as emphatically more important than leisure. Records indicate that young people were fined and punished for leisure activities such as dancing, drunkenness, and gambling. Laws were passed banning non-religious music, drama, and even walks on Sundays (Daniels, 2008; Marsden, 2009). The industrial revolution brought increased migration of farming families to cities and there was an unprecedented

Ephebiphobia

Ephebiphobia is the

fear of youth by adults in society . Factor y owner s were afraid to reduce workin g hours becaus e of their fears of young people.

growth in crowded tenements at unprecedented rates. At the same time, there were a few families that had enough wealth to allow their children to have a carefree childhood with toys and leisure. There was pressure from labor groups to reduce the number of working hours for industrial workers. Initially, there was great reluctance on the part of social elites to allow for sporting and other recreational activities for the working class. The efforts to prohibit them proved futile and reformers argued that allowing socially sanctioned activities might help stem more destructive habits. In large cities, commercial sports and recreational parks gained in popularity (Juniu, 2000; Parker, 1983).

In large cities, working class youth who were less under adult supervision than ever before, escaped their tenements for organized entertainment in dance halls and clubs. This was resisted by churches and law enforcement agencies that attempted to promote more activities that were considered prosocial at that time (Nayak, 2006). When work hours were

reduced to eight, leaders and factory owners worried about the misuse of leisure by young people and there was, in general, a fear of youth among powerful people in society, a phenomenon known as ephebiphobia (Astroth, 1994).

As more youth began attending high schools, institutions arranged for after school activities and constructive

recreation. In 1910, the Boy Scouts organization was started by Lieutenant-General Baden-Powell who wanted to instill in boys the importance of patriotism and cultivate what he viewed as masculine skills (Jordan, 2009). It was a reaction to the perceived problems of masculinity among youth at that time. Many social commentators blamed the social arrangements of the Industrial Revolution for leading to what they described as the feminization of boys. The founders of the Boy Scouts organization aimed to rekindle a particular interpretation of masculinity and national pride in young boys (Mechling, 2002). In the early 1900s, work hours were significantly reduced for more workers, but overproduction was still deemed to be a problem. The gospel of consumption was considered one way to stimulate growth (Haine, 1992). Thus, there was a huge increase in entertainment products for workers. After the Great Depression, leisure time was perceived as such a great problem for the American people that national expert leadership was established to oversee the use of leisure by Americans (Parker, 1983). After World War II, organized recreation was a fact of national life for young people (McLean & Hurd, 2015).

The Post-war Origins of Youth Leisure Today

The American teen today has more free time than at any time in the last century. In the early decades of the 20th century, adolescents worked and contributed financially to their families. The drive to compulsory schooling and

prosperity after the Second World War, changed life for adolescents. Figure 1 is an ad from the 1950s; it very effectively connects teen leisure to consuming a product. From about the middle of the 20th century, Hollywood understood the consumer value of the American teen. Movies were made to reflect the unique issues in adolescent lives at that time. In this rendition, being a teenager is synonymous with being white, upper-class and rebellious, attending proms, and sports events (Sprechlen, 2013).

Modern
Adolescence

Hollywood helped socially construct the concept of adolescence today and

The wide reach of Hollywood movies made this spread of an imagined lifestyle possible globally. In some sense, Hollywood helped socially construct the concept of adolescence as we know it today, and spread it globally. Adolescents in Germany and Japan have adopted the leisure habits of youth portrayed in Hollywood movies. There is evidence that adolescents in cultural contexts that have assimilated western popular culture are more likely to suffer from the range of mental illnesses that youth in the US suffer from, i.e., loneliness, alienation, depression, and anxiety (Eckersley, 2005). The movement to start clubs and afterschool activities (which took off in the 1960s) is a direct result of adult fears that youth had too much free time and are likely to misuse it. Today adolescents spend more time on leisure activities than in school or work, almost half of their

waking hours (WCCO-CBS Minnesota, 2015). There is wide variation between adolescents in how they spend their free time ranging from paid work to extra-curricular activities to entertainment and hanging out with friends.

spread
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y.

American teens have higher amounts of free time compared to youth in most other countries. They spend their leisure time with friends, playing, engaging in hobbies, organized sports and in solitude (Spracklen, 2013). Most adolescents find school boring and being with friends interesting. In this context, extracurricular activities provide enjoyment and lead to higher levels of concentration. In several studies, it has been demonstrated that participation in extracurricular activities is correlated to higher levels of participation in academic activities, increased communal engagement, and a tendency to continue these engagements into adulthood. Youth participation in school-sponsored activities also correlated with the ability to identify ways to control stress and anger as well as facilitating young people's development of positive relationships with adults (Johnson, 2009; Kaczynski, Manske, Mannell & Grewal, 2008). Organized sports participation has been found to have a mixed impact on adolescents, especially for boys. While it offers boys a space to engage in relationships across racial and ethnic groups, it is also related to higher levels of delinquency and lower academic engagement in school (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Messner, 1990).

A related topic is the impact of unsupervised time on youth after school. Studies show that a lack of supervision and time spent socially with friends may lead to earlier engagement with sex, drugs, and sometimes criminal

behavior (Rani & Sathiyasekaran, 2013). At the same time, some studies show that being alone at home after school may lead to more responsible behavior and facilitate self-care (Jacobson & Crockett, 2000; Harker, 2001). Related to this issue, community efforts to provide safe spaces for adolescents is crucial. Research studies show that providing safe community spaces for young people after school provides opportunities for rich peer relationships, connections with adults and a sense of accomplishment through incorporating skill building activities. As a Wallace Foundation report (Wallace Foundation, 2015) emphasizes, effective programs for youth during their out of school hours would include coordination of services from the local government to the public schools and the families living in the community. In high quality after-school programs, there is an effort to make activities youth centered, and decisions are made with appropriate data and consequent reflection. While there might not be one program that works well in all settings, according to the report, there needs to be a sharing of processes that work and what quality means in each context (Wallace Foundation 2013). Finally, the comprehensive report by the foundation cautions that for any after school or safe space community program to survive, planners have to be fiscally prudent and plan for the sustainability of the program even after the leaders who may have originally applied and received funding have departed.

The Explosion of Commercial Media

Popular media has had a tremendous impact on the way we live our lives today. It provides us with metaphors to make sense of our experiences while at the same time, it borrows from our experiences to create marketable entertainment products. Since the advent of the first moving images, films have been used to define who we are as citizens and members of our community. Viewers may assume that mainstream news, for instance, reports all that is of significance to the viewer. Audiences are well served, however, by questioning who makes the decisions about which news items are selected and why those choices are made. As far back as 1917, J. P. Morgan, the financial and banking corporate entity, hired news managers to explore ways to influence Americans by influencing news stories in major newspapers.

Today, propaganda and marketing have taken on a whole new level of sophistication. Consumer tracking is far more granular than the early years of marketing research. A variety of professionals associated with children's lives are being paid handsomely to explore children's vulnerability to marketing messages and ways of exploiting them. Marketers are trained to ensnare parents

*Why
Popular
Media is
Important to
Understand
and
Adolescence*

Popular media provides us with metaphors and meanings to make sense of our experiences, and in

turn, it
borrow
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ences
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by getting their children to nag for material objects. In fact, almost 25 – 40% of all purchases made by parents are because of the persistent nagging of their children (Linn, 2004). Child product manufacturers are the top advertisers on TV, spending almost 17 billion dollars per year (Šramová, 2014). Media companies hope to turn children and teens into adult loyal customers of the brands they advertise. The earlier children are exposed and buy particular brands, the longer their loyalty to the brand and to the company that manufactures the products (Quart, 2004).

How Media Constructs Adolescent Needs

A new paradigm for looking at the impact of media on adolescents is exploring how media not only sells certain messages, but it creates the world that people live in (O'Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2014). As discussed in chapter one, the form that adolescence takes today is a social construction. Media has been, and continues to be, a big part of that creation. One of the pioneers of early marketing to people of all ages was Edward Bernays, nephew of the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. Bernays was assigned to devise a campaign for the cigarette company Lucky Strikes. He conceived of an ingenious

strategy where he exploited many women's need to appear trendy to popularize cigarette use among women. He even used the women's liberation movement at that time to associate freedom with smoking. Prior to Bernays, companies mostly aimed their marketing at essential goods. Bernays convinced producers that almost anything can be sold if they appealed to people's emotional needs and deep inner wants (Amos & Haglund, 2000).

In Herman and Chomsky's well known book, *Manufacturing Consent* (1988), they assert that media operates through several filters that actually manufacture our consent, even in countries with a free press. The first filter is through ownership. Since mass media is typically owned by a few corporations, the bottom line is always profit for the shareholders. Since the cost of producing mass media is high, owners recruit advertisers to cut down their costs and in return they sell the audience to the advertisers. Those in power find ways to influence the stories that are told and they determine how they are told. As a result, profits and self-serving goals form barriers to people's capacity to get information that is unbiased. While the platforms for disseminating information has mushroomed, the underlying profit-motivated frameworks have changed little (McChesney, 1989; 2008). Teens today have more conversations centered on

*Manufacturing
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The book 'Manufacturing Consent' asserts that what is considered normal or accept

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brands as compared to teens in past years (Quart, 2004). Regular children and teen programming have a parade of brand name products displayed prominently and these are promoted additionally through peer to peer marketing (Story & French, 2004; Lee & Ulgado, 1997).

In the 1970s, the American Pediatric Association argued persuasively for a ban or at least a regulation on advertising in children's programs on TV. Marketing lobbyists vigorously fought against the proposed legislation and managed to thwart the movement towards regulating children's advertising (Schlosser, 2001). The commercial value of teen free time and their engagement with popular media has been well documented both in academic literature and among marketing circles. Fox (1995) described the many ways that adolescents are manipulated by commercial interests because youth do not recognize the real purpose of advertising and often mistake the actors in the ads as representing real people. The students in his sample could not distinguish between a public service announcement and an ad for a sugar beverage in terms of their purpose and intent. Other research has conclusively demonstrated that marketing of fast food products has led to a rise in obesity as well as disordered eating nationwide (Cummins

& Macintyre, 2006). As a result, in recent years there has been a movement by parents, caregivers and other advocates for children to push the Federal Trade Commission to impose regulations on advertising aimed at children (TEDX, 2013). The advocates argue that cigarette advertising aimed at children was regulated because of its dire public health impact; fast food and other children's products have a similar public health impact and therefore their marketing should be regulated (Allen, 2008; Adam, Tyrrell, Adamson & White, 2012).

that popular media provides. US youth spend about 10 hours on media devices.

Popular media creates ideas and narratives for people to make sense of their society – the political ethos of a society. In modern times, mainstream media has had an unprecedented role in shaping public perceptions of youth. For instance, much of the popular narrative about the media impact on youth has been negative – studies are cited by writers to substantiate how media makes young

*Regulate
or Not to
Regulate
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The advocates of advertising regulations argue

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people more violent and more prone to sexual behavior. This reflects researcher's perceptions of youth as being particularly impressionable and vulnerable. The media in turn provides symbols and stories that young people use to live their lives. Media narratives both define youth and is defined by youth in particular ways. Youth in turn borrow the metaphors that media provides to communicate their own social location (Ruddock, 2013). Anyone who works with adolescents and youth cannot understand youth reality without coming to terms with the media that adolescents interact with. American teens spend more than 10 hours a day immersed in popular media including television, feature films, music, video games and going online (Buckingham, Bragg & Kehily, 2014). The sheer amount of time that they engage with popular commercial and digital media underlines the importance of the media messages on their lives.

Violent Video Games, Sexism and Youth Aggression

Violence in commercial media is usually measured by researchers by

operationalizing it as deliberate intent to harm another individual through physical activity (Meurant, 2009). In the 1970s and 80s there were a series of studies that seemed to demonstrate that children who watched violent TV at age 8 were more likely to exhibit increased aggression at age 18 regardless of the baseline violent behaviors they exhibited at age 8 (Huesmann & Miller, 1994; Huesmann, 2007). A comprehensive meta-analysis of studies conducted by Anderson and

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Bushman (2001) establishes a clear link between playing violent video games and watching violent acts on TV (in other words, both active and passive media) to aggressive behavior. The majority of medical and psychological professional organizations similarly agree that there are clear links between the viewing of violence and behaving aggressively (Gentile, Anderson & Gentile, 2003). Some researchers claim that in terms of magnitude, violent video games' effect on violence is higher than other significant established factors for violence like growing up in an abusive household and neighborhood crime (Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Sherry, 2001). Cross-cultural research similarly substantiates the above findings (Colwell & Kato, 2005; Groebel, 2001).

The new frontier in exploring the impact of violent video games involves marking changes in brain functioning when people play violent video games. For instance, studies have demonstrated changes in the prefrontal cortex after playing an aggressive game (Hummer, Wang, Kronenberger, Mosier, Kalnin, Dunn, & Mathews, 2010). Under situations of threat, there is arousal in the amygdala, the emotional

center of the brain and this leads to an inhibition of the regulatory capacities of the individual. The self-regulation areas of the brain show decreased activity and the subject exhibits increased attention to physical cues in the environment. This might lead to higher distractibility and impulsive behavior. Thus, in situations where a gamer feels provoked after playing a violent video game, they could exhibit an increased unregulated response to an unconnected event (Hulvershorn, Mennes, Castellanos, Di Martino, Milham, Hummer & Roy, 2014). In addition, studies show that post-playing aggression persists over a long period of time (Brunelle, 2014). Extended game playing is related to a hostile world view and players show more aggressive fantasies and include changes in personality like sensation seeking, risk-taking and breaking rules (Hull, Draghici, & Sargent, 2012). There are some moderating variables in this relationship between violent media and aggression according to some researchers. The more realistic the video-game images, the more the players identify with the character and they are more immersed in the game (Möller & Krahé, 2009). When they can personalize the character, the effect is stronger in terms of their identification. Players playing with a Black avatar or a male avatar tended to be more aggressive afterwards than players playing with a white or a female avatar. This demonstrated the impact of deep-seated cultural stereotypes on subsequent behavior (Cicchirillo, 2009; Waddell, Ivory, Conde, Long & McDonnell, 2014).

Video Games are a 25-billion-dollar industry and shows no sign of slowing down. Content analysis of advertising of video games demonstrates that the images are highly sexualized and portray women in demeaning ways (Dill & Thill, 2007). When video game covers portray women at all,

they are shown as sexual objects. In the games themselves, women often are waiting to be rescued or secondary to the male characters. The former is more likely to be nude and engage in sexually provocative posturing. Studies demonstrate that viewing of sexually objectified female game characters lead to a higher tolerance for sexual harassment and more sexist thoughts (Dill, Brown & Collins, 2008). Similarly, playing sexualized video games lead to more participants accepting rape myths and a few even professing to be aroused by rape (Beck, Boys, Rose & Beck, 2012). The relationship between sexual imagery in video games and actual behavior is more complicated and research is less conclusive about its impact on them (Anderson & Dill, 2000).

Sexuality in Commercial Media

Caregivers and parents of adolescents are uncomfortable talking about sexuality in general and sexual behavior online is even more difficult to discuss. Regardless of what adults think, adolescence is a time of searching both for one's sexual identity and more broadly, intimacy and relationships. Today technology has become ubiquitous in that search (Steele, 1999). In fact, teens feel a greater freedom to explore their sexual identities online because of a sense of privacy and anonymity. In recent years, there has been an explosion of sites aimed at providing information on all matters related to sexuality and sexual behavior to adolescents.

*Objectifi-
cation of
Women*

Studies demonstrate that viewing of sexually objectified female game characters leads to a higher tolerance for sexual harassment

Youth with non-normative sexual interests and needs find other teens to provide support and supply information. Similarly, there are online dating sites that address the needs of youth in helping them find romantic connections (Kanai & Dobson, 2016). Youth engage in online gaming and visit pornography websites in larger frequencies than ever before but there is little data on the long-term impact of engaging in these activities (PBS Newshour, 2016). There is some evidence that boys visit pornographic sites in larger numbers and adolescents who view pornographic material online tend to engage in sex at higher rates, but long-term studies demonstrate that over time viewing decreases especially as they enter adulthood (Brown, 2002). The impact of pornography on adolescents have been mixed; some studies show that engaging in excessive pornography during adolescence leads to negative consequences like erectile dysfunction and negative attitudes towards women, and subscribing to rape myths (Hussen, Bowleg, Sangaramoorthy & Malebranche, 2012; Wright & Bae, 2015). Other studies demonstrate that adolescents tend to grow out of their engagement with porn and can establish intimate relationships with others as adults (Štulhofer, Buško &

Schmidt, 2012). The relationship between popular and digital media, sexual behavior and sexual attitudes will be explored in greater detail in the chapter on Peers and Relationships.

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Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. How do teens today embody leisure?
2. Is there a difference in how leisure is performed based on one's socioeconomic background?
3. What are some ways that the media constructs adolescent needs?
4. How does the brain respond to people playing violent video games?

REFLECT

1. What did you like to do in your spare time as a teen?
2. How did your familial and economic circumstances affect your time of leisure?

Representation and Difference

Media representations are not neutral but reflect the views of those who have power. There has been some excellent exploration of mainstream media representation based on gender, race, class and religious categories in contemporary society by researchers from a variety of disciplines. One of the principal ways in which media portrays groups in the margins are in the form of symbolic annihilation and through misrepresentation of groups. Symbolic annihilation occurs when some groups are invisible in public spheres including the mass media.

Symbolic
Annihilation &
Hegemony

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Gramsci introduced the notion of hegemony to explain how it is that the powerful continue to maintain their hold over society. One of the ways that they do is through ideological manipulation and misdirecting the attention of the audience and one of their most forceful instruments is popular and commercial media. For example, instead of concentrating on the corporate welfare that rich families receive through tax loopholes and breaks, and through sheer non-payment of taxes, it is the poor and other marginalized groups that are labeled welfare cheats. Instead of pointing to a central fact that most adolescent girls are impregnated by

adult men, the media focuses on the teen mothers who are supposedly lost and have no moral virtues. Focusing on vaguely understood notions about what qualifies as welfare or what factors lead to early pregnancy, through popular medium, the masses are encouraged to focus their anger and hatred towards the most vulnerable groups in a society.

some groups are invisible in public spheres including the mass media.

Hegemony refers to ideological manipulation exerted by those with privilege to misdirect the attention of the audience

Gender

Popular media provides information on the ways in which gender is expressed in our lived reality. Women and girls are often reduced to their bodies in popular media despite all the strides that they have made in modern society. By the end of their teenage years, girls suffer from higher rates of depression, self-loathing and disordered eating than boys and experts believe that popular and digital media play a big role in their negative body image (Dines & Humez, 2003). Boys get the message that girls' bodies are what is important in judging them. The ideal physical image of beauty of women in magazines and on TV are flawless, especially with all the technology that is

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available to photoshop and perfect these images. Similarly, real boys are depicted as being hyper-masculine, powerful and in control. Thus, anyone who does not conform to this idea of masculinity is denigrated (Nayak & Kehily, 2013). Boys are often forced to put on a mask to hide their vulnerabilities. By the end of their youth, boys are likely to respond to these messages by engaging in self-destructive behavior, dangerous risk-taking and acting out in anger (Osgerby, 2004).

Race and Ethnicity

Media representations around issues of race and ethnicity are skewed and reflect the stereotypes held by groups in positions of power. Edward Said introduced the concept of Orientalism (1978) to explain this phenomenon. Orientalism is a framework for viewing the world often used by European thinkers, especially with the rise of colonialism. The framework distorts the differences between the East and the West by exaggerating them. During the period of western colonization of the rest of the world by the countries of the Global North, this view was emphasized to justify the rule of the European colonizers over the others. Under the orientalist view, shared common values are ignored or unstated. Cultural practices of ethnic minorities are exoticized, demeaned or labeled

unnatural and backward. This concept of ‘othering’ unfamiliar cultures leads to social divisions where the world is divided into us and them and where dialogues are precluded between groups. The orientalist lens is still evident as one examines the functioning of popular media (Eric Ingersoll, 2018).

Racially and historically marginalized ethnic groups are infrequently portrayed on TV or feature films. When they are portrayed, ethnic minorities are depicted as criminals, mentally ill, and a danger to society. Some groups are often represented as very dependent and child-like (Alia, 2005; Cottle, 2000). Black youth are depicted as criminals in news reports and TV shows (Welsch, 2007). Immigrant youth are depicted in certain segments of popular media as being a threat to prosperity in society because of their impact on jobs and services while the benefits of their presence is understated (Ungar, 2001). Muslims are represented as threats or as having irreconcilable differences with mainstream values (Morgan, 2016). Concurrent with the invisibility and misrepresentation of people from historically marginalized cultures, the lives of Christian, white, heterosexual, cis-gendered, upper and middle class, able-bodied youth are valued more than the lives of people from other groups. As a result, TV programs

Orientalism

Orientalism is a frame work used by European writers that distorts the differences between the East

and the West by exaggerating them; for example, viewing all African women as sexually available or viewing all Muslims as exotic terrorists

predominantly feature white protagonists and simply include a few youths of color as tokens on shows (Wilson, Gutierrez & Chao, 2003). When people from underrepresented groups appear on TV, they play stereotypical characters that reinforce pre-existing ideas about the groups featured. The consequence has been that there is a moral panic among mainstream white populations towards people from marginalized communities (Welsch, Price and Yankey, 2002). Moral panic is the intense fear of one group of people threatening the general social order and these social panics spread under the influence of mainstream media and on social media.

LGBTQIA+ Youth

Moral Panic

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer youth and youth who manifest non-normative gender and sexuality are practically non-existent in children and teen shows. Thus, for

LGBTQIA+ youth, one of the most ubiquitous environments that children are immersed in has few characters that they can identify with. In addition, heterosexual behavior is elevated into a transformative and magical experience that supposedly leads to eternal joy. In primetime shows on TV, LGBTQIA+ characters are depicted about 4% of the time. When they are cast in popular media, they are portrayed in highly stereotypical roles (McInroy & Craig, 2015). Research studies have demonstrated that when children with non-normative gender and sexual identities have few representations in public spaces, there is more trauma associated with the shaping of their identities and they exhibit higher rates of depression, self-destructive behavior and have lower self-esteem. Thus, balanced LGBTQIA+ media representations are crucial to transforming the way society views people who belong to non-normative gender and sexuality communities (Gandy, 2015).

Moral panic is the intense fear of one group of people threatening the general social order; for example, popular discourse in the 1990s about predatory youth who

Youth with Disabilities

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Youth with disabilities endure many forms of symbolic annihilation on commercial popular media. Paul Hunt (1991) similarly analyses media representations of youth and adults with disabilities and concludes that they are practically invisible in popular media even when compared to other historically marginalized communities. When they do appear on TV or in films, they are shown as evil perverts (especially if they have a mental disability), child-like with few adult needs and traits, odd curiosities and exotica, non-sexual people or the objects of other people's humor. Young (2012) points to the phenomenon where youth with disabilities are often cast as heroes who manage to overcome terrible odds through sheer personal effort and with little social support. The author calls these depictions inspiration porn. Inspiration porn refers to the fact that marginalized youth are expected to raise themselves on their own without social, community or government support. Popular depictions of instances of heroic achievement underemphasize the social supports and community involvement that allow historically under-represented group members to achieve their potential.

*Inspiration
Porn*

There are even fewer depictions in popular media that involve youth of color with disabilities (Farmer, 2010). Not being exposed to people of color with disabilities prevents mainstream communities from recognizing this as a social problem that needs to be addressed

with humane social policies. There is evidence, for example, that Black youth in trouble in high schools are criminalized while white youth are medicalized. This is because youth of color with mental or physical health issues are symbolically annihilated, leaving viewers to assume that behavioral infractions by youth of color must be because of criminal tendencies. Some experts point to the fact that the crack epidemic that devastated poor Black communities resulted in zero-tolerance laws while the heroin epidemic that is devastating white communities is framed as a mental health crisis. Similarly, Black patients are less likely to be prescribed painkillers than white patients for similar problems (Hoffman, Trawalter, Axt & Oliver, 2016). In general, it is rare for people with physical and mental disabilities to be depicted on popular media as having rich lives outside of their disabilities and the disability itself becomes the focus of any depiction of the group. While disabilities are socially constructed and it makes sense only within specific social contexts, popular depictions of disability are often portrayed as residing within the person in popular media.

Youth with disabilities are often cast as heroes who manage to overcome terrible odds through sheer personal effort and with little social support. The author calls these

depictions of inspiration porn.	Social Class
Cereal Packet Families	Mass media rarely portrays people from the upper class in a negative light nor does it highlight the issues of inequality in wealth and power. There is often an element of nostalgia when upper class are depicted with the notion of honor and culture emphasized. The middle-class family are the most represented in the media, with middle-class values and concerns emphasized as the most relevant for society. Leech (1967) refers to this as the cereal packet family, by which they mean that the idealized version of the middle class is held out as a norm for others to aspire to. The working class and the poor are portrayed mostly
Cereal packet family refers to an idealized version of the middle class that is held out as a norm for	

negatively in popular media. They are mostly shown as well-intentioned but clueless, extremely troubled and therefore causing trouble, and undeserving of public sympathy or help because of their laziness and lack of enterprise (Schildrick &

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MacDonald, 2007). In his book *Chavs*, Owen Jones the British sociologist argues that as society has become more unequal there has been an increasingly fierce demonization of the poor and the working class to justify the existing system (University of Birmingham, 2012). Media representations of the poor encourages us to think of poverty as self-created situations and individualized, rather than a product of political factors and family social location.

Conclusion

Popular, commercial and digital media tell us how the world ought to be structured, what our values should be and most important of all, what is 'normal'. When youth from marginalized communities are constantly exposed to popular commercial media that communicates that they have no value, are evil or just objects of fun and vicious humor and are responsible for their own terrible situation, youth react by internalizing these messages (Carmangian, 2013; Emerson, 2002; Gross, 1991; Petras, 1993). Thus, many

of the modern 'ills' exhibited by adolescents be a response to the hegemonic messages about youth in the margins put out by those in power. In 2019, during Black History Month in March, Esquire Magazine's cover feature was called The Life of An American Boy. It profiled a 17-year-old middle class, white, heterosexual boy normalizing the lives of a small slice of the American population – it received criticism from a wide range of readership and other magazines for its choice of representation of boyhood in 21st century America. There is a lesson here in that mainstream social science takes as its norm white, cis-gendered, heterosexual, Christian, and middle- and upper-class youth as its norm for representing adolescence. Popular media reinforce the stereotypes about youth in the margins. It creates a feedback loop for youth that does not capture all of the potential authentic ways of being for young people.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. In what ways are people from historically marginalized ethnic groups portrayed on commercial media? How does this impact how they are treated in real life?
2. How do the concepts of Orientalism contribute to the act of 'othering'?
3. How are the lives of youth with disabilities portrayed in the media?

REFLECT

1. Think about some of your favorite media shows. What is the racial and ethnic demographic of the casts in these shows? How are people from historically marginalized ethnic groups portrayed in these shows?

Digital Media and Youth

The principal developmental tasks for adolescents in the last half a century involve exerting their independence, exploring new ways of expression and looking for peer validation. However, the digital revolution has transformed their spaces and methods of exploration. Most teens today have computers or laptops, smart phones, video game consoles and tablets (Roberts & Foehr, 2008). While there has been a sea change in teen media use, there are disparities in usage based on income, race and ethnicity (Ana Rojas, Straubhaar, Roychowdhury & Okur, 2003). Black and Latinx youth have much lower levels of digital engagement than white and Asian youth though in recent years the gap is considerably narrowed (Fairlie, 2004; 2017). Language barriers along with income and other factors contribute to the large digital divide between groups from different ethnicities (Servon, 2008). Of those who do have access to digital devices, 90% of youth of all ethnicities go

online every day and about a quarter claim to be online almost constantly (Weber & Dixon, 2007). When online, youth spend more time on social media than on other activities. They use Facebook the most followed by Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and Vine (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Teens report that texting is their principal manner of communicating digitally with friends. Talking on the phone is rarely preferred by youth (and increasingly, adults as well); boys report video games as a significant mode of communication with friends (Pew Research Center Teen Relationships Survey, 2015). While many teens report engaging in digital technology use deliberately, they are equally likely to be exposed to popular media in an ambient fashion. In many homes, the television is on during meal times or music is playing in the background. There might be billboards on the way to school and digital signage in the school hallway. There is little research about the impact of ambient exposure to popular media on children and teens, though there is some evidence that teens do absorb the advertising information in all of these different modes (Stice, Spangler & Agras, 2011; Harris, Bargh, & Brownell, 2009; Veerman, Van Beeck, Barendregt & Mackenbach, 2009).

One question raised by such ubiquitous media use among adolescents is whether digital media and the accompanying multitasking, affects the way they process information. In one survey conducted by Scholastic, 92% of teens report they concentrate the best using printed material and 89% report that if costs were the same, print was preferable to digital reading materials (Subrahmanyam & Smahel, 2010). The major challenge with digital reading (and writing) is often distraction (CBS News This Morning, 2015). Some researchers claim that excessive texting and engaging with

digital media could become a neurological addiction (Conley, 2011). In both high school and college classrooms across the country, instructors are having to manage this distraction through using enactment of codified rules and strategic redirection (Cheong, Shuter & Suwinyattichaiporn, 2016). Another major challenge for instructors of youth increasingly is to transform in a dynamic fashion the platforms where new information is presented to students. Instructors have written about using tweets (euronews, 2014) to find out more about students' understandings of a topic and engaging students through social media platforms while at the same time offering guidance to critically deconstruct messages in the platform (Alverman, 2017; Akom, Cammarota & Ginwright, 2008). Since technology is constantly changing and the kinds of platforms young people are using and feel most comfortable in is undergoing rapid transformations, it is a challenge for instructors to use them in a relevant and useful fashion.

Cell Phones, Social Media and Adolescents

Today, adolescents spend considerable time during their waking hours emailing, texting, tweeting, watching and posting Instagram photos, using their cell phones almost exclusively. The average American spends 11 hours a day with their digital devices (Petronzio, 2014). In one survey,

college students reported using cell phones over ten hours a day with many of them reaching for their phones first thing in the morning (Pew Research Center Teen Relationship Survey, 2015). In fact, young people have been central to the penetration of internet capabilities into the average American homes. Families with teens are much more likely to be connected digitally and use online facilities than families without (Montgomery, 2009).

Cell
Phone
Use
Among
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In
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It is only recently that the impact of excessive cell phone use on the brain and cognitive functioning has begun to be explored. In one study, scientists found that the right frontal lobe functioning in youth who texted excessively was reduced compared to their peers who did minimal texting (Seeking, 2016). This area of the brain is involved in regulating behavior and self-control (Walsh & Walsh, 2007). In another study, students who texted in a marketing class received lower grades than those who did not receive texts and did not send out texts (Clayson & Haley, 2013). A few studies substantiate the negative relationship between compulsive texting and grades among high schoolers (Domoff, 2010; Lister-Landman, Domoff, & Dubow, 2015). High levels of texting have been related to social intolerance (Kobayashi & Boase, 2014), increased peer conflict and bullying (Allen, 2012) distractibility during school (Thompson, 2017) and lowered levels of enjoyment of

school (Garmy, 2014). On a positive note, texting also encourages increased self-disclosure and the effects of texting is mediated by teen off-line lives (Davis, 2012). In a few programs with high school students, texting has been used to assign interesting work outside of the classroom. In one class, students were given problems using their smartphone and students had to text the answer back. The study found that it increased student's enjoyment of the topic and allowed them to apply their knowledge outside of classrooms (Swartzwelder, 2014).

Sherry Turkle (2012; 2015) was a champion of technology adoption to transform lives in the early 1990s. Today, she contends that technology is undermining our relationships by providing for easy distraction and making it easy to not be emotionally present (Turkle, 2015). Turkle claims that young people are prevented from developing an independent self because of their near constant connection to digital media. In addition, she asserts that the digital media forces adolescents to constantly manage their public self which is highly stressful. In addition, youth use online platforms to escape negative life events thereby preventing them from having opportunities to develop strategies for healthy living and empathy. From the

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many interviews with teachers and other advocates for youth, she points to the inability of many young people to talk to adults and maintain eye contact with them (Fischetti, 2014). Media multitasking could lead to increased burden on the areas of the brain involved in attention and regulatory control without the corresponding increase in performance (Moisala, Salmela, Hietajärvi, Salo, Carlson, Salonen, Lonka, Hakkarainen, Salmela-Aro & Alho, 2016). Her views are confirmed by surveys that demonstrate that adolescents and youth report that they rarely use their cell phones for real voice conversations, instead preferring to text (O’Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Reinemann, 2013).

Many adolescents report that they are afraid of the face-to-face conversations that colleges may force them to engage in. Many youth respondents assert that they feel vulnerable because of the unpredictable nature of real-time conversations. Youth prefer to engage with their parents or their dating partners through text messaging and emailing since it reduces the intensity of conflicts and allows them to arrange themselves in the most favorable way possible (Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi & Gasser, 2013; O’Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Thus, according to some experts, children and youth are being given fewer opportunities to demonstrate anger, anxiety, disgust and fear, in socially appropriate ways, because of the overuse of texting in communication instead of face to face conversations (Lenhart, Ling, Campbell & Purcell, 2010). Paradoxically,

under circumstances of stress youth have reported that they prefer face to face interactions than receiving emotional support via text messages (Holtzman, DeClerck, Turcotte, Lisi & Woodworth, 2017).

Digital platforms and cellphones have been identified as new spaces for commercial exploitation of children. Just as in traditional media, commercial forces are a big factor in how teens are encouraged to use digital media (Montgomery, 2009). Children have been thrust into the frontlines of the culture wars both as players and symbols in the new digital world. With the capacity to increasingly hide their activities from caregivers and other adults, the online environment has proved to be a very profitable platform to sell products and ideas to children and youth (Hargittai, Schultz & Palfrey, 2011). Corporations now have so much data on teen engagement online that they can make accurate predictions about individual behavior, desires and needs using social media interactions. This in turn allows for programming that can be commercially exploited. For instance, Facebook has a research division that captures the minutiae of teen relationships as they unfold minute by minute. Facebook and other social media platforms can then sell this information as well as place their own

The
Children's
Online
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Act

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Children's
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only
protects
children
under
the age
of 13;
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are the most exploited within the spaces of commercial popular media.

advertising and news stories appropriately for increased revenue (Russell, 2013). In many cases, the boundary between media and other aspects of life is disappearing as all these technologies are woven seamlessly together. The Children's Online Protection Act only protects children under the age of 13; thus, teens are the most exploited within the commercial realm (Pollach, 2007). A side effect of these predictive algorithms are the filter bubbles that individuals are exposed to. Users can only see similar viewpoints online thus isolating people into silos. Children and teens are not exposed to diverse viewpoints and people

from varied backgrounds, defeating the motto of the digital media companies that claim they are bringing the world together.

Captology & Filter Bubbles

Captology
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Another related concern around connectedness to social media and other platforms are their addictive quality, especially for teenagers (Andre White, 2016). The persuasive technology lab at Stanford trains its graduates to examine the habit-forming impact that computers have on humans and how this can be manipulated for commercial interests (Fogg, 2009). The originators of this field of research call this captology or computers as persuasive technology. For them, a successful application creates a

behavioral loop, providing both the conditions of a recurring problem and a momentary solution to it. Thus, feelings of boredom or indecision leads to certain actions using technology and over time these connections are cemented into habits – i.e., looking at one’s Facebook page because one is bored. When a user finds a satisfying post, they get a hit of dopamine to the reward centers of the brain but because it is unpredictable, the user is ready for another hit soon after (Oulasvirta, Rattenbury, Ma, & Raita, 2012).

The need for constant connection to social media has been termed Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, (2013) found that a high score on FOMO was related to a host of motivational and academic problems in school. Under these circumstances, it is hard for adults to exert control to protect their children. Some researchers have suggested that the industry needs to give users opportunities to exert control over their own technology by reminding them about the time spent on specific platforms and their loss of privacy. Feedback about one’s behavior online has been found to be effective in regulating time spent online (Carver & Scheier, 2001).

field
attempts to find ways to hook users and keep them addicted to technology. Feelings of boredom or indecision leads to certain actions using technology and over time these

connections are cemented into habits. The principles are the same that underlie all addictions.

Filter bubbles are a result of the algorithms that tech companies use to understand

Communication and Sexting

Smartphones and other media devices have made it easier for people of all ages to connect to each other. More recently, legal experts and youth advocates have expressed fears around the issue of sexting. Sexting can be defined as sending sexually suggestive images and messages via smart phones. Defined more loosely, it could also include receiving and sending forward such images. Typically, 14% of teens have sexted in any given year (Lenhart, 2009). Older adolescents are more likely to have sexted than younger teens. Even though the percentage of adolescents who have sexted is small, the number of youths who have received sexually suggestive words and images is much larger affecting a much larger proportion of teens. The research connecting gender and sexting is mixed and does not clearly demonstrate that one sex engages in the behavior more than others (Klettke, Hallford & Mellor, 2014). In 2019, a teacher working in Long Island was fired from her job because a topless photo she sent to her ex-boyfriend fell into the hands of her students who sent the picture around. She is now suing the

district for sex discrimination claiming that a man would not be fired for a similar infraction (Inside Edition Staff, 2019).

Digital images can be easily stored and distributed making one moment of indiscretion result in serious consequences for the person sending a sexually suggestive image of themselves. They can damage reputations, affect future employment opportunities negatively or lead to cyberbullying. For those receiving the images and texts, it may lead to confusion and may constitute harassment, especially if it is unwanted. Sexting may normalize pornographic images among teens which can then be used by adult sex-offenders. In fact, there is evidence that teens do not take the potential consequences of sexting too seriously and regard it as simply

Sexting

Sexting can be defined as sending sexually suggestive images and messages via smart phones. In most states, consensual

consumers. Digital users often only see information from people who are most like them.

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another form of flirting (Judge, 2012). On the other side of the debate, researchers such as Hugh Curnett (2012) argue that sexting feels in some ways powerful and empowering to some youth because of the do-it-yourself nature of producing your own sexual image in an environment saturated with adult produced media images mostly for the benefit of corporate profits. It gives the sender of the sext a sense of agency. In addition, there is a notion among adolescents that the public outcry by adults is morally duplicitous and is only the result of the deep sexual meanings in these self-produced images of nudity and sexual suggestion (Judge, 2012).

When new communication technologies and platforms become common among teens, states struggle to regulate it with the ostensible aim of protecting children and ultimately also to maintaining the current moral order (Eraker, 2010). Teens themselves are often uneducated about online communication etiquettes and are unaware of the consequences of their actions because of inexperience. Legal controls are therefore struggling to be meaningful in the face of such fast-changing technologies. Many states have now criminalized sexting among young people (Zhang, 2010). Lampe (2012) argues for decriminalizing the act stating the harmful outcomes of making this a crime far outweighs the negative impact of the act itself. While in legal terms, the ramifications of teen sexting are indistinguishable from adult pornography, Lampe argues that when perpetrated by

adults, sexual images of teens lead to far worse outcomes. In most states, consensual sexting is treated the same as adult pornography even though the former is not exploitative. In most of the former cases, there was little harm done to the sender or the receiver. When there is harm done, it was because of the involvement of a third person who distributes the sext without consent. Thus, Lampe suggests that accountability should be related to both consent and the malicious intent of the sender and the receiver. In fact, according to her, punishment may harm vulnerable individuals and will not deter others. In some states there has been a move to reduce the punishment for sexting, at least for the first infraction but in most states little distinction is made between consensual and non-consensual sexting.

Since schools and other social institutions are not appropriately equipped currently to deal with the consequences with the ever-evolving technology associated with social media, parents become the main educators for youth about the negative consequences associated with sexting. Talking about sexting as part of internet and technology etiquette helps youth make wise choices. It is important for the adult to emphasize that once an image is sent, it cannot be retrieved, and the sender loses control. Teens today face immense pressure from peers and from their own need to express their desires to craft and send images that provoke and taunt. Understanding the deep motivations associated with sexting helps teens gain more control over their technology. If youth are receiving sexually suggestive imagery from their friends, they need to be taught that it is against the law to distribute them as it constitutes pornography. In order to be safe, it is important to suggest

that they delete sexually suggestive images. Most important of all, parents and caregivers of youth need to push schools to have appropriate education around issues related to technology that is inclusive of all youth and their need to connect and belong.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

- 1.What are some of the challenges instructors face as youth become increasingly engaged with digital media?
- 2.How do commercial forces influence how teens are encouraged to use digital media?
- 3.How are the perspectives of sexting different among youth and lawmakers?
- 4.What are some of the legal controls around sexting?

REFLECT

- 1.What aspects of your life does digital media impact?
- 2.What aspects of your life did digital media impact 10 years ago?

Media Literacy and Youth Media Production

For most of its history, research on the impact of media on young people tended to focus on them as passive consumers of adult driven messages. In more recent years, the move to study the audience of these messages have uncovered the surprising agency that many youths demonstrate to media messages and the efforts of advocates to facilitate new ways of responding to commercialism in the media (Jackson & Goddard, 2015). In some ways, the 'girl-power' movement of the 1990s and other such empowering forces allowed teens to talk back to big media (Hains, 2009). Bloustien (2003) wrote about how the opportunity for young women to present themselves in new ways online allowed for both self-making and self-representation. The girls in her study carefully chose the images that they wanted to carve out for themselves while also experimenting with novel depictions of their desired selves. The girls in Bloustien's study used images and narratives from popular culture to communicate their own sense of who they were. Seiter (2005) similarly points to Latinx boys in her study who adopted cultural symbols from wrestlers in their own representation in film of who they were. Most spontaneous youth media productions however ignored difference and inequality in popular media and the images they chose reflected their assumptions that they and their inner circle were the norm; thus, teen media even if self-produced erases or minimizes difference (Osgerby, 2004). Youth and their problems were more likely to be explored using the framework from mainstream communities that have predominant access to digital media production tools- these typically tend to be white, heterosexual, cis-gendered, middle and upper class, and Judeo-Christian (Akom, Cammarota & Ginwright, 2008).

Some of the essential skills of a media literate person is the capacity to analyze media messages, identify who created the messa

Today social media and other forms of digital media are ubiquitous and the technology that is essential to media production are more easily available to youth in the margins (Horst, 2011). Phones are more media tools than phones in the way in which they are used by people. They can consume and produce media for dissemination. As a result, children and youth are participating in information and entertainment culture in an unprecedented manner. The challenge is to connect formal critical media pedagogy (Media Literacy Now, 2017) with their informal knowledge allowing them to be flexible in their responses to the dramatically changing world. As advocates of children's expanding use of digital media, it is impossible to not be fearful of the many negative impacts of media while recognizing the opportunities and affordances it provides for growth. All literacies are a capacity to share meaning through symbols. Today, there is an expanding arena of work and life in which that facility for dissecting information and producing meaning is important.

Experts today agree that there are many kinds of literacies that go towards shaping an educated individual. Traditional reading and writing are no longer enough to be fully informed. Aufderheide (1993)

writes that media literacy is the ability of the citizen to access, analyze (evaluate) and produce information for specific outcomes. Robinson (1996) defines media literacy as the ability to decode the carefully constructed codes and conventions of the media industry and understand how it affects our perspective of the world. Thoman (1999) adds that it is the ability of the consumer of media to make personal meaning from all the information. Thus, it is the ability to choose, challenge and question. It is the ability to be conscious of current events and the larger structural forces that influence the trajectory of individual lives. Some of the essential skills of a media literate person is the capacity to analyze media messages, identify who created the message and for what purpose, recognize the tools of persuasion used to sell ideas and objects, identify lies and biases, and most importantly, forge ways to be agents of change (Schwartz, 2001).

Today, teacher education programs routinely include technology but have little on media literacy (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009). Critical media literacy pedagogy requires that teachers of children and teens critically analyze the impact of media on their students, the entities that big media benefits and the groups it disenfranchises, how violence in

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television affects children and the commercial implications of growing up in a media saturated environment. An effective media literacy curriculum would have to explore the anti-democratic sentiments that are part of the media landscape for youth – reducing their needs and aspirations to fashion statements, exploiting them for commercial purposes, and demonizing and stereotyping them as immature and self-obsessed (Hobbs, 2010; Lewis & Jhally, 1998).

A crucial part of media literacy is to fully comprehend that media and power are intimately related and the many ways in which they are related. Some groups have less space in popular media than others and in an effective media literacy curriculum, students would explore the complex ways in which some groups are kept out of power within mainstream media (Lewis & Jhally, 1998; McChesney, 2015). A second important goal for media literacy programs is to explore the

commercial interests that govern most media. As McChesney (2008; 2015) asserts, for most of the major players in the marketplace, the concern is in profit and less, if any in the health and welfare of the population. Thus, an important element of a critical media literacy program would include democratizing the nature and the access of popular media. Understanding how it works allows students to do exactly that. Some questions that parents

and advocates for youth can encourage is regarding the entities putting out influential media messages. It is important to question their motive, helping to facilitate an exploration of the winners and losers of the current media environment. Teachers and parents can encourage analyses of the tools of persuasion and the parts of the story that are being left out when a story is told.

In addition, it is important to facilitate students' exploration of the ethical dimensions of communication. Students must be taught to apply social responsibility to digital situations (Fleming, Giroux & Grossberg, 2000). Studies conducted with high school students substantiate that media literacy leads to increased levels of perspective taking, civic engagement, confidence and motivation in the learners (Bennett, 2008; Cohen & Kahne, 2011; Scharrer, 2002). Kubey (1998) cautions US educators against ignoring the vital need to educate youth about how media functions. They encourage us to examine the issue from a cultural studies framework which involves deconstructing how the media imparts cultural values to our society. Since media is a crucial space for imparting cultural messages, it is also a space for those who are powerful and those who want to assert their own dreams and desires. For Kubey, the central purpose of media education is to make this struggle for power in media

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representation explicit and teach students to denaturalize these images – to not take them as natural. When students begin to comprehend the many ways that media represents the real world, they can start to challenge the basic assumptions around us that we take for granted. A good media education class would allow students to leverage the media environment and not ignore it.

While young people have unprecedented means to communicate with others, they experience little control over that communication. In fact, youth report that they feel surveilled and controlled (Ruck, Harris, Fine & Freudenberg, 2008). Advocates of youth must prepare students to be leaders in creating the new media environment, move it from a closed to an open system, from a predetermined structure to a platform for free expression and from simply absorbing information to participating in its creation (Merrin, 2009). Watch Ernest Morrell, professor at Teachers College at Columbia talk about media literacy and empowerment among youth – there is no video link here yet.

Clark (2013) asserts that in an environment where there are more youth of color than white youth under the age of 18 in the country, we must foster agency and voice for our students with digital media. In one study she conducted, high schools' students decided to use digital media to explore their relationship with local law enforcement. They videotaped their conversations with cops, analyzed the data and came up with suggestions to improve the frayed communication between the two. As a result of the study,

training in implicit bias was introduced to the local law enforcement training. Clark emphasizes that along with teaching youth how to use their voice, advocates need to help teens gather their audience and use digital technology for evidence gathering and reflection.

Media literacy need not be a standalone course in educational projects. It can be integrated into other areas of study. In one South African school, students were taught to dissect history books to explore gender bias in the depiction of men and women (Schoeman, 2009). Exposure to critical media can be used to teach immigrant youth a new language (Vargas, 2006). The differences between a popular article on a scientific subject and its primary source can be used to discuss how audience and intent has an influence on the writer's language and tone (Yarden, Brill & Falk, 2001). One group of teachers facilitated an exploration of popular scientific claims using primary resources by their high school students (Brickman, Gormally, Francom, Jardeleza, Schutte, Jordan & Kanizay, 2012). Another group of teachers explored children's films for inaccuracies in scientific understandings (Worsham & Diepenbrock, 2013). In fields like the social sciences, there is evidence that having knowledge of media production also increases student's civic engagement (Hobbs, Donnelly, Friesem & Moen, 2013; Kim & Yan, 2016).

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

- 1.What are some of the ways in which media and power are intimately related?
- 2.What are some of the benefits of media literacy programs on youth?
- 3.How does youth media production impact the development of youth voices?

REFLECT

- 1.Have you ever used media to communicate with a larger audience or a corporation regarding an important issue? What was that experience like?
- 2.If you have never used media to communicate in this manner, how would you go about it?

Conclusion

Leisure takes varied forms in different cultures and historical periods. In modern industrial capital societies, it has been co-opted by corporations for profit and to sell people products, images and ideas. In the last two years, it has become evident that political actors use digital and social media to manipulate the emotions and perceptions of the masses and fake news has been employed to create

moral panics and violence among people. Critical media literacy is an important tool for teachers and other advocates of young people to help them talk back to corporations in the face of disenfranchisement and lack of inclusivity.

Glossary of Terms

‘cereal packet family’

‘computers as persuasive technology’

“manufacturing consent”

accountability

Black avatar

boy scouts

chavs

critical media pedagogy

decriminalizing the act

denaturalize

digital divide

ephebiphobia

Facebook

filter bubbles

Greek & Roman ideas of leisure

hegemony

inspiration porn

Instagram
John Locke's ideas of leisure
loyalty to the brand
media literacy
media multitasking
moral panic
orientalism
pornography
Puritans
regulations on advertising
schools are criminalized
sexting
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snapchat
symbolic annihilation
the Protestant reformation
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6. Chapter 6 - Family and Social Class

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Objectives

- Conduct a historical review of the family as an institution
- Explore the sociological framework in understanding the family unit
- Explore the psychological issues pertaining to the family
- Learn about the impact of socioeconomic status on the family
- Explore the importance of facilitating health families

Chapter Outline

- A Historical Review of the Family

- The Communal Family
- Early European Settlers in The New World
- The Early Industrial Era
- The Birth of the Nuclear Family
- A Sociological View of the Family
 - Socioeconomic Status and Poverty
 - Immigrant Families, Policy and Impact
 - Undocumented Youth
- Psychological Frameworks: Exploring Family Dynamics
 - Attachment Theory
 - Parenting Styles
 - Social Class and Parenting Behavior
- Child Maltreatment
 - Consequences of Child Maltreatment
 - Factors that Contribute to Abuse
 - Interventions
- Facilitating Healthy Families
- Glossary of Terms
- References

A Historical Review of the Family

While the family has played a crucial role in rearing children and transmitting values and culture in all societies, it is only one of the many institutions that make up the context within which children live and grow. The nature of families has changed dramatically over the ages and in different cultures. A historical overview of familial structures demonstrates that the contemporary notion of a family is of rather recent origin. While the family can be defined as a kinship group residing in the same household, membership has varied through different periods in history. It is important to explore the history of the family because much of modern psychological theory on childhood rests on the conception of the modern nuclear family as the most natural of all possible arrangements.

The Communal Family

Hunting Gathering 9 Families

Engels (1909) argued that changes in modes of production from hunting and gathering to modern industrial societies have been responsible for the changes in kinship connections from larger clan arrangements and communal ownership of property to the nuclear families in industrial societies. Some anthropologists contend that before the shift to patrilineal

societies where wealth passed from the male head of household to his son, most societies were organized along matrilineal lines with women (often sisters) living together and raising their children in a communal fashion. Marriages were dissolved without much of an impact on children who continued to be nurtured and protected in matrilocal households of extended relatives and friends. The agricultural revolution of the Neolithic time period changed the situation – with the rise of agriculture came private land ownership and the latter was accompanied a need to guarantee that the progeny who inherited a man's property were indeed his children. For Engels, the nuclear family with a man and a woman with their children living in one household is a modern arrangement and is not more than 200 years old. Aries (1962) uses this conception of changes in family life to argue that childhood itself is a modern phenomenon. In hunting gathering and foraging communities, child-rearing was a collective enterprise and the whole community helped with the maintenance of the clan unit. Anthropologists note that women would breast-feed other children in the community and children would spend more time with other related and unrelated adults as compared to their biological parents. Most children were contributing members of their

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communities as early as 6 years of age and at the same time adults spent many more hours of the day in leisure as compared to adults today. The difference between childhood and adulthood was not as starkly defined as it has been over the last one hundred years (Diamond, 2012).

The Early European Settlers in The Americas

Historical records indicate that early settlers in the new world often professed that they crossed the ocean for the sake of their children. However, records also demonstrate the invaluable role that teens played in the development of North America into its current state (Elliott, 2015). Children worked on family farms, were active in the logging industry, worked in factories, apprenticed in artisan workshops and worked in retail. In colonial America, parents needed children as much as children needed parents (Carlson, 2017). Youth and adolescents contributed enormously to the family needs. Most children worked and contributed to the family income. In return, parents offered children religious and moral education and training in a trade. The family was the focus of economic production as well as mutual support. Despite the presence of child labor, there was still a labor shortage in the new world (Coontz, 2016). On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, in cities across England, young

adolescents were spirited away to the Americas, either through enticement or through force. In most cases by the time parents became aware of the disappearance of their children and came after the kidnappers, they were long gone. When children did not want to go, they were forced. They often became indentured workers until they became adults. Young women were in demand and were married before they became adults (Daniels, 2014).

The seventeenth century family was a place of refuge amid the chaos in the new environs. However, it was highly unstable because of the high death rate of children and partners in a marriage. The consequence of the instability was that the ties that bound members of a family were loose. There were many stepparents and stepsiblings within the same family. In Northeastern settlements, the family was the ultimate authority in all manner of things with the father having the most power over the members. Both girls and boys worked for the family at a very young age. They engaged in spinning, gardening, candle-making, and cooking for the family unit (Coontz, 2014; Townsends, 2018). Right from the inception in early settlements there were but vague notions of what childhood or youth meant. Marriage was often a marker that distinguished adulthood from youth. Prior to that point, children were considered not quite morally complete. All the New

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England states had laws that forbade people from living outside families. The difference between youth and adults was that youth could contribute to their families while the adult went off to form their own families. This contributed to the stability of the society (Field & Syrett, 2015) at a time when death rates were high and resources scarce. As new Christian norms took root in the new world, family structure changed from a matrilineal and matriarchal system that was common among the native American peoples, to one of patriarchy and a patrilineal system (Columbia Gorge Community College, 2013).

The Early Industrial Era

Throughout the 18th century, young men and women in their mid-teens found ways to become independent from their families. The cities and the American frontier towns were places with work for youth. Children in their teens were often stronger and more powerful than their parents. The new-found freedom that youth enjoyed in these settlements alarmed some clergy and religious leaders and writers. In 1730, Jonathan Edwards wrote that young people were “addicted to night walking, frequenting the tavern, lewd practices, wherein some, by their example exceedingly corrupted others.” Religious leaders made direct appeals to youth and youth responded to the call

without having to go through their fathers on whom had rested religious authority in earlier times (Coontz, 2016a; 2016b). With the loss or at least, a loosening of the economic dependence on one's parents, young people began making significant choices about the paths their lives would take about religion, career, romantic partners and values. Parents were forced to offer increased flexibility in terms of their children's needs.

In an earlier era when marriage was arranged by families, wealthier youth married earlier than working class youth but as individuals began to choose their own partners, the marriage age of youth from different social classes began to converge. In fact, girls and boys, men and women from upper class families increasingly chose to postpone their own marriage. Thus, the early European settlers in North America saw a sea change in how the family functioned and its role in adolescent and youth lives. We still see the impact of those early social changes in the notion that is commonly held by social leaders that the ages between 14 and 25 are pivotal in determining what kind of an adult a young person is going to be.

For Blacks, the role of the family and the responsibilities and rights of children varied considerably from their European peers. By 1860, slaves who were brought here during the transatlantic slave trade

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began having children and more than half the slave population were people under the age of 20. The largest proportion of trading in slaves were of children. Since mothers were expected to work long hours, it was usually the very elderly that looked after young children. Most slave children began working around the age of 7-9 prior to which white and Black children played together. Young slave children and youth were subjected to harsh punishments when they disobeyed their master and sexual abuse was endemic to their lives – in the eyes of the slave owner they had to be trained for a life of servitude. There was also the constant threat that they could be sold at a moment's notice and separated from their families (King, 1995; 2011; Rawick, 1972; Walter B. Hoyer, 2017).

The Birth of the Nuclear Family

Today, the nuclear family with a married breadwinner man and a homemaker woman with children under the age of 18 is only 23% of all the possible kinship arrangements in the USA. There are almost as many single parent families in

the USA. The traditional arrangement has been replaced by a mix of blended, cohabiting and remarried families. There are over 5.5 million heterosexual and homosexual couples living in cohabiting situations without getting married. In over a third of US households, wives earn more than their husbands. Over 45% of children under the age of 18 live with a single parent, mostly mothers and among African Americans the proportion rises to about 70%. Despite the sea change in family arrangements, governmental and social policies are still determined by models that assume that traditional heterosexual families are the norm (Vespa, Louis & Kreider, 2013). This has had a negative impact on the health of families. The taking root of capitalism gave rise to the modern nuclear family as opposed to more collective arrangements pre-1700s (Sam Seder, 2017). Capitalism also demanded new gendered arrangements where part of the workforce stays home to take care of children unlike more nebulous work arrangements prior to the industrial revolution. We see the impact of the unmooring of the nuclear family from its community roots even today as parents and caregivers struggle with providing adequately for their children (CBS Sunday Morning, 2014).	trading in slaves were of childre n. Young slave childre n and youth were subject ed to harsh punish ments when they disobe yed their master and sexual abuse was endem ic to their lives.
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Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. How has the role of child rearing in families changed from the 17th century to the 21st century?
2. In the 1800s, what were the roles of teens in the early industrial era?
3. In what ways are these roles different from those of Black youth at the time?

REFLECT

1. What was your role in your family growing up?
2. What was expected of you as a teenager?

A Sociological View of the Family

We read in the earlier segment, that the family unit has seen dramatic changes in its membership, goals and functioning through history. The modern nuclear family is a product of capitalism where the goals have been defined by the needs of private corporations to have a unit that is

nimble in its geographical mobility and as a training ground for its workers.

Socioeconomic Status and Poverty

As societies have grown more complex, the inequality in wealth and social status between families has grown, especially since the 1970s in the US where worker wages have stagnated for much of the population. The classification in Figure 1 has been proposed by sociologists as a framework for organizing families by their social class in modern capitalist contexts. Sociologists have debated about what constitutes social class and not everyone agrees with the mainstream classification. There is a consensus that a family's social position is a combination of educational achievement, occupational status, income, neighborhood and political power wielded. The table below outlines some of the major social classes that sociologists recognize and the factors that go towards determining them. The social and economic class (SES) that a child is born into has an enormous impact on both their development and long-term

Families Under Neoliberalism

The steep decline in workers belonging to unions have resulted in a lack of

leverage for workers vis a vis contractual agreement with their employers. Under neoliberalism, rising debt often resulting from medical bills and student loans accompanied by declines in

prospects in life. The USA is a country of enormous wealth and income inequality and simply living in a society that is extremely unequal has an impact on all people; the consequences of inequality affects everyone (Piketti & Wilkinson, 2015).

In her book, 'Cut Adrift: Families in Insecure Times' Cooper (2014) writes about the enormous economic insecurity that modern American families are facing today. Since 2008, there has been an unprecedented decline of middle-income jobs that offer reasonable benefits and safety for workers. The steep decline in workers belonging to unions have resulted in a lack of leverage for workers vis a vis contractual agreement with their employers. Today, 11% of workers are unionized and this has eroded the moral commitment toward fair wages by communities. Experts point out that financial risk has been privatized to families with pension and savings benefits tied to the stock market which by its very functioning is not very stable (Hacker & Pierson, 2010). In the new economy, rising debt often resulting from medical bills and student loans accompanied by declines in pay have led to family insecurity even when moving up the social ladder (Thompson & Conley, 2016; Wolff, 2010).

In the current job market, when college grads lose jobs, the next job pays 23% less (Houle, 2014).

Cooper found in her interviews with the very wealthy, they were not immune to the anxieties surrounding economic insecurity. However, families in different social classes manage their stresses in different ways both emotionally and financially. While the very affluent families seek to accumulate more in order to build an economic firewall for their children, middle- and lower-class families scale back on their expectations for their families. For the working class and the very poor, religion often plays the role of the safety net with the church being their last place of refuge. Thus, the poor according to Cooper, are unable to accumulate an adequate savings net because they give any savings, they have to the church to be redistributed to others. Having a long-term goal is often painful for poor families and they are preoccupied with holding on to what they have.

In addition to the general gap in wealth, poverty is also related to race and gender especially in the USA. People of color and women tend more often to be in poverty compared to men and people of European origin. Experts have a term for the gendered nature of wealth distribution and poverty – the feminization of poverty (or conversely, the masculinization of wealth) (Pearce, 1978). According to the US department of Labor (2015), women today earn 79 cents to every dollar that a man earns; however, when wealth distribution is examined the inequality is even more

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stark. Single women possess 32 cents to every dollar that a single man owns. Black and Latina women have less than a cent to every dollar that a man owns. As a result, even as women's wages are rising and they are working in ever larger numbers relative to men, the wealth gap remains. There are many factors that contribute to the disparity – women often work the lowest paying jobs and they assume caregiving roles at home with both children and the elderly depriving them of the capacity to build wealth. Today, the proportion of women and children living in poverty is at a historic high and has been climbing for the last 4 decades in the USA according to the US census data. The US has one of the largest poverty gender gaps of any developed country (Glasmeyer, 2014). Most minimum wage earners are women and so are most part-time workers. Gender is intimately connected with being poor (Emma Keune, 2017).

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The calculated proportion of women in poverty (about 21% nationally) tends to be underestimated. The poverty line itself, some experts believe, grossly underestimates the resources that people need to survive. The original formula for measuring the poverty line was conceived of forty years ago and while some adjustments have been made for inflation, it does not consider new patterns of resource use and consumption. The rules also do not make allowances for geographical differences (Meyer & Sullivan, 2012). However, even with a deficient measure of the poverty line, the evidence is strong that there are a large

number of children who live in poverty – almost 20% of children in the US live in poverty but another 20% live in near poverty levels, thus they do not meet the criteria of being poverty stricken but are at high risk for the dangers of being impoverished. Young adults between the ages of 18 and 25, especially if they have children, are among those with high levels of poverty (Census 2014). Almost half of young adults as well as children under the age of 6 are poor and a quarter are below the poverty line (Danielle Link, 2017). The overwhelming majority of young people who are poor have at least one parent who works full-time.

The impact of poverty on children is deep and persistent and includes all aspects of child development. Family poverty is associated with neural, learning and developmental disabilities (Ullucci & Howard, 2015). Families in poverty suffer from food insecurity leading to children being malnourished; in addition, they are much more likely to be exposed to toxic chemicals and pollution in the environment and suffer from chronic stress. They have few resources available to help them overcome the conditions that impede their living in relatively safe circumstances (Evans & Schamberg, 2009). Even before poor children are born, their mothers are more likely to suffer from poor nutrition and appropriate care (Bradshaw & Main, 2016). One evidence of this is the

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smaller volume of the hippocampus and the amygdala leading to a poorer working memory in children born into poverty (Lipina & Colombo, 2009). In addition, the prefrontal cortex involved in planful behavior is also affected because of the chronic stress associated with living in circumstances of material scarcity (Johnson, Riis & Noble, 2016). The prefrontal cortex governs many of the behaviors around self-regulation and planning. When this area is affected, it leads to a cascade of problems in language, emotions, and cognition that may last into adulthood. Children in poverty tend to suffer from higher rates of AD/HD, autism, depression, anxiety and a host of other mental health issues. They express pervasive negative thinking, helplessness, lack of control and withdrawal from social connections. The significance of the relationship between poverty and the deficits described above hold even when other factors like race, ethnicity, neighborhood conditions and education are controlled for (Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000).

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Poverty*

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Wealth provides both independence and security for American families since the most important investments that US families make towards their future is tied with home ownership. In the US, race and class are intertwined in that people from certain racial and ethnic minority groups tend to be more often in poverty than white people (Gans, 2005). A Black family in the US owns only 10 cents for every dollar that a white family owns. The US government, from its earliest inception helped fund and funnel, land and money

to white families. In addition, white capping (making threats of violence if a family does not move out) was used to force Black people off their lands in the early 1900s resulting in race riots in cities like Memphis and Tulsa. Throughout the 1900s, wealth effectively remained outside the reach of most Black families. Similarly, Blacks were left out of government programs like the New Deal and GI Bill which helped push many Americans into the middle class. When assets are held constant Blacks achieve higher levels of education than whites (Mangino, 2010). However, people from African American backgrounds who have graduated college earn less than whites who have dropped out of high school (Hamilton et al, 2015). The capacity of wealth to enable the taking of risks and financing agency is underestimated. Wealth begets more wealth and racism exacerbates the divide (Hamilton, Darity, Jr., Price, Sridharan & Tippett, 2015).

Black, Latinx, and native children are more likely to be in poverty compared to members from other communities. An astonishing 43% percent of African American and 34% of Latinx children are in poverty. For all children under 18, the highest rates of poverty are in the South and the Midwest. Among young adults, Native American youth tend to have the

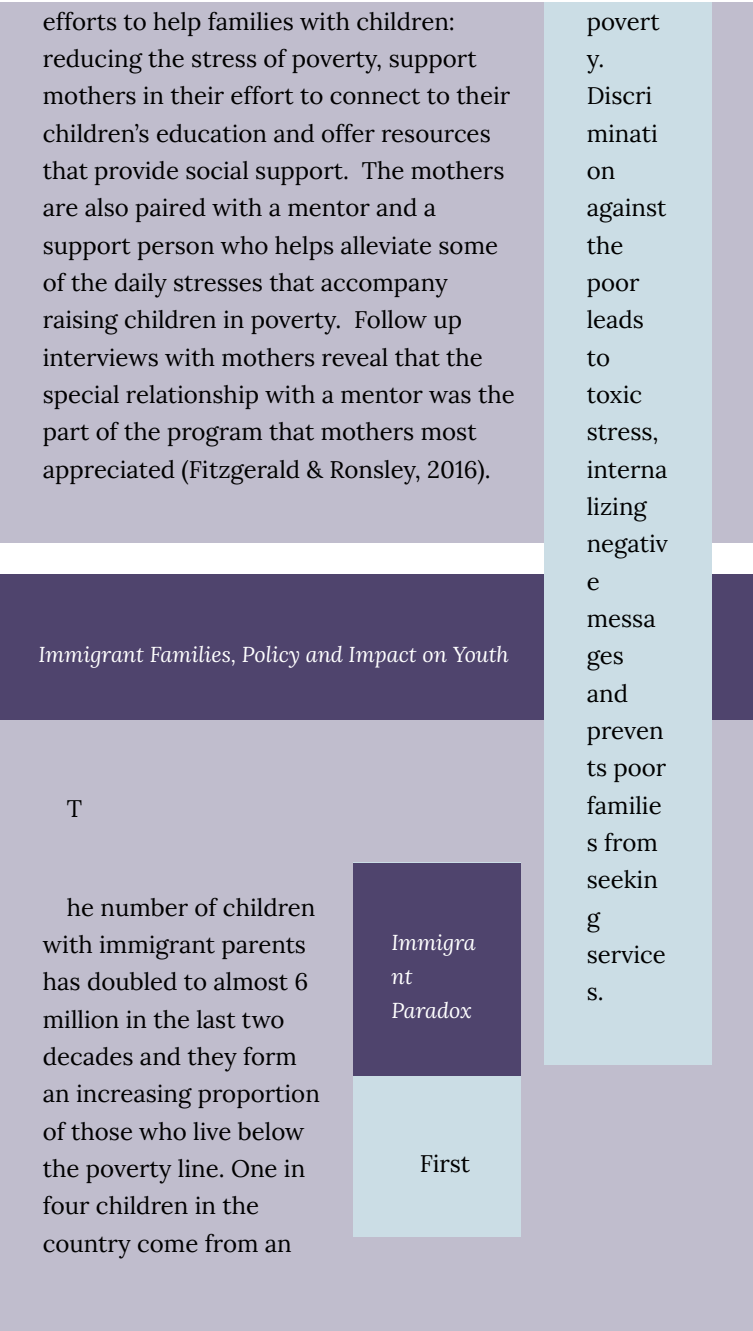
n live in poverty and 20% live in near poverty levels leaving them at high risk. Children in poverty are at high risk for a host of physical and mental health issues and toxic stress.

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highest rates of poverty at over 47% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Families that belong to marginalized communities in the US thus face immense resource challenges to raising healthy children.

One of the many underexplored areas around the issues affecting poor children is the discrimination that they face in society and the impact it has on them. Discrimination leads to the chronic stress that poor families and families of color face and in turn, this affects children's psychological and neurological development (Santiago, Wadsworth & Stump, 2011; Wadsworth, 2012). While the need for physical and psychological services are clearly important, many poor families have internalized society's message that their circumstances are the result of their own actions. They therefore do not seek assistance and are ashamed to express their needs publicly (Kabeer, 2000). Research on people living in poverty are limited and there are no clear guidelines to assess their needs and offer appropriate services. It is important for providers of services to display a non-judgmental and caring attitude towards the complex challenges that poor families and children face. Mom2Mom is one advocacy group that uses evidence-based practices to support poor mothers. They use a three-pronged approach in their



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immigrant family. In some of the larger states like New York and California, the percentage of children with at least one parent born abroad is much higher. Nine out of ten of these children are US citizens (Turner, 2015). In 2014, there were almost 31% of children from immigrant homes living in poverty; the reasons are wide ranging. Immigrant families are more likely to have lower levels of education than the mainstream population, more likely to live in poor unsafe neighborhoods, less likely to have access to quality education and are less likely to speak English. The poverty rates among legal immigrants as well as unauthorized migrants is higher than it is for the native population. US governmental policy prioritizes people with advanced level skills when it comes immigration policies; thus, legal immigrants have higher levels of education than the native population. Undocumented immigrants have the lowest levels of education since many are fleeing poverty, war and persecution in their home countries. Despite the lower socioeconomic status that first and second-generation immigrants fall into, children from immigrant homes exhibit more positive development outcomes than the native American population. This phenomenon is called the immigrant paradox (Coll & Marks, 2012). In fact, the length of residence in the USA seems to be

related to declining academic performance among immigrant families (Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes and Milburn, 2009). Usually by the third generation, the immigrant advantage in academic success is about equal to the native population. The reason for the paradox seems to be that the longer families stay here the less they buy into the idea of the American dream. Immigrant children seem to work harder at tasks, have increased flexibility as a result of being bicultural and fluent in more than one language and value achievement. There is also great motivation in maintaining the family honor among often closely-knit immigrant communities (Crosnoe, 2012; Nguyen, 2006). Latinx immigrants have some of the best health indicators in California regardless of their lower levels of education (California Newsreel, 2014).

The earlier psychological models exploring immigration and its impact on positive identity were biased and assumed that total assimilation with the dominant group was positive and helped in development (Liebkind, 2001). One classic model proposes that when immigrant families first land in a new cultural context, the tendency is to preserve the traditional beliefs, rituals and practices from the culture of origin (Gordon, 1964; Alba & n ee, 2003). After a time of

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residence in their new setting, most immigrant families begin to adopt some cultural practices from their new home but still preserve important basic elements of their native culture. Eventually, fully adjusted immigrant families become acculturated by adopting the mainstream norms of their new culture. Under the traditional models of adjustment, the goals were always assumed to become completely assimilated into mainstream society; it was assumed that the healthiest strategy for new immigrant families was to aim to

adopt fully, the values of their host context (Brown & Bean, 2006). The immigrant paradox throws this traditional model into doubt; there is evidence that new immigrants are healthier the less they are assimilated into the dominant culture. The longer members of new immigrant communities stay in the US, the less healthy their children tend to be. Thus, policy makers will have to be mindful of the host cultures of immigrant families as they are settled in their new context. Services and resources ought to maintain a balance between helping them assimilate while providing spaces for the maintenance of their cultures of origin.

Berry (1997) came up with a model that was dynamic and more flexible than the traditional models of acculturation. He argued that immigrant attitudes towards their host culture is independent of their attitudes towards maintaining their original cultural values and practices. Under such an assumption, there are four possible strategies that immigrant families could implement in new

settings – fully adopt cultural values from the new context and give up one's original culture (assimilation), fully maintain one's traditional cultural practices with little influence from the host context (separation), adopt practices from both cultural contexts to a high degree (integration), and finally, reject both traditional context and the new culture as well (marginalization). Berry proposed that integration is the most adaptive strategy for immigrant families while marginalization had negative consequences for children in immigrant homes. Recent studies complicate this narrative. Bosky (2008) found that immigrant adolescents distinguish between private and public spheres. They maintain their heritage culture at home while opening themselves up to mainstream influences in public. This allows them to strengthen community ties both at home and in school. One of the factors that determine the strategies that youth adopt to adjust to mainstream society include the extent of discrimination that the group faces from the dominant culture. When there are multicultural policies adopted in the community, youth are more likely to use integration as a strategy. Discrimination forces youth to turn inward and adopt separation and in-group identification to cope with the alienation and social exclusion they experience. Similarly, the social class of the immigrant family plays a role in how youth integrate into mainstream society. Middle class immigrant youth assimilate into the mainstream middle class of the host context while working class immigrant youth tend to assimilate into the underclass leading to lower achievement levels in school and a lack of opportunities to succeed (Phinney, Berry, Vedder & Liebkind, 2006).

In 2017, there were a series of executive orders on border security and a travel ban on families from certain regions of the world that had a deep impact on children and youth. The orders and enacted policies threatened to separate parents from children and detain children who were already in the US. Parents of unaccompanied refugees who were minors were threatened with incarceration and there was a massive roundup of undocumented immigrant adults and children with no criminal record. The American Pediatric Association issued a statement that opposed these measures as having a negative impact on children, especially those seeking shelter from the violence and insecurity of their countries of origin. Children that migrate without authorization face steep odds against healthy development; for many of these families and unaccompanied undocumented children the migration journey can take months and even years. Adult workers in immigrant households are subject to exploitation at work with its consequent negative impact on children. Overcrowded living arrangements and insecurity of access to basic needs is a norm among these families and children. Unlike the immigrant paradox experienced by other immigrant communities, children and youth from undocumented families exhibit lower achievement in schools even when they are US citizens if they have one or both parents who are non-legalized. The risk of deportation prevents parents from seeking helpful resources for their citizen-children. In addition, the

constant threat of arrest of parents by homeland security personnel leads children to exhibit high rates of depression, anxiety, attention problems and conduct issues. Men tend to be deported at much higher rates than women leading to the splitting up of families and additional stress on the women and children. Children of undocumented parents often exhibit sleep disorders, nightmares, withdrawal and an intense fear of law enforcement (Brabeck, Lykes & Hunter, 2015; Capps, Fix & Zong, 2016).

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

- 1.What are some ways families in different social classes manage both their emotional and financial stresses?
- 2.How does poverty impact children?
- 3.In what ways has the government helped fund and funnel, land and money to white families?
- 4.What is the immigrant paradox and what are some current examples of it?

REFLECT

- 1.What social class are you a part of? How can you tell? How has this impacted the opportunities available to you?

Psychological Framework Exploring Family Dynamics

We've explored the history of changing membership and functions of the institution of the family. The chapter also examined the impact of social class on children's welfare and youth development. Mainstream psychological research lays a lot less emphasis on the social class or cultural contexts that families live in unlike some of the other fields of social science. In this section we will explore the main findings about parenting styles and family dynamics and how culture may complicate some of these findings.

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Attachment Theory

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Traditional psychological literature has historically viewed the family in heteronormative terms – a man and a woman living together with the sanction of the community they are residing in, along with their children. Thus, most mainstream psychological research have been on heterosexual, nuclear families.

The family's central role in child-rearing has been emphasized by the earliest writers from Freud to researchers today (Stone, 1975). For Freud, the child's personality is almost completely formed by the age of 5 and parents are central characters in this development.

According to Freud, the earliest stages of infancy provide spaces for parents to play a role by stimulating them orally and then by fostering appropriate toilet training opportunities in toddlerhood. However, it is around the age of 5 when children are most affected by their interactions with parents; according to Freud, children at this age develop a sexual attraction towards the parent of the opposite sex. By now, children are aware that the parent they are drawn to is attached in a romantic fashion to the parent of their own sex. In order to win the favor of the parent of the opposite sex, children are forced to identify with the same-sex parent. He called the phenomenon the Oedipus Complex for boys and Electra Complex for girls (named after Greek heroes). He thought this process was crucial to the development of morality in young children. Children learn that they are not the center of the world through this process of identification (Robinson, 2001). According to some experts, Freud changed his theory to make the central attachment figure the mother for both boys and girls at a later point in his

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professional career (Freud Museum London, 2015). Thus, from very early on in the history of developmental psychology, the impact of the family has been examined through heteropatriarchal framework (Gillis, 1998).

John Bowlby a developmental psychologist, used Freud's framework to forge his own theory on attachment during the early years of the child. Early in his career he concluded that, "the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment" (Bowlby, 1951, p. 13). He drew on the empirical work of Harry Harlow who found that rhesus monkeys that were separated from their mothers and deprived from contact with other monkeys, suffered numerous damaging psychological consequences. Bowlby asserted that the attachment between child and mother is especially crucial during the earliest days of infancy and when infants are deprived of physical contact with their mothers, the negative consequences can last for a long time (Harlow, 1958).

Bowlby
&
Ainsworth's
Framework

Ainsworth, a student of Bowlby expanded his theory with several studies in the laboratory where she explored children's reactions to being separated from their mothers in order to assess the quality of children's attachment to the caregiver. She was interested in the moment when the caregiver and child reunited after a brief separation in the lab – she called them the Strange Situation experiments. She found that there were individual differences in how children

responded to being reunited with their caregiver (Ainsworth, 1969; 1978). Ainsworth divided attachment quality between child and caregiver into three types – secure, avoidant and ambivalent. Securely attached children were immediately calmed when the caregiver picked them up after a parting. Avoidant children showed little positive response to the caregiver returning while ambivalent children were almost hostile when their caregiver returned after a brief absence even when they were distressed during their absence. Ainsworth connected these responses to the consistency and quality of care that children received at home. According to her, feeling loved is crucial to secure attachment while unresponsive or inconsistently responsive caregiving will produce avoidant and ambivalent attachment types respectively (Bretherton & Ainsworth, 1974). There has been considerable criticism of the Strange Situation experiments, chief among them being that there are significant cross-cultural differences in how children respond to being separated from their principal caregiver. Critics contend that the framework used to study attachment has been typically white and middle-class and the methods are not sensitive to other forms of attachment dominant in other cultures and social contexts (Harkness, 2015). In summary, Bowlby and Ainsworth

Bowlby and Ainsworth studied the impact of bonding with mothers, asserting that when children were deprived of the bond, there are likely to be negative consequences for the

development of the child.

inspired a new generation of child development researchers to explore the impact of parent-child relationships on child outcomes. The word 'parenting' (a verb coined from the noun parent) was not part of the vocabulary prior to the 1950s but has since become a significant

topic of study in child development with thousands of articles published in peer reviewed journals. Some critics would argue that the focus on 'parenting' and the relationships within nuclear families is reflective of privatization of child-rearing that happened after societies increasingly turned capitalist.

Parenting Styles

One of the most influential frameworks introduced within the annals of family research in psychology is that of parenting styles in the late 1960s by a psychologist called Diana Baumrind. While parental practices refer to specific behaviors of parents towards their children, parenting styles purported to move beyond to measure the emotional climate in their home (Smetana, 2017). Baumrind mainly worked with families of white suburban children in the USA. Based on her observations of familial interactions she categorized parent-child interactions into three major types which she called parenting styles. As the phrase parenting styles indicate, these are enduring qualities of family interaction. According to her observations, the

parent-child interactions were typically stable across time and they comprised of qualities that mostly rested in the parents and less in the child. In other words, while the child may have minor influences on how the parent interacted with the child, the parents could govern and mold the interactions (Baumrind, 1971).

The three parenting style categories described by Baumrind (1971) and the fourth introduced by Maccoby and Martin (1983), are based on two dimensions of parenting behavior – a) responsiveness to child needs (warmth), and b) expectations and demands on the child by parents (control and autonomy). Table 1 below explains the four resulting parenting styles – authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. As the table demonstrates, parents who are authoritative score highly in both the warmth and the control that they exert over their children. According to Baumrind, the authoritative parenting style is the most appropriate for children of all the four categories. Authoritarian parents are very strict and often cold towards their children, permissive parents are excessively laissez-faire and allow their kids unrestricted freedom with few limits while being high in warmth. Neglectful parents abandon their children emotionally and physically. Authoritative parents establish an emotionally fulfilling relationship with their children, gradually relinquishing control as children grow older. They believe in communication and give their children opportunities to express their feelings and thoughts. Rules are often followed by explanations as to why they are important.

Baumrind's Model of Parenting

Baumrind studied suburban white families and identified four parenting styles – authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and

Some researchers have linked authoritative parenting styles to better self-regulation in children, higher achievement in school, mature behavior, and higher self-esteem (Gonzales & Walters, 2006; Mackey, Arnold & Pratt, 2001). Studies demonstrate that children from authoritative homes are high in self-esteem, less susceptible to peer pressure, have high self-regulation and perform well in school. Those from permissive homes have trouble regulating their feelings and have low interest in school. Children from authoritarian homes have low self-esteem and poor social skills while children who have been neglected have some of the worst outcomes in terms of academic achievement and social skills (Darling & Sternberg, 1993; Spera, 2005).

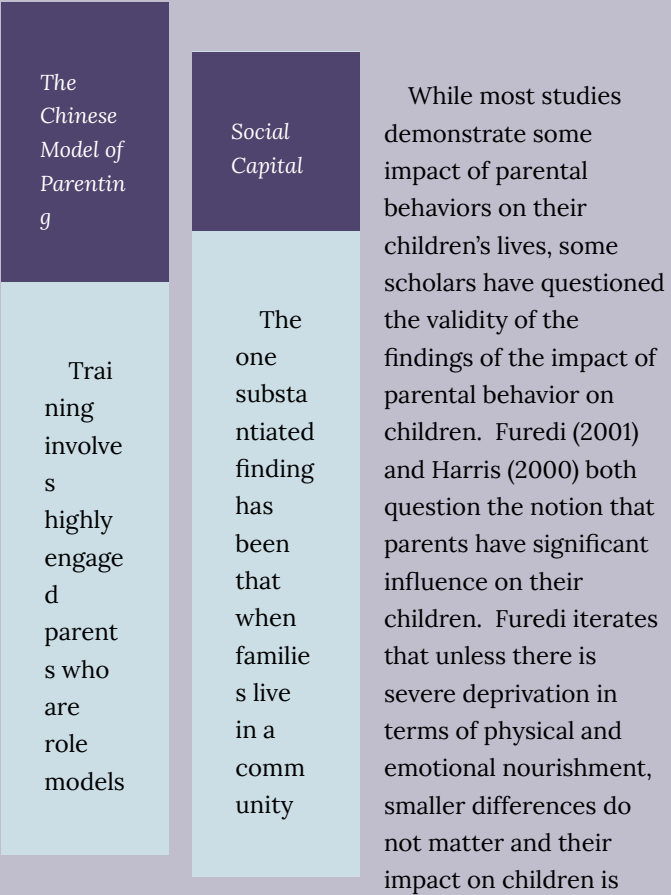
Research using Baumrind's model and its associated findings have been criticized by writers and researchers from several perspectives. Stewart and Bond (2002) question the notion that the dimensions that measure parenting style are universal – i.e., the concept of warmth or autonomy is the same regardless of cultural context. Similarly, Peterson, Steinmetz and Wilson, (2003) question the idea that autonomy and interconnectedness are opposite ideas in all cultures. Kagitcibasi (2001) found that parental expectations and

negligent.

values differed more across social class and cultural lines than within these groups. The cultural values around parenting are very slow to change even when there is a change in the social context. Some of the most significant critiques of parenting styles research have come from psychologists who work with populations located in the Global South and in marginalized communities in the industrialized world. Since culture determines the modes of communication, parenting styles, values, expectations and coping skills, some researchers posit that culture would not only play an enormous role in how parents engage with their children but also the outcomes of those interactions. Josh and Krishna (1998) found that Indian parents valued interdependence with the larger extended family over autonomy and independence.

Chao (1994) has argued that the Chinese parents in her studies were authoritarian and controlling and yet, their children were successful in schools. Among European Americans these practices that are highly successful within their context, have been found to lead to low achievement and self-esteem in children in European origin communities. She suggests that the categories proposed by Baumrind are not adequate when examining parenting styles in other cultural contexts. She has coined the concept of training to explain the unique features of Chinese parenting; Training involves highly engaged parents who are role models of family traditions, enforcing Confucian norms by a display of respect for family elders, maintaining social harmony within and outside the family and an encouragement of hard work and discipline. In contemporary societies, increasing numbers of marital

unions consist of couples who come from different cultural groups and this creates new issues around agreement on socialization of children. Disagreements over childrearing could result in delayed identity formation and emotional problems (Heath, 1995). When these differences are played out in a transnational setting where there is no immediate connections or guidance from an extended family, it could be stressful for all members of the family (Crippen & Brew, 2007).



insignificant. Harris (2000) points to research that demonstrates that the largest impact on children's well-being is the neighborhood that families live in and not the specific environment within the family. Harris contends that if there are differences among children in terms of personality and achievement it is more likely to be due to biological variations than parental behaviors since parents are also likely to pass on genetically determined traits to their children. Parents who are warm are more likely to pass on their genetic trait for warmth to their children. Similarly, the display of other traits might be more an outcome of genetic variations than environmental factors. Thus, while popular prescriptions about well-being of children relate it to parenting practices, research has produced mixed results between the two variables. The one substantiated finding	that is inclusive and where the basic needs of its members are met, children are more likely to thrive. This idea is summed in the term 'social capital	of family traditions, enforcing Confucian norms by a display of respect for family elders, maintaining social harmony within and outside the family and an encouragement of hard work
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and
discipline.

has been that when families live in a community that is inclusive and where the basic needs of its members are met, children are more likely to thrive. Robert Putnam (2015) offers the concept of social capital to explain the positive impact of living in a community that is safe and supportive (LA review of books, 2015).

Social Class and Parenting Behaviors

Affordances

Affordances refer to environmental props that

One of the most influential studies that examined social class and family functioning was conducted by sociologist Annette Lareau (2003). She conducted an ethnographic study with 88 black and white families of differing social classes, all with young children. She found that there were significant differences in parental behavior based on social class. According to Lareau, the process of classifying people as belonging to a certain economic, social and cultural class begins in childhood. She asserts in her convincing book that as adults, individuals simply continue making the choices that maintains class distinctions that begin in childhood. Lareau asserts that middle-

and upper-class parents practice a parenting style that she terms concerted cultivation while lower class parents engage in accomplishment of natural growth. Middle class parents organize and structure their children's lives, providing guidance, shaping their experiences and placing educational achievements above connections with extended family members. Poor and working-class families allow their children a natural path to development with few structured activities and experiences. Among working class families, parents tend to use directives when addressing their children and rarely intervene on behalf of their children within social institutions like schools and health care settings. The parents themselves had few strategies to engage effectively with authority figures and were often fearful and anxious around them. One of the

strengths of the accomplishment of natural growth is that working-class children are self-motivated and need little parental supervision to entertain themselves. Lareau made it clear in her study findings that both parenting behaviors came out of concern for their children and both offer different opportunities for growth; however, parents were mindful of the opportunities that their own children would have as adults and adapted their parenting behaviors to help children adapt to their adult surroundings. In other words, social class offered different environmental affordances for parental engagement with children. Affordances refer to environmental props that people must

people must work with – these environmental features offer different opportunities and limitations for individuals.

work with – these environmental features offer different opportunities and limitations for individuals. The different parental engagements were just different ways of coping with the challenges posed by one's class environments.

Lareau (2015) conducted a follow up study with the same families in her original study and discovered that the consequences of those early differences persisted. Many of the poorer and working-class children, now young adults, dropped out of school or did not study beyond their high school years. The middle-class children in her sample had extensive preparations and guidance from their parents that led them to choose higher education and professional programs. Lareau asserts that social class had a profound influence on the pathways to adulthood and the pathways diverge dramatically depending on the social class.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1.How do cultural practices play a role in Baumrind's Parenting Styles theory?

2.In what ways does social class impact parenting behaviors, especially as asserted by Lareau?

REFLECT

1.Looking back, how do you perceive your social class impacted how you were raised?

Child Maltreatment

In the year 2010, over one in every 58 children reported abuse in the USA. The true figures are probably much higher since underreporting is the norm (Sedlak, Mettenburg, Basena, Peta, McPherson & Greene, 2010). Child maltreatment can be physical, sexual, and emotional abuse or it could simply constitute neglectful behavior. Most child abuse cases are ones that include neglect and sometimes abandonment. Physical abuse is more common than other forms of abuse like sexual and emotional. Contrary to popular conception, the perpetrators are most likely to be the biological parents of children. Family dysfunction is difficult to separate from abuse and poor management tactics by parents could mask abuse. Similarly, poly-victimization (several forms of abuse) of children is commonly found among adolescents with trauma symptoms (Finkelhor, 2007). The impact of maltreatment on children are mediated by when the abuse began in a child's life, whether it was detected and addressed, the chronicity of the abuse and how much social support there was for the child as they managed a difficult family situation (Gilbert et al., 2009). The earlier the abuse began, the longer it lasts, the more frequently the child encounters abuse and the fewer the social supports that

the survivor of the abuse has, the deeper the emotional scars left and the damage the abuse leaves behind.

Consequences of Child Maltreatment

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The consequences of abuse on children are like other severe repeated stressors and have a long-lasting impact well into adulthood. Maltreatment has an impact on brain functioning that could lead to mood disturbances for an extended period of time (Academy of violence and abuse, 2011). The persistence of violence at home leads to a host of problems for the child – low self-esteem, depression, emotional stunting, inability to trust adults, a lack of capacity for empathy, and resorting to violence to solve their own personal problems (Nemeroff, 2016; Sousa, Mason, Herrenkohl, Prince, Herrenkohl, & Russo, 2017). The violence may be directed at both others and they themselves, sometimes resulting in severe self-harm. By the time an abused child reaches adolescence, they have learned to distrust others and may interpret others' actions in a hostile fashion. For example, mistakes made by their peers are viewed as arising

from malicious motives and maltreated children may react in an aggressive manner to actions by others. Psychological abuse seems to intensify these reactions over time as compared to physical abuse (Butaney, Pelcovitz & Kaplan, 2011). For children and adolescents living in extremely threatening circumstances, where their personal integrity is threatened and direct threats are made on their lives, the consequences can be severe with anxiety and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder symptomatology (Wisdom, 1999). Experts conclude that the PTSD resulting from repeated abuse is more complex psychologically and physically than that resulting from one-time traumatic events as in the death of a loved one. The results of severe maltreatment include highly elevated levels of stress hormones and smaller brain sizes. Childhood abuse is a strong predictor of adolescent substance abuse and risky sexual behavior in adolescence (Thibodeau et. al., 2017; Yoon et. al., 2017).	the child encounters abuse and the fewer the social supports that the survivor of the abuse has, the deeper the emotional scars and the damage left behind.
<i>Factors that Contribute to Abuse</i>	Some

consequences of repeated maltreatment are low self-esteem, depression, emotional stunting, inability to trust adults, a lack of capacity for empathy, PTSD and resorting to violence.

The personal factors of children that affect the likelihood of being abused are, children who are difficult to manage, are born premature or have special needs. Parents who abuse children are often less skillful in handling difficulties in life and feel powerless in managing their children. Thus, there is a strong transactional feedback loop between the parent and the child that sets the abuse on a long-term path (Christian & The Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2015). Once the pattern of abuse sets in, it is hard to eliminate. Other stresses in the parent's life contribute to maintaining the abuse like unemployment, poverty, isolation, alcohol and drug dependence, household violence, and overcrowded living conditions (Gelles, 2017). Community stresses include socially isolating environments that is crime ridden and lacking in communal safe spaces like parks. As a society, the US has a high tolerance for violence to resolve issues making it more likely for parents and other authority figures to use force on children (Molnar et al., 2016; Van der Kolk, 2017). Nationally, there is no law that prohibits physical punishment of children in schools though some states have passed statutes prohibiting corporal punishment in schools (AAIEGlobal, 2018; Straus, 2017).

The roots of child maltreatment can be located at every level of society from the family to the neighborhood to larger social and cultural conditions (Fay, 2018; Lee, 2014; Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017).

The solution needs to be aimed at all these levels. In some communities, aid to families both material and social has been evidenced to be crucial in reducing child abuse and neglect (Thompson, 2015). Teaching parents how to address behavioral and conduct issues with their children in a constructive manner can be effective in helping parents find alternatives to physical punishment and emotional abuse (Mendelson & Letourneau, 2015). Howard and Brooks-Gunn (2009) examined some of the most widespread and popular home visit programs that involved frequent drop-ins by nurses or other qualified professionals. These included the National Nurse-Family Partnerships, Hawaii Healthy Start, Early Head Start, Healthy Families America and others. They found that the programs had little direct impact on the abuse itself, but it did result in better parenting practices and generally improved the home conditions under which children live. Including fathers in the raising of their children has been found to be effective in reducing maltreatment but sometimes

Factors Contributing To Maltreatment

The roots of child maltreatment can be located at every level of society from the individual predispositions, family stresses to

the neighborhood distresses and to larger social and cultural values and policies. The bottom line is, the more the stresses at these levels, the more likelihood the abuse.

there are barriers to their participation due to incarceration and mental health issues (Shadik & O'Connor, 2016).

Moving beyond the family, interventions at the community level must include neighborhood factors that may allow for higher levels of child and adolescent maltreatment. It is crucial for policy makers to address the isolation that families, especially those that are dysfunctional due to caregiver mental illness, or poverty and unemployment by enacting family friendly policies. Easy access to parks, libraries and other publicly available services help increase connections with the community. In addition, making sure that families most in need of help have the information that they need to ensure availability of services offered in the area is crucial to reduce stress within the family (van Dijken et. al., 2016). When all levels of the community are involved in detecting, addressing and preventing child and adolescent maltreatment, programs can be effective in reducing the use of foster-care services.

Interventions

Any intervention around issues of child maltreatment must involve culturally sensitive methods with well-trained staff and social workers. Parents who are found to be repeatedly abusing their children tend to come from families where their own needs were not met, and their voices not heard. Agency staff who interact with them need to be able to develop a nurturing relationship with the members of the family and respect the parents as repositories of knowledge about their children (Ridings, Beasley & Silovsky, 2017).

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

- 1.What defines child maltreatment?
- 2.What do most child abuse cases include?
- 3.What are some of the consequences of child maltreatment?
- 4.What are the stresses in a parent's life that contribute to starting and maintaining child abuse?

REFLECT

- 1.Think about your treatment as a child. How were you

treated? How did familial stresses impact how you were treated?

Healthy Families Through Evidence-based Social Policies

Today adulthood seems out of reach for many young people until their mid to late twenties. For youth with institutional support, especially in the form of a family that can support them, weathering this period of life is much smoother than for those who have no support. As was noted in previous section youth who are poor, belong to immigrant communities and communities of color have less access to support that will likely have an impact on their growth. The youth who most need institutional support are the ones who are least able to obtain it from adult society (Plenty & Mood, 2016; Woodman & Wyn, 2014). Many of these youth in distress have passed out of foster care, been in juvenile detention centers or have been homeless for extended periods of time. They live in dangerous neighborhoods, go to schools with few resources and work in jobs (if employed) that are dangerous (Berg, 2015).

Building Health Families

Equitable societies are not built from market forces but have to be created through data-based implementation of policies that aim to enhance the growth of all individuals – providing adequate safety nets and supports for families, sustainable

wages for workers and ensuring support for those who are unable to work or find work. All the major institutions in society must work towards ensuring a reasonable quality of life for all its members (Berg, 2015). Currently, our society does not ensure such equity for families across a broad social spectrum, except for those at the top end of the hierarchy.

The current generation of youth live in a post-industrial society where jobs, especially jobs that provide other benefits like health insurance and post-retirement resources, are hard to come by. Most middle-class families are providing unprecedented levels of support for their youth, but the cultural expectations are still that adolescents ought to become independent by the time they are 18 in the case of working-class families and 22 in the case of children from middle-class families who do go on to complete college. While families with resources can provide a cushion for young people as they are making a transition into independence, working class youth and the poor are left with few resources to deal with the difficulties of making the change. Middle class children can come back home to stay with their extended family or may expect their parents to help with down-payment on their first home as they move on to establish their

Reducing parental unemployment and poverty leads to lower stress rates among both children and adults. One of the major factors that influences children's well-being is the

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independence. For poor youth, this is not possible and the transition to adulthood can be fraught with failures and pitfalls. Adolescence can thus be a time where social class differences are accentuated putting middle- and lower-class youth into very different paths for the rest of their lives. There is little recognition of these changes in demographics and life conditions by policy makers who withdraw all social support from youth once they turn 18, thereby forcing some youth with little familial support to become destitute or homeless (Waters, Carr and Kefalas, 2011). Researchers believe that there needs to be a rethinking about when young people should be considered independent from their families and the kinds of supports that communities should be offering them (Rickwood, Deane & Wilson, 2007).

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, sociologists point to the enormous negative consequences for children and youth when they grow up poor. This is not just because of a lack of access to resources but the continuous toxic stress that children in poverty are exposed to.

There is evidence that the persistent stress affects the architecture of the brain. Children in poverty tend to suffer in much higher numbers from depression, substance abuse and other diseases into adulthood. One of the great natural experiments in

intervening with communities in poverty came from North Carolina where a law was passed allowing a local Cherokee Native American people, who had endured an extended period of high unemployment rate to operate a casino. The profits from the casino were distributed equally among the members. Costello, Compton, Keele & Angold (2003) had been studying this community and a similarly impoverished white community in the area for four years. Unemployment and poverty were much higher in the native community than in the white community and so too the consequent mental illness incidents. However, after the supplements from the casino operation arrived, the researchers noticed that there was a marked reduction in mental illness incidents among the Cherokee children. There was higher school attendance rates and increased school achievement. They also noticed that the earlier the extra income arrived in a child's life, the better the improvements in outcomes. Clearly, Cherokee families were able to afford better resources with the additional income but more importantly, they found that the newly acquired resources allowed children to live a rather stress-free life. About half of the profits from the casino went into a collective fund that helped build infrastructure and develop substance abuse programs. In an atmosphere of 'collective efficacy' the Cherokee community began to think of their welfare as belonging to the group rather than to individuals. They also began to exercise more control in how the profits were spent thereby prioritizing the needs of families over individual rights.

Roberto Vargas in his powerful book on Familia activism talks about integrating activism in communities starting with the family and widening the circle to include the community. According to Vargas, "Family activists seek

health and success for their families and all others. They take time to communicate and connect. They also promote social involvement.” According to Vargas, the system works because everyone feels responsible for every child in the community. Vargas expanded on an already existing Latinx tradition of formalizing relationships between friends through rituals. A godparent to a child explicitly vows to perform certain duties towards the child and friends who are inducted into a family as close connections articulate their responsibilities as well. Children in the families make explicit their responsibilities to the adults involved. One incident that Vargas described involves a group of young men who were constantly tempted by gang activities in the streets. When these men were drawn into a positive circle facilitating honesty and authenticity, many were able to lean on each other for strength in the face of adversity. During his community organizing period in Castro Valley in California, one Latinx mother was appalled that a local police officer characterized all Latinx youth as potential gang members. A group of parents organized themselves and spent some time thinking about their vision for their teenage sons. As a result of the reflective activities that parents engaged in, they were able to form an organization that furthered the development of their children and communicate to the district and the sheriff’s department the need for respect for their children. In addition, these family groups were connected to other familia groups in the Oakland area which facilitated activism that moved beyond children and family issues to goals that relate to national and international development.

One important space where families can come together to both reflect and resolve community and educational challenges is in the public school. David Levine (2009)

pointed to one group of African American and Latinx parents who organized around issues that mattered to their children in Washington DC. Many of these parents felt disconnected from the school. The African American parents felt that they were only called in to meet with school administrators when their children were in trouble. The Latinx parents were culturally not used to the idea that they could have a say in the school functioning. A few parents mobilized the others and they began meeting regularly for what was termed story tellin. Storytelling allowed the parents a sense of ownership over the proceedings of the meetings and allowed the parents to connect in a deep way with others in a group notwithstanding the cultural differences they had. A bag was placed in the middle of the room and parents had to respond to various prompts that they pulled out of the bag. One prompt for instance was, my first day at school. The stories allowed the parents to establish a bond with each other. A few sessions later, the prompts became more about their children and fears for their children.

Over the many meetings, parents began to find common issues that they all identified with. They were able to feel empowered enough to go to the school administrators and articulate their concerns about the curriculum and discipline at school. The parent group felt a great sense of unity in the many travails of parenting that they shared that they were able to offer each other assistance when needed. When a group of parents felt that the school infrastructure needed to be improved, the group was able to articulate their children's physical needs at school and successfully kick-start the improvements that needed to be made. When the Chancellor of the school district wanted to impose penalties on the school district for lack of adequate

performance on standardized tests, the parent group effectively argued against it and the chancellor compromised on her original position. The group continued to collaborate effectively with teachers identifying strategies that worked and strategies that did not in terms of student academic performance.

At the governmental level, federal and state governments can legislate and implement policies that allow for the health of families. Most families below the poverty line have at least one adult that works full-time. Yet, they are unable to make it above the poverty line which today is about \$24,000 for a family of four. Passing laws that ensure sustainable wages for all workers will help alleviate poverty to a great extent. Access to healthcare and dental care will enable both caregivers and children to manage their health and avoid financial stress that comes from medical emergencies and sudden disabling conditions. Encouraging employers to implement family friendly policies like generous parental leaves, flexible working hours, on-site child care, and family medical leave by offering tax and other incentives contributes to healthy family functioning. State governments can allocate appropriate funds for public services like literacy and nutrition programs, access to healthcare, elder and child care thereby ensuring that communities can serve families better. Local governments can facilitate closer community relationships by setting aside land meant for families to enjoy like parks, skating rinks and other recreational activities. At all levels of the government it is important to make sure that family and communities are served when creating and implementing new laws.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. How does the toxic stress children who grow up in poverty endure impact the architecture of their brain?
2. What are the benefits of schools serving as spaces for African American and Latinx parents to resolve community and educational challenges?
3. What are some examples of how state and local governments can better serve families?

REFLECT

1. When you were a child, how involved were your parents in your school(s)? What circumstances allowed them to be, or not be involved in your school? When they were involved, what were some of the positive impacts they had on your experience in school?

Glossary of Terms

(control and autonomy)
'immigrant paradox'
accomplishment of natural growth'
affordances

assimilation
authoritarian
authoritative
Cherokee native American
chronic stress
Communal ownership of property
concerted cultivation
early head start
Electra
food insecurity
Hawaii healthy start
healthy families America
hippocampus and the amygdala
home visit programs
indentured workers
isolation that families
marginalization
matrilocal
mom2mom
national nurse-family partnerships
negligent
nuclear families
Oedipus complex
parenting style
patrilineal
permissive
poverty line
prefrontal cortex
race and class are intertwined
secure, avoidant and ambivalent
separation integration
social capital
total assimilation

training
universal
warmth
white capping

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7. Chapter 7: Emotional Life and Relationships

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Goals

- Learn about the development of emotions and how they relate to self-regulation
- Explore the development of friendships and intimate connections
- Understand the role of romantic growth in youth life
- Know Social Reproduction Theory (SRT)
- Explore some major issues surrounding youth relationships

Chapter Outline

- Introduction

- Emotional Self-Regulation and Relationships
- Friendships
- Intimacy
- Dating
- Violence in Dating Relationships
- Romantic Relationships
- Sociological Frameworks Exploring Relationships
 - Social Reproduction Theory
 - School Status and Maintenance
- Fostering Interethnic Relationships
- Important Issues Related to Youth Relationships
 - Cyber-bullying
 - Sexuality Education
 - Coping with Loss and Grieving
- Conclusion
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Introduction

The chapter on the physical development of adolescents enumerated on the dramatic biological changes in youth as their bodies change from prepubescent to being fully developed and sexually mature. We learned how adolescent brains undergo rapid transformation with new connections being formed and unused ones being pruned. All these

changes have deep implications for emotional growth during adolescence. Popular culture depicts adolescent emotions as being unstable and quick changing. As discussed in earlier chapters, this is only part of the truth about youth life and is a result of not just biological changes, but the social, political, and economic contexts in which adolescents live and function. In this chapter, we will examine some of the changes that adolescents go through and the impact on their lives and relationships.

Emotional Self-Regulation and Relationships

Children and youth demonstrate an increasing capacity to control their emotion by exercising a wide range of strategies. These strategies are continue to be developed and refined for increasing effectiveness throughout adolescence and into adulthood. Strategies might include; distracting oneself from thinking about stressful situations, taking on challenging tasks, and engaging in planful action to eliminate the stress associated with impulsive behavior (Gardner, Dishion & Connell, 2008; Gestsdóttir & Lerner, 2007; Zimmerman, 2000).

One of the most famous techniques used to research young children's self-regulation strategies and capacity has been termed "the marshmallow experiment". It was first conducted by Walter Mischel in 1972 (Mischel, Yoda and Rodriguez, 1972; University of Rochester, 2012). The experiment involved offering children an immediate reward

(one marshmallow) or, alternatively, a larger reward (two marshmallows) if they waited to receive the reward until the experimenter got back to the laboratory after an interruption. Mischel found that there were individual differences in how long, and if, the young participants waited for the experimenter to come back (thus garnering the doubled reward). Participants were followed for several years after the experiment and researchers found that the children who waited for a bigger reward were more successful than the children who did not wait. Replications of the experiment, however, did not quite substantiate this finding. The experiment was found to have overstated the role of willpower while failing to acknowledge the influence of socioeconomic factors (Watts, Duncan & Quan, 2018). The authors of the study assert that the reliability of getting rewards is intimately linked with self-regulation-oriented behaviors (Calarco, 2001). In a subsequent study conducted in Germany and Cameroon, groups of children in those countries were tested using the marshmallow experiment. Cameroonian children waited longer for their reward, and a larger percentage of Cameroonian children were able to resist the temptation to eat the sweet on the table right away. Interestingly, the Cameroonian participants did not need to distract themselves by self-talk and other methods to resist the temptation to eat the reward (Lamm, Keller, Yovsi & Chaudhary, 2018).

Even during their earliest months, infants take steps to soothe themselves in stressful situations by turning away from the source of an unwanted stimulation and engaging in other self-soothing techniques like sucking (Rothbart, Ziaie &

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The marshmallow experiment of self-regulation could not be replicated reliably and was confounded by other factors like cultural norms, socioeconomic	O'Boyle, 1992). When parents respond to infants' emotional cues, babies are less likely to be stressed and fussy. During the second year of life, capacity to express themselves through language allows for additional control of emotions. They can now talk to themselves or transform their goals to reduce stress. Parents and other adults can model self-talk that is positive and self-affirming for young people thereby offering them paths to soothe themselves (Diener & Mangelsdorf, 1999; Garner, 1995). In adolescence, children become increasingly capable of recognizing different emotions in themselves (Johnson et. al, 2002) and in others (Thomas, Debellis, Graham & LaBar, 2007). At the same time, they learn appropriate ways to express the complex emotions that they experience (Collier & Collier, 2014). Youth experience fears and anxieties related to their relationships with significant others and their achievement on tasks. Recent research indicates that there are cultural differences in how these fears are experienced and expressed. George & Odger (2015) found that some of the more recent fears among youth are related to their engagement with digital technology, which, in turn, influences their offline behavior. Adolescents' digital interactions are evidenced to be related to sleep

disturbances and fears of being bullied or trolled, which is associated with feelings of anxiety. In order to control the feelings of insecurity and reduce stress, youth engage in both active problem-solving strategies and more internally focused emotional control (Riediger & Klipker, 2014; Rood et. al., 2012). Children who feel as if they do have better control over their emotions are more likely to experience optimism and hopefulness (Shapiro, 1997; Siu & Shek, 2010).

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At the same time, all through middle school and high school, children become increasingly knowledgeable about the rules around emotional expression (Lutz, 1996; Stearns & Stearns, 1989). They learn that negative emotions do not evoke friendly expression from other people while happy positive emotions do (Stearns & Stearns, 1989). This feedback loop allows youth to regulate their emotions in the presence of other people. Adolescents learn how to use increasingly differentiated language to express their emotional states and seek assistance in dealing with situations where they feel powerless (Greenberg, 2006). At the same time, the connection between language and emotional regulation becomes increasingly divergent for boys and girls as they go through adolescence. While girls are taught to value emotional expression and their own connections to other people in their lives, boys are taught very early that the free expression of pro-nurturing feelings need to be held back for them to be valued as boys and men (Lewis & Simpson, 2007).

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Children and youth learn empathy and understanding of other people's emotions over the period of their development (Hoffman, 1991). The roots of these capabilities lie in early childhood, perhaps even in infancy, when very young children use social referencing extensively. Social referencing refers to acquiring emotional cues from caregivers' facial expressions in order to determine appropriate responses in unfamiliar circumstances (Walden & Ogan, 1988). The need to feel safe drives young children to carefully read any situation through their caregivers' emotional expressions (Denham, 1998). In early childhood, children are increasingly adept at identifying other people's emotions accurately and can ascribe reasons and predict the consequences of different emotions on future behavior (Eggum et al., 2011). Studies demonstrate that in later childhood, youth come to understand that people can express emotions they do not feel and that they can think one thing and say another (Harris, 1994).

When caregivers use a large vocabulary to express their emotional states, children obtain a deeper understanding of affective states. This translates into youth with better problem-solving skills, empathy, emotionally mature behavior, and being

perceived as prosocial by others (Cutting & Dunn, 1999). Thus, empathy and the capacity to read other people's emotions has roots in individual predisposition, early experiences, and cultural values. Experts agree that it is also a precursor to altruistic and prosocial behavior. Regulating one's own emotions is important in order to empathize with other people's needs. In contrast hostile, impulsive, and aggressive behaviors prevent one from taking in other perspectives (Hoffman, 2001). There is a strong correlation between self-regulation, empathy, and emotional intelligence (Kit Welchlin, 2014).

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Emotional control is related to feelings of optimism.

Friendships

Youth networks in the Western contexts have been found to consist of cliques, which are small groups of people closely connected to each other, which are in turn loosely connected to other small cliques in larger networks called crowds (Hartup, 1993). Though elementary school children spend much of their social lives in cliques, they tend to move on to larger groups as they get older while continuing to

While girls are taught to value emotional expression and connections

to other people, boys are taught that the expression of pro-nurturing feelings needs to be held back for them to be valued as boys and men.

maintain their closest ties with a small group of friends. Within these small networks, youth create their own frameworks of meaning. The selective and often creative use of language, along with ritualized behavior, are key methods employed by youth to create meaning within their social communities and strengthen their bonds with one another (Brown & Klute, 2003).

Friendship Factors

Race, class, gender and neighborhood characteristics all play key roles in

Friendships from the earliest years in school have been found to be marked by seeking similarities in terms of race and sex. As they enter adolescence, some youth begin to cross gender boundaries and seek friendships across genders. Well-adjusted youth demonstrate a marked capacity to form friendships with both same sex and other sex teens. Researchers have found that female identified youth typically value closeness and openness in their friendships while male identified youth are more

likely to engage in activities together. In the context of such gendered friendship styles, cis gendered boys seem to learn trust and intimacy when they have close friends who identify as girls (CSU Fullerton HCOM, 2013). Race, class, gender and neighborhood characteristics all play key roles in determining who children and youth befriend, how the friendships unfold, the spaces friendships occupy in a person's life, the relationship these peer connections have to family life, and the impact they have on the person's life and development (Clark & Ayers, 1992; Graham, Cohen, Zbikowski & Secrist, 1998).

From very early in childhood, when children are given a choice, they select friends who are most like them temperamentally; thus, aggressive children seem to seek out other aggressive children to associate with (Gleason, Gower, Hohmann & Gleason, 2005).

Researchers have found that even when children exhibit behavioral problems, they find similar levels of support and loyalty from their friends as young people without behavioral issues. This is one reason that there is an intensifying of conduct issues over the course of childhood as youth reward behaviors that they approve of in each other (Gifford-Smith, Dodge, Dishion & McCord, 2005; Seidman et al. (1999). Adolescents often find themselves very vulnerable in terms of their social relationships; young people with conduct issues find a great deal of support

determining who children and youth befriend, how the friendships unfold, and the spaces they occupy in a person's life.

from each other as they find themselves increasingly isolated from others in their peer group.

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There is an intensifying of conduct issues over the course of childhood as youth reward behaviors that they approve

There has been much research conducted on the cross-cultural variations in friendship patterns. North American adolescents tend to spend less time on homework and with family than they do with peers as compared to Asian youth (Larsen & Verma, 1999); however, there are intra-group differences in this pattern of findings. African American youth report feeling closer to their parents and spending more time with family members than their white peers (Bengtson, 2001). Similarly, youth from middle class homes typically tended to be more instrumental in their friendship patterns, forming and breaking connections depending on changes in their interests and their activities. Students from working class homes lacking these extracurricular outlets have more long-lasting relationships, often with youth from their neighborhoods and within their extended family (Boiché, Sarrazin & Chanal, 2015). Young people from homes with unstable living conditions must relocate frequently leaving them with less opportunity to form lasting friendships. In addition, living in unsafe environments forces children to have a cautious approach to people and

less facility to build trust in others (Anderson & Leventhal, 2017; Faris & Felmlee, 2018).

Children and adolescents are impacted significantly by the quality and the type of friendships they have and the peer networks they maintain. Research has pointed to the impact of peer networks in fostering delinquency and aggression. Earlier research posited that isolation led young people to antisocial behavior (Rubin & Mills, 1988). There is substantial evidence that points to the notion that teens with different temperaments seek others who share their values and framework towards school and society (Rulison, Gest & Osgood, 2015; Young et al., 2014). This research also indicates that the quality of friendship does not differ between conforming and nonconforming adolescents. It has been found that suicidal ideation and body dysmorphia can be fostered by peer groups (Fortuin, Van Geel & Vedder, 2015; Kenny et al., 2017). Thus, conversely, self-destructive behavior can also be disrupted by peers. Peers tend to reward others who exhibit behaviors that conform to their own cherished values. In a subset of studies, racial differences in peer influence on behavior have been identified. Black teens tend to be less susceptible to peer pressure than white teens. This correlates

e of in each other.

Black teens tend to be less susceptible to peer pressure than white teens. This correlates with the strong attachment that Black teens exhibit towards their families.

with the strong attachment that Black teens exhibit towards their families (Giordano, Cernkovich & DeMaris, 1993).

Intimacy

Gender and Relationships

While the heightened empathy and understanding among girls' close

Harry Stack Sullivan (1937) offered one of the most comprehensive theories describing the development of intimacy between people before and during adolescence. According to Sullivan, our capacity for intimacy predates adolescence. Furthermore, the quality of our earliest intimate relationships with others, including friends and family, predict our capacity for close relationships during adolescence. He believed that it is healthy for adolescents to experiment with different roles in their relationships as they make novel attempts to experience intimacy and sexual fulfillment within the same relationship. Some youth may not attempt a sexual relationship but may have close intimate relationships with same sex and other sex peers while others may engage in sex without seeking intimacy from the same person. By the time they reach late

adolescents, a mature young person is ready to address intimacy needs in a healthy fashion (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987).

While early adolescents describe their relationships as companionships within which they engage in activities together, later in youth, individuals increasingly describe their friendships as including loyalty and intimacy. For girls, these qualities are especially important in their relationships and any perceived betrayal of the relationship is accompanied by emotional upheaval. As they get older, teens learn to deal with conflict with their best friends through negotiation and compromise rather than dominance or insisting on getting their way. During the same period, adolescents become increasingly knowledgeable about their closest friends' deepest secrets and know things about them that others do not. Over the course of adolescence, they are increasingly likely to show more care and concern for their friends and predict their closest friends' responses to situations better than casual acquaintances (Hey, 1997).

Research with white teens has demonstrated that girls define their relationships to close friends by highlighting the self-disclosure, intimacy, and care that they share. Boys tend to be

relationships is comforting, it can also lead to excessive rumination leading to increased depression and anxiety for the participants. Girls' connection styles are often described by expert

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less exclusive and more controlling in their friendships (Shulman et al., 1997). While the heightened empathy and understanding among girls' close relationships is comforting, it can also lead to excessive rumination which can then lead to increased depression and anxiety. Similarly, the closeness among girls makes conflict more emotionally painful. Boys' conflicts often are a result of exertion of power and control which gets resolved without the trauma that accompanies girls' conflicts (Goodwin, 2006). Towards the end of adolescence, fewer gender differences are found in the quality of close relationships that boys and girls share (Davis, 2012; Valkenberg, Sumter & Peter, 2011). The pattern of gender differences in self-disclosure is varied for youth from other backgrounds with Black teens exhibiting few gender differences in the quality of close friendships through adolescence (Miller & Benson, 1999).

While adolescents' intimacy with their peers and romantic partners grows, so does their intimacy with their parents, especially later in adolescence and into adulthood. Studies have found that the quality of relationships that youth have with their peers and romantic partners is related to the quality of the relationships they enjoy at home. Teens report finding it easier to express negative emotions to

their parents; this is based on their perception that those ties are less likely to break (Larson & Asmussen, 1991). While there are ethnic group differences in the relationship between youth and their parents, actual behavior tends to be very similar across cultural groups. Most adolescents name their parents as very significant as a source of support (Helson, Vollebergh & Meese, 2000). In the modern social context in the West, relationships with siblings and the extended family

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tends to diminish in importance through adolescence. Black youth have a deep relationship with their grandparents when they have an unmarried or unpartnered mother (Stoneman & Brody, 1993; Wilson, 1986). Often, youth tend to seek help and support from different sources in different areas as they navigate adolescence. For many teens, there is no one to offer a helping hand when needed, especially when the adolescent belongs to a more vulnerable group in terms of race, social class, sexual and gender orientation, or a discriminated religious group.

Dating

Adolescent Relationships

Adolescent relationships tend to involve more conflict around jealousy and betrayal as compared to young adult romantic connections

Over the last few decades, the age of marriage first declined and then increased for both men and women (Rotz, 2016). New research shows that boys have the same needs for emotional intimacy that girls have, but boys are more likely to report finding themselves inadequately prepared by society to engage with cross-sex intimacy in an authentic fashion (Coontz, 2015). The age at which adolescents date is influenced by several factors. The age of sexual maturation is one; the earlier a teen matures the earlier they begin to date. The attitude that communities hold around issues of dating and the behavior of teens' peer groups, also influences the age at which youth begin dating (Besharov & Gardier, 1993).

Dating could involve anything from casual outings in mixed sex groups to having an intimate relationship with one person. Usually, the former precedes the latter and the transition to serious dating is hard for most teens because of their limited experience and awkwardness around initiating and maintaining romantic relationships. Adolescent relationships tend to involve more conflict around jealousy and betrayal as compared to young adult romantic connections. By late adolescence, issues regarding

commitment and intimacy begin to enter romantic partnerships even though relationships are still unstable (Connolly & McIsaac, 2011; Connolly et al., 2004). For gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals, the development of their intimate relationships may have a different trajectory because of the discrimination and the stigma attached to their choices. Despite the enormous progress being made in the area, LGBTQ+ youth face censure when they attempt to express intimacy in public; same sex friends may misinterpret their actions and they may have to hide their desires in order to be accepted (Furman, Brown & Feiring, 1999).	tion LGBTQ + youth face censur e when they attemp t to expres s intima cy in public; same sex friends may misint erpret their actions and they may have to hide their desires .
<i>Violence in Dating Relationships</i> Violence and aggression are all too common among youth in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships (Amanda Maver, 2014). It can include physical, sexual, emotional and psychologically	<i>Gender and Violence</i>

Boys report more minor forms of abuse while girls report higher levels of more severe forms of abuse.

aggressive behavior with romantic partners. Nearly 23 % of girls and 14 % of boys experience violence from their dating partner before the age of 18. Unlike intimate partner abuse in adulthood, adolescents of both genders are almost equally likely to be perpetrators of the violence because, physically, boys and girls are more equal in strength. At the same time, boys report more minor forms of abuse while girls report higher levels of more severe forms of abuse. Abusers tend to be overly possessive, jealous and have mood swings. The victim often feels isolated from friends and family and bears the physical and emotional scars of the abuse (Offenhauer & Buchalter, 2011; O'keefe, 2005).

The social emphasis on boys controlling their relational behavior

Romantic Relationships

According to the early psychologists like Freud, one of the major developmental tasks of adolescence is establishing romantic relationships with other youth (Furman & Shaffer, 2003). Erikson, Freud's student, suggested however that adolescence is a time of identity search and adolescents will not be able to achieve

mature romantic connections if their need for an identity is not met. Cross-cultural research has substantiated that most of the developmental goals that we construe for children and adolescents in the industrialized world are specific to the social needs in modern capitalist economies (Breyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010). Research has also demonstrated that many of the assumptions that youth hold about romance and sexual relationships are socially constructed and are highly gendered. Social sanctions around violating norms like monogamy or heterosexual behavior help keep these rules in place (Tolman & Tolman, 2009). In middle school, the social emphasis on boys controlling their relational behavior and emotions, especially in spaces like sports locker rooms, leads young boys to objectify girls and establish relationships of exploitation in heterosexual connections (Lorber & Farel, 1991).

Early adolescence is characterized by romantic relationships that are highly unstable. Going steady is often associated with superficial needs and there is frequent turnover of partners. Through adolescence, unlike friendships which often bring comfort to the young person, romantic alliances bring about heightened emotionality and intensifying conflict. Inexperience with these kinds of relationships adds to the intensity and

or and emotions, especially in spaces like sports locker rooms, leads young boys to objectify girls and establish relationships of exploitation in heterosexual connections.

ruminating nature of the connections. Unlike within friendships, the relatively high percentage of lack of reciprocity in feelings adds to the instability and the associated feelings of neglect and vulnerability. While overt norms in society value commitment and loyalty within romantic relationships, many adolescents are forced to deal with the conflicted feelings that come from violating these norms such as monogamy or honesty within relationships (Crouter & Booth, 2014).

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All through their early socialization experiences, girls are more prepared to engage intimately with other people as compared to boys. Girls are taught to value relationships and are better prepared to disclose their authentic selves. Boys are socialized to hide their vulnerabilities and connect with other people by engaging in activities rather than by self-disclosure or strengthening their emotional connections. Tannen, Hamilton & Schiffrin (2015) refer to girls' connection styles as being face to face and boys' engagement style as being side by side. Studies have demonstrated that boys use very different language when connecting with their friends versus with their romantic connections. Girls on the other hand use the same engagement style and vocabulary with their friends and their romantic relationships. Boys have also learned, through socialization, that dominating over their partners is one way

to establish their masculine credentials. During adolescence, girls struggle to be assertive within relationships whereas their male partners take their superiority for granted (Hertzog & Rowley, 2014; Honeycutt & Cantrill, 2014).

There has been little research on the influence of romantic relationships on the partners themselves and the conditions that foster good relationships. For many youths, especially those who are marginalized, being in a romantic relationship provides a way to feel good about themselves. However, these connections have downsides as well because of their instability and intensity (Machel, Disabato & Kashdan, 2016).

There is some evidence that the movement to establish romantic connections in adolescence leads to a lowering of self-esteem, especially for girls. Dating during early adolescence is related to decreased academic achievement and lower levels of participation in school activities. Thus, while romantic connections can provide a safe space for some youth, it is often fleeting and by its very nature leads to emotional vulnerability (LaGreca & Harrison, 2005).

Studies indicate that dating at younger ages leads to earlier sexual experiences for both girls and boys (Bouchey & Furman, 2003). Engaging in cross-sex friendships earlier in life is related to earlier initiation into sex especially for boys (Connelly et al., 2004). Traditional

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notions of who engages in sex with whom has been upended by more recent work in the area. Youth do not just engage in sex with partners who they are in a dating relationship with. Surveys reveal that they also engage in sex with friends, previous partners who they have broken up with and with casual acquaintances. Under these circumstances, the importance of exploring safe sexual practices become even more important. Where there is greater asymmetry and difference between the partners (age, economic status, ethnicity) the lesser the frequency of use of condoms and engaging in safe sex (Center for Disease Control And Prevention, 2013). Two very salient factors that seem to predict lower contraceptive use is status asymmetry (when one has a higher status than another) and relationship asymmetry (when one partner is more invested in the relationship than the other). Girls who are engaged in a romantic relationship with an older man are some of the least likely to use contraception (Manning, Giordano & Longmore, 2006; Moore & Rosenthal, 1992; Troth & Peterson, 2000).

Sociological Frameworks Exploring Relationships

Current forms of adolescent friendships and social structures have their origin in the industrial revolution when the adult world was split from the social world of adolescents. In the modern context, youth are forced to congregate among themselves for long periods of time. While this has prevented them from assuming adult roles even when they are ready for it, it has allowed the space to form exclusive norms and a language to express their lived experiences that is their own – for example, engaging in collective silly action that most adults would label as infantile (Rotundo, 1993). Earlier theorists emphasized the notion that adolescent social structure derived their inspiration from intergenerational conflict and opposition to traditional order (Roseman, 2004). Today, that theory has been discarded; in fact, adolescents and adults in modern societies are more likely to be intergenerationally separated in a laissez faire relationship where they engage in social behavior that involves different spheres and spaces. Some experts have observed a lack of rebelliousness towards authority in today's youth (Giancola, 2006). Many of our relationship experiences with family, peers and the larger community in contemporary societies can be understood by using the framework provided by Social Reproduction Theory or SRT.

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Social Reproduction Theory (SRT)

Social
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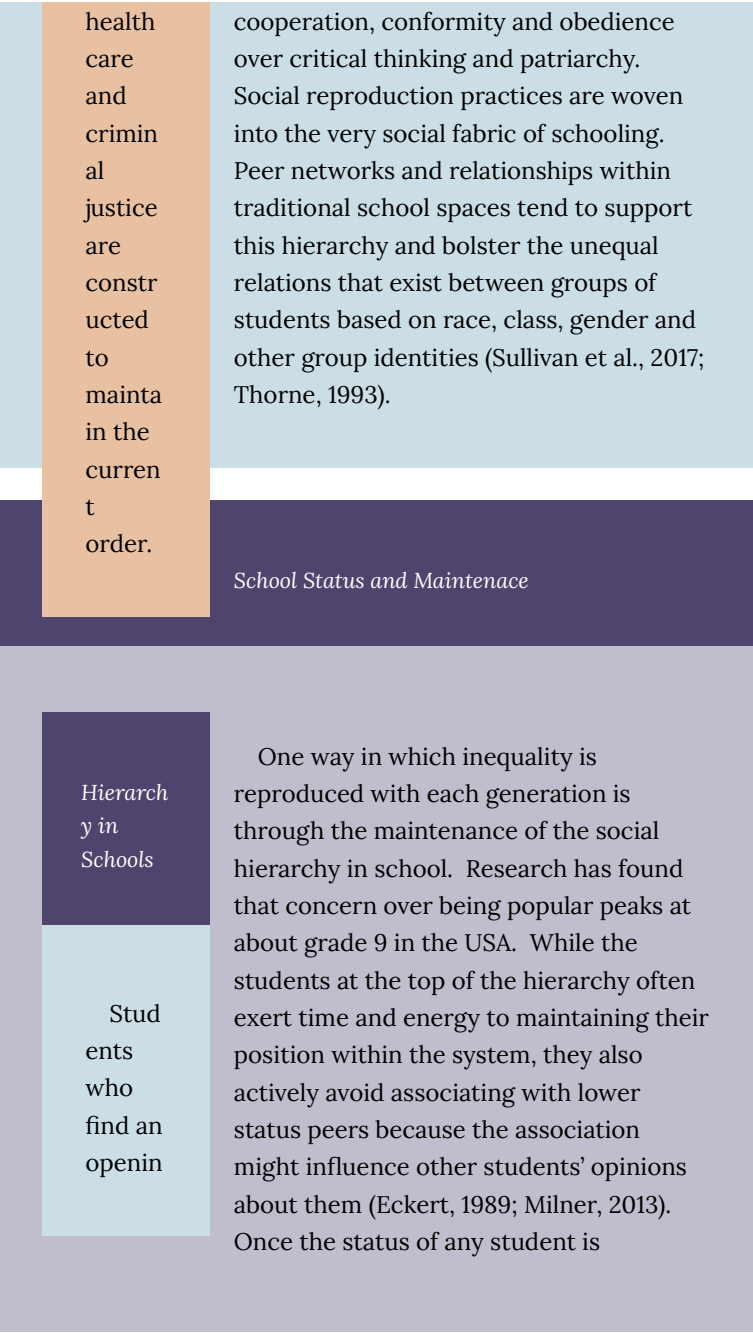
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The original ideas about social reproduction was introduced by Karl Marx. The central idea of SRT is that all goods and services are produced by workers and these must be continually manufactured. Workers who produce these goods and services must be reproduced as well even when they are not working. You need the reproduction of the working class both from one day to the next as well as from one generation to another for the system to be perpetuated. Since capitalists need a continuous stream of laborers, workers' unpaid work outside of their paid labor must be harnessed to sustain them and the future generation of workers. This work is gendered, racialized and stratified by social class (Bhattacharya, 2017). Experts for instance have noted how most of the unpaid household needs and services are provided by women even as they are headed to paid labor in ever larger numbers. In an earlier era, communities were more intimately involved in raising children; today it has been privatized to the nuclear family, especially to the women in the family. Thus, on the surface, it may appear that the work sphere and the non-work spheres of workers' lives are very different

and unrelated to each other but when one digs deeper, the connections between the two become obvious. The conditions of non-work have a deep impact on the worker and vice versa. For instance, neighborhood quality affects work conditions while poor working conditions have an impact on the quality of living conditions outside of the working environment. Similarly, relationships within the school system as an institution have an impact on the future life of the children as workers and hence the reproduction of the social class system we are born into (Pluto Press, 2017; Sampson & Sharkey, 2008).

Social Reproduction Theory argues that schools are not meritocratic systems where children have equal opportunities to succeed but they are institutional spaces where old divisions based on social class, gender and race are perpetuated. There are several mechanisms through which this happens – within the curriculum by elevating some topics as being more important than others, expenditure of resources on various school activities that benefit middle and upper class children disproportionately, enforcement of exclusionary disciplinary processes that disadvantage children of color, and school rituals and sports that elevate values like competitiveness over

succeed but they are institutional spaces where old divisions based on social class, gender and race are perpetuated. All the institutions of society from the family and schools to



established, it is relatively stable through adolescence. The established status is reinforced by the associations that students make and by feedback from authority figures. Occasionally, there is significant movement up or down the social ladder by a boy who may go through a sudden growth spurt or a girl who could possibly develop special talents but most times if there are status changes it is usually not very dramatic (Simmons, 2017). Students who find an opening to moving up the social ladder in school often find that they would have to distance themselves from their old friends and even put them down in order to be able to move up. The result is often that youth who were made fun of become downwardly mobile (Sentse, Kretschmer & Salmivalli, 2015). Marcel Danesi (1999) calls these insults small cruelties and adolescent school life is filled with them on a regular basis. Derogatory comments are often made by students when their object of derision is not present, and it forces other high-status group members to distance themselves from the lower status individuals. Coming up with a mocking nickname is another way that high status youth keep others in their place and influence their status. Such ritual ridicule is not restricted to verbal insults but also includes physical aggression where high status students

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would rough up someone of a lower status. Students of lower status thus have great incentive to avoid any contact with those who are of higher status in order to protect themselves physically and emotionally (Klein, 2006; Milner, 2013).

Much of the hostility, threats, ridicule and aggression arise from the way schools are organized where social and academic rewards are given only to a select few and most students experience little power in their interactions with peers, administrators and teachers. When the atmosphere is wrought with hostile feelings, aggression is used as an instrument to gain status. Students practice their put-downs with students' lower down in the ladder with few consequences. The put-downs and insults are also used to keep people from deviating from what is considered normal behavior in the dominant group by making the consequences intolerable for those most vulnerable to insults. The result is often that those who enjoy high status are those who come from the most privileged segments of the social economic, political, gender, racial and religious hierarchy. Clearly, there are also more obvious ways in which children coming from families of privilege advance within the educational system as demonstrated in the recent example where a sting operation found

many wealthy families bribing their way into elite colleges (PBS Newshour, 2019).

the dominant group.

Fostering inter-ethnic friendships

Most children in the USA will be of non-European origin by the year 2040. A significant proportion of them will have at least one immigrant parent (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Schools can provide important spaces for children and youth to meet students from other cultural and social contexts where they can learn diverse frameworks for viewing the world. Encouraging friendships across social boundaries can help reduce prejudice and further understanding. Teachers, school counselors and administrators can help advance the cultural competence of young people by facilitating better communication among students. Studies demonstrate that better intergroup relations predict higher academic achievement, and social emotional development for all students (Kawabata & Crick, 2008). In schools where race and the social hierarchy of the school

Addressing Hierarchy

In schools where race and the social hierarchy of the school

coincide, intergroup relationships are harder to form and sustain.

Allport (1954) hypothesized that for optimal friendships between different ethnic groups in a school context

coincide, intergroup relationships are harder to form and sustain. Thus, fostering cross-cultural friendships and associations involves questioning the inequities that exist in schools (Graham, Munniksmä & Juvonen, 2014).

From early childhood onwards, children tend to have friends from within their own racial group and intragroup friendships are rated more highly than intergroup friendships. This phenomenon seems to be especially strong for white children who tend to have fewer friends from other ethnic groups. Where there is active effort made on the part of the adults in a child's life to foster varied connections with children from diverse communities, the results are often dramatic prejudice reduction, higher self-efficacy, and appreciation of other cultures. The chance to form friendships across racial and ethnic lines allows for young people to understand others as individuals and thereby resist stereotypes (Sigelman & Welch, 1993).

Allport (1954) hypothesized that for optimal friendships between different ethnic groups in a school context they must feel equal, have common goals and have the support of administrators and other adults. It is not just enough to have diversity among the student body; it must be supported by the institutional

framework. Some ways to assist in facilitating interethnic contact and friendships include a) Mixed group collaborative projects with shared goals; b) Having open discussions about race, racism and other forms of prejudice in both formal and informal settings to further the goals of honest communication between students; c) Having an inclusive curriculum with regards to race, gender, sexual orientation and disability studies; d) Incorporating informal conversations on prejudice reduction and equity. Research studies have shown that facilitating direct conversations between students from varied backgrounds in terms of race, ethnicity, social class, religion, abilities, gender identity and sexual orientations have had the greatest impact in prejudice reduction, self-awareness, and appreciation of diversity (Brewer & Gaertner, 2004).

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One of the main factors that prevents intergroup friendships is the systemic barriers that exist in schools that do not allow for engagement across social class lines. Often, extracurricular activities may cost family resources that may not be affordable or may be scheduled at times when the student cannot be there. Thought must be given to alleviate these structural barriers. Data on discipline, punishment and school activities and achievement should be consistently collected in order to identify areas of improvement with regard to equity. The bottom line is that

it is difficult to foster intergroup communication and connection when there is deep inequality in the social and academic fabric of the school life. Overcoming the structural barriers that keep intergroup divisions in place requires all the various institutions in society from governmental agencies, schools, communities and families to engage with each other in a constructive manner.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1.What are the mechanisms through which divisions based on social class, gender and race are perpetuated in schools?

2.What are the roles of teachers, school counselors and administrators in fostering interethnic relationships between students at schools?

REFLECT

1.As an adolescent, what was your school status? How did you maintain or seek to change it and why?

Issues Related to Relationships and Intimacy

Adolescence is a time of changing relationships and the new needs that arise from increased maturity and the developmental tasks that society sets forth for youth. As we saw in the previous section, youths at this age experience intense relationships focused on shared goals and needs for intimacy and loyalty. One's developing sense of identity forces them to seek friends and peers who will facilitate and mirror who the young person is. The challenges that arise from these yearnings must be dealt with and addressed by both the adults in the young person's life as well as the institutions that that the individual functions within, i.e., schools and family.

Cyber-bullying

There has been an explosion of research on cyberbullying in recent years. Most experts agree that the presence of technology has led to an increase in cyberbullying among youth. Children today can handle technology in complex ways earning them the nickname Digital Natives (Prensky, 2001). Many of these youth have never known a time when there was no digital technology. This contrasts with the Digital Immigrants who

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grew up during a time when technological devices were absent or were not easily available. While much of this new access to technology has proven beneficial to young people giving them diverse ways to get information, providing them new avenues to be creative and allowing them easy connectivity to friends and peers, youth are often unschooled about the dark side of cyber use. The new digital forms of bullying are perhaps some of the most destructive ways in which a small number of young people use social media and other online tools.

Olweus, Limber & Mihalic (1999) define bullying as an action where there is intentional harm towards the victim, the harmful behavior is repeatedly performed, and there is a power imbalance between the victim and the bully. Smith et al (2008) define cyberbullying as “an aggressive intentional act carried out by a group or individuals, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time, against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself” (p.376). Whatever the form of bullying, the phenomenon causes core distress among victims, occurs when there is no supervision, starts in school and spills over outside of school, and the victim usually knows the bully. A crucial difference between cyberbullying and

face-to-face bullying is that in the former case, it is difficult

for the bully to see the victim's distress, which often makes it easy to be uninhibited in the problematic behavior. Some experts argue that cyberbullying also robs the bully of the pleasure of seeing another person suffer. Another difference between the two forms of bullying is that of anonymity – in cyberbullying the victim often does not know who is doing the bullying. This emboldens individuals who may not otherwise use bullying to resolve an issue. How the bullying behavior is replicated also distinguishes between both forms of bullying. In cyberspace, a simple act of aggression by one bully may be repeated endlessly by others uninvolved in the original incident by sending forward an email or a picture or re-posting threatening messages. Thus, the consequences of cyberbullying on all the students involved may be longer-lasting. One third of bullies both online and face-to-face are themselves victims of bullying (Haynie et al., 2001).

There are gender differences in the kind of bullying youth are subjected to. Girls use indirect/relational forms of bullying more frequently while boys engage in more direct/physical aggression (Rivers & Smith, 1994). Relational aggression involves verbal and emotional harassment of individuals repeatedly and with the intention to do harm. Some cyberbullying experts claim that girls are more likely to engage in online forms of aggression because of the increased likelihood of girls engaging in relational aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). The internet lends itself easily to relational violence. However,

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other studies do not show a gender difference in cyber aggression (Li, 2006). Several studies have demonstrated that girls report more negative impacts and are more likely to experience exclusion and revelation of private personal information as a violation of trust (Smith et al., 2008).

The consequences of bullying in the victim tends to be depression, poor self-esteem, anxiety, suicidal ideation, psychosomatic problems like headaches and sleep disturbances, low academic achievement, not feeling safe in school and a risk for problems at school (Hoertel et al., 2011; Meyer, 2015). The effects of cyberbullying may be intensified by its very nature; most youth have difficulty cutting oneself off from technology because of the social isolation it produces even when they are bullied. The public nature of the aggression online, not knowing who has seen the bullying posts and the permanent nature of the posts themselves leading to repeated exposure to the same messages make the encounters traumatic for individuals.

Lynn Mikel Brown writes that bully-prevention has become a huge for-profit business with top-down strategies aimed at reducing bullying behavior in school. She suggests that the solutions are often simple with the adults in children's lives taking responsibility for the unsafe environments that children are forced to spend hours in. She offers 10 simple strategies to

address behaviors that form bullying. Strategies for addressing bullying include:

Stop labeling kids as bullies and victims: Children are complex and are capable of both doing good and harm to others. Adults ought to take responsibility if schools are unsafe.

Name the behavior and not the child: Identifying the specific behavior like homophobia or sexual harassment or ableism is more productive to pointing to a consequence or a strategy than simply calling it bullying.

Move beyond the individual: Examine social factors like racism, classism, homophobia and ableism as sources of aggressive behaviors. How does cultural, social and economic capital affect bullying behavior in school?

One size does not fit all: While Olweus programs have worked in Norway, they may not show the same effectiveness in diverse schools in the United States.

Have realistic expectations for students: Expecting students to adhere to standards that adults may find difficult to follow is unrealistic. Having students always follow rules imposed from above, never resisting or fighting back when their rights are violated, are counterproductive in reducing aggressive behaviors.

Listen to students: Understanding where kids come from and their perspective helps undermine the damaging impact of privilege and protects the less powerful. Often, aggression stems from an unequal status quo.

Embrace Grassroots Movement: Change has to be student-driven, not enforced top-down for effectiveness. Including students in dialogues about school rules increases compliance by students.

Be Proactive/Not Reactive: Working towards making schools safe for all students helps in reducing bullying. Clubs like Civil Rights Team Projects allow students who are otherwise marginalized in schools to explore their identity.

Coalition Building: Working towards building bridges between different groups allows for marginalized youth to find allies and respond to violence in constructive ways.

Accentuate the Positive: Adult advocates for youth must recognize that youth need more control over their lives to feel important.

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One area that has not been explored well is the influence of peer groups in both the bullying behavior as well as an effective means of stopping the bullying. There is evidence that children who are willing to intervene when a peer is being bullied report greater empathy than those who do not (Cowie & Olafsson, 2000). However, peer intervention is influenced by the social standing of the bully or bullies, the number of people engaged in the bullying incidence, and the relationship of the bystander to the bully as well as the one being bullied. Thus, peers may be reluctant to intervene if there are several, more popular peers who are the bullies or if the victim is unpopular (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003). The larger climate in peer communities around issues of race, gender and sexual orientation influence bullying behaviors.

Rarely does prejudiced aggression take place in isolation but often, the community normalizes certain forms of prejudice which is then exhibited as physical or emotional violence against individuals from underrepresented groups. As many experts observe, it is hard to prevent incidents of bullying if diversity and inclusion are not infused into the school curriculum and its rituals.

sexual harassment or ableism is more effective than simply calling it bullying.

Sexuality Education

From its very origins, sexuality education in the US had a rather ambivalent framework that was mostly aimed at keeping youth informed about the negative consequences of engaging in sex while stifling a more scientific understanding of the topic. The earliest sex education programs addressed the issues of chastity, nutrition and the evils of masturbation. In their presentations of the topic, early educators connected masturbation to warts, constipation, loss of energy, insanity and death. In the late 1800s when the first sex education

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programs were launched, the Catholic church tried to shut them down. During World War I, the country experienced widespread sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and infections (STIs) and this prompted the first organized sexuality education programs within the military. Later, the curriculum was adopted by schools to teach about STIs and hygiene. In 1964, Mary Calderone, a physician at Planned Parenthood, established the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the USA (SIECUS). The organization attempted to move away from scare tactics and teach sexuality from a scientific viewpoint. It also established the first programs to train teachers in sexuality education methods. Religious conservatives attacked SIECUS and claimed that sex education had the potential to further the cause of communism and create chaos. Rumors were spread that sexuality educators were stripping themselves in front of their students. In 1994, the surgeon general of the US was forced to resign after she admitted that masturbation can reduce unsafe sexual activity (Middleton, 1998;

Pardini, 2002). To this day, the country still struggles to form a coherent policy on sexuality education for young people.

Current sexuality education in schools often replicate relationship of hegemonic sexuality and heterosexism,

reinforcing racist and classist stereotypes. While the debate about the efficacy of abstinence education is centered around whether teaching abstinence leads to lower or higher engagement with safe sex, there is very little discussion around homophobia, racism and classism. Some authors argue that sex education in schools normalizes inequality (Ferfolja, 2007; Fields, 2008). Conservative groups initially resisted all forms of sex education but the advent of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s forced these groups to shift tactic and advocate for abstinence-only education. During the HIV pandemic, conservatives encouraged more resources to be set aside for abstinence education. In abstinence only education, teens are encouraged to wait until marriage to engage in monogamous sex. By 2005, the dominant model for educating teens about sex was abstinence only education, though in recent years there has been a shift to 'abstinence + condom' where abstinence is still held up as the only appropriate sexuality related behavior (Perrin & DeJoy, 2003). On both sides of the issue, children have been constructed as victims of sex; thus, education around sexuality is often based on inculcating fear in children. White teens are especially constructed as 'innocent' and needing to be protected while youth of color are perceived as being hypersexualized and in need of restraint (Chan et al, 2001). Today, many states have the provision that public schools will be stripped of funding for sex education if they taught comprehensive sexuality education.

Gays, lesbians, bisexual, transsexuals, and queers are invisible in these lessons and six states in the USA require instructors to label behavior associated

Critical

Sexuality Education	with non-normative sexual behaviors as being self and other destructive (Fields, 2008). Even when students seek out information on non-normative sexualities, they are prevented from gaining accurate information. Another missing element from sexuality education in schools is an exploration of female desire. Girls are portrayed as victims that need protection with little discussion about their own needs and desires (Garcia, 2009). All these misconceptions about sexuality and youth lead to large public acceptance of rape myths that objectify girls and women and construct boys as people with insatiable sexual appetite.
There is very little discussion around homophobia, racism and classism when discussing youth sexuality. In addition, sexuality education	Schools teach children implicitly about how to do gender and sexuality through various curriculum but especially when it relates to sexuality education. Homophobia and heterosexist messages prevail from elementary school to high school. In high schools, through the many rituals during the school year, boys learn how to do masculinity and learn an aversion to feminine behavior (Pascoe, 2007). Rituals like the prom and sporting events reinforce and reward hierarchical heterosexism. Sexually harassing behaviors, sexist language and homophobic slurs frequently used by students are ignored by teachers thereby reinforcing inequality based on gender.

Similar behaviors by Black and white students are perceived very differently by administrators – Black students’ behaviors are framed as sexually loaded while white student behaviors are ignored as harmless, thereby hypersexualizing Black students, especially boys (Ferguson, 2000). It is harder for teens to abstain from sexual behavior in a society where desire floods popular media and images consistently communicate hypersexuality and sexual objectification.

A critical pedagogy of sexuality education can overcome some of the deepest concerns about traditional sex education. In order for an equity based sexuality pedagogy instructors must use strong anti-discriminatory language when discussing and introducing sex education. This will go a long way towards an equal education for all groups. The information needs to be medically accurate instead of simply trying to induce fear in young people. Teachers would need to be sensitive to issues of race, class, gender and sexual orientation and they ought to be ready to acknowledge adolescent desires. Last but not least, schools should focus on peer education; this could make students feel safe about expressing themselves in an authentic manner.

These alternative pedagogies could be fraught with their own pitfalls –

reinforces gender stereotypes and acceptance of rape myths.

Strong anti-discriminatory language when discussing and introducing sex education will go a long way toward

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homosexuality may become central to the discussion marginalizing other groups, and teachers may let their own prejudices get in the way of effective teaching. Apart from the formal education about sex that adolescents receive, there is also an informal curriculum with peers teaching each other about how to do sex and gender. Much of this learning is

hierarchical. Beauty magazines and clothing provide props to discuss heterosexual relationships and they solidify class and race divisions among youth. Sexual performance and sexual restraint help reinforce stereotypes about teens based on race and class. Among boys, heterosexism is reinforced by objectification of girls, homophobic language, and boasting about heterosexual connections made. However, peers also have the potential to disrupt traditional ideas about sexuality and gender. Parents reinforce traditional gender norms and heterosexism by emphasizing the safety aspect of sex and discriminating between girls and boys in how much sexual freedom a child is allowed. Fathers are especially likely to express homophobic ideas and focus on heterosexual relationship when talking about sex in adolescence. Many parents experience resistance among their children when they do attempt to talk about sex especially if they are themselves ambivalent about the topic. Teachers and other advocates can help provide safe spaces for youth to challenge and transform their traditional frameworks for comprehending gendered and sexual behavior.

Many people assume that grieving in adolescence takes on similar characteristics as adults coping with deep loss. However, research has demonstrated that adult grief exhibits a different set of signs as compared to youth grief. As discussed earlier, teens are very peer oriented. When they do face loss, it often tends to be sudden and traumatic since few youths die of natural causes. The top reasons for youth mortality are auto accidents, suicides and homicides. There is little warning preceding the loss and this leads to young people not feeling safe in their communities after the loss of their loved one. The response to traumatic loss is severe in young people and is marked by greater functional impairment, suicidal ideation and physical disability. The move to be independent from families and other adults predisposes adolescents to not communicate their emotional states to the adults that they interact with every day. Hence, it is difficult for teachers and parents to gauge how a sudden loss has affected the individual concerned. Youth are often concerned that they may be

*Grieving
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The response to traumatic loss is severe in young people and is marked by greater functional impairment,

suicidal ideation and physical disability. The feelings are intense because loss during one's youth is often sudden.

Grief in teens may be unacknowledged because of the

judged harshly by their peers if they expressed their fears, anxieties and sadness. This leads to self-silencing of their negative emotions. They may feel very alone in their misery since they feel unique and different from other people. Teens may express their sadness through spending hours listening to music or exercising or even engaging in destructive behavior (Wingate, 2017). They may feel more comfortable expressing their sadness online in an anonymous fashion and while this may provide some relief, they may also be subjected to misinformation and cruel taunts. Unlike children, adolescents may not be able to rely on simple answers from their religious faith to comfort them since they may be moving away from their spiritual or religious traditions and questioning cherished family beliefs (Cox & Stevenson, 2017; Sofka, 2009).

Adolescents who may be experiencing profound transformations in their identity or who may be questioning their identity intensely may be even more affected by general questions around death and specific anxieties about the loss of a loved one. While youth are questioning the meaning of their own lives and the purpose of their actions in the larger scheme of things, death may make their lives appear unstable, unpredictable and

scary. Problem-focused and emotion regulation only appear later in adolescence making responses to loss extreme and sometimes destructive in young people (Doka, 2017).

Grief in teens may be unacknowledged because of the nature of the loss – abortions, the loss of a loved pet, perinatal loss, incarceration of a loved one or a parent, divorce, placement in a new foster home (Doka, 2017). The grief of children and youth are left unacknowledged because they are thought to be incapable of feeling to the same intensity as adults. In some cases, the circumstances of the loss may be deeply shameful and therefore unacknowledged. Children and teens often experience the loss of a parent they have not had contact with deeply because of the lost time and opportunity to establish a connection. The way adults respond to their children's grief may teach young people lifelong lessons in how to cope with loss and sorrow. Thus, listening respectfully as youth voice their feelings gives everybody an opportunity to strengthen their connections while also learning appropriate ways of coping (Moore, 2018). Brushing the feelings aside and pretending that they do not matter sets up patterns that prevent conflict resolution that youth take with them into adulthood.

nature of the loss. They may feel shame as when a loved one is incarcerated, commits suicide or a home is lost because of parental unemployment.

Even as they face marginalization

n and a sense of 'difference' at a time of profound loss, the online space may be more accepting for a grieving teen. The challenge for the moderator is to keep it respectful and safe

In order to help youth, educational institutions would need to have clear policies and guidelines to help grieving students cope with schoolwork and their lives at school. A death of a family member especially by homicide or suicide often brings with grief, a sense of shame. They may be treated differently by other people or there may be silence around the event that the adolescent may feel is embarrassing. Teachers, staff and administrators would have to be trained to look for signs of grieving in students who may be acting out or whose grades have dropped precipitously. Setting up helping groups might facilitate the participants sharing of their thoughts and feelings about the events that may be bothering them. Some organizations offer grief camps for children and teens to find solace as they cope with their loss. Comfort Zone Camp and Camp Erin are two such camps that have national reach. They have an online profile as well so students can continue their healing process even after camp ends. Hospice groups offer grief counseling and healing groups as well (Warnick, 2015).

The cyber environment that adolescents immerse themselves in provides a natural outlet to adolescents as they face loss. Online environments tend to be more participatory and have fewer barriers to

engagement and artistic expression. It gives youth a little more control over how and when they participate, and the feedback is often immediate. Thus, even as they face marginalization and a sense of 'difference' at a time of profound loss, the online environment may provide a more accepting space for a grieving teen (Williams & Merton, 2009). Youth and young adults have built shrines to commemorate the memories of their loved ones; there are several sites that offer easy templates that youth then fill in with digital artefacts. Some popular sites include cemetery.org, teensremembered.org, and worldgardens.com. Many adolescents are using web logs to record their experiences with illness, loss and coping with death. Facebook and other social media websites allow for messages of condolences and organizing of vigils quickly. The challenge for a moderator of any social media platform is to keep the remembrance respectful and positive. It is also important to educate teens about being sensitive to their friends needing help, especially after a suicide event. Ultimately, both digital immigrants and digital natives, adults and children, advocates for youth and the youth themselves need to learn about the technologies that are available for use during times of stress and grief. At the same time, it is important to teach adolescents how to keep themselves safe when they reach out for support in a digital environment (Balk, Zaengle & Carr, 2011; Sofka, 2009).

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Conclusion

In summary, adolescence is a time of both reaching out and pulling back, a time of increasing autonomy but at the same time strengthening ties at school and in one's home. Youth's social lives become increasingly complex and social inequalities acquire even more salience as individuals in the age group try to negotiate power and intimacy within complex environments. During adolescence, youth acquire the capacity to emotionally self-regulate even as they face challenges that relate to romance and intimacy. Adults play a crucial role in helping young people successfully name and validate their own feelings even as they develop the capacity for empathy and compassion towards others.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

- 1.What are some of the main differences between face-to-face and cyber bullying?
- 2.What are some of the gender differences in the kind of bullying youth are subjected to?
- 3.What are the differences between traditional sex education practices and critical pedagogy around issues of sexuality education?
- 4.How can educational institutions help youth as they cope with grief and loss?

REFLECT

1. Did you personally experience bullying or had a close friend who did? What was that experience like? Was there support from the school around remedying the situation? What role did adults play in remedying the situation?

Glossary of Terms

‘digital immigrants’

‘digital natives’

‘marshmallow experiments’

ableism

accentuate the positive

active problem-solving strategies

adult grief exhibits a different set of signs as compared to youth grief

be proactive/ not reactive

bullying

classism

cliques

coalition building

critical pedagogy

crowd

cyberbullying

direct/physical
embrace grassroots movement
emotional intelligence
empathy
face to face
have realistic expectations for students
homophobia
indirect/relational
internally focused emotional control
language and ritualized behavior
listen to students
name the behavior
one size does not fit all
racism
ritual ridicule
self-regulation
self-silencing of their negative emotions
sexual harassment
side by side
small cruelties
social referencing
stop labeling kids

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8. Chapter 8: Self and Identity

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Goals

- Know about the research on the self and self-concept
- Know Maslow's Theory
- Understand frameworks for understanding research on the self in the world
- Understand theories of identity development
- Explore frameworks about marginality and identities

Chapter Outline

- Introduction
- Psychological Exploration of the Self
 - Self-concept
 - The Social Construction of the Self

- Self in the Digital World
- Identity: A Psychological Exploration
- Privilege, Under-representation, and Identity
 - Identity Formation: Ethnicity and Race
 - Helm's Theory of White Identity Development
 - Black Identity Development
 - Other Minoritized Groups
 - LGBTQ+ Sexuality and Identity
 - Gender Identity Development
 - Immigrant Youth
 - Youth with Disabilities
- Conclusion
- Glossary of Terms
- References

Introduction: Psychological Exploration of the 'Self'

Theorists from Erikson to Piaget point to adolescence as a period of identity search. This is the period in industrialized contexts, when individuals are going through the challenge of identifying their values, the interests that engage them, and their future goals in life. By the end of

*The
existential
and
the
categorical
self*

The existential self refers to our uniqueness. The categorical self is the realization that the self has certain properties in relationship with other objects around them. The self-

adolescence, most youth are forced to choose a path forward in their self-identification process.

We cannot understand the development of identity without also exploring the notion of self and the role it plays in our conceptions of identity. The definition of the self is in some ways tautological; it is a conception of who we are as it relates to our own reflective consciousness.

Knowledge of the self is a private experience which makes it problematic in terms of establishing a scientific understanding of the concept (Harter, 1999). The existential self refers to our uniqueness and being distinct from the world. This understanding maintains a consistency of identity through time. The categorical self is the realization that the self has certain properties in relationship with other objects around them. This involves comparisons with others.

Researchers have had to operationalize the term self into measurable and tangible ideas and one way in which psychologists attempt to study the self is to understand how we conceive of ourselves in this world. They attempt to study the notion of self-concept which refers to how one perceives oneself as a social, biological, spiritual, and relational being. The formation of the self-concept (Emcworthy, 2017) is a combination of both one's own

memories of being in the world as well as the feedback about oneself that individuals get from people that they interact with (Gecas, 1982).

The self-concept of individuals is highly influenced by the cultural context of people as the notion of the self itself is social in nature (Rosenberg, 1981). Psychologists claim that both the conception of self as well as notions of self-concept are determined by group cohesion and its salience in the lives of people. They differentiate between individualistic and collectivistic cultures and their impact on this conception (Gudykunst et al, 1996). Today social scientists prefer to refer to these concepts as individualism and interdependence (as opposed to collectivism).

Most of the countries in the Global North, except for Japan are

Collectivism and Interdependence

Youth living in collectivistic and interdependent cultures tend to put a high premium on social harmony and

concept relates to how one perceives oneself as a social, biological, spiritual, and relational being.

collective well-being. Their self-definition often includes their relationships and connections. Youth in individualist cultures tend to value the gratification of their own needs.

characterized by their individualistic orientation. The USA represents the extreme version of this individualistic worldview. At the other end of the spectrum are the interdependent cultures mostly from the Global South where the family and community are regarded as more important than one's own gratification of needs. Youth living in collectivistic and interdependent cultures tend to rate their own self-concept as lower and put a high premium on social harmony and well-being. Their self-definition often includes their relationships and connections.

Youth in individualist cultures tend to place a higher value on the gratification of their own needs and score higher on self-esteem scales. Youth in the Global North also tend to overlook negative qualities that may be associated with their self-definition and highlight positive aspects of their self-conception. In other words, they underemphasize negative traits in themselves and highlight the positive traits they may possess (Bochner, 1994; Kashima et al., 1995; Triandis et al., 1988).

Self-Awareness which is a precursor to self-concept develops in infancy and continues to develop in complexity through childhood and adulthood. As infants coordinate the various parts of their bodies in concerted action, they

develop a sense of integrated self (Damon & Hart, 1982). There is evidence that infants begin to recognize themselves in the mirror at about 18 months (Malone, 2010). At about the same age, toddlers respond to images of other people by paying attention to them longer than they do images of themselves (Gallup, 1998; Moore & Corkum, 1994). In industrialized cultures, by age two children exhibit a clear distinction between themselves and others. By this age toddlers are able to engage in playful interactions of paying attention to each other with their caregivers. They exhibit great distress within minutes when their caregivers display unresponsiveness to their facial expressions and attempts to engage (UMass, 2009). This is evidence of both their connection to caregivers and their sensitivity to separation (Nichols, Fox & Mundy, 2005). During the third year, they increasingly exhibit knowledge of other people's goals. They are able to identify when others' goals conflict with their own goals. They are also able to coordinate their actions with others to achieve common goals. With self-awareness comes possessiveness and a sense of ownership as well the capacity for compromise and cooperation (Ruffman et al., 2006).

Psychologists write about three constructions of the self that children acquire starting around the age of three to four. The categorical self is one that they use to describe the attributes they may have (i.e., girl, tall, black haired, etc.). The remembered self is constructed through the stories that are told about them by others around them. The enduring self is a view of themselves as persisting over time.

Theory
of Mind

Theo
ry of

the mind is the understanding that other people have beliefs and motives that are different from one's own and these thoughts influence people's actions.	Thus, people might change their conceptions about who they are, but the core of their self-concept remains the same. Over the course of their childhood, children begin to develop a theory of the mind, an understanding that other people have beliefs and motives that are different from their own and these thoughts influence the actions of people of all ages (Miller, Fung & Mintz, 1996; Neisser, 1991). This understanding is crucial for the development of social skills and empathy.
	<i>Self-concept</i> Along with self-awareness comes a notion of self-concept in children. The self-concept of a person is a set of beliefs, abilities, attitudes and values that define them (Fonagy, 2018; Hattie, 2014). By middle childhood, children have moved from describing themselves purely with observable traits to including broad dispositions such as “I am a good athlete” (Byrne, 1996). This increasingly leads to social comparisons. By adolescence, youth begin to describe themselves using sophisticated language. They also distinguish who they are from one situation to the next and from one social context

to another. They begin to comprehend that they are not the same person when they are with their friends versus when they are with authority figures. They may perceive themselves to be extroverted with their friends and perhaps introverted with family. Thus, by adolescence individuals have a complex self-concept that includes contradictory traits and is situational (Harter, 2015).

Many of the more recent constructions about the self and self-concept take their inspiration from Maslow and his theory of a hierarchy of needs (Robertson, 2016). According to Maslow (1968), the needs that an individual, while mildly modified by culture, can be arranged in a pyramid beginning with a base that includes gross physical needs and ending in the highest level that includes self-actualization and the need to fulfill oneself through one's actions. When the lower level needs are satisfied, there are opportunities for the individual to fulfil higher level needs, as illustrated in the figure below. The needs at the top of the hierarchy cannot be fulfilled without the needs below being satisfied. Thus, self-actualization is a need that is never completely satisfied but there are moments when one feels a sense of achievement or satisfaction over an accomplishment; during those occasional moments we approach the state of self-actualization (Maslow, 1971; Sprouts, 2017).

Maslow thus had a comprehensive theory about what

Maslow's Theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes the following:



motivates people to act and seek specific goals. His critics, however, point out that his needs are not very context specific though they are presented as if they were universal. Maslow himself did not claim they applied in every context. More recent work on self and identity have (especially from non-psychological social sciences) taken to examining how the 'self' is socially constructed under capitalism and the socioeconomic contexts we live in today. Postmodern theory explicates the ways in which our modern lives define ourselves and how commercial popular media constructs the self mainly as a consumer of objects. While the psychological sciences have attempted to look for the basic elements that constitute the self, postmodernism asserts that there is no self without society.

The Social Construction of the Self Under Capitalism

Capitalism is only about 400 years old but the new arrangements between individuals and work has led to enormous changes around how individuals view connections with the larger world (Pieterse, 2004). Today, the average person in the Global North uses the term 'self' plentifully and assumes the listener or reader understands exactly what they mean. As with the term adolescence, the origins of the current understanding of self can be traced to the early years of capitalism. Industrial factories rearranged the relationship of individuals with the work that they did and with other people in their communities. It introduced money as a mediator between the value a

worker brought to their work and the profit that the owner of a factory was able to extract from the work that the worker performed. The 'self' was dramatically altered as a result of the new arrangement where a few people held all the equipment of production and the mass of people had nothing but their labor to offer. Some experts would argue that the current notion of the individual came about as a result of capitalism and that this direction of focus of attention toward the individual was necessary for capitalism to function and survive.

Freud was one of the first to delineate personality and self as composed of three substrates. He coined them; the id, the ego, and the superego. The id is described as the uncontrolled desires that humans have, many of which are expressly forbidden by society. The ego is the logical adult part of the person's personality that sets limits on appropriate ways that needs can be fulfilled. The superego is the moralist and develops later in childhood as the child absorbs the caregivers value systems.

Since its early conceptualization, the notion of self has taken on multiple related meanings in psychological mainstream research, with the common theme being that the self is bounded, clearly distinguishable from the 'other,' with some level of personal control (Freud, 1990; 2018). For Freud and his early followers, including his daughter Anna

*The
Disengagement of
Self
From
Context
Under
Capitalism*

Throughout
the
decades of
the
20th
century

y, the relationship between self and society became increasingly unattained. In the last decades, self-expression became the principal goal of therapy and personal development. Throughout

Freud, the self is filled with desires that are forbidden by society, mostly sexual and aggressive in nature. These desires threaten to undo the stability of the social fabric of a community (Mansfield, 2000). For them, therefore, our thinking and decision making are not rational, and humans barely understand themselves or their motives (Chodorow, 2014). According to Freudians, the goal of social planners is to identify these urges and channel them into appropriate activities sanctioned by society.

Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, was a pioneer in the field of marketing and public relations in the USA. In the first half of the 1900s, Bernays successfully used Freud's theory about forbidden desires and anxieties to sell everything from cigarettes to the fear of communism (Bernays, 1928; 1942; Fiser, 2016). Bernays reasoned that individuals' unconscious desires, anxieties, and fears could be used to manipulate the population and sell products. The need to find new markets for products became especially intense with increasing efficiency in the production of goods as the industrial age roared on. Exploiting the fragile self-concepts of individuals became a way to find new markets for products (Levitt, 1981).

Throughout the decades of the 20th

century, the relationship between the self and society became increasingly bifurcated. As Freud conceptualized the self as self-contained and teeming with desires and anxieties grew more and more entrenched, social connections were viewed as either thwarting those desires or helping to express them. This notion of the self was therefore only marginally connected to the social and cultural context. This conceptual foundation became central to practice within the mental health and self-help movements.

Wilhelm Reich, a student of Freud's, asserted that this suppression of basic needs (like sex and aggression) was only leading to destructive and maladaptive behavior. He advocated for free expression of such desires in a safe space (Reich, 1988). The end goal, in Reich's conceptualization, is the benefit that allowing the expressions of one's desires has on society. Giving space for the emotional expression of one's needs, he asserts, prevents individuals from sliding into neurotic states and maintains social order (Atwood & Stolorow, 1977). During the early years of the development of the field of mental health, social welfare was still a principal concern; self and society were perceived as being intimately connected in a democratic society. This tenuous connection between the health of

the decades of the 20th century, the relationship between the self and society became increasingly untethered from each other.

Positive psychology rests on the belief that

people are responsible for their own happiness and that self-empowerment would ensure success.

society at large and its connections to the individual self was all but severed in the last decades of the 1900s.

The rise of self-expression movements symbolized by schools like the EST initially established by Werner Erhard (Rosen, 1977) claimed that society was inconsequential to individual happiness. Erhard denied that people were limited in any way by social factors or their location in society. He proposed that people needed a space for full self-expression where they can be whatever they want to be. He conducted seminars in his institute where his clients role-played and gave vent to their frustrations and desires with the aim of ‘freeing’ themselves from the tyranny of social life. Thus, within mainstream psychology, especially within the mental health movement, there was a pendulum swing where the self was viewed as totally

divorced from its connections to society. As the self-expression movement grew, advertisers had to find new ways of selling products in a world where the self was placed on a pedestal and its fulfillment became the principal goal to citizens (Vitz, 1994).

Critics claim that today, the self-help and the positive psychology movement relies on a definition of the self that is untethered from race, class, gender, and other social location determinants of the quality of one’s life. Positive psychology reiterates the belief that people are responsible for their own happiness and that self-empowerment would ensure success (Seligman, 2004). While there is some truth

to that statement, many positive psychology proponents fail to acknowledge the role that racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination in society pose significant impediments to achievement for many youths. Thus, positive psychology experts assure youths that they can cultivate the habits that lead to happiness by focusing on their personal qualities and working on any flaws that may be preventing them from making it in society.

Seligman, who pioneered positive psychology also popularized the concept of Learned Helplessness. He asserted that the main reason children in poverty were not achieving in school and or doing more to better themselves was because they had learned, through being in disempowering situations, that nothing they did could make a difference. According to Seligman, they had what he termed Learned Helplessness. Thus, many in the self-help movement assert that the barriers to success that people in marginalized communities face is due to their having learned to tolerate failure. This stance deemphasized or ignores the structural issues that may prevent members of marginalized populations from succeeding (McNulty & Fincham, 2012). One example of a neoliberal framework for development is the proposed by former Facebook CEO Sheryl Sandberg in her book *Lean In*. There she suggests that women just have to be more assertive to succeed in a male dominated work world (Sandberg, 2015). This constitutes a neoliberal positive psychological model, where actual situational barriers are dismissed, while individualistic traits are emphasized

This message has been particularly powerful in getting generations of young people born in the in and after the last decades of the 1900s to see themselves as consumers.

Marketing firms have effectively tied their growth to possessing the right consumer items and a positive attitude that these possessions enhance. (McDonald & O'Callaghan, 2008). At the height of the workers solidarity movements and unionization in the USA, many people had developed a strong sense of identity tied to being members of a particular social class. This class consciousness allowed workers to organize to demand better working and living conditions. The consistent undermining of the self-conception of self as worker over the last fifty years has eroded workers' unions and disempowered large sections of the working population (Miller, 2008; Sundararajan, 2005). The self as consumer contrasts with the notion of the self as a worker with a class position.

There is evidence that being healthy is correlated with a self-positive attitude; however, it is not clear that one causes the other. Some studies demonstrate that people with low self-esteem or who are pessimists feel worse about themselves when forced to repeat positive statements (Wood, 2009). Similarly, people who report only moderate levels of happiness are much better at gauging the chances of succeeding under a given set of circumstances and are typically more politically engaged than those reporting very high levels of happiness (Oishi, 2007). When people are excessively focused on changing their own happiness levels with little consideration for outside determinants of health and happiness, they may not see the larger political factors that affect them, engage politically in changing the unequal structures of society or see their own predicament as that reflected in a large swathe of the population. They are unlikely therefore to work with others in bringing about social change.

Christopher Lasch published his book 'The Culture of

Narcissism' in 1979. Lasch bemoaned the fact that few people felt they were subjects of history in modern society. With the heightened emphasis on the present moment and the need for gratification, many felt little connection to their past or their future. Almost five decades later, we have seen that tendency around self-care and self-indulgence take on new forms in a society that values being a good consumer over engaging in civic activities. While self-focus helps sell products and lifestyles, it leaves people isolated and unable to cogently seek collective solutions to problems that affect everyone.

Clean living and an intense focus on the body and its well-being has its dark side in the form of body dysmorphia and eating disorders. In one new study it has been found that almost 1 in 5 young men have muscle dysmorphia and engage in unhealthy eating (Lavender, Brown & Murray, 2017). While it is not in the DSM, youth advocates warn against the development of Orthorexia in young people because of the intense focus on personal empowerment. It affects white women disproportionately and involves an obsession with eating clean foods and eliminating foods that may contain impure substances like non-organic or GMO ingredients. People with Orthorexia spend enormous amounts of time thinking about food preparation and the possibility of unhealthy foods being served at social occasions. They may avoid social events based on their interests in certain foods (Sanchez & Rial, 2005). While it is important to be mindful of the foods we consume, an excessive preoccupation with our health may hurt one's development in other areas of life.

Erving Goffman (1959) in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, first introduced the concept of self-presentation as a way an individual constantly manage how people perceive them. Others in the interaction attempt to get information from the self-presenter. Goffman likened this back and forth as a kind of stage with a front and back; the former is more public, where the individual cultivates an acceptable persona and the latter region is where individuals can be less consumed by appearances. One of the major elements of a successful social interaction is a common interpretation of the social scene that everyone can accept. The participants may in fact help each other save face to avoid embarrassment. Goffman's theory has profoundly influenced studies about individuals interacting in online platforms – technoself studies (Luppigini, 2013). Technoself studies explore the changing landscape of the self that accompanies the various technologies that shape people's lives in modern societies.

Technose
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Online social platforms offer new and ever-present ways to present oneself to one's peers (Bradbury, 2015). Thus, digital identity encompasses all the different ways in which individuals represent themselves online and how they in turn affect other people's identities in mediated environments as in the virtual world.

Researchers in this area assert that individuals can mold their identities much more in an online environment than in the physical world as the former offers a level of anonymity not afforded by the latter. This anonymous characteristic also offers a level of danger for the young person because of the lack of protection that law enforcement and other advocates can provide.

The potential for surveillance by government and commercial interests can lead to the exploitation of individuals and increases the vulnerability of youth at a time when they are attempting to form healthy identities. Several experimental studies demonstrate that when individuals create an online avatar, the characteristics of the avatar has an influence over their behavior offline as well. Pena et al. (2009) called this phenomenon The Proteus Effect. Thus, when an individual was given an avatar with Ku Klux Klan (KKK) affiliated symbols online, they engaged in more aggressive behavior. Similarly, when women were assigned an avatar that wore swimsuits, they professed to thinking about their bodies more when they were offline than when their avatars were not wearing revealing clothes. One's virtual identity is both affected by and in turn affects lived reality. In terms of research, only the surface of this influence has been studied.

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The new focus on the self, its needs and their expressions by people have been exploited by digital media producers and marketers. Over the last twenty years, corporations and governments have been using sophisticated data mining processes from online user activity to make judgments about people's personalities, their strengths and weaknesses, and what they are passionate about. The estimations about people's inner selves are made using algorithms that use statistical methods and machine learning techniques to recognize patterns and "deep neural networks" from people's use of the internet (Bolotaeva & Cata, 2010; Yang et al., 2006). In recent years, the extent of the surveillance has been revealed through the many scandals involving online social platforms and the commercial benefit that the companies involved reap through selling personal information and records of users.

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In Europe, in May 2018, a sweeping law was passed limiting the use that for-profit corporations and governments could make of tracking online user activity (Ericson & Haggerty, 2006). The General Data Protection Regulation, as this law was called, affirmed the right of consumers to erase data about themselves and the right to transfer data from one platform to another. European consumers also gained the right to demand an explanation from entities if such data mining affected them adversely (Mantelero, 2013). The US has no such protections and has imposed few consequences for corporations that

violate privacy laws. Predictions using algorithms have led to relatively accurate understanding of the mental and emotional lives of people online. Much of these attempts have been commercial or surveillance oriented and not even the algorithm creators have much of an idea as to why certain algorithms are so accurate (Hamilton, 2017). Even more disturbing, many of these machine

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learning algorithms have been found to be biased, based on gender, race, and sexuality, conforming to the worst stereotypes of society. One very popular social media portal was allowing racially profiled ads to be placed by companies purely through the use of algorithms and when confronted with the issue, attributed it to technology and not to personal bias (De Laat, 2017).

Conceptions about the self and self-concept have undergone enormous changes over the last few centuries. In traditional societies, the self was placed squarely in its relationship to one's family, other people, and society. In interdependent societies, this involved balancing the needs of the self with the need to support the group and strengthen the connections of the individual to the larger society. In individualistic societies, the needs of the self are placed above the needs of the group. Under capitalism, individual needs and aspirations are highlighted often at the expense of social bonds. While people in individualistic societies have higher self-esteem than those in interdependent societies, the negative impact of failure is also heightened because of the focus on the individual. There is a more intense pressure to be successful especially when the context of performance is competitive.

As mentioned above, capitalism requires a definition of the self that prioritizes individual needs above the needs of the collective so that materials and ideas can be effectively targeted and new desires can be created. In the digital era, these tendencies have found new spaces online. There has been heightened surveillance and capacity to exploit the self for commercial profit and for policing the individual by the state. The popularity and ubiquity of social platforms for sharing has made it easier to use a self-as-consumer identity to exploit individuals amenable to marketing messages, especially adolescents who form a very vulnerable group. In an earlier era, people were targeted for the marketing of products, the marketing messages carefully crafted to appeal to their individual needs; today people have become the product sold by data gathering entities to those who will pay large amounts of money to get information about digital users (Lohr, 2015; Van Dijck, 2014).

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

- 1.How does commercialism affect the self?
- 2.How is the self as consumer different from the notion of self as worker?
- 3.How does the digital universe influence the Self?

4. In the last few centuries, how have conceptions about the self changed?

REFLECT

1. How have digital social platforms influenced your identity?

Identity: Psychological Explorations

Erik Erikson was one of the first psychologists to write about the importance of a firm sense of identity to the subsequent development of individuals. For Erikson, adolescence is the time in the lifespan when young people begin to ask questions about who they are, and what their values and their life purpose is. The search for identity encompasses their religious and occupational lives as well as their social connections and deeply cherished values (Simply Psyc, 2014). Successful completion of this search is reflected in a new sense of self. The inability to complete the search adequately or giving up the search resulted in youth either losing themselves in their peer group or isolating themselves from others who may be able to help in their search (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015). In the pathway to this search, adolescents may experiment with various roles and personalities, changing very quickly from one day to the next and associating with new people and breaking connections with others. They may challenge authority as they attempt to carve out their own unique

identities (Strauss, 2017). In modern societies, the need to define one's occupational identity by late adolescence becomes of paramount importance as middle- and upper-class youth try to balance their aptitudes, desires and value systems to define the kinds of jobs they might want to seek training for (Meeus, 1996). The push and pull of autonomy versus connectedness drive an intense search to define adolescents' roles as adults. Erikson stated that identity search is sandwiched between the striving for industry in late childhood and intimacy in young adulthood.

Marcia's Stages



James E. Marcia, a student of Erikson, continued to conduct valuable work and theorize about identity development. For Marcia (1966), identity formation was less a trait that one possessed and more an inference based on observable behavior. He pointed to Erikson's third stage of industry versus inferiority as very important to determining the trajectory and the outcomes of identity search in adolescence. During the stage of industry

young people learn the value of setting goals and develop pride in accomplishing mastery in new tasks. Similarly, for Marcia, identity development was crucial for the stage of intimacy that emerged in early adulthood. Each stage was built on the outcomes of the stage that preceded them. When one exhibits a strong sense of identity in adolescence, one can be vulnerable enough to be open to intimacy in adulthood. Research has substantiated that the stages are interlinked, especially the stage of identity in adolescence and intimacy in early adulthood (Kroger, 2015; Marcia et. al., 2012; Orlofsky, Marcia & Lesser, 1973); identity

status is related to the quality of intimacy that youth establish later in life. For Marcia, adolescence is the period when social expectations and cognitive development coincide to accelerate the search for identity. As an individual becomes increasingly sophisticated in defining oneself, they are pushed towards a new crisis. Thus, flexibility in responding to crises is crucial to appropriate identity development since choices and decisions over behavior and values that form one's core identity is constantly being shaped and transformed.

According to Marcia (1966), there are four basic identity categories that adolescents fall into:

- Identity achieved: individuals in this category have completed their search for the moment and are following their chosen ideological goals.
- Foreclosed: individuals in this category are committed to certain goals that are often predetermined by their parents or others in authority.
- Moratorium: individuals here are intensely searching for their ideological goals. They are likely in an identity crisis.
- Identity Diffusions: individuals in this category have no set ideological direction.

The figure below gives some examples of outcomes of the identity search for people in different categories that Marcia proposed. All these categories often come with a combination of both positive and negative features. People in the foreclosed category tend to have simple cognitive structures and are not flexible. They get higher grades than the others but are often not open to new perspectives. Those in moratorium tend to be more

internally driven but also are more likely to use drugs. Both identity diffused and foreclosed individuals tend to be low on autonomy while those in moratorium exhibit the highest levels of anxiety. People in moratorium and in the identity-achievement status tend to form relationships that are deep in terms of intimacy while identity-diffused youth are isolated as young adults. Youth in the foreclosed category tend to have more traditional relationships.

William Damon (2008) reflects the concerns of contemporary identity researchers when he writes that young people today seem to be more distracted and ambivalent rather than actively searching for their identity. Cote (2006) argues that young people with no college education have fewer opportunities to define their identity in a society that places a high premium on college. As individuals progress through their twenties and thirties, self-identity continues to be refined and more individuals move into a status of identity achievement. Archer (1989) labels the cyclical nature of identity search through one life span as MAMA, (moratorium, identity achieved, moratorium, identity achieved) in an alternating fashion as individual life circumstances change, and self-identity must change correspondingly as a response.

Parent-child relationships have an impact on identity status. Foreclosed parents tend to have the best relationships with their children, though often it is accompanied by some coercive quality especially by the father. Youth in moratorium have the most difficult relationships with their parents and it is often accompanied by a struggle for autonomy and self-expression. Identity diffused youth tend to be detached from their caregivers and sometimes feel a sense of abandonment. Identity achieved individuals have moderately positive connections

with their parents though it is accompanied by some ambivalence (Jordan 1970, 71). The identity statuses of parents themselves have little relationship with their children (Waterman & Waterman, 1975). One of the lessons that identity status researchers emphasize is that the search for one's goals, mission, values and meaning is a lifelong process and therefore institutions engaged in people's welfare will have to take into account how the life stages of individuals affect each other and intersect with the search of those who influence them in their lives (Willis & Cashwell, 2017).

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

- 1.What are the four basic identity categories that adolescents fall into?
- 2.Why is the identity of an individual rarely stable?
- 3.How do parent-child relationships impact identity status?

REFLECT

- 1.With the understanding that identity categories change as we age or experience intense life events, as an adolescent, which identity category did you mostly experience? How do you know?

Privilege, Under-representation and Identity

Since Erikson proposed his stages of identity, other scholars have argued for a more nuanced understanding of self-identity, especially as it relates to race, ethnicity and other markers of social location that determine the position of people within the social order. These scholars claim that the trajectory of development for people who are in the margins of society is different from those who occupy positions of privilege within the hierarchy. In the last three decades there has been an increasing amount of scholarship on the development of identity among individuals belonging to communities that have been historically underrepresented. One of the areas that has been underexplored is the issue of identity development among dominant groups (white, able-bodied etc.). Before we examine identity stages among those who are often targets of discrimination, it is important to outline the stages of development of the numerically and politically dominant group in the USA, people of European origin.

Helm's Theory of White Identity Development

Helm (1984) had one of the most comprehensive models of identity development among white people. It is possible

to live all of one's life in the USA without having to acknowledge white privilege. In fact, for white people, unlike people of other races, defining one's racial identity is optional and does not become a factor in development until one confronts non-white people. For other ethnic and racial groups, white people's power becomes evident very early in life even if they do not play an important role in their personal lives. When there is interracial contact, white people would still have to unlearn years of direct and indirect socialization that demeans and paints a negative picture of people of color. It is not easy to shed the individual and cultural racism that one has learned from the media, peers, family and social institutions. Helms classified this learning into two phases with several stages (Helm, 1991). Phase I begins with contact with people who are ethnically and racially different and ends with reintegration. In Phase II, individuals begin with pseudo-independence and end with autonomy. A similar trajectory of development can be claimed for people when they are in the dominant group in other dimensions (heterosexual, able, Christian, middle and upper social class etc.). There must be contact with people from historically underrepresented groups for real change in identity to happen if one belongs to a dominant group with the power to set the rule of engagement in society. There are two main stages and 3 sub-stages for each according to Helm. The stages that Helm outlined are classified as follows:

Phase I

Contact

The initial process of self-discovery for a white person begins with the first contact with people of color. Initially there is a lack of recognition of one's own identity but once the idea or the interaction leads to sustained thinking about difference, a person from a dominant group is forced to confront the concept of one's own racial heritage. The white person judges the person of color using frameworks that are important for white people or through stereotypes they have learned about other races and ethnicities. When the target does not conform to those negative stereotypes, they are looked at as exceptions. Individuals may subscribe to the idea of fairness and not experience guilt because they do not yet see themselves as having any privilege. If there is little contact between the white person and the target, there is limited possibility of further growth and the stereotypes remain intact.

Disintegration

If there are further opportunities for interaction, individuals move on to the second stage of identity development where they are forced to acknowledge their whiteness. This triggers a set of moral dilemmas. The peer pressure from other white people to treat people of color a certain way, the desire for justice and the stereotypes that inform people, contribute to their dilemma. Individuals in this stage become aware of the split in their consciousness

around racial identity for the first time. This results in guilt, depression and anxiety. In order to reduce the discomfort that comes from this new understanding, youth may seek out confirmation of their preexisting beliefs, changing their framework, not seeking any more contact with people of color or confronting other white people about their prejudices. Unlike people of color, whites have the power to remove themselves from situations where they must interact with people from other backgrounds. Youth who try to change other people's attitudes are often met with rejection by their significant others.

Reintegration

The intense feeling of discomfort may lead many individuals to resort to an attitude of white superiority, which is the dominant position in the USA. Cross racial similarities are minimized and the lower statuses of people of color are attributed to their laziness, intellectual and physical inferiority or other such personal factors. The predominant feelings of people in this stage are one of fear and anger towards people of color and the slightest provocation might unleash these feelings. Some experts might call the vulnerability that ensues for white people around this recognition, white fragility. It is comforting for many people to remain in this stage until they have an insightful experience that leads them to reevaluate their position or their social and economic conditions provide new ways of looking at the world (Robin DiAngelo, 2012).

Phase II

This phase marks a turning point in the ethnic racial identity of white people because racism is acknowledged, and white superiority is discarded in favor of a more egalitarian worldview.

Pseudo-Independence

During the stage of reintegration, individuals for the first time become aware of the role of racism in the social hierarchy. Much of this acknowledgement takes place at the intellectual level and there is increasing commiseration with people of color. While there is an abandonment of white superiority, the solution is often looked at through dominant frameworks such as getting people of color to change their attitudes or behaviors, to become successful in a white dominated society. People of color are still made the locus of change agents in a culture dominated by white superiority. Thus, white youth in this stage often face ridicule from their relatives and peers while at the same time people of color may view them suspiciously for their excessive interest in them and their endeavors to change them. Individuals at this stage may feel a great deal of discomfort with their own racial identity. With active questioning and action however, they begin to eventually develop a sense of positive white identity in matters that are unrelated to racism.

Immersion/Emersion

A positive white identity involves replacing the negative stereotypes about people of color with accurate information about what it means to be white in the USA. Youth in this stage begin that quest by searching for more information about their place in society. They address this through engaging with other anti-racist people in unpacking racism. They become active in consciousness raising interactions and social movements that address the problems of historical racism in society. At this stage, there is also an increased capacity to fully articulate negative feelings about race and racism and to give expression to them.

Autonomy

At this stage, individuals respond from an enlightened and informed position. They can completely give up their racist framework and gain a true appreciation of what it means to live in a diverse but unequal society. The autonomous individual becomes increasingly aware of the intersectionality of oppressions. Being in autonomy does not mean that one's racial identity is complete. The individual is constantly in the process of learning more about people of other races and ethnicities as well systems that prop up racist, sexist, heterosexist, homophobic and other forms of oppressive ideology.

Since the middle of the 20th century, there has been a rise in movements propagating ethno-nationalism in many countries in Europe. Nazi Germany symbolized its most virulent form; ethno-nationalists argue that if they do not

defend the rights of white people, they would become a minority and would be subjugated by other races or ethnicity groups such as Jews or the Chinese. The fear of preserving Europeans and European culture is frequently associated with a hatred of women and people who express non-normative gender and sexuality since their acceptance poses a challenge to tradition. Since the 1950s, many of the European powers had to give up the colonies that stretched across the world. The loss of these colonies and the privileges that come with being imperial powers led to an increase in the feelings of the endangerment that many Europeans felt. In the 1980s, the trend towards increased privatization of public resources and loss of manufacturing jobs led to the hollowing out of industrial cities in the US and in Europe leading to many people feeling left out of the economy. In the late 1900s, the Soviet empire unraveled with many countries being absorbed by Europe but often with a loss of status for the former Soviet satellites. All these factors provided rife space for hate to flourish.

Since 2013, experts observe that white nationalists and the Nazi's moved their operations to online platforms. Digital social media affords them protection against being surveilled by law enforcement. Many of these sites are totally anonymous and participants' identities are fluid and ever-changing. Thus, users are known by hashtags and subscribers and there are no demands placed on the participants to establish any real-world identity. When members commit hate crimes, they are frequently marked by law enforcement as lone-wolf crimes and the larger loosely organized groups that conducts in business online do not have to take responsibility for their heinous actions. Unlike traditional hate groups, online communities are not held accountable for member actions. YouTube is also an

important platform where hate thought leaders flourish. Many of them do not think of themselves as hate leaders but are simply trying to keep a permanent group of viewers glued to their channels. This often means that the leaders must strive to make their viewers angry and outraged, repeating lies and fudging data to draw in a faithful audience that will tune in. Most of the viewers and subscribers to these fringe forums are adolescents and young adults. Hence ethno-nationalism and conceptions of a digital self based on hate ideology have flourished in the early decades of the 21st century.

The pattern of identity development seems to track along a similar path for people who belong to groups that are dominant whether it is race, ability, religion, sexual or gender orientation. Much of the development one experiences depends on the amount of direct or indirect contact with the lives of people who are marginalized, oppressed or invisible in society. This is one reason why it is important for major institutions in society to allow for spaces of interaction between diverse individuals as equals. Schools can be especially effective in fostering dialogues between youth who may not share the same worldviews in a safe environment. For individuals from marginalized communities, identity development takes varied paths which we shall explore next.

Black Identity Development

Individuals in each ethnic or racial group or color have their unique process of identity development. One of the identity models that has found some support is Cross' Black American Racial Identity Model. The model is outlined below with the caveat that it may not be applicable to all groups and the trajectory of development depends on other factors such as socioeconomic factors, length of stay in the US, geographical location etc. According to Cross, Black Americans go through 5 different stages of development before they reach a stable identity about their own racial identification. He questions the benefits of framing identity development as an individualistic endeavor. The stages are outlined below:

Pre-Encounter

Racism and racial prejudice pervade US society. Thus, Black children and youth grow up internalizing the notion that white is right and Black is evil or untrustworthy. While young children of color may acknowledge their race before white children, they do not quite recognize how race continues to have a big influence on their lives. Early in life, young children may think that racial identity can be altered.

Encounter

Repeated encounters with mainstream society move Black youth to comprehend that their racial membership is not volitional or changeable. Members from communities

of color cannot be white even if they wanted to. This realization brings with it the importance of race in society.

Immersion/Emersion

The understanding of the immutability of race inspires a person at this stage to seek the company of others who share membership in their racial grouping. They surround themselves with symbols of their heritage and try to explore the history of their group. An attempt is made to separate themselves from mainstream culture and demonstrate pride in their own heritage.

Internalization

Once a secure racial and ethnic identity is established within oneself, the individual becomes more open and less defensive in their interactions with people from dominant communities, especially those who acknowledge and are respectful of Black culture and contributions to society.

Internalization-Commitment:

In this stage, individuals begin to express a concern for and commitment towards social justice. They take part in civic action and other constructive approaches to transform existing arrangements that may be unequal.

There are differences among youth from various ethnicities in how much these stages apply to them or if they apply to their own circumstances (Rivas-Drake et al, 2014). For many youths from groups that are termed involuntary minorities (many African American, Latinx and all Native American communities), the path to adulthood is especially difficult. Schools work to silence any comprehension of the social structures that keep inequality in place and students who resist the oppression are punished (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Remediation work with youth of color are often looked at as if fixing something broken; thus, a deficit model is the principal framework used to engage young people of color in their own development. In recent years, there has been criticism against the traditional deficit model and its modern variant, damage centered models, that examines the identity development of young people from communities of color as if they were problems to be set right. The former model looks at youth of color as if they were needing to be set right and the damage-centered explanations look to historical oppressions in order to explain the problems of youth who are from communities of color, especially Black, Latinx and Native (Seaton, Scottham & Sellers, 20026).

When youth from communities in the margins, especially Native American, can talk back, it is often only from a position of pain and longing. Dehyle (2009) uses the concept of survivance to describe the optimum ways in which Native youth develop their identities. Survivance is more than simply survival; it refers to the process whereby silenced youth redefine themselves in new and politically conscious ways. The term refers to a rejection of the framework that the dominant society uses to limit youth and find unique ways to speak back. Tuck (2009) who introduced the term damage-centered to describe Native youth's experiences in schools, cautions against this damage-oriented framework. She recommends that adult advocates allow youth to speak from a place of hope and desire rather than from one of oppression. She calls this a desire-centered approach. For many Native youth, the world of their white peers is inhospitable, but they also do not feel at home in a world that is populated by stereotyped images of Native culture. Being a Navajo or a Sioux for instance is a process that unfolds over time in a unique way for each individual and it requires talented advocates of youth to see that. When Native cultures are framed as being

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frozen in the past, it does the development of Native youth identity great disservice. What Native youth want as they develop their identity is an understanding of their lived cultures, ever evolving and changing. They want to be able to have their literacy heritage and their language taken seriously. They also want encouragement to explore and learn more about their own cultures.

Youth from underrepresented ethnic groups report that their white classmates are often unable to empathize or understand where incidents of racism or ethnocentric prejudice occurs; their white friends may respond with stereotypical frameworks for making sense of a situation. Schoolmates may make fun of ethnic cultural practices belonging to these youth when they find out about their cultural identity. In some cases, to be thought of as prosocial, youth from the margins must make extra effort to shed their cultural identities and ask few questions of their white peers. In addition, many of these youth feel that they must bear the responsibility of educating their white friends about their cultural practices. At the same time, they may feel a need to keep secret some cultural practices and engage in silence around issues of oppression, so their white friends do not feel threatened. In

data gathered from studies, adolescents from underrepresented communities reported that they could not be close to their white friends because of the gulf between them, and all they could do was to deflect negative attention off themselves by joking and laughing casually with friends (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; de Souza Briggs, 1998; Tatum, 2004). Thus, their developing identities predispose youth of color to seek other members from similar backgrounds as friends and companions at the expense of interethnic or interracial friendships.		ons the benefit s of framin g identit y develo pment as an individ ualistic endeav or. As we will see, mature identit y develo pment for most individ uals wheth er they belong to the domin ant
When youth from communities that are marginalized are disrespected and their needs ignored by educational institutions, they respond with resistance. They may sit silently in class, heckle authority figures, refuse to perform on tests or not perform to the best of their abilities in low paying jobs that they feel they are too qualified for. When they do not see people, who look like them in their curriculum,	<i>Deficit and Damage Centered Teaching versus Desire Centered Teaching</i> The deficit - center	

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people use to fight back
against these inequities.
Youth of color are
constantly having to
negotiate their insider-
outsider status. There
are several ethnographic

and anthropological work in schools have identified the many ways in which schools delegitimize and make invisible the identities of adolescents of underrepresented cultures in the school community (Salisbury, 2020; Stitch, 2016).

problems of youth of color.

More than 15 buses carrying youth from central America arrive at the US border patrol every month, many of them carrying young people from countries like El Salvador and Honduras. They often come alone without their parents or other caregivers. Crime and gang violence drive them towards crossing international borders illegally. El Salvador has one of the highest murder rates in the world. Organized criminal groups like MS-13 and the 18th Street gangs use extortion regularly to control whole neighborhoods. Many of the gang members are youth who had been deported from the US and joined the gangs in their time in the US. Families are forced to send some of their young adult members to work in the US to send money back home because the situation is often too dangerous to work. It can cost up to \$9,000 to be smuggled into the US. In 2019, the US government detained over 69,000 children who fled central America. Some of these migrant children have been deported, others have been reunited with their families in the US. About 4,000 children remain in custody away from their families and other social connections. The government calls these children Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC). The American Academy of Pediatrics asserts that the UACs need urgent therapy and help reuniting with

Survivance

their families. Few of these children will ever receive the interventions that they need whether they remain here or are eventually deported back to their countries of origin.

Survivance refers to the processes where by silence and youth redefine themselves in new and politically conscious ways. Tuck argues

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1.What are some of the main differences in identity development between white individuals and individuals from marginalized communities?

2.What does the concept of survivance mean to youth from marginalized populations?

3.What are some of the resistance tactics youth from underrepresented ethnic groups enact when they are disrespected, and their needs are ignored by educational institutions?

REFLECT

1.How has your race and ethnicity influenced your identity?

Examples

Religion and Identity

Religion is a rather difficult concept to define, especially as it relates to identity development. Religion refers to a belief in a higher power or the supernatural, and human beings' dependence on it. At a societal level it could refer to the adjustment of a community to the uncertainties of life and as a way of life to reduce the fear that is associated with these uncertainties. Whether religion is a force of good or evil has been endlessly debated by some writers like Karl Marx, comparing religion to opium, a drug that prevents people from acting in their own self-interest. Others claim that religion is a longing for people's unity with the universe and therefore a force of good in the world. In some instances, religion equates with ethnicity where a people's culture is maintained through their religious heritage as is the case among Jews, Amish and Mormons or among other immigrants when they leave their ancestral homelands. Fulton (1997) found that across all religions, early religious involvement and commitment is associated with higher levels of foreclosed

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to keep secret some cultural practices and engage in silence around issues of oppression so their white friends do not feel threatened.	and identity achieved statuses. Identity diffused youth have the lowest levels of church attendance.
	Stereotypes And Religion Mainstream media perpetuates negative stereotypes by defining people who practice Islam as monoliths, i.e. Muslim
	Religion as a factor in children's identity development has perhaps been the most underexplored topic within the social sciences despite its enormous influence in the life of any community. The USA has undergone some dramatic transformations in its demographics, especially as it pertains to religious affiliation. Less than half of the population is white Christian today as compared to 2007 when it was majority white Christian. One of the most precipitous drops in numbers have been seen among white evangelical protestants. Even though non-Christian Americans are still a small minority, they are more likely to be younger than people

belonging to Christianity of all denominations. The largest growing segment of the population however tend to be religiously unaffiliated, secular, atheist or agnostic. This is true especially among younger people where a majority now claim to be spiritual but not religious. Thus, childhood in the USA has had a rather complicated and conflicted relationship with religion and religious identity.

A mature sense of ideology and the place of one's own life in the larger universe is essential for identity development. Religion has the possibility of providing all of these in the presence of a community of people – but it is only among many influences that offers the space for youth to think about ethical living and one's values. Religion provides a transcendent worldview and it allows youth to see it in practice with peers and older members of the tradition who provide spiritual modeling for the developing person. Within these safe spaces, youth can practice and experiment with their ideals as leaders or followers. The young person relates oneself both to the divine as well as others in their religious group in complex ways including as a member of a historical tradition. At the same time, religious organizations and affiliations can hinder development by

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Muslims as harmful in modern American national life has forced them to rethink their internal diversity and form a unified position to protect their own identities.

foreclosing options for young people to explore their own unique identity and beliefs. Similarly, when religion becomes a blind dogma that perpetuates hatred for those who do not follow the faith, there may be a barrier for the development of prosocial qualities in individuals that connect them to the larger society and the world. There is more on ethical and faith development in the chapter on civic engagement.

While the population has witnessed transformations in religious affiliation and/or non-affiliation, national rituals, holidays and traditions are based on the Christian faith in the US. Thus, identity formation around religious issues is problematic for children of non-Christian faiths. The diversity among the practitioners of these faiths adds to the variations in the experiences that characterize the practice of these faiths. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Muslims have faced prejudice both individually from people as well as in the form of collective surveillance and discrimination by the government. The average American has little knowledge of the diversity within Islam both in terms of practice and in terms of origins leading to personal prejudice and hateful actions against youth practicing the faith. In

recent years there have been an increase in exploring the

impact of religion on identity especially among youth coming from Muslim backgrounds. Many of these constructions do not identify the diversity among Muslims and the impact of other ethnic and cultural factors that may affect identity (i.e., female genital mutilations that is specific to some North African cultures but not to others practicing Islam). Mainstream media perpetuates these stereotypes by referring to people who practice Islam as monoliths, i.e. Muslim world, rather than explaining the varied practices that form Islam. While early Muslim immigrants identified strongly with their ethnic group, the later discrimination and profiling of Muslims as harmful in modern American national life has forced them to rethink their internal diversity and form a unified position to protect their own identities. Thus, the diminishing of intra group differences by mainstream media and other knowledge producers has led to Muslim youth in the USA struggling to construct an identity of themselves that is part of mainstream society as well as belonging to a group that has been treated in a hostile fashion by dominant US culture. In addition, religious strife in other countries spills over into the lives of youth of all religious faiths living in the west. In 2019, a gunman from Australia shot and killed several dozen Muslims in New Zealand who had been praying in a Mosque. In a manifesto that he wrote, he used white supremacy symbols adopted from around the world to justify his actions. This has renewed the sense of insecurity that young Muslim youth feel about their lives and their identities.

Identity and Non-normative Sexuality and Identity

The earliest models of identity formation among those with non-normative sexual identities described a five-stage model of development during adolescence and into adulthood. The stages were pre-coming out, coming out, exploration, first relationship and finally identity integration (Coleman, 1982). The more recent models of identity development among individuals of non-normative sexual orientation have moved away from stages but instead have focused on the fluidity of sexuality and have concluded that one's final identity is just one of many possible ones for an individual. The models stop short of categorizing stable identities but have emphasized the changing nature of one's sexuality across time and context.

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Fingerhut, Peplau and Ghawami (2005) wrote about identity development among lesbians and they observed that there were two trajectories of development for most of them – one that related to mainstream heterosexist society and one that related to their lesbian identity. The authors point out that many women prior to the civil rights era had intense emotional and physical relationships with women but they did not define themselves as lesbians. Today, sexuality is an important element that makes up one's identity. The civil rights movements of the 1960s brought to focus the oppressions that people with non-normative sexual and gender identities

faced in society. This recognition led to an active subculture among gays and lesbians that celebrated them and advocated for their rights in a society where they were marginalized. Youth who identify as homosexual exhibit a great deal of diversity among themselves. Thus, the second aspect of their identity involves their relationship with mainstream society. Peplau et al. divided lesbians into 4 categories emphasizing these relationships. Lesbians who were assimilated valued the relationships with the rest of society as being more important than their identification as lesbians. Those who were in the category of separatism valued their lesbian identity above other identities and tried to separate themselves from society. When they perceived themselves as integrated in their identity, they strove to combine their affiliation with their lesbian identity and their relationships in mainstream society. Individuals who were in the category of being marginalized separated themselves from both identities, not finding a comfortable space to feel either integrated or being able to find companionship with other lesbians. Many recent writers note that a strong lesbian identity correlated negatively with internalized homophobia but was positively correlated with experiences of

of development identified for people with non-normative sexualities relate independently to both mainstream heterosexual society and to their lesbian identity. Lesbians fall into 4 categories as

they search for their identity – assimilation, separation, integration, marginalization.	discrimination and prejudice (Hegarty, 2017; Rubino, Case and Anderson, 2018).
	<i>Non-normative Gender Identity Development</i>
	Trans individuals have a gender identity that is different from the sex that is assigned to them. The trajectory of identity development is varied for those who are outwardly different from their peers versus those who may be able to fit into the assigned sex category. Outwardly gender conforming individuals come out later in life when they feel stronger and more autonomous as compared to the former group of youth. Most trans youth however report shame, loneliness, fear of abandonment and isolation. Paradoxically, trans youth who grow up as girls have fewer difficulties with peers because US culture tolerates masculine behavior from girls much more than feminine behavior in boys. Having peers with similar experiences offers young people a guide to their own coming out process. Bockting & Coleman (2007) identified the stages of development for Trans individuals as follows:

Coming out:

Coming out to friends and family is often the hardest step for young people in the process of their gender identity development and the initial rejection may lead them to cut off ties with the person or persons they came out to. Support is needed for trans individuals as they move through this stage and to allow for their loved ones to come to terms with their situation. After having come out, there is more of an effort made to learn about what is going on with their bodies and expressing themselves as trans individuals. They reach out to other trans youth and the acceptance and safety they feel allow them to engage more with their exploration.

Experimentation and Exploration:

For some, the experimentation may involve living as their preferred sex selves or going further with hormone therapy and surgery. Trans youth and adults may develop an aversion to their own bodies and may have low self-esteem about their attractiveness. Exploration may thus involve relearning about themselves as sexual beings and the boundaries of what is considered appropriate, especially in the area of clothing. Since our society does not tolerate ambiguity, individuals who may not be sure of their identities may dress in extremely gender stereotyped ways to mark their identity. Years of internalized transphobia may drive an early identification with their desired gender without taking the time to think about their individuality. Supportive advocacy and help by adults can ease the stage of exploration to a successful resolution.

Intimacy:

During the stage of intimacy, trans individuals have to reclaim their right to a fulfilling intimate life. Many trans youth and adults experience themselves as sexual beings before arriving at a conception of themselves as individuals with multiple qualities and needs, all of them contributing towards making them unique and fulfilled. Their early emphasis on sexuality may lead to exploitation by other people, especially if they are male to female trans individuals. However, trans youth have an opportunity to move beyond simple gender and sexual dichotomies and nurture their unique identities.

Identity Integration:

In the stage of identity integration, trans youth and adults integrate their private and public selves into a fulfilled and positive identity. They find social support and have fulfilled intimate lives. Due to a higher level of self-acceptance at this stage, individuals have a higher tolerance for ambiguity and their trans identity is perceived as only one aspect of their varied selves. Coming out becomes an everyday experience that the trans individual faces with pride and self-confidence even as their lives go through changes and stability (Bockting & Coleman, 2007). In addition, many trans youth get involved in social advocacy and work towards a more socially just world.

Early research in immigrant identity development assumed that young people proceed, albeit unevenly, to get to a stage of assimilation with the culture of North Americans from Europe. This was touted as the best of all possible outcomes for young people living here. In recent years, there has been a rethinking of both the trajectory of growth and the impact of assimilation on the well-being of immigrant children in the US. During and after the second world war, the US was seeking unity among its various population sub-groups and there was an emphasis on assimilation as the most desirable goal. This framework assumed that the host cultures of immigrant groups were inferior, and the shedding of its culture was the only way for immigrants to equip themselves to cope with a more superior setting in the US. In the 1960s and 70s, with the rise of the civil rights movement and other social justice initiatives, there was a reevaluation of this framework.

More recently, experts have proposed what they term as an immigrant paradox. They point to the deteriorating health indices of immigrants the longer they stayed in the USA and with each succeeding generation. Recent immigrants to the US have better infant mortality rates than the native population and as compared to ethnic groups that have been here for longer. Similarly, when controlled for other factors, second generation youth have poorer emotional, mental and physical health outcomes compared to the youth of their own ethnicity who were foreign born and arrived later. The former also engage in

risky behavior at higher rates during their adolescence than the latter. Thus, epidemiological research demonstrates that the longer a family has stayed in the USA and the more assimilated they are, the less positive the outcome for their children. This exposes the faulty logic of assimilation proponents.

Today, there is increasing interest in the process of identity development among youth with the development pathways of biracial identity as many people in the US begin identifying as biracial; today the choices for identifying oneself has broadened in terms of ethnicity. For youth with more than one heritage, integrating and expressing both identities is a sign of maturity. This leads to a strengthening of ties with multiple ethnic communities which in turn reinforces the young person's own sense of self-worth. The experience of being different from other members of their family is an almost universal experience for biracial youth. As they grow older, they are often asked by strangers about their identification which adds to their sense of dissonance. In order to cope with their own difficulties around being different, the parents may underemphasize the child's difference and unique heritage thereby adding to the child's confusion. During the second stage of development, they attempt to gain some level of acceptance by the outside world. This may involve having to explain their uniqueness to their peers and schoolmates. Some may not have the language to articulate why they may have a different sounding name or look white while exhibiting cultural practices from other places or ethnicities. All this extra focus by their social group on their differences leads to the young biracial individual to have an ambiguous relationship with their non-mainstream parents. At some point in their development, biracial

individuals begin experimenting with adopting practices from their unexplored backgrounds. This leads them to reject their parent's own frameworks and choose their own paradigms to explore both cultures. In the stage of acceptance, immigrant youth begin to be less defensive and more self-accepting. There is an acknowledgment that there are hidden rules to becoming members of various cultures and biracial youth begin trying to understand and employ these cultural rules with people from both ethnic and racial groups. They also seek the company of other people of biracial heritage to find allies in their journey (Kich, 1992).

Identity Development in Youth with Disabilities

One of the major contributions that critical disability studies has made to understanding how society constructs inequality and inequity is to not just construe prejudice and discrimination as merely a linguistic phenomenon but to place the body at the center of this discussion. Critical disability theorists view a body with disability not merely as a personal misfortune or something to be corrected but because of a disabling social and built environment (Siebers, 20, page 3). Disability advocates claim it as central to the human condition (i.e., almost everyone enters a form of disability in older adulthood) and therefore important when thinking about human identity. Critical disability studies challenge the notion that being able bodied somehow signifies a more advanced human being. This

response to disability creates a more socially just environment that is more sensitive to everyone's needs.

Critical Disability Theory

Critical disability theorists view a body with disability not merely as a personal misfortune or something to be corrected,

Disability activists view disability as an identity and not a mental or physical defect. Of all the identities discussed in this essay, disability identity is perhaps the most unstable. Anyone can fall into this classification and its consequent discrimination. Often people in other minority categories have been demeaned by being classified as disabled. Thus, critical disability studies view the consequences of being labeled as disabled, as being invisible to society and punishing in its cruelty. For many individuals with disabilities, the struggle to be normal as defined by society takes a heavy toll on their mental and physical wellbeing and impedes the development of a fulfilling identity. Bourdieu (1984) suggested for many in the disability community, the options are only of two kinds – either to extoll the positive aspects of belonging to the group, or to try and minimize their differences with mainstream society and seek ‘normality.’ For youth with little exposure to the history of the disability rights movement, attempting to be like everyone else and erasing any visible reminder of their disabilities is part of their major goals, challenging though it may be. That may include being

successful in school, engaging in sports, and being independent and transitioning to work. Depending on the seriousness of the disability, the goals may be challenging or even beyond the reach of some individuals with disabilities.

For youth with disabilities, obtaining independence and autonomy from their families may be especially fraught with difficulties and may impede their development of a positive identity. They struggle with the stereotype that others have of them as being dependent and being unable to make decisions for themselves. Many thus distance themselves from other youth with similar disabilities and attempt to find commonalities with the 'able-bodied', solidifying their identities as adults. Some experts of disabilities theorize that the field's pursuit of independence and work fulfillment regarding youth with disabilities may deprive many of them of other important aspects of their lives like relationships and living in the moment in the best way possible.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed with the intention of ensuring that people with disabilities get appropriate and fair accommodations in society. The variety and severity of impediments that people may have, make it difficult to make judgements about who

but a consequence of a disabling social and built environment.

Bourdieu (1984) suggested for many in the disability community, the options are only of two kinds – either to extol

the positive aspects of belonging to the group, or to try and minimize their differences with mainstream society and seek 'normality.'

Matthews may give back to

is worthy of ADA protections and the rules may in fact run counter to the broad aims of the ADA by excluding people. The act specifies that the ADA relates to people with disabilities based on 3 criteria: a) having a physical or mental impairment that prevent individuals from functioning; b) a record of such an impairment; c) consensus that the person has an impairment. This is inclusive of many people with visible and invisible disabilities. The impact of the disability on the individual may also depend on a host of factors from family dynamics, the extent of the disability, the affordances and aids accessible to the individual and the circumstances that the individual is placed in at any given time (job or a social environment that affects them one way or another).

Forber-Pratt and his associates (Forber-Pratt et al., 2017; Forber-Pratt & Zape, 2017) are some of the first researchers who attempted to formulate a theory of identity that pertained to people with disabilities. They attempted to frame disability identity development not as a set of stages but as one of statuses: 1) The first status is one of acceptance of disability by the person affected as well as significant individuals around the person with disabilities. 2) Individuals with disabilities value their connections with

other individuals with disabilities leading to an emphasis on relationships in the next status. 3) An individual with disabilities may adopt the values of others within the disability community – this is the adoption status. 4) Finally, some individuals may give back to the disability community that nurtured them, guiding others and being role models. This is the engagement status and is crucial for the advancement of both the disability community as well as social justice values in the larger social group.

Considering the sheer diversity of disabilities that people may have, it is important as part of healthy development to foster a sense of identity among people with disabilities. As with other oppressed and marginalized groups, youth with disabilities gain a sense of solidarity when they can form associations with others with disabilities and have successful role models to emulate. For many, it is not just the active political activities and legislative successes that they experience with other people with disabilities but the emotional richness that accompanies such endeavors for social justice that is fulfilling. Many of them claim that having a disability identity was central to their positive development. Unlike children belonging to minority race and gender, children with disabilities grow up in families where they are the only

the disability community that nurtured them, guiding others and being role models. This signifies the culmination of identity development among people with disabilities. Many

people with disabilities hope to not eliminate their disability but the conditions that create for it to be treated as a stigma.

ones experiencing discrimination and experts warn parents about the burdens of raising a child with disabilities. Many people with disabilities hope to not eliminate their disability but the conditions that create for it to be treated as a stigma. They hope to eliminate the current prevailing environment that prevents them from functioning as interdependent human beings, having self-determination, fostering personal connections and maintaining human community.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

- 1.How have the demographics of religious affiliation changed in US?
- 2.What religious affiliation is dominant when it comes to holidays and traditional national practices?
- 3.How has the five-stage model of development of non-normative sexual identities changed?
- 4.What is the immigrant paradox?
- 5.How does viewing disability as an identity and not a mental or physical defect challenge the stereotype that

others have of youth with disabilities as being dependent and being unable to make decisions for themselves?

REFLECT

1. What identities do you hold and how have they been developed throughout the years? What have been some of the major influences in forming your identity? Where do you stand with your identity today?

Conclusion

As we review the various challenges that young people in the margins must overcome to develop an identity that includes the traits that marginalizes them in a heteropatriarchal society, the commonalities between them become clear. For many of these youth, forming a mature identity involves recognizing what contributes to their differences and using it to reach out to others in their community and developing a larger mission to address discrimination. For youth who belong to the communities that form the majority, identity formation may or may not involve addressing difference and this depends on the level of their interactions with youth from historically oppressed groups. It is important therefore for advocates of children and young people to facilitate opening of spaces where there is genuine dialogue involving youth from a variety of backgrounds in an atmosphere of safety. This should be accompanied by helping white, heterosexual and cisgender

individuals break their defensive responses to issues of discrimination and prejudice around them. When youth get past their own fragile self-concepts, they can build a mature identity that will allow them to grow in their interactions with others.

Glossary of Terms

‘damage-centered’

‘desire-centered’

‘immigrant paradox’

‘resistance’

‘the proteus effect’

3 criteria

acceptance of disability

achieved

adopt the values

assimilated

assimilation

categorical self

civic action

collectivistic

coming out

critical disability studies

damage centered models

data exploitation
deficit model
disability rights movement
disabling 'social and built environment'
dissonance
enduring self
engagement
EST
explain their uniqueness
exploration
first relationship
foreclosed
growing up trans
historical oppressions
identity achieved
identity diffusions
identity integration
identity integration:
individualism
individualistic
industry
integrated
interdependence
intimacy
involuntary minorities

learned helplessness
lesbian identity
mainstream heterosexist society
mama
marginalized
moratorium
moratorium
negotiate their insider-outsider status
positive psychology
pre-coming out
relationships
remembered self
role models
search for identity
self-accepting
self-actualization
self-concept
self-presentation
separatism
social justice
survivance
technoself studies
the ego
the id
the superego

theory of the mind

white fragility

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9. Chapter 9 - Adolescent Mental Health

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Goals

- Know about the research on mental health
- Know the history of the psychological-biological frameworks of mental health issues
- Understand frameworks for understanding research on the classification of mental illnesses in the DSM
- Understand theories of mental health using a sociological framework and post-structuralism
- Explore frameworks that decolonize mental health research in youth

Chapter Outline

- Introduction
- Psychological Behavioral Perspectives of Mental

Illness

- The History of the DSM
- Common Mental Health Disorders
- Internalizing Disorders
 - Suicides
 - Mood Disorders and Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
 - Other Internalizing Disorders
- Externalizing Disorders
 - Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity
 - Oppositional
- Other Mental Illnesses
 - Substance Use Disorders
- The Social Historical Perspective
 - History of Mental Illness
- Moral Panic & Youth Mental Health
- Facilitating Healthy Adolescence
 - Psychological Instability & Youth
 - Social Contextual Approaches
 - Childcare
 - Decolonization of Mental Health
- Glossary of Terms
- References

The rates of mental illness, especially depression and anxiety, has spiked in recent years in the USA. More than half of the respondents who said they were severely depressed contemplated self-harm. More than 60% of them did not receive any treatment or were misdiagnosed (Colton & Manderscheid, 2006; Mondimore & Kelly, 2014). It is estimated that nearly one in five adolescents seeks help for mental illness in any given year. Five of the ten causes of living with disability for both youth and adults is a result of suffering from psychological illness (Merikangas et al, 2010). Youth with untreated mental illnesses are much less likely to graduate from school and their mental illness certainly affects their performance. Across the nation, there continues to be a shortage of professionals who can address the needs of the population of the nearly 44 million people who are in psychological distress (Mojtabai, Olfson & Han, 2016).

Over the last 4 decades, the factors that impact adolescent lives have changed dramatically but many observers note that teens today live in a pressure-cooker environment with increasing levels of competition for scarce resources and higher rates of alienation and loneliness (Moksnes et al, 2010; Rueger et al, 2016). In the 1950s, the family was rated as the number one influence on children by adults in surveys while in the 1990s, the people rated popular media as having an outsized influence on teens. Today, one could add digital media to the list (Monti & Rudolph, 2017; O'Keeffe & Clark-Pearson, 2011); teen

mental health is tied to several factors both personal and social-political. Stressful events in the family have an impact on adolescent capacity to function effectively (Huang et al, 2014; Steeger et al., 2017). Earlier chapters in the series discussed the negative impact of digital media with its constant messaging about violence, popularity and material acquisition (Cain, 2018; Eiser, 2015; Lissak, 2018). In schools, the stress of high performance in an age of decreasing resources and standardized testing is well established (Jaycox et al, 2018). Organized sports offer their own forms of mental pressures where children vie for adult attention with little freedom for the young players (Myer et al, 2015; Myer et al, 2016).

*Frameworks
Influence
Practice*

The
frameworks
used
to
determine
the
diagnosis

As reviewed in the section on physical development, there is evidence that the body responds to prolonged stress in a generalized way that may harm the mental and physical wellbeing of a person. Repeated toxic stress leads to increased cortisol and a higher stress response that is triggered even when the original source of stress is not always present (Schonkoff et al, 2012). Stress in turn leads to anxiety; depression often is a consequence of persistent anxiety (Brady & Kendall, 1992; McLaughlin & King, 2015). Studies have shown that stress levels increase with increasing grades and more than 3/4th of high schoolers feel at least somewhat stressed (Abdollahi et al, 2018; Teubert & Pinquart, 2011). Experts have pointed to several social and psychological factors

that contribute to stresses that children and youth experience. There are various frameworks that can be used to explore and explain the prevalence of mental illnesses among youth. The frameworks often determine the diagnosis of the problem and recommendations for solutions proposed. For instance, if an expert were to determine that family dynamics leads to increased depression, they might suggest family therapy; on the other hand, if a mental health expert determined that socioeconomic status plays a big role in mental health, they might address the problem through public policy prescriptions.

sis of a mental health issue influences the recommendations for solutions proposed.

Psychological Biological Perspective

Since the inception of psychiatry as a legitimate science, the psycho-biological model of mental health and illnesses has been the dominant framework for classifying and treating mental illnesses. Psychological distress has been treated as an extension of physical illnesses and has been assumed to be a result of physiological problems (Spitzer et al, 2018). This has had implications for the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses. Medications today form a significant line of treatment to address symptoms of mental disorders. The dominant framework assumes that mental

illness is the result of either an underproduction or overproduction of certain neurotransmitters like serotonin or dopamine, or physiological abnormalities especially in the brain (Laing, 1971). The foundational book that guides diagnosis within this model is the DSM or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. There have been 5 editions of the DSM over the last century with modifications at each iteration, aimed at responding to political and social demands (Kendler, 2017).

The History of the DSM

Diagnostic and
Statistical
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Mental
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founda

In the late 1800s, seven disorders of the mind were recognized by the medical community. These were recognized mostly for administrative purposes and was not used for treatment. It was not until the 1920s that the medical community wanted to organize a classification system for the purpose of treating patients in psychological distress. After World War II, the American Veteran's Administration engaged in its own attempt at classification and introduced 17 categories to respond to veteran's need for psychological services. In 1952, the first edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

(DSM) was completed for clinical use. In 1978, the third edition of the DSM was completed and, unlike the earlier versions, emphasized the precision of the categories and eliminated specifying the causes of various illnesses (Zachar et al, 2019). The third edition was one of the largest undertakings in the history of the DSM, and the version was explicitly biomedical in its framework; it was hoped by the editors that this would satisfy critics of psychiatry (Shorter, 2015). The DSM IV was completed in 1994 and this used new evidence to tighten the language around the categories of mental illnesses. In 2000, a fifth major revision of the manual was initiated where there was renewed effort to identify mental illness categories using new data and frameworks (Bandini, 2015; Scott, 1990; Schacht, 1985; Stein et al, 2010).

From its inception, the DSM process has been influenced deeply by politics. In the first iteration of the DSM in 1974, homosexuality was defined as a mental abnormality, but it has been removed in further editions because of the pressure exerted by homosexual rights activists (Drescher, 2015). Similarly, trans-people were diagnosed as having a gender identity disorder in the earlier versions of the manual while the fifth edition identifies them as having gender

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From its inception, the DSM process has been influenced deeply by politics. Many of the recent classification schemes in the DSM are also aimed at fulfilling and

dysphoria to better represent their experiences. However, members of the trans community continue to criticize this classification as still being stigmatizing and call for non-pathologizing their experiences (Cosci & Fava, 2016). The more recent versions of the manual have been criticized for obfuscating differences between symptoms exhibited as responses to natural events and conditions of life, and enduring psychopathology. The manual has been accused of having too many categories and hence being too difficult to use. Many of the recent classification schemes in the DSM are also aimed at fulfilling and ensuring the ease of communication with insurance companies, which health activists have pointed out is counter-productive to good health care delivery (Davy, 2015; Stein et al, 2010; Stein et al, 2019).

Mental Disorders in the DSM

The DSM 4 identifies a mental disorder as “a clinically significant behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual and that is

associated with present distress or disability or with a significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom.” Disorders are often identified by the cluster of syndromes or symptoms that characterize a problem. The latest iteration, DSM 5, defines mental illness as the following,

“A mental disorder is a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual’s cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. Mental disorders are usually associated with significant distress in social, occupational, or other important activities. An expectable or culturally approved response to a common stressor or loss, such as the death of a loved one, is not a mental disorder. Socially deviant behavior (e.g., political, religious, or sexual) and conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are not mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict results from a dysfunction in the individual, as described above” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 20).

In having all these qualifying events, the editors were responding to critics within the community who complained that the categories were problematic and lacked external validity since the illnesses were not tied to specific causes (Paris & Phillips, 2013; Whooley, 2014; Whooley, 2016).

Several of these disorders that seem to occur more often in children, are not appropriately defined and their

ensuring the ease of communication with insurance companies.

prevalence seems to vary enormously from one decade to another (Merikangas et al, 2010). In a study conducted in 2014, it was estimated that almost 21% of youth ages 9 to 18 were diagnosed with a mental health disorder (Leaders, 2019). American children consume almost 4 times the number of psychotropic drugs as the rest of the world combined. Almost one in five youth is prescribed mood-altering medicines (Bachman et al, 2017). During the first decade of childhood, there has been a sharp rise of people being referred for mental health issues (Healthcare Cost Institute, 2012). As many critics point out, medications are being prescribed at earlier ages with little scientific knowledge of the long-term consequences of psychotropic drugs on children's lives. It is also unclear how efficacious these medicines are in treating disorders that manifest in children (Conroy, McIntyre, Chumara & Stevenson, 2000; Wong et al, 2015). When children are impulsive and non-cooperative, the adverse effects of medical interventions multiply since usage is erratic and often not compliant with the prescribed regimen (Ninan, 2014).

Internalizing And Externalizing Disorders

There are some disorders that are more commonly diagnosed among North American children. Mental health experts typically classify these psychopathologies into Internalizing and Externalizing disorders and have a third category that consist of others that cannot be classified as either of the first two. Internalizing disorders are the result of harmful thoughts and actions turned inward; this category includes mood disorders and anxiety. Externalizing disorders are

associated with defiance, impulsive, destructive and rule breaking behavior; this category includes Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity disorder and Conduct and Oppositional Disorders. Other illnesses that are not classified in the first two are schizophrenia, congenital developmental disorders, trauma and eating disorders (Farmer et al., 2016; Cicchetti & Toth, 2014). While these disorders may be discussed as if they were separable, they in fact often co-occur (exhibit comorbidity) and a single individual may be diagnosed with multiple disorders.

While internalizing and externalizing disorders may be discussed as if they were separable, they in fact often co-occur (exhibit comorbidity) and a single individual may be

Internalizing Disorders

Internalizing disorders are the result of harmful thoughts and actions turned inward. A person with an internalized disorder is more likely to hurt themselves than others around them.

diagnosed with multiple disorders.

Suicides

Any kind of intentional self-harm is classified as an internalizing disorder. Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among adolescents, the first being accidents and the second homicides. Almost a quarter of adolescents have considered suicide at some point in their high-school years, 17% have come up with specific plans to carry it to fruition, while 8% attempt it (Hedegaard, Curtin & Warner, 2018). Ninety percent of adolescents who end up committing suicide exhibit signs of depression (Beck, Brown, Berchick, Stewart & Steer, 2006). Many youths consider suicide for the first time during their adolescence. The most common suicide attempts undertaken by adolescents are overdosing on potentially lethal drugs, hanging, using firearms and using sharp objects. Most adolescents who do attempt to end their lives plan their suicide actions. It is also important to distinguish youth who may only want to self-harm but not end their lives but whose attempts may end in fatality, and youth who have suicidal ideation and aim to end their lives (Cha et al, 2018; Klonsky & May, 2014; Klonsky, May & Saffer, 2016). Suicidal ideations often precede attempts to end one's life; it involves the person spending significant amounts of time thinking about the act of ending one's life.

Suicide deaths are preventable when addressed in a timely fashion and this age group provides a space to explore ways to treat internalized mental disorders like those related to mood. Studies show that youth who report at least one suicide ideation are 12 times more likely to commit suicide than those who do not express suicide ideation (Reinherz, Tanner, Berger, Beardslee, & Fitzmaurice, 2006). Similarly, almost one-third of adolescents who report suicide ideation go on to committing suicide (Nock et al., 2013). As adolescents get older, the rates of suicide attempts go up (Turecki & Brent, 2016).

Demographics is a big factor in adolescent suicide; girls are much more likely to have suicide ideation and attempts while death is more likely for boys (Scott, Pilkonis, Hipwell, Keenan & Stepp, 2015). By adulthood men commit suicides 2 to 3 times more than women do (Bertolote & Fleischmann, 2015). Indigenous youth are far more likely to commit suicide than youth from any other ethnic group; this can be attributed to extreme poverty and unemployment, accessibility to lethal means, trauma and loss of cultural identity (Wexler & Gone, 2012). Among other historically underrepresented groups and among

Suicidal Ideation And Anhedonia

It is important to distinguish youth who may only want to self-harm but not end their lives but whose attempts may end in

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Suicidal
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suicides.

Anhedonia,
a lack
of
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immigrants, the geographical location where the family lives has a huge impact on youth suicide rates. When families from marginalized groups live in neighborhoods dominated by other families from their backgrounds, suicide rates are much lower than if these families lived in a dominant community with mainstream characteristics (Zammit et al., 2014). Similarly, youth from LGBTQ+ communities experience more barriers to finding a wholesome identity in their youth leading to higher rates of suicides (Smith, Sanchez & Lopex, 2019). Several studies show that where they live has significant mental health implications for LGBTQ+ youth – living in a state that has legalized homosexual marriages, neighborhoods that have more registered Democrats, and having supportive school districts lead to lower levels of depression and suicidal ideation among this population (Hassing, 2019; Marx & Kettrey, 2016). Discrimination and stigma are related to rates of suicide attempts.

Gosnell, Fowler & Salas (2019) found that adolescents who exhibited suicidal thoughts had abnormal hippocampus (this regulates emotions) and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex which is involved in planning behaviors. Reduced levels of serotonin, lowered levels of cortisol and inflammation has been cited by several

researchers as a precursor to suicide attempts (Courtet et al, 2016; Pandey, 1997). Some studies point to a genetic component to suicide behaviors though the relationship may be indirect in terms of susceptibility to environmental stress (Buchman-Schmitt et al, 2017).

At the psychological level, low self-esteem and hopelessness is related to suicide behaviors (Extremiera et al, 2018; Wilburne & Smith, 2005). Anhedonia (the inability to experience pleasure and happiness) has been increasingly correlated with suicidal ideation (Auerbach et al., 2015; Winer et al, 2016). Experts have noted that suicide attempts are correlated to a lack of capacity for emotional regulation accompanied by inflexibility of emotional strategies, i.e., a tendency to engage in angry rumination when facing problem situations (Bonanno & Burton, 2013). The risk factors for suicide have not been well explored but bullying (especially cyberbullying) and child maltreatment exhibits significant correlation to rates of suicide (Castellvi et al., 2017; Britton, Van Orden, Hirsch, & Williams, 2014). In the case of bullying, surprisingly, both perpetrators and victims of bullying are more likely to attempt suicides and the length of the bullying incidence is related to suicidal ideation (Holt et al, 2015; Winsper et al, 2012). Peer

emotional inflexibility, and feelings of loneliness are related to increased suicide attempts. Discrimination, stigma and bullying are related to rates of suicide attempts among

young people.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy that facilitates

individuals' tolerance of distress and pain has also been shown to be effective in reducing suicidal ideation.

influence is significant as well; having a friend or acquaintance who has attempted suicide leads to a higher probability of attempting suicide. This can explain why suicides occur in clusters among teens (Borowsky, Ireland and Resnick, 2001; Hawton, Niedzwiedz & Platt, 2013). At the social level, explorations around social belongingness and loneliness have been correlated with suicidal ideation.

Treatments involve addressing individual, psychological, group and social factors that influence suicide behaviors and thoughts. Family and individual therapy as well as school group therapy strengthen belongingness and increase the conflict resolution capacities of students (Kaz et al, 2013). One particularly helpful therapy has been the Integrated Cognitive Behavioral Therapy that aims to change internal monologues of affected individuals while at the same time addressing family dynamics (Spirito & Esposito-Smythers, 2011). Dialectical Behavior Therapy that facilitates individuals' tolerance of distress and pain has also been shown to be effective in reducing suicidal ideation (Mehlum et al, 2014)). At the school level, one effective model is to address all preventive programs for all youth regardless of suicide risk (Wasserman et al., 2015; Zalsman et al, 2016). Conducting regular

mental health assessments to identify youth who are at high risk of suicide attempts has been shown to be only moderately effective. Gatekeeper programs that train youth in identifying and referring youth who might be at higher risk has not shown significant effectiveness in reducing incidence (Wasserman et al, 2015). Similarly, the efficacy of crisis lines has not been studied extensively and needs to be explored more to substantiate its efficacy in reducing suicide behaviors (Surgenor, Quinn & Hughes, 2016).

Mood Disorders and Anxiety

Mood disorders and clinical anxiety refer to all those syndromes that reflect a lack of regulation of one's moods. While their symptoms are different, they share the characteristic of a debilitating disturbance and instability of emotions.

Depression

Until the 1980s, teens and children were not thought capable of suffering from depression; mood imbalances were often looked at as being normal for that age group. In 1987, the drug Prozac was introduced to the market and for the first time; adolescents began to be diagnosed with the disorder in increasing numbers (Lawlor, 2012). However, despite the relative newness of the diagnosis, clinical depression and anxiety among adolescents and young adults have skyrocketed in recent decades (Thapar et al, 2012). Girls are more than twice as likely to suffer from the disorder as boys. The rates range from 9% of all teens to 36% (Moffitt et al, 2010). Most teens who are diagnosed with mood disorders have other comorbidities like ADHD, conduct disorders and anxiety (Wichstrøm et al, 2012). Depression and other mood disorders tend to persist and re-occur over the long term and there is significant but only moderate correlation into adulthood (Goodyear-Smith, 2006). This might be related to the interaction between the social context, experiences and the impact of the mood disorder. In many cases, the diagnosis of a mood disorder may set forth a chain of events that lead to experiences that reinforce and strengthen the symptoms that lead to the diagnosis in the first place (Langa & Gone, 2019; Patten, 2019).

Experts have identified symptoms that constitute

depression; some of the signs of full-blown depression are, persistent irritability (especially among children and youth) and sadness, loss of interest in normal activities, changes in appetite or body weight, insomnia or excessive sleepiness, psychomotor agitation, loss of energy, and feelings of worthlessness and guilt, outbursts of emotions, loss of friends, substance abuse and physical symptoms of illness (Monti & Rudolph, 2017; Price et al., 2016). Experts recognize that for youth who may be predisposed to melancholy, encountering stress at school, home or among their peers may heighten the chances of experiencing a major clinical depressive episode (Löfving-Gupta, 2015).

Anxiety and depression are deeply connected through the lifespan and anxiety often precedes depression (Turner, Mota, Bolton & Sareen, 2018). Similarly, depression seems to demonstrate a connection to substance abuse and conduct disorders; experts surmise that depressed individuals often use alcohol as a medication to treat their depression (Hussong et al., 2011). Depression often runs in families; this may reflect both a genetic basis as well as commonly shared experiences that is passed on from one generation to another (Riglin et al, 2018). Several neurocognitive and neuroendocrine bases for depression have also been identified, though it is difficult to say if the former causes depression, or if depression leads to these changes (Forbes & Dahl, 2005).

Treatment for depression

Problems with Treatment Compliance

Compliance with medication is a problem for those taking antidepressants because

The major form of treatment for depression in the USA is psychotropic medications, chief among them being the anti-depressants (aan het Rot, Matthew & Charney, 2009). Antidepressants work to increase the absorption of certain neurotransmitters like serotonin in the brain. Some experts believe that when there is a deficiency of these neurotransmitters a person is likely to exhibit the symptoms of depression. However, the results of studies exploring the connection between neurotransmitter deficiency and major depression have been mixed (Lacasse & Leo, 2005; Schildkraut, 1965). There are several gaps in the evidence that critics have written about. The drugs are more likely to work in cases of severe depression than in mild cases of depression (Fournier et al, 2010). The efficacy of these medications ranges from about 40% to 60% of those taking them. Efficacy rates refer to the percentage of users who benefit from the drug and can diminish the symptoms over

time. For others, the medications are not effective while a few others may improve with time even with no intervention. About 50% of those taking antidepressants experience uncomfortable to disabling side effects. Thus, compliance with the medication regimen is often a problem with those taking antidepressants (Arroll et al, 2009; Geddes et al, 2003).

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In addition to medication, talk therapy, especially in the form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy has been shown to be effective (Van Hoorhees, Smith & Ewigman, 2008). Some experts believe that counseling and therapy are more effective for treating depression than are medicines. They claim that talk therapy is typically more expensive than pharmacological medicines and many insurance companies may refuse to cover the costs of extended therapy; the result is often over-medication in people suffering from both depression and anxiety (Harris, 2011; Wilens & Hammerness, 2016).

Anxiety

Symptoms of Generalized Anxiety

Generalized anxiety disorders are the most common among children, especially

Experts describe anxiety as a diffuse uneasiness over some anticipated ill that might befall the sufferer or their loved ones (Bernstein, Borchardt & Perwien, 1996; Tuma & Maser, 2016). It often co-occurs with depression and is the most common mental illness in children and youth. Almost 31% of youth in the USA suffer from anxiety disorders and only 18% of sufferers get the help they need (Bandelow & Michaelis, 2015). Anxiety could be a generalized state, or it could be a response to a specific situation (Guildford & Miller, 2015). Its impact can be manifested directly in the body or it could be hidden while still affecting the person's functioning. Children often manifest anxiety in the form of physical symptoms like stomach pain, headaches or expressing a need to withdraw from stressful situations. Generalized anxiety disorders are the most common among children, especially among students who worry about their performance. This is often manifested in high levels of

restlessness, difficulty concentrating and experiencing tension (Henningesen, Zimmerman & Sattel, 2003; Spencer, 1998).

Social anxiety disorder is a form of anxiety that manifests in social situations. Social anxiety is exhibited in avoiding eye contact or showing little interest in reaching out to other people. Youth with social anxiety are easily embarrassed and humiliated and hate calling attention to themselves (Stein & Stein, 2008). Anxiety is one of the most treatable mental-illness if diagnosed accurately (Byrne, Lebowitz, Ollendick & Silverman, 2018; Seligman & Ollendick, 1998).

ally among students who worry about their performance. This is often manifested in high levels of restlessness, difficulty concentrating and experiencing tension.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

OCD tends to manifest its symptoms in childhood and adolescence. The disorder is manifested as a compulsive need for excessive structure and order as well as the tendency to hoard objects or engage in repetitive thoughts that might obstruct productive work. For clinicians to classify this as a disorder, the symptoms need to last for two weeks (Mataix-

Cols, Nakatani, Micali & Heyman, 2008). OCD can be distinguished from other disorders like autism spectrum disorders and tic disorders by the awareness displayed by the patient (Holzer et, 1994). People who are diagnosed with OCD recognize that their obsessive thoughts are senseless and disruptive. They have unsuccessfully tried to resist these thoughts (Krebs & Heyman, 2015). Approximately 4% of teens are affected by it and their symptoms can be very disruptive to normal functioning. Some studies have implicated the overactivity of the orbitofrontal cortex in the disorder (Pauls, Abramovitch, Rauch & Geller, 2014). Environmental factors like social isolation, physical abuse and negative emotionality co-occur in many cases of OCD (Stein et al, 2010).

Treatments For
OCD
Symptoms

Progressive
muscle
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to

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) has shown to be highly effective in treating mood disorders and OCD in adolescents. Children with depression often engage in highly negative self-talk accompanied by irrational thoughts and expectations. They have unrealistic standards of behavior and over emphasize the impact of the capabilities and actions of both themselves and others around them. CBT attempts to bring to the surface these thoughts and modify them in a gradually positive manner (Olatunji, Davis, Powers & Smits, 2013). Family dynamics can be addressed by engaging the entire family in therapy (Geller, March & AACAP Committee on Quality Issues, 2012). Other ways of addressing these disorders might

be to include exercise and dietary changes in the regime and providing a supportive environment in the school (Nosratmirshekarlou, Shafiq, Goodarzi, Martino, & Pringsheim, 2019). Progressive muscle relaxation leads to better adaptability in stressful circumstances. Including imagery in the form of systematic desensitization has been demonstrated to be successful in reducing some of the symptoms of many mental illnesses. Systematic desensitization involves introducing a stressful situation with therapeutic support, in a gradual manner until the client is no longer triggered by the elements of a situation (Luber, 2015). While psychotropic medicines are helpful in the short term, there is increasing skepticism by experts about using medication without also including talk therapy to address symptoms of OCD (Franklin & Foa, 2011; Schwartz, Schlegl, Kuelz & Voderholzer, 2013).	better adaptability in stressful circumstances. Including imagery in the form of systematic desensitization has been demonstrated to be successful in reducing some of the sympt
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Other Internalizing Issues

Many youths engage in self-harm behavior not intending to commit suicide, these behaviors are often referred to as non-suicidal self-harm. They may include cutting, scratching, burning or minor overdosing. Like with other internalized mental disorders, these behaviors often co-occur with symptoms related to depression and other trauma (Nixon, Cloutier & Janssen, 2008). Surveys have demonstrated that self-harm affects youth at a high rate from about 13% – 45% of young people reporting to engage in it; about half of those affected seek help and this has been correlated to the severity of their self-harm behavior. The more severe the self-harm, the more likely individuals are to seek professional help. That leaves out many young people whose quality of life may be affected by the disorder but who may not think it important to seek help. Women and LGBTQ+ youth reported more self-harm behaviors than boys and straight youth (Laye-Gindhu & Schonert-Reichl, 2005). It is important that advocates of youth be vigilant for self-harm behaviors when young people come in with other issues associated with depression or they profess to feeling bullied or discriminated against (Liu & Mustanski, 2012; Ougrin et al., 2015)

Increasingly, youth who come from a variety of persistent stressful situations have been diagnosed with PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The symptoms can mimic other illnesses but youth with PTSD have marked reexperiencing of the problem situation over and over again and exhibit hyper-arousal during situations that might trigger certain negative emotions. Children who have experienced sexual abuse are particularly susceptible to PTSD. Youth with PTSD may avoid certain stimuli, be hyper-aroused under similar circumstances as when the past trauma happened, express disorganized behavior or may dwell on the situation excessively (Dyregrov & Yule, 2006). As with other mental health issues, the symptoms may occur with other illnesses as well.

PTSD Symptoms

Youth with PTSD may avoid certain stimuli, be hyper-aroused under similar circumstances as when the past trauma happened, express

Externalizing Disorders

The DSM identifies certain mental illnesses among young people as externalizing; these are clusters of behaviors that are directed at the person's

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environment. The behaviors under this category are often a result of impulsiveness and emotional dysregulation and involves aggression, antisocial behavior and challenging authority and social norms. To be classified as a disorder there must be a functional impairment in a significant area of the youth's life.

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)

Diagnosi ng AD/ HD

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Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) is an externalizing disorder and is commonly diagnosed among children and youth. As its name suggests, youth with AD/HD have trouble focusing on tasks, are distracted and have trouble following through with school work. They have trouble paying attention when spoken to, are forgetful in daily activities and unrelated thoughts intrude when performing specific activities. Teachers report that students who may have AD/HD fidget or talk excessively in class, are disruptive and inappropriately active. There are a set of 18 symptoms

that are specified by the DSM; children would have to exhibit at least 12 of them for a period of 6 months in order to be classified as AD/HD (Hudziak, Copeland, Stanger & Wadsworth, 2004). As with other mental disorders, AD/HD is also thought to be caused by a combination of genes and the environment (Nigg, 2006). In particular, two neurotransmitters have been implicated in AD/HD – dopamine which is responsible for the feeling of being rewarded after engaging in an activity, and norepinephrine which is responsible for attention and arousal. Some researchers believe that low levels of both these hormones cause the symptoms of AD/HD (Thapar Cooper, Eyre & Langley, 2013).

Treatment for AD/HD involves behavioral psychotherapy and medication. Children and youth may be taught better time management and organization skills while occasionally using rewards judiciously (Nigg, 2006). Parents and teachers can be taught to help these children negotiate their environment by introducing firm structures within their homes or schools (Evans Schiltz, deMars & Davis, 2004; Klassen, Miller, Raina, Lee & Olsen, 1999; Trout et al, 2007). The principal medications tend to be stimulants since it is believed that lower than normal levels of neurotransmitters are responsible for the disorder. The medications resemble other illicit stimulants like

that are specified by the DSM; children would have to exhibit at least 12 of them for a period of 6 months in order to be classified as AD/HD.

methamphetamine; unlike their illicit counterparts, experts claim AD/HD medicines are slow release and do not cause the euphoria that methamphetamines cause (Chacko, Newcorn, Feirsen, Uderman, 2010).

Oppositional Defiant Disorder/Conduct Disorder (ODD/CD)

Programs To Address ODD/CD

School-based programs that teach

The group of behaviors and symptoms that lead to the diagnosis of ODD/CD are usually observed in childhood and include being uncooperative, defiant towards authority figures and hostile towards peers, caregivers, teachers and other authority figures (Matthys, Cuperus & Van Engeland, 1999). ODD/CD is sometimes the result of an inability of young people to separate appropriately from their caregivers and may also involve a history of negative consequences for infractions that models aggressive behavior for youth (Bezdjian et al, 2011). In many cases however, there is a strong association between being diagnosed with AD/HD and the occurrence of conduct disorders.

While the behaviors that constitute ODD/CD may occur in children without AD/HD, they tend to occur consistently in those diagnosed with AD/HD and pose significant challenges to adjustment to school or connections with peers (Michanie et al, 2017; Oosterlaan, Scheres & Sergeant, 2005).

The treatment for ODD/CD involves talk therapy that facilitates a child learning to control their anger and aggression as well as to increase their capacity to engage in nonviolent communication and conflict resolution (Webster-Stratton, Reid & Hammond, 2001). Family therapy that helps increase better communication between parents and siblings of youth with the disorder and helping the adults at home learn better discipline and management techniques have been found to be effective (Drugli, Larsson, Fossum, & Mørch, 2010). School-based programs that teach social skills and conflict management, address issues of bullying and harassment, and teach emotional regulation are useful in facilitating growth in all children including those with ODD/CD. The disorder often co-occurs with other mental illnesses like ADHD and therefore it is important to have appropriate diagnosis to best help those affected (Pine et al, 1997).

social skills and conflict management, address issues of bullying and harassment, and teach emotional regulation are useful in facilitating growth in all children including those

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Other Mental Illnesses

There are other relatively common issues that affect youth that are neither internalizing nor externalizing. These may affect existing mental health issues that youth may have; it is also important to remember that disorders often occur together and addressing one problem area might involve diagnosing and treating other issues.

Substance Use Disorders (SUD)

While a majority of adolescents experiment with substances (both illicit and legal), only a small minority transition into abusing substances. The criteria that distinguishes a disorder from recreational use of mind-altering substances is that a disorder creates a significant problem in the daily functioning of the individual, a loss of interpersonal relationships, increasing tolerance to the drug and withdrawal when the drug is unavailable to the person (Cole, Sprang & Sillman, 2019). SUD involves both dependence and abuse – the former refers to the physiological processes that keep the person consuming

the drug while the latter is the more complex interactions between the individual, the drug and the larger social context in (Rhemtulla et al, 2016). Often, substance abuse co-occurs with other mental illnesses like depression or ADHD which adds additional stressors to a teenager who is predisposed to substance abuse (Priester et al. 2016).

Recent surveys indicate that teen drug use frequency of most substances like tobacco, alcohol, cocaine, ecstasy, heroin and prescription drugs have come down in recent years; marijuana use has stayed stable (Sarvet et al, 2018). Almost a quarter of high school students report having used marijuana in the previous month and 6% report using it daily. While attitude towards marijuana has softened, the rate of use has not spiked. About 5% of 12th graders used opioid painkillers in 2016; it was over 9% in 2004. Over 7.5% of 12th graders used Ritalin and Adderall in a non-medical manner. A significant number of high schoolers used over the counter medicines like those for cough, for non-medical purposes. Younger teens are more likely to use inhalants like household cleaners, glue and pens while older teens use marijuana and less often, synthetic marijuana. High school seniors use and abuse prescription medications like opioids and Adderall more than other substances (Das et al, 2016; Schepis, Teter & McCabe, 2018).

Alcohol and tobacco are the most commonly used drugs by adolescents in the USA. Since both are legal for adults, they are often viewed as a rite of passage for youth and part of their attempts to try on adult roles with their peers. With the use of alcohol, most adolescents report that their primary motive was curiosity about what it felt like to be intoxicated. Inexperience contributes to unintentional overdoses and other negative consequences (Hennessy & Tanner-Smith, 2015). Using any substance inappropriately

and for non-medical purposes pose some level of risk; however, in recent years the rise of opioid and heroin addiction has been characterized as a public health epidemic in several states where youth die from overdose regularly (Manchikanti et al, 2018). Opioid pills are typically crushed, injected or snorted leading to an immediate euphoric experience. Many young people graduate from opioids to heroin because the latter is much cheaper, resulting in similar but sometimes deadly consequences (Maxwell, 2015). ADHD medications like Adderall are similarly abused by high school students; most students use these drugs to increase focus and concentration, but the consequences are very similar to the high produced by amphetamines. Regular use leads to long term negative physical consequences (Smith et al., 2017). Another major substance used by youth, mostly by men, are performance enhancing steroids. When steroids are abused, it can lead to severe physical problems and even irreversible organ damage. There is also evidence that steroid use may lead to increased aggression (Sagoe, Mentzoni, Hanss, & Pallesen, 2016). When youth stop using these steroids after overuse, withdrawal symptoms like depression can impair the person's health and functioning (Yates, 2016).

Genetic predispositions have been implicated in SUDs (Hodgson et al, 2017). Having parents who abuse substances significantly increases the likelihood of children abusing drugs (Koob & Volkow, 2016). Taking highly addictive drugs in one's teen years, being a male, being under the age of 25, not having adequate familial support and suffering from other mental health illnesses are all factors that are associated with a higher probability of developing a SUD (Koskela et al, 2017). Older adolescents are much more likely to engage in drug use than younger

adolescents. Many experts believe that the instability in emotions that often accompanies being an adolescent is related to the higher incidence of drug use among older adolescence. Youth use drugs to self-medicate; this is called the self-medication hypothesis. However, once these substances are used regularly, their psychotropic effects begin to feel 'normal'. When the drugs are withdrawn, the carefully maintained stability under the influence of these mind-altering substances begins to dissipate leading to drop in the feelings of mental well-being. In addition, the inappropriate use of these drugs can lead to anxiety and depression (Khantzian, 1997; Mayes & Suchman, 2015). Thus, it is important to tease out the various issues that might be affecting an adolescent's normal functioning before beginning a treatment regimen.

As in the case of other mental illnesses, both psychotherapy and medication can be used in combination for optimum outcomes. With the spike in heroin overdoses and deaths across the US, there is a fierce debate raging around appropriate ways to address the issue of addiction. Since the late 1980s, the flow of drugs from the Global South has been viewed as the principal problem leading to addiction. The War on Drugs conceived of by successive administration was meant to cut off supplies of illicit drugs to the American consumer. This policy did not work as intended and led to the largest expansion of the US prison system in history, with most of the prisoners being

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young, male and often from vulnerable and marginalized groups (Inciardi, 2008). Instead of helping reduce drug use and abuse, the war on drugs and other punitive policies implemented added to the stigma of those who suffered from addiction and hardened public opinion towards this vulnerable population. Today, there is a new push to legalize some of the less harmful drugs along with decriminalization of marijuana in several states. Criminal justice reform advocates argue for a removal of the mandatory sentencing laws that force judges to mete out harsh sentences; advocates recommend that the criminal justice system treat the problem of SUD as one involving mental health (Ferrazzi, 2018; Hoffman, 2001).

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. How do socioeconomic circumstances and geographic location affect suicide rates amongst youth from underrepresented groups?
2. What are some of the treatments which involve addressing individual, psychological, group and social

factors that influence suicide behaviors and thoughts amongst youth?

3.What are some of the main symptoms that constitute depression?

4.What are the similarities amongst treatment models across both internalizing and externalizing mental disorders?

REFLECT

1.What are some resources you remember from your school context that helped with students undergoing distress?

The Social Historical Perspective of Mental Illness

According to some researchers, the current frameworks for classifying and describing mental illness use pathologizing and deficit-based language (Brown et al, 2017). The frameworks used to explore mental illnesses have been borrowed from physical disorders and is historically based on scientific positivism (that believes science should strive to measure observable phenomena). It reduces all suffering to categories and

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measurements (Fee, 1999). Wittgenstein, one of the founding fathers of postmodernism and social-constructionism posited that when people use and receive language, it is a representation of 'reality' that is being exchanged and not reality itself. In other words, our language can create realities; this is referred to as the linguistic paradigm. Thus, much of what language creates through historical happenings becomes objective reality for each succeeding generation. Many of the terms we use to describe mental illnesses are a product of power relations between different groups of people and the process whereby some behaviors are normalized whereas others are pathologized (Fee, 1999; Scull, 2013; Scull, 2018; Spector & Kitsuse, 2017).

Mental Illness from a Historical Perspective

Society has always constructed mental illnesses in varied ways, and these are reflected in art, written and visual mediums, and more recently, via films and digital media. In the early 1970s, American psychology of mental illnesses was

dominated by the field of psychoanalysis where the recovery of meaning was the centerpiece of all treatments. Today, there has been a big shift in the framework used to understand and respond to mental illnesses and it is rooted in the biology of the individual, especially the brain. In the earliest civilizations in the middle-east and in medieval Europe, madness was often looked at as a consequence of the violations of God's laws or the sin of arrogance and boastfulness. The symptoms of insanity were regarded as the effect of the possession of the mind and body by evil spirits and witchcraft. Thus, the supernatural origins of madness were widely documented in many cultures. At the same time, around 340 BC a Greek physician Hippocrates, declared that the root of illness was not in the supernatural but within the functioning of the individual. His view was marginal at that time. Under Christianity, converts to the religion were often ascribed to exhibit miracle working and sainthood was bestowed on them; today these individuals might be classified as mentally ill. The relics of some who were mentally ill were worshipped by devotees and the pious (Scull, 2015).

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Starting in the middle ages, in several places in Europe, the institutionalization of the treatment of mental illness began with specialized doctors and asylums. The treatments included unsubstantiated methods like waterboarding and the tranquilizer chair that drew blood away from the brain. In the 17th century, the term neurology was first coined, and the brain began to be considered central to the understanding of human

behavior. Phrenology became a dominant framework to exploring brain functioning; the skull was mapped intricately into areas supposedly controlling different behaviors (Whittaker, 2003). Another popular method among practitioners was looking at the countenance of individuals to identify the type of insanity they might have (Roberts, 2005). This is illustrated in the figure below.

In the USA, the Kellogg brothers (whose company today manufactures cereals) were experimenting with dietary methods, phototherapy, hypnosis and static electricity to cure madness (Markel, 2017). In the 19th century, for the first time, asylums were founded to house those who were labeled insane. There was an era of optimistic expectations for the rehabilitation of the patient which increasingly turned dark as the asylums were found not to make patients better in the long term. In fact, the population in these asylums grew at a rapid pace and experts began to have doubts about their usefulness in the management of mental illness. Some of these asylums were inhabited by patients who numbered in the thousands and they were more prison than sanctuaries (Ziff, 2012). In the late 1800s, the theories of Freud gained traction and psychotherapists used his framework of the three layers of personality, the id, ego and superego to craft techniques to treat the mentally ill (Scull, 2015).

The discovery of antibiotics and the idea of germs causing diseases led to enormous changes in psychiatry and psychology in 1900s. Drugs and pharmacological mixes replaced the cruder methods from an earlier era in the control of symptoms associated with mental illnesses and abnormal behaviors. As the advertisement in figure 2 demonstrates, new 'miracle' drugs were prescribed for a range of problems related to a lack of adjustment to social

norms. Often, lack of obedience to socially gendered and heterosexist norms were perceived as signs of insanity and therefore in need of immediate medication. The medical model is still the prevalent model to explain mental illnesses.

Despite all the progress made on issues related to mental illness, there is little agreement on what separates the sane and the insane, or reason and unreason. The DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) which is put together by the American Psychological Association, is into its fifth edition but each iteration comes with a host of controversies around what criteria should count and who should be included among the mentally challenged. The origins of these categories remain elusive and so do the treatments for these illnesses. While psychiatrists and psychological researchers routinely locate the problem in the brain or in the genes, the neurological system or the neurotransmitters, the treatments are largely aimed at symptoms and have limited efficacy in addressing root issues that lead to mental distress.

Today, psychotropic drugs are a multi-billion-dollar industry and one out of every six adults in the USA is on one (not including sleeping pills etc.) (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). From its earliest days, commercial drug marketing was directed towards caregivers and loved ones exhorting them to buy powerful psychotropics for their suffering loved ones so they can fulfill their social expectations; the advertisement in figure 3 depicted in this section demonstrates the rather crude gendered norms that were used to appeal to consumers. Most modern-day psychiatric medicines were derived from antipsychotic medicines developed half a century ago and many of them include moderate to severe

side-effects like tremors, type II diabetes, cardiac arrhythmia and loss of memory. Life expectancy among the mentally ill is about 20 years lower than those who have not been diagnosed as having a psychological illness. Thus, while the institutionalizing of patients in psychiatric hospitals have plummeted, most still suffer the painful consequence of both their illness as well as the effects of the chemicals used to treat their illness (Walker, McGee & Druss, 2015).

Moral Panic and Youth Mental Illness

Throughout history, anxieties around mental disorders have taken on the form of moral panics among those with privilege. These public panics are a reaction to any perceived corruption of social stability. With the rise of popular media and digital platforms, these have intensified and spread rapidly in recent times (Duxbury, Frizzell, & Lindsay, 2018). The persistence and spread of moral panics are facilitated by the exaggeration of the stated problems and spreading false stories about their impacts (Richardson, 2016). It mischaracterizes the nature of a problem and projects blame on to its victims (Tartakovsky, 2009).

Mental

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2012) delineate 5 aspects of moral panics: a) Concern for the problem: this is reflected in congressional hearings, higher amounts

allocated to research on the topic and higher rates of research studies exploring the phenomena; b) Hostility towards victims: the victims of the phenomena are racially, economically and geographically coded and made to feel that they are responsible for their experiences. There is an attempt to label and stigmatize victims rather than an attempt to address the problem; c) Consensus: a repetition of the horrors of the problem lead to public consensus about the dangers posed by the phenomenon. Reinforcing the stereotypes through public discourse and social media platforms leads to spurious connections made between the phenomenon and other social ills. d) Disproportionality of the extent of the problem: The frequency and spread of a problem is exaggerated and its impact is overrated; e) Volatility: Moral panics rise and disappear suddenly. Many drug scares take the form of moral panics. In the 1980s, criminal justice policy was shaped around the notion that poor people, especially those of color, used crack indiscriminately passing on their addiction to their children. In the 1990s, a similar moral panic arose around the meth epidemic. Thus, there was widespread stigmatization of the poor and those with SUDs. While the statistic around crack use has not changed much today, the focus has shifted to heroin and opioid	<i>Illness as Moral Panics</i> The persistence and spread of moral panics are facilitated by the exaggeration of the stated problems and spreading false stories about their impacts.
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Anxieties about epidemics of mental illnesses have often taken on the characteristics of a moral panic.

addiction (Ahrens, 2009; 2013; Briggs, 2009; Weidner, 2009). All these panics demonstrate how moral panics around issues of mental health have been used to maintain social stratification while blaming the victims of punitive policies enacted by those in power. With the more recent panic about heroin abuse however, since the epidemic has disproportionately affected white communities, the focus has often moved from criminalization to medicalizing the problem.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1.What are some of the differences between how mental illness was understood and addressed between the middle ages and the 21st century? How has the use of psychotropic drugs for mental health evolved throughout this time?

REFLECT

1.What are some examples of moral panic around issues of mental health that are currently being used to maintain social stratification?

Facilitating Healthy Adolescence

In the last 50 years, the dominant framework that has been used to analyze and respond to instances of mental illness has been a biological one. As we have seen, despite the advances made with brain research and new technologies to study the biological underpinnings of mental illness, the frequency of young people who suffer from issues like depression, anxiety, AD/HD and ODD have shot up in the population. Sociologists and social workers emphasize the need to have healthy societies in order to promote mental and physical health.

Psychological Instability in Youth Lives

In the US, over the last few decades, there has been much written about the instability in adolescent life. Youth are susceptible to a host of mental issues because in industrialized societies, this is the time when there are immense pressures to choose their life trajectory and values. Lightfoot (1997), for instance, explores the issue of adolescent risk-taking as a space for an adolescent to take meaningful action to negotiate their connections with the larger world. During adolescence, the cultural artifacts of childhood are thrown over for those that attempt to better

reflect one's relationship with society. To Lightfoot, adolescents are in a transitional space which is playful, speculative and fanciful and which help youth articulate their identities in the present and for the future. She points to the fact that much of the risk-taking that adolescents engage in take place in the company of other teens. Many of the risks that adolescents take is also aimed at rebelling against authority.

Adults in the US have historically viewed youth risk-taking as both trouble and opportunity and the ambivalence towards the phenomenon has made any societal response disorganized and ineffective (Koot & Garde, 2013). However, an alternative constructive response might be to highlight the moments of opportunities that risk-taking offers to grow and form adult identities. Educational philosopher John Dewey and psychologist Stanley Hall spoke about the enormous possibilities for self-exploration and identity that adolescent spaces offered (Pajares, 2006). Erikson wrote about the adolescent need for locomotion both physically and ideologically; he proposed that this propelled youth towards change (Arnett & Cravens, 2006). For Erikson, youth tendency towards experimentation, while sometimes extreme, serves to help them push boundaries and try new identities. Preventing youth from these experimentations might sometimes inhibit the achievement of the development tasks for the period, one of the main ones being the achievement of one's identity.

Normati

Some researchers emphasize the need for adult advocates of youth to differentiate the normative risks that many teenagers take and ones that often

are pathological and are likely to result in self-harm. Smoking an occasional joint with friends is a normative risk that many teens take, while heroin addiction is something that needs to be attended to right away (American Psychological Association, 2007). The behavior that is under study needs to be situated in the appropriate social contexts within which it is happening. In addition, it is important for advocates to understand the meanings that adolescents themselves give to the behaviors (Goodman et al, 2015). For instance, anti-social activities by gang members is a way for individual members to show their solidarity with the group and it has powerful personal significance for the members even as law enforcement and the adults in teens' lives may implement negative consequences for these associations (Pyrooz & Densley, 2016).	ve Adolesce nt Risks Versus Self- harm	
<i>Social Contextual Approaches to Mental Health</i>	Som e resear chers empha size the need for adult advoca tes of youth to differe ntiate the norma tive risks that many teenag	
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of all forms of mental illness. For instance, evidence indicates that almost 80 % of people with depression could be diagnosed with a major depression episode within a year even with appropriate use of psychiatric medication (Pernu, 2018). Hari (2015) posits that the reason for the spike in depression in industrialized communities is that the social context of most people in the industrialized world is unable to meet basic psychological needs, most importantly, people's need for a meaningful life. One Gallup poll found that almost 63% of adults polled are not engaged in their jobs and 24% were actively disengaged from their jobs. Studies demonstrate that if a worker has little autonomy in their jobs, they are

much more likely to be stressed and suffer from a host of mental illnesses. Many writers point to the alienation, loneliness and exploitation that many individuals in modern industrial societies feel. To them, the antidote would be to build societies where equity, community and collective welfare is valued over individual achievement (Hari, 2015; Ussher, 1991; Wang et al., 2017).

The Rise of Mental Illness

Researchers point to the need to examine the social context for factors that might contribute to mental illness among young people. Young people today face unprecedented pressure both at home and at school. As mentioned in other

chapters, the hyper-competitive, individualistic society adolescents are forced to live and function in, leads to feelings of isolation, lack of empowerment and low self-esteem. The highly unequal social order alienates youth in the margins; discrimination and stigma add to the feelings of worthlessness for adolescents who may not fit into dominant acceptable categories. Only an inclusive society will offer spaces for all youth to find fulfillment.

Prior to the industrial revolution, the raising of children was in the hands of the church, the family and the community. Today, that responsibility has been privatized and corporatized and this model dominates all conversations around the family-government-market relationship. In the early part of the 20th century, the market was regulated so families could be supported. In the last half of the twentieth century, these protections were stripped giving rise to a privatized family model. Under the latter model, families are left isolated and without support. Families today have been stripped of their rights to access services that help raise healthy children. The welfare of the family must rely on the capabilities of the adults in the family to negotiate their skills in the marketplace and how much care they are therefore

Some researchers emphasize the need for adult advocates of youth to differentiate the normative risks that many teenagers take and ones that often are

pathological and are likely to result in self-harm.

Prior to the industrial revolution, the raising of children was in the hands of the church, the family and the community.

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able to buy for their own children. Any major illness that the caregivers or children might suffer, any resulting loss of income or skills, could lead to instability and trauma for the children. In an ideal social context, parents and caregivers would have access to sustainable work while also being ensured quality childcare, maternity leave and time with their children. Almost all industrially advanced countries, except the United States, offer a range of public policies that protect families from the vicissitudes of the marketplace. All humans need caretaking at some point in their lives and a stable protected family is crucial to that process. Contrary to the popular notion that the American family has always been self-sufficient, much of the modern framework for the privatized family took place in the late 1900s.

The USA has always been an outlier in the level of support and protection families have received, even though the meager levels of protections have been dismantled in recent years. One important area where this is demonstrated is in childcare. In 2015, a US family spent \$233,610 on a child without counting college expenses from birth to 17. Higher income families spent close to \$454,770 during the same period (Bhattarai, 2017). The Swedish

government spends almost 5 times as much on children as American families do. Similarly, French families get free healthcare, childcare, schooling and higher education, leaving families with children with little debt. In contrast, in the USA, most of the families' expenditures is concentrated around an offspring's early years and then later in college and it is predominantly borne by individual families. In more recent decades, the American family also bears increased financial risk because of the depleted social safety nets, lack of pensions and other guaranteed benefits. While the US spends the same amount on child rearing as Europe, much of the US's expenditure comes from private sources, mainly the families, while in Europe the resources are mainly from public sources. Thus, child rearing is significantly more unequal in the USA.

Market forces have taken an enormous toll on families in the bottom rungs of the social economic ladder where fewer marriages are intact and there are high levels of child births outside marital unions (National Marriage Project, 2010). While in many surveys, mothers of children born out of wedlock profess a preference for marriage, they see their partners as being financially unstable and the trend has dovetailed the loss of

that responsibility has been privatized and corporatized and this model dominates all conversations around the family-government-market relationship.

The poor are forced out of the job

market, while at the same time wealthier families are struggling to hold on to their tenuous prosperity. Even when offered maternity leave, women do not take their full leave because

industrial jobs (Harnett & Mcclanahan, 2004. At the same time, Americans work the longest hours on the planet, about 47 hours... a week?. They work 10 more weeks a year than workers in Germany and the Netherlands (Huberman & Minns, 2007; Saad, 2014). Thus, on the one hand, the poor are forced out of the job market, while at the same time wealthier families are struggling to hold on to their tenuous prosperity. Economic inequality and financial insecurity forces everyone to work harder and often pick the most lucrative jobs over jobs that may be socially useful. Even when offered maternity leave, women do not take their full leave because they cannot afford to and men take their leave even less often than women do (Esping-Andersen, 2013).

Childcare

Parenting Under

When it comes to childcare, young parents are often engaged in what one sociologist calls 'intense cultivation' of their children. Parents

spend more time engaging with their children now than at any time in the since the industrial era. Much of this increase in time spent with children is in the form of interactive activities to maximize their children's chances of success – this is true of mothers and fathers (Bianchi, 2005). Families thus seem to be responding to the extreme instability of the workplace and the markets. When both paid and unpaid work are counted, parents put in about 10 hours a day, every day of the week in work. In one recent survey, most men and women say that balancing work and caregiving is highly stressful. This stress is more highly felt in the upper echelons of the social ladder because more parents work, and they work many more hours at higher pay. As a	Capitalis m	e they cannot afford to and men take their leave even less often than wome n do.
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result, couples today spend far less time socializing with friends or extended family, enjoy activities or engage in projects together leading to lower quality of marriage (Evenson & Simon, 2005). For the almost 50% of American adults who also engage in caregiving activities towards their own parents, work, family and childcare can be exceedingly stressful leading to stress and depression (Evensan & Simon, 2005; McLanahan & Adams, 1987; 1989). The happiness gap between parents and non-parents is larger in the USA when compared with other industrially advanced countries and many emerging economies.

Since families work long hours in the USA, there is an acute need for good quality childcare programs. The evidence however demonstrates that childcare

facilities are ill equipped when compared to other industrially advanced countries (Laughlin, 2013). More than three quarters of American children spend time in day care settings, many for more than 35 hours and yet unless a family is wealthy, most children who do attend daycare get substandard care. The evidence that early childcare improves wellbeing for individuals for years after is proven (Campbell, 2012; Yoshikawa, 2013).

Decolonization of Mental Health Research

Much of the research about mental illness has been conducted within the field of psychology and biology since 'the mind' is conceived of as operating within the embodied individual. However, this framework ignores the intricate and intimate connection that exists between individuals and the larger system. Psychology has been complicit in furthering the notion that individual health is equivalent to their functioning adequately within the system of capitalism and the current neoliberal order. From its very inception, the field has defined a healthy person according to terms that suit the needs of a corporatized world. Upadhyia (2018) describes a modern corporatized work culture where trainers of young workers stress the importance of developing a specific kind of personality that is likely to lead to success – highly individualistic, valuing personal achievement, orientation to career, materialism, and having lifestyle diversity. Thus, youth coming from traditional cultures with strong connections to family and where families are an important source of identity are immediately branded as non-performing, ill and in need of professional help. This has had a far-reaching impact on notions of self and

Decolonization of Mental Health

Decolonization of mental health research involves understanding the role that modern capitalism has played in shaping

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identity as well as how mental health frameworks are visualized and used in society. It has transformed ethical approaches to living and acting for the average citizens. The idea of who is mentally healthy is highly biased and is maintained and propagated through scientific work, books, popular culture, and in the self-image of people who are successful in a highly competitive world. Thus patients, doctors and policy makers operate on the assumptions of a normalized self that is a product of exploitation and work within an institution that seek to keep it in place (Bhatia & Priya, 2018; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Decolonization of mental health research involves understanding the role that modern capitalism has played in shaping notions about what is considered mental health and how these commonly accepted frameworks might deter individuals from working to further their own development. It makes individuals incapable of examining the role of discrimination and inequality in the formation of self-concept and identity. It is hard to struggle collectively for equity and justice when self or outer-blame and guilt are the main sentiments that are encouraged under conditions of social trauma.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. How has the responsibility of raising children been privatized and corporatized?
2. How does this impact the rates of mental illness among youth?
3. How does economic inequality and financial insecurity impact the lives of working adults in the US?
4. What are the differences across race when it comes to economic inequality and child rearing?

REFLECT

1. What resources were available to you and your parent(s) or guardian(s) when you were being raised? What support services did you and your parent(s) or guardian(s) have?

Glossary of Terms

5 aspects of moral panics

concern for the problem

consensus

disproportionality of the extent of the problem

externalizing disorders
hostility towards victims
internalizing disorders
linguistic paradigm
qualifying events
self-medication hypothesis
volatility
wittgenstein

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10. Chapter 10: Youth Civic Engagement

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Goals

- Learn about the history and philosophies of exploring justice
- Explore the connections between notions about justice and moral development theories
- Understand major theories of moral development
- Understand theories explaining civic engagement among youth
- Explore youth action in the modern context

Chapter Outline

- An Introduction to Theories of Justice
- A Historical Exploration of ‘Justice’
 - Philosophers on Morality

- Psychological Frameworks
 - The Cognitive Researcher
 - The Development of Empathy
 - The Morality of Disobedience
- Civic Engagement
 - Citizenship
 - Activism
 - Occupy Wall Street
 - Trans Activism
 - Gun Control
 - Conclusion
 - Glossary of Terms
 - References

An Introduction to Theories of Justice

Researchers who have studied the period of adolescence comment on the period as being important to the formation of notions of what constitutes ethical and moral behavior. In this chapter, we will explore the growth of the adolescent sense of ethicality and engagement both in contemporary societies and through history. Adolescence is a period in which young people in our society develop greater autonomy and independence. This growing freedom often leads to important moments of decision-making regarding their values and morals. This chapter

discusses how many young people search for an ethical life and how this search, in turn, affects their social action. Advocacy, social activism, and transformational organizing by youth are intimately connected to their sense of morality, their ethic of care for other people, and their need for justice and social order. Before we launch into an understanding of youth and their civic engagement, it is important to understand what the terms mentioned above actually mean and their relationship to social action.

A Historical Exploration of Justice

Historical Views of Justice

Justice has been used differently by different

Throughout history, philosophers have written extensively about the concept of justice, but its meaning and its applications in human life is still fraught with complexity. While most people assume that they know what it is, few can articulate the concept clearly. Early Greek writers used the word synonymously with a word that meant 'harmony' and social order. Injustice was anything that violated the relationship between people in society (Vlastos, 1947). The Confucian framework for justice and fairness is similarly inseparable from social harmony and the smooth maintenance of social relationships (Peerenboom, 1990). The

philosophers of the Utilitarian movement used the word justice to mean anything that increases the quality of life for most of a community's citizens. For utilitarian philosophers, any action that produced the maximum good for the most people was an ethical action (Rawls, 2009). For Libertarians, justice is the same as access to rights and it means freedom to exercise one's rights (Kronman, 1979). Thus, the many variations in the use of the word justice signifies the different ways that its users think about how a society should work.

In recent times, justice has been defined differently by different schools of thought. The debate today is centered on how material goods and resources should be distributed in society and who should be allowed to benefit from the proceeds of labor. Proponents of distributive justice consider how resources and materials are distributed in society and who should be allowed which possessions. For others, justice is about equality and the idea that everyone should get the same in a perfect society. Supporters of needs-based justice claim what we need should determine how much one should be given as part of the public good. Western capitalist societies claim to be meritocracies in which, theoretically, all material goods and advancement is earned through skill and effort. Meritocracies claim that

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societies ought to be unequal based purely on their ability and capacity to 'contribute' to society. Proponents of justice as fairness argue for historical facts to be taken into consideration when determining distribution of goods; they claim that the neediest would be given the most to level the playing field and correct historical disadvantages (Miller, 2017). The idea of reparations for people of African-American descent is based on the notion that many prominent families, and the country as a whole, benefited as a result of centuries of slavery where slaves were not compensated for their toil and had no choice of whether or not to work. In fact, slave owners were compensated for their loss of slaves as property when slavery was finally repealed; there were laws that were created by the US government so former slave owners would not be too disadvantaged because of their loss of free labor. This is based on the notion of justice as fairness.

Similarly, experts differ in their views about how consequences and punishments should be meted out in society. Some members of societies have argued for retributive punishment, where the punishment is the same as the pain the perpetrator caused the victim. An eye for an eye would be the motto of such a society. In communities that value welfare maximization, rehabilitation is emphasized and not vindictiveness. In this model of societal organization, education and therapy is considered better than punishment for addressing social issues like crime. In some communities, deterrence is the preferred approach for addressing antisocial behavior. In this model, punishment is seen as being good for society and is used to disincentivize certain behaviors through conveying a message to other people who might consider acting in similar ways. Finally, many experts consider punitive

methods of addressing antisocial behavior as being ineffective and argue for restorative justice. Restorative justice brings together the people affected by an offense, the victim, the offender, and sometimes other affected parties, to collectively address what happened, who was harmed, and what needs to be done to make things right. If conducted appropriately, these guided conversations bring about a resolution where the perpetrator experiences remorse and makes amends to the victim of their actions (Holroyd, 2010; Worrall, 2014). Today, as communities are becoming increasingly aware of the existence of the schools to prisons pipeline for many youths of color, advocates are arguing for restorative justice processes in schools (Cassidy Friedman, 2011).

Philosophers on Morality

Conceptions like justice, rights, and punishments have been influenced by larger frameworks composed of the moral views and ethical perspectives of any community or culture. The early philosophers of morality in Europe, like Kant and Hobbes, argued passionately for the importance of following universal moral principles regardless of the context in which they are enacted, but they differed in their reasons for proposing

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absolutist in his understanding of morality where ethical precepts were not to be disobeyed under any circumstance. **Locke and Aquinas** also believed in universal principles, but

these laws. Hobbes for instance believed that moral rules should help in the fulfillment of human desires. For philosophers Locke and Aquinas, it was all about using one's reasoning capacity to discover universal moral frameworks that do not depend on the social context.

While Immanuel Kant agreed with the others in the existence of moral rules that are above specific contexts, he proposed what he termed Categorical Imperative which are unconditional rules we must all follow regardless of our desires or the context. The basis of the set of rules is that we are all self-governing beings and we are in a community of other people who are self-governing. For society to function optimally and for respect to be retained among people, everyone must follow these moral precepts. In some sense, Kant was an absolutist in his understanding of morality where ethical precepts were not to be disobeyed under any circumstances. In one of his most famous hypothetical stories he argues that if an assassin knocked on your door and asked you if his victim is in the house, you would have to answer truthfully since that is a pact you have made with your fellow humans. Exercising a choice to lie in any circumstance would destroy people's trust in each other and lead to a larger crisis in

human society which supersedes the needs of the context (Copleston, 1953).

these were derived using logic.

Hannah Arendt (1973) was a philosopher who conducted a deep analysis of what morality means in the larger context of the history of communities. She wrote her philosophical treatises right after the end of WW2 and therefore was consumed by the immorality of evil and hatred against whole groups of people. In connection with this phenomenon, she examined the tools of violence and war and their role in moral behavior. Arendt believed that violence is so normalized in contemporary societies and the tools of violence so invisible that it has become banal (ordinary) and people do not recognize violence when it does happen. She calls the phenomenon the

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banality of evil. She believed that anyone could engage in unspeakable horrors and immoral action when the context was right for the encouragement of such behavior. She especially wrote about the ordinary German citizen during the rule of the Nazis and their complicity in the deaths of millions. She believed that engagement with evil actions is marked not by its exception but by the normality and prevalence of the participants where they do not recognize that they are committing unethical actions. When an administration makes mere cogs of its citizens, they demurely go along with the atrocities committed by the government according to Arendt and in fact, they may think they are behaving honorably (Arendt, 2013). Arendt is one of the most important philosophers of the last century, just as the holocaust perpetrated by the Third Reich is one of most significant events of the 1900s. She has argued for non-

conformity as a response to evil (Anita Roars, 2017).

Martha Nussbaum is a contemporary philosopher who examined ethical actions but iterated that one's moral stance did not ensure moral action and there were many contextual factors that might intervene in the acting out of moral beliefs. For her, acceptance of vulnerability as an ethical person was necessary to lead to a healthy moral self. In order to become a citizen of the world, she champions a morality that is rooted in the context but that underlies an ethical universalism. Nussbaum considers a

study of emotions as central to a study of moral philosophy because emotions mediate how we experience and enact moral thought and behavior (Nussbaum, 2003). For her, moral and ethical considerations should include the notion of facilitating human capabilities and functionalities (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993). When societies are pondering ethical choices and related public policies, lawmakers will have to ask whether their actions would enhance citizens' capacities, freedoms and contribute to their individual development. Moral laws are those that help individuals enhance their lives and develop their full potential.

One of the important political philosophers of the latter half of the 20th century is John Rawls. Many of the contemporary psychologists who we will explore in the chapter, used Rawls' framework in their own studies of moral development (Cortese, 1997). Rawls introduced a theory of justice that still resonates with academics from various disciplines who tussle with ideas around morality and justice. Rawls conceived of three principles of justice: 1) The liberty principles which includes civil and political rights; 2) The fair opportunity principle that everyone deserves fairness and equal opportunity; 3) The difference principle which suggests that inequality is alright if the needs of the worst off are still taken care of by society. His radical new argument was based on his conception of the original position. According to him, it

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is natural for people to be guided by self-interest. However, in order to organize a just society, policy makers need to move beyond what would personally benefit them. They would have to begin from a position that Rawls called 'veil of ignorance.' They would have to assume that they do not know what their own social location is going to be when making laws, especially those that have to do with distribution of resources (Rawls, 2013). For example, a rich person might want to argue for lower taxes because it would benefit their own financial standing, while a poor person might argue for higher taxes since the meeting of their own needs might have to come from such revenue. For a society to have laws that are not skewed, lawmakers would have to approach law making from the framework of the veil of ignorance where they themselves do not know if they are going to be wealthy or poor. Similarly, with racial and sexual discrimination – lawmakers would have to put themselves in the position of the most disadvantaged in order to enact laws based on social justice. Rawls' moral philosophy does not apply to daily behavior as much as it is about laws and policies (Philosophy Overdose, 2016). In fact, for many of the moral philosophers described, morality did not exist so much in individual citizens but in the social

context and social functioning of the collective. They believed that when societies are organized along justice-based principles, individual ethical behavior will also be enhanced.	<i>Rawls and Political Morality</i>
<i>Review and Reflect</i> REVIEW 1.What are some of the different definitions of justice used by societies? 2.How do ethics influence the actions and motivations around justice? 3.Who are some of the most famous philosophers of morality? How do they define a moral society? REFLECT 1.How do you define justice? 2.How does your own exploration of morality impact your definition of justice?	Rawls recommends that in order to establish a society based on justice, policy makers begin from the veil of ignorance. They would

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Psychological Frameworks

Many of the psychologists who studied ethicality in children and adults used the developmental framework to explore moral thought and action. Psychologists believe that brain growth and childhood accumulation of experiences lead to an individual moral maturity. Just as in other areas of development, psychologists believe that there are universal changes in moral structures in children and adolescents and these transcend the contexts in which children grow up. Unlike the philosophers who we discussed earlier, psychologists give less emphasis to the context and explore moral maturity within individuals.

The Cognitive Researchers

Piaget was one of the first psychologists to delve deeply into the issue of moral development among children and adolescents. For him, moral reasoning was a continuation of children's cognitive development and therefore linked to

the stages of their understandings of the world. In the pre-moral phase, which is during early childhood, children disregard rules related to social behavior and are purely concerned with fulfilling their desires. During middle childhood, children absorb the rules laid down by authority figures and the rules are considered inflexible and irrelevant to the context in which the behavior occurs. This stage he termed heteronomous morality. However, as they get older children realize the social context of any behavior must be factored into judging behavior and that the rules of ethical behavior can change with the situation. During this stage of autonomous morality, the intentions of the actor are considered important when distinguishing right from wrong (Duska & Whelan, 1975).

Lawrence Kohlberg adopted some of Piaget's basic tenets of developmental change in morality and expanded it into a 3 stage (with 6 substages) model that he used to explain the growth in moral reasoning among children and youth. Like Piaget, he conducted clinical interviews with the participants in his study using 12 vignettes in which the protagonists made moral choices under different circumstances. He asked the participants how they viewed the decisions made and why they held such a view (for their logic). One of his most famous stories was about a man named Heinz. The vignette is referred to as the Heinz Dilemma. The following is the basic details of the story:

“A woman was on her deathbed. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was

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charging ten times what the drug cost him to produce. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000 which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So, Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's laboratory to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz have broken into the laboratory to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?" (Kohlberg, 1981).

Kohlberg followed his story with a series of questions meant to elicit the participants understanding of the ethical aspects of the story, such as, "Did Heinz do the right thing or the wrong thing?" or "Would it have mattered if the dying woman was not his wife?" etc. Based on the participants' reasoning around moral issues, he classified their moral stage into one of 6 levels. During the two preconventional stages, children's reasonings are mainly aimed at fulfilling self-centered needs and morality is mostly a matter of whether the actor gets punished or gets away without negative consequences. During the two

conventional stages, people are motivated by the need for approval of others as well as to maintain law and order in society. Any violation of the law is perceived to lead to chaos and is therefore to be avoided. People in the conventional stages would view laws as written in stone and therefore would not challenge them. Kohlberg posits that most people across cultures could be categorized in the conventional stages based on their responses to his moral dilemmas. The few people who do reason at the postconventional stages would look at rules and laws as mostly created by humans for human welfare and therefore if they do not serve to benefit the weakest in society, should be broken. They would argue that any country's laws are merely social constructions and ought to be challenged if they are unfair. Table 1 outlines Kohlberg's stages and the basic moral arguments that people in each stage employ to deliberate on moral dilemmas.

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Kohlberg's theory was foundational in framing moral development research for decades after, but there were criticisms of his theory from several quarters. One of the most significant counter frameworks was proposed by Carol Gilligan, a student of Kohlberg who wrote about the unique ways in which women develop their ethical reasoning because of their experiences being raised as female (Gilligan, 1996). She asserts that women have an ethic of care as opposed to an

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gan asserts that women have an ethic of care as opposed to the ethic of justice that men possess. She asserts that Kohlberg's framework is better at gauging the latter than the

ethic of justice that men develop. A sense of responsibility dominates this ethic as opposed to an entitlement of rights that males are encouraged to hold dear. This leads women to care for others who suffer deeply and value emotional connectedness as a moral value. While Kohlberg emphasized principles and universal codes of conduct as moral values shared by everyone at the higher levels of moral development, Gilligan asserts that women value their responsibility to individuals as their expression of morality. Subsequent research however has only offered mixed support for Gilligan's theory. There does not seem to be a clear-cut gender difference in moral reasoning (Friedman, Robinson & Friedman, 1987; Walker, 1984).

Research studies have demonstrated that the educational level of the participants is correlated with the stage the moral scale scores according to Kohlberg's scheme. Higher levels of education correlate with reasoning at higher stages of Kohlberg's framework. Some studies demonstrate that going through a progressive educational system is a necessary condition for individuals to argue at the higher levels of moral reasoning (Bar-Yam, Kohlberg & Naame, 1980; Gibbs, 1977). Experts have pointed out that there are cultural differences in

the moral reasoning strategies used by individuals. Traditional cultural contexts emphasize obedience and family loyalty as important to ethical living (Edwards, 1986). Abstract principles around social justice is thereby less important in the ethical frameworks of many cultures (Edwards, 1986; Snarey, 1985).

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William Perry who also used Piaget's framework on cognitive development expanded his exploration of moral and ethical development (Michael Green, 2013) into late adolescence and early adulthood (Perry, 1999). For Perry, one's ethical and intellectual development is intimately associated with how we view all experiences in life. The early educational experience of most students teaches them that there are right and wrong answers in the first stage of dualism. They bring these certainties to college and refuse to accept that there are some problems that do not lend themselves to easy answers. As they move through their college education, students begin to differentiate between problems that have right and wrong answers and those that have a multiplicity of resolutions. In the third stage, students realize that the appropriateness of solutions to most problems is relative to the context. They move into a stage of ethical understanding that Perry terms relativism. Finally, in the

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stage of commitment, students become comfortable with uncertainty and use a combination of personal experiences as well as evidence and logic from other experts to arrive at a comprehension of any situation. This four-stage growth from certainties handed down by authority figures early in life to a commitment to pursuing the path of nuanced justice, is mostly available for those privileged students who continue into higher education (Perry, 1981).

Along the same theme of the development of a sense of justice, William Damon explored the development of notions of fairness when distributing resources (distributive justice) among children and youth. In early childhood, children do not dwell on the issue of fairness and believe that resources should belong to them just because they want it. Later in childhood, children think that an equal distribution of all resources would be the ethical of all possible solutions to inequity. Around adolescence, youth begin to see the complexity of resource distribution problems and begin to take many factors into consideration such as being in need, merit, equity etc. (Damon, 1977). These changes are associated with the development of social understanding in the child (Damon & Hart, 1982). In infancy, babies do not have the capacity to

distinguish self from others and therefore are not capable of experiencing the world that another person experiences. In early childhood, children can understand when another is in distress though this does not translate into effective action. In middle childhood, children understand that other people have different needs and personalities and therefore they can respond to others as individuals. By adolescence they are able to empathize with the plight of individuals they have never met and realize that situations of distress are endemic and require larger changes in order to alleviate. One's moral reasoning is tied to our capacity to understand other people's perceptions of the world and their experience of it.

Unlike the psychological theories described earlier, some theorists believe that moral action and moral reasoning develop differently in humans and that moral action is underemphasized in most psychological theories. James Rest (1983) is perhaps the earliest to explore moral decision making and behavior. He proposed a 4-component model to address the question. The first component begins with the capacity to recognize that a situation calls for a moral response. Then, the actor must identify a path that is morally appropriate of all the possible courses of action. Thirdly, motivation to act on moral grounds versus more personal motives is important. Finally, the actor must reaffirm a commitment to act in moral ways in order

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to enhance one's ethical character. The last component involves "having the strength of your convictions, having courage, persisting, overcoming distractions and obstacles, implementing skills, and having ego strength" (Nucci and Narvaez, 2008). Figure 2 outlines on Rest's four components and their relationship to ethical action.

The Development of Empathy

Rest's Theory of Ethical Development

For James Rest, moral

New research has indicated that unlike Piaget's contention that young children are egocentric, they are in fact capable of engaging in a variety of empathy related behaviors. From the earliest ages, babies respond more strongly to other infants crying than almost any other sound including recordings of their own cries (Martin & Clark, 1982). During toddlerhood, children

increase their capacity for empathy and prosocial behaviors like distracting a person in distress and comforting them (Zahn-Waxler et. al., 1992). By the time children enter preschool, they are capable of cognitive empathy where they can place themselves in the shoes of someone in distress. Thus, emotional empathy which includes feeling distress at someone else's misfortune and cognitive empathy which includes understanding the feelings that the other person is experiencing, go towards making ethical judgements about responding in a prosocial way to others around the child. Several studies show that empathy is a stable trait in individuals and that there is a significant correlation between an individual's empathy scores in early childhood and their score in adulthood (Eisenberg, 2000; Knafo et al, 2008).

Researchers have proposed the existence of mirror neurons, which are a special class of motor neurons that may contribute to human empathic response. The mirror neurons light up when a person experiences actions by others that lead to a feeling that the individuals watching the action is also performing the action (i.e., when we cry or feel joy at the movies) (Iacoboni, 2008). De Waal (2008) proposes that mirror neurons are crucial for matching one's emotional and physical

behavior or is a result of a process where by a person identifies a situation as a moral one, identifies a moral path to solving it, has the motivation to go through with it and a commitment to act

morally.

state to another person's state. This state matching is a precursor to feeling empathy for another person. The mirror neurons connect to the older limbic system of the brain which is responsible

for processing emotions like fear and anger (Decety & Jackson, 2006). When one feels empathy, mirror neurons and the limbic system are activated; at the same time, centers of emotional regulation are also activated and this prevents a person from feeling overwhelmed by the empathic feelings. The self-other differentiation areas of the brain allow one to stay above the feelings to help another individual.

Emotional and Cognitive Empathy

One important factor that determines the level of empathy shown by an actor is the similarity between the observer and the distressed person. Studies have demonstrated that individuals are more likely to help another person the more similarity they perceive between

themselves and the one who needs their help (Barnett et al., 1986; Batson et. al., 2005). This could at least partly explain why people are less moved by the plight of others who may be very different from them or who come from backgrounds that are unfamiliar – i.e., undocumented families fleeing crisis in their home countries.

Emotional empathy includes feeling distressed

Empathy requires advanced cognitive processing capacity for it to lead to effective action; internalizing moral values

regardless of external rewards and punishments should be key goals for parents, teachers and other adults aiming to provide for positive development in this area. When one has internalized a moral value, there is a level of guilt when one thinks that one's actions may have harmed others, and this forces individuals to consider other people's needs even when they conflict with their own. During times when parents discipline their children, a space is created for shaping children's moral concerns in a way that leads to children controlling their actions towards prosocial ends. Most parental disciplining consists of threats of love-withdrawal and assertion of power; these are often counterproductive. Research has found that focusing on the victim's distress and the actions by the child that led to the distress is much more effective in getting children to internalize the moral values. The latter form of disciplining is known as inductive discipline. Induction with

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just enough pressure allows children to develop an empathic distress and guilt and this leads to the enhancement of moral development. Repeatedly making the

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When one feels empathy, mirror neurons and the limbic system are activated; at the same time, centers of emotional regulation are also activated and this prevents a person

connections between the child's actions and the distress produced in others, creates an internal script for these events. The script allows the child to display self-control before acting in a way that might harm others.

The Morality of Disobedience

While the theories above deal with the development of ethical reasoning in young children and youth, there were other psychologists who wanted to look at factors that lead youth and adults to stand against tyranny and authoritarianism even when the individual's own safety was under threat (in other words those who act from Kohlberg's highest stages). After the second World War, the horrors of the holocaust conducted under Nazi rule was fully exposed to the world. Many of the individuals who perpetrated atrocities against the Jews, gypsies and homosexuals in Germany were tried for their crimes in a place called Nuremberg. In the course of their trials, lower level defendants cited that they were simply obeying authority and were not personally culpable. A year after Adolf Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem,

psychological researcher Stanley Milgram (1961) proceeded to explore the notion that blind obedience to authority and an incapacity to reason ethically were correlated. In his experiment, he had his participants shock another person in order to teach them new information. The learners were collaborators of the experimenter and experienced no shock. The participants who were the “teachers” were frequently assured by the experimenter (a person in a white coat) that the shock while painful was not going to harm the learner. Milgram found that most men and women were willing to shock another person severely based simply on the assurance of the experimenter that nothing bad was going to happen. For Milgram, this demonstrated the dark side of obedience to authority (Milgram, 1963; Milgram & Gudehus, 1978). Milgram’s experiment became a foundational one in psychology; (Korlan Syzdykova, 2014).

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A contemporary of Milgram, Philip Zimbardo, designed his experiment to identify the importance of the context of actions in the expression of morality (Zimbardo, 1973). Zimbardo’s famous prison experiment at Stanford reflected some of the same findings that Milgram’s had (Another Boring Week, 2013). He was motivated to find out if people behaved in morally reprehensible ways because they had a personality that lent itself to such

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Psychological researcher Stanley Milgram (1961) proceeded to explore the notion that blind obedience to authority and an incapacity to reason ethically were correlated

behavior or whether the contexts in which people live or work lead them to behave in different ways. He set up a prison-like environment in his lab in Stanford and his volunteer participants were randomly assigned to be either a prisoner or guard in the prison. They had to stay in their roles and live in the prison set up for a few days. The participants were previously evaluated and classified as mentally healthy. The mock prison simulated a real-life prison as much as was possible. Both prisoners and guards were given little opportunity to communicate with each other as people. Both were treated like prisoners and guards are regularly treated in society- punitive punishment for prisoners and immense respect that is demanded by(for?) law enforcement. The guards were instructed to maintain law and order in the prison and gain the respect of the prisoners.

Zimbardo had to suspend his experiment after six days even though it was scheduled for two weeks because of safety issues and the mental health concerns for the prisoners. The guards began to routinely humiliate the prisoners and divide them by offering special favors to some. The prisoners who were treated especially harshly banded together and became non-compliant. The guards in turn attempted to break their spirit by

engaging in cruel punishments. Several prisoners exhibited signs of emotional stress and broke down; they were so caught up in the situation that they did not ask to leave even when they were in pain. They simply attempted to obey and curry the favors of the guards even more. Zimbardo's prison experiments reinforced once again the notion that situational contexts determined moral reasoning and behavior.

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eaching moral reasoning, ethical behavior and empathy is complex and must be reinforced at various levels and institutions from the family to schools to larger institutions in society. At the family level, it is important to talk about feelings, treat a child with respect and use inductive reasoning when emphasizing moral values. Researchers have found that using physical discipline, threatening a child with withdrawal of love or with other dire consequences, is counterproductive. Emphasizing the victim's feelings and using positive consequences facilitate moral development. At the societal level, valuing social justice and organizing the physical space to facilitate safety and community are likely to further enhance agency among people. In schools, it is important to talk about equity and use restorative justice to address issues related to discipline.

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Review and Reflect

REVIEW

1. What is the development of a sense of justice or fairness among children and youth?

2. What are the effects of parental disciplining involving threats of love-withdrawal?

REFLECT

1. How do you think teaching moral reasoning, ethical behavior and empathy can be reinforced in schools? What methods and strategies can be used to reinforce these concepts?

Civic Engagement

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement includes concepts related to youth participation in the community, the effective use of youth voice to make positive social changes, and youth empowerment within the political system (Adler & Goggin, 2005). Furthering youth social participation is central to their growth during their adolescent years and leads to their emotional and physical wellbeing. The near universal ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes the rights of young people to assemble and have a voice in their community and be taken seriously when it comes to social policy. While many of the other rights of children are passive, the right to a voice asserts their rights as agents of change. It shifts the language of their wellbeing from being vulnerable and in need of protection, including their strengths and their voice. The US is only one of two countries that have not ratified the Convention (Lundy, 2007; UNICEF, 1989).

In the many countries that have ratified the Convention, communities have used its basic framework around civic participation and decision making by youth to provide a scaffold to introduce and include youth in community and local government decision making about issues

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that affect children and adolescents (Lundy, 2007). US research into youth civic engagement often portray young people as disinvested and alienated from the political context. Some of the future goals of educators and other advocates of youth in the USA should include pushing for a framework that strengthens the participation of young people in regional and national politics (Stepcik & Stepick, 2002).

Some political socialization experts claim that the most impressionable years in terms of teaching political engagement is between late adolescence and early adulthood. Early research on the topic tended to be focused on the parents and the home environment and their relationship to practices like voting. More recently, there has been more research on schools as agents of political knowledge and socialization. There have been several studies that point to significant connections between civic engagement in school and later connections with community (Andolina et al., 2003; Sherrod, Torney-Purta & Flanagan, 2010). Students who engage with volunteer activities are more likely to be involved in similar work as adults. There is much less evidence

that simply engaging in voluntary work in high school leads to political involvement as adults. The US, for instance, exhibits a high level of volunteer work by youth but very

low levels of political engagement (Kris, 2012). There is some evidence indicating that engaging in political discussions at home is more likely to lead to political activities like voting later in life (Rubin, 2007).

Most young people in the USA are not very engaged in the political life of their communities. While a large percentage of adolescents claim to have volunteered in their community, less than 6% of youth have engaged in meaningful political work. Having a course dedicated to civic knowledge has been found to lead to a higher rate of awareness of issues in the community. One of the strongest connections between civic engagement and schools is that most students who report a high knowledge of social and political issues also report that there were open discussions about these topics in their college and high school classes and that their teachers allowed them to make up their own minds (Torney-Purta, 2007). Effective teachers also encourage students to develop specific civic skills for instance, engaging in debates and discussion, recognizing propaganda, and writing effective persuasive letters about civic issues (Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

When students are required to volunteer in their communities, having them give a talk or a lecture on their service-learning component to other

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people enhances their feeling of ownership over the project and is likely to lead to continued engagement with community work. After-school clubs and advocacy groups increase the likelihood of continued engagement with issues of importance to the community. However, these groups have an impact only when there is a connection to political activity through group activities (Rheingold, 2008). There are much fewer political clubs in high schools than there are clubs that cater to religious and sports interests. When students were interviewed about how they began engaging with volunteer activities, most of them said it was through outside groups initiating contact with them or adults they knew connecting them to the groups (Stoneman, 2002). This points to the importance of allowing opportunities for young people to reach out to connect with community groups during adolescence. The impact lasts long after their connections have ended in terms of voting behavior and volunteer activities (Andolina et. al., 2003).

Student
Volunteer

Citizenship

The US is one of only two countries that has not signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention recognizes the rights of citizenship of children and their special interests that need to be safeguarded (UNICEF, 1989). In this context, it is especially important to address the issue of citizenship and its implications for members of the community. The definition of what constitutes citizenship-related activities has been debated by experts because of its complex nature. Everyone can agree that political engagement in the form of electoral politics and awareness of the important issues in a political race is important. In addition, most experts think that involvement in the	ring and Political Engagement When students are required to volunteer in their communities, having them give a talk or a lecture on their service - learning component to	topics in their college and high school classes and that their teachers allowed them to make up their own minds.
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community with other people is essential to developing the qualities of good citizenship. While the focus of political scientists has been the former, developmental psychologists emphasize connections to community. Other experts have differentiated between 'political' engagement and 'civic' engagement, describing the latter as being more inclusive of a variety of ways in which we commit to the well-being of our society. Still others, identify other forms of civic engagement that may not necessarily lie with connections to patriotism but may involve challenging norms of inequality within the nation state (Galston, 2001).

When youth are asked about their own definition of citizenship, the majority of those interviewed often talk about obedience to authority and following laws as key to be a citizen (Conover & Searing, 2000). This is especially true of Black youth who are even more sensitized to appropriate forms of citizenship they are allowed to exhibit (Sherrod, Brabeck & Quinones, 2002). Advocates for civic engagement among youth argue for a broader conversation with youth about issues related to their rights and responsibilities as members of their community and the notion of tolerance for other viewpoints in order to move young people beyond looking at citizenship as simply obeying laws.

Activism

In order to teach youth to have a voice in their communities and to exert their rights as citizens, it is important for them to have knowledge about the history of past organizing to bring about change. As the section on cognitive development demonstrates, youth have been at the forefront of positive change in society through their collective organizing and activism. Kennelly (2011) outlines two forms of activism with very different implications for the youth activist and for society. The good citizen is a young activist who works from within the parameters of state sanctioned protest. They tend to be white, educated, middle-class and people with some privilege. While they recognize that their communities are unjust and offer exclusive privileges to a chosen few, their methods of protest fall within boundaries that are acceptable and socially sanctioned. The engagement with society is often from a neoliberal deeply individualistic framework with a layering of guilt about being part of the 'haves' in a world that is unequal. Kennelly warns against equating all activism as one and equally productive. The bad citizen on the other hand often does not have a choice but to act against inequality and injustice

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The good citizen is a young activist who works from within the parameters of state sanctioned protest. The bad

citizen on the other hand often does not have a choice but to act against inequality and injustice and engage in protests that are antagonistic to authorities.

and engage in protests that are antagonistic to authorities. Movements like Occupy Wall Street and the Pussy Riots in Russia fall in the latter category and they force open an atmosphere of mass political awakening. They provide a space for radically new visions of society and a new educational space for young people to learn collective engagement.

Youth have always been at the forefront of social justice issues and this is especially true in times of strife and injustice. In recent years, they have engaged in political action that center on racial justice, disability rights, non-normative gender and sexuality issues and climate change issues. In the following sections, we will examine some prominent examples of young people who have been leaders of movements for a more just world.

The Movement for Black Lives

People of color, and Black people specifically, have always established movements of resistance against racial

discrimination. An influential racial justice movement today is Black Lives Matter which is a widespread global network for black liberation across America. Black Lives Matter started in 2013 as a response to long standing and continuous, state-sanctioned violence and anti-Black racism in America. The movement was founded by Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi as a grass roots organization to intervene in the violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and other racist elements. The founding women hoped that the movement would connect Black people globally in their desire to act collectively for the welfare of their communities. Black Lives Matter has given young people a platform to express their opposition to incidents of violence on Black people in their communities as well as to the long-standing racism and hate that perpetuates this violence.

Youth have always been at the frontlines of the struggle for racial justice. The increased attention to state violence on Black people has galvanized youth of color for whom the daily aggressions against their dignity is not a new phenomenon. After two white Baton Rouge Police Department officers shot Alton Sterling, a 37-year-old black man in Louisiana in the summer of 2016, students from the Baton Rouge High School took to the streets. In response to the unjust and horrific killing, students Myra Richardson, Raheejah Flowers and Jeanette Jackson led what they called the Wave March for Justice, which brought thousands to the Louisiana capitol five days after the unjust killing (Simonton 2016). These three young women were trained for community organizing as members of the Baton Rouge Youth Coalition (BRYC), a youth development organization that promotes civic engagement. The skills and experience these young women were gaining by being members of

BRYC were used to organize students around fighting racial injustice in their community. Lucas Spielfogel, the executive director of BRYC, shared that activism around social issues is a natural extension of the organization's work with youth (Simonton 2016). The fact that these young women could organize thousands of people to protest an injustice, speaks to their leadership and influence as well as to the collective outrage around the unjust killing.

In the summer of 2019, 18-year-old Nupol Kiazolu, president of Black Lives Matter of Greater New York, led demonstrators in a passionate chant: "We will not stop until justice is served" as they stood by the New York Police Department's Times Square substation (Baum 2019). The protest aimed to bring attention to the final hearing of NYPD officer Daniel Pantaleo who, along with other police officers, tackled and restrained to death an unarmed Black man by the name of Eric Garner. Garner's last words were "I can't breathe," which became, "a rallying cry for the Black Lives Matter movement" (Baum 2019). Kiazolu, who is a sophomore at Hampton University, was featured on Teen Vogue's list of 21 Under 21 in 2018 and calls for the rebuilding of the US criminal justice system saying, "until we can radically deconstruct the system of policing and not just reform but rebuild it, these gruesome injustices will continue" (Baum 2019). The Black Lives Matter movement continues to inspire youth of color to take matters into their own hands by protesting and educating.

Another example of youth activism in the movement for Black Lives comes from Ottumwa High School in Ottumwa, Iowa. As part of the 2020 National Black Lives Matter in School Week of Action, a group of Ottumwa high school students committed to reading and educating their peers on issues around equality, difference, and diversity. One of

the students, Nardos Gebremedhin, who read books to preschoolers in her efforts, shared that she wants to teach others about her culture and, “show that we may be different, but we can come together” (Reece 2020). There is great power in the influence that youth can have on others to impact social change, especially when they are working with their own peers. However, schools and other institutions in young peoples’ lives must provide the appropriate scaffolds so youth can be trained in the field of collective community organization to effect the positive changes that they need for their development as change agents.

Occupy Wall Street

Perhaps one of the most significant protest movements that was overwhelmingly spearheaded by youth in the last two decades was the Occupy Wall Street movement. When the housing bubble burst in 2007- 2008, many young people across the country felt betrayed by the system. The country plunged into a recession and pushed families and communities into poverty and bankruptcy. Since the recession, the wealth inequality between the wealthy 20% and the rest of the population has grown enormously. The top 1% owns about 40% of the wealth of the country. There has been a growing disenchantment among young people

and a lack of trust that the current economic system will facilitate a transition into self-sufficiency and economic independence (The Guardian, 2011).

On September 17, 2011, the group Adbusters, a youth advocacy and anti-corporate group, called for the Occupation of Wall Street to send a signal to the financial elites that young people had lost faith in all major institutions in the country – the government, the media and the banks. Law enforcement in NYC, which had been forewarned, prevented activists from entering the area and so the protest moved to Zuccotti Park. By nightfall over a 100 people had gathered in Zuccotti park voicing their protest over a system that fueled economic injustice in the country. It was the largest movement since the Vietnam War and was unique in the way in which it organized itself. The organizers proposed direct democracy, no hierarchical organization structures and emphasized self-empowerment. There was an attempt to challenge race and gender hierarchies within the movement and be more inclusive of the concerns of marginalized groups.

Almost immediately, the movement was criticized by mainstream media for disrupting public peace and not having clearly defined goals. However, the use of digital media allowed the group organizers to exchange information and the movement spread across the country where it took on regional characteristics with issues specific to their community being raised within the movement. Technology allowed communication and individual groups learned from each other. In order to counter the negative media coverage, it encouraged recordings of movement actions and soon the Occupy Movement created its own coverage which it broadcast over the internet. The group also began publicizing the

casual use of violence by law enforcement to suppress its gatherings. In October 2011, 700 people were arrested in NYC alone. This coalesced other organizations to rally around the group. By December, thousands of young people in NYC managed to shut down Wall Street. Since the civil rights era, this was the first time that there was a national youth movement that drew a wide range of people. Youth had learned a valuable lesson about mobilizing for change. While the movement itself did not achieve institutional change, it inspired young adults to get engaged in a civic manner for political change. Many of the youth who were active in the movement gravitated towards the Democratic Socialist of America (DSA).

Trans Activism

When Eli Ehrlich came out as female even though she was classified as male (cis male) at birth, she did not find much support from people around her. However, with access to digital information, she found out that there were many thousands of people who identified as trans. She also understood that for trans youth it was important to establish connections with others in the community and acquire accurate information that is pertinent to their identity and community. The Trans Student Educational Resources (TSER) network was set up by Ehrlich for exactly such a purpose. Digital advocacy has also allowed groups such as the TSER to educate others about the specific issues that youth with non-normative gender identities

face in the country and around the world. Most mainstream ways of dealing with transphobia has been to increase visibility of the group; however, this has also led to increased violence on group members. The virtual space creates a haven for many in the 'gender defiant' community especially in rural areas. Similarly, crowd funding has been successfully employed by trans communities to recover transition related costs within the group, especially for people of color who have less access to health resources. Transgender youth have had a much more radical liberatory focus in their actions both on and offline as compared to older generations of trans activists who focus more on assimilation and less on disrupting basic neoliberal frameworks. Young trans organizers have been the most insistent that the focus in terms of social justice remain on trans youth of color since they are the most likely to suffer violence, discrimination and a lack of access to health resources.

In recent years, the digital resources provided by youth groups dedicated to trans advocacy has proved invaluable because of the rapid changes that has come about in the frameworks used to comprehend the transsexual experience. There has been a move for instance to use trans* to include all gender non-conforming experiences and using the term trans to refer to only people who want to transition to one of the binary genders (male/female). Having consistent language to represent non-conforming or marginalized experiences is crucial to building community and the internet aids in the discourse that facilitates this.

In 2016, North Carolina passed the restrictive HB2 law which prevented trans individuals from using the bathrooms of the chosen gender. There was an outcry at

the national level, but it was really the organizing and protests that students in North Carolina engaged in that eventually led to the law's repeal. For one young trans student in North Carolina, Vinnie Holt, life became very difficult since his school, which only had one gender inclusive bathroom, did not want to flout the law. He decided to collect letters from other students and organize collectively to change school policy. With the support of the community, the school eventually did transform itself into a gender inclusive institution. In high schools and colleges around the country trans youth have protested the lack of options and safety when it comes to toilets. Cases where they have been harassed have prompted young people to organize and demand safe bathroom spaces for gender defiant and gender non-binary individuals. Communities have responded in a variety of ways such as providing for gender neutral bathrooms in accessible locations.

Gun Control Advocacy

One of the most important issues facing youth in high schools today is the issue of gun violence. After the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland Florida in 2018, students organized to advocate for gun free schools and strict gun control in society. During

the shooting, 17 students and staff were killed and another 17 were injured. Many of the survivors showed signs of trauma. A group of about twenty students from the school came together to form a group that they titled Never again MSD with a hashtag #NeverAgain. Their goals were mainly to influence legislative action that would lead to strict gun laws. The governor of Florida was pushed to raise the minimum age for gun ownership, increase the waiting period and perform a more thorough background check before guns were sold to individuals. The National Rifle Association filed a lawsuit against these measures. The activist student group publicly called out legislators who had taken money from the NRA. The founding students of the group utilized the attention of the national media on the violent shooting in their school to gain a presence on social platforms and other digital media, while at the same time giving interviews to TV and radio stations to make their point about the need for effective gun legislation. They also used their reach to organize a national protest march a little over a month after the shooting incident. The group and their supporters applied pressure on major corporations to sever their ties with the NRA. One year later, they held an anniversary march in Washington DC reiterating their goals for a gun-violence free country. (Guardian News, 2018).

All the above examples demonstrate the power of collective organizing and the impact of youth voice in society. Students who feel politically empowered in high schools continue to be socially engaged in their communities and in the larger world. With their prospects being uncertain, it is important for adults to teach young people the strength that they do obtain when they are organized around important goals that are beneficial for

themselves and for society. A culturally sensitive, anti-racist, equity oriented, historically accurate pedagogy facilitates an understanding of how social hierarchy works and the history of past efforts to undo the consequence of unearned privilege. It fosters individual youths' sense of agency and efficacy over their contexts and helps foster positive social change.

Climate Change Movement

The climate change movement's most influential leaders today are youth, not scientists or political figures. Isra Hirsi, daughter of U.S. congresswoman Ilhan Omar, is one of the many teen activists behind the climate movement. Hirsi is co-founder and executive director of U.S. Youth Climate Strike, a youth-led climate movement (Cassel 2019). She is particularly interested in educating about environmental racism as an important aspect of climate change in terms of who is most affected by climate change. Hirsi suggests that the climate issues tend to appeal more to white people and has therefore become a movement centered on whiteness and the exploration of the impact of climate disruption on just communities of privilege. The consequence of this unequal emphasis, according to Hirsi, is that Black, brown, indigenous and low-income communities are ignored (Cassel 2019; Ettachfini, 2019). Mainstream conversations

about climate change therefore constructs the problem as if it was not taking place within the context of injustice and marginalization of some communities, and the solutions discussed or implemented leave out the concerns of those who it affects the most (Cassel 2019).

Youth of color have been part of the major protest movements centered on protecting natural resources in the USA. Quannah Chasinghorse of Alaska fought successfully to keep the Arctic Wildlife Refuge safe from mining and logging. Feliquan Charlemagne is the creative director of the national organization Youth Climate Strike, highlighting the major risks that climate change poses for nations around the world and trying to influence legislative change. They are both 17 years old.

Greta Thunberg is perhaps the most well-known young climate activist. She became popular when she protested in front of the Swedish parliament building with a sign reading “School Strike for Climate” in 2018. This sparked other protests and strikes around the world and soon Thunberg was traveling to other places around Europe where there were climate protests. This built great momentum and by September 2019 she was presenting at the Climate Action Summit (BBC 2020). In her opening remarks she stated that she should not have been there, and instead should have been in school on the other side of the ocean. She goes on to say, “Yet, you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you? You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words and yet, I’m one of the lucky ones” (Thunberg 2019). Her speech was powerful and a real testament to how deeply young people feel about the climate crisis and the lack of action being taken around it by policy makers and citizens.

Conclusion

As the chapter demonstrates, moral development is not simply a product of maturity but also the consequence of the social and cultural context that people function within. All the institutions in society play a huge role in its development in young people. Social context is a significant factor in how people choose to display their morality and ethical frameworks. In authoritarian situations, people are likely to follow leaders even when they behave in immoral ways. When schools emphasize civic engagement and open discussions about controversial issues, children grow up having the language to think about ethicality in comprehensive ways. In addition to voluntary engagement, youth also need political engagement to stay democratically involved throughout their adult lives.

Review and Reflect

REVIEW

- 1.What is the difference between political and civic engagement?
- 2.What defines a 'good' or 'bad' citizen?

3.What are some examples of how youth have taken active stands around gun control?

4.How have digital resources ignited teen activism?

REFLECT

1.How did you engage with politics and activism as a teen?

2.Were there clubs in your school that focused on political issues?

3.In what contexts did you grow up hearing the word ‘citizenship’?

Glossary of Terms

‘bad citizen’

‘categorical imperative’

‘civic’ engagement

‘good citizen’

‘heteronomous morality’

‘political’ engagement

‘the banality of evil’

‘veil of ignorance’

absolutist

acceptance of vulnerability

Aquinas

autonomous morality
blind obedience to authority and an incapacity to
reason ethically
Carol Gilligan
cognitive empathy
collective engagement
commitment
Confucian
consistent language
course dedicated to civic knowledge
cultural differences
deterrence
distributive justice
distributive justice
dualism
early Greek
emotional empathy
equality
ethic of care
ethic of care
ethic of justice
following universal moral principles
Hannah Arendt
hb2 law
Heinz dilemma

Hobbes
inductive discipline
James Rest
John Rawls
justice
justice as fairness
Kant
libertarians
Locke
Martha Nussbaum
meritocracies
Milgram's experiment
mirror neurons
morality
multiplicity of resolutions
need for justice
needs-based justice
norms of inequality
original position
postconventional stages
premoral phase
relativism
restorative justice
retributive punishment
right and wrong

social order
Stanford prison experiment
Stanley Milgram
the difference principle
the fair opportunity principle
the liberty principles
threats of love-withdrawal
trans
two conventional stages
two preconventional stages
utilitarian
welfare maximization
Zimbardo

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II. Chapter II: Case Studies & Integrating the Chapters

GOWRI PARAMESWARAN

Learning Goals

- Integrating knowledge across the text
- Using concepts to make meaning of adolescent lives
- Applying theories to real-life events and issues
- Understanding the ambiguity and uncertainty of real-life problem solving
- Work with peers in a collaborative fashion

Chapter Outline

- Introduction to Using Case Studies
- Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning
- Case Studies
 - o Ahmed:
 - o Sophia

- o Jonathan
- o Angela
- o Keira
- o Robin
- o Javed
- o Shefali
- o Tara
- o Jared
- o Concluding Reflections
- o References

Introduction to Using Case Studies

Stories and storytelling are powerful ways to learn and understand theory in the context of actual applications. Case studies complicates simplistic understandings of knowledge and forces the reader to come to terms with contradictions inherent in frameworks of knowledge. Case studies facilitate the use of inductive thinking for learners; in other words, most case studies have no clear right and wrong answers and the reader must weigh the pros and cons of each course of action (Popil, 2011). The pedagogical tool as used in this segment allows for applying the knowledge gained in other chapters, solving problems, and finding new ways to explore the topics surveyed in earlier chapters. It has the potential to bring knowledge and praxis together. Case studies invite the reader to make connections between theory and the real world in which

people function. Another clear benefit of introducing case studies as a part of the curriculum is foregrounding the ambiguities inherent in real world situations. When used as a group exercise, the method has the capacity to facilitate cooperation and teamwork (Dowd & Davidhar, 1999; Herreid, 2007).

Practitioners and experts of the case study pedagogical method recommend that certain predetermined steps be used to facilitate thinking when using the tool. They advise that learners and instructors initially begin by identifying the main ideas that hold the case together; in other words, we could ask, “what is this story about and what is the intention behind its telling?”. The group or individuals could try to articulate clearly why the case is being discussed and why the discussion might be important in the overall context of the class. How can students benefit from exploring the issue?

The second major step could involve exploring the context of the problem enumerated in the case study. The exploration can involve key factors that affect the issues identified in the case-study. The students and instructor can make clear the connections between the various facets of the case and the larger factors that may not be spelled out in the case description. This would be especially true as one begins to explore social and political factors that might have led to the problems in question. In popular discourse, individual distress is not connected to larger political and social forces and is often presented in a reductive fashion. However, as discussed in the earlier chapters of the book, the personal is political and social. Discussing case studies as couched within the larger context helps expose those connections.

Finally, it is important to end the discussion on a hopeful

note; thus, solutions or the way forward can be explored in attempting to address any underlying issues. Participants can discuss alternative solutions to a situation both at the macro and the individual or familial levels. The relative advantages and disadvantages of any solution can be laid out and the long-term consequences on individuals, families, communities and the larger social context can be enumerated (Herreid, 2011).

The case studies listed reflect a variety of situations that involve young people in diverse contexts. There is no one stated problem and the situations can be used in a variety of ways to strengthen connections between the readings, applying the information from the chapters and analyzing the larger social and economic contexts within which youth function. Some of the cases require the reader to go beyond the book and search for external resources that may shed light on the case. Following each of the case descriptions, there are questions and follow up work that students are invited to engage in. There are also some suggested topics and chapters that the cases may relate to if the instructor chooses to review earlier information that the class explored.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning

The Bloom's taxonomy of learning states that there are several levels of complexity in the learning process. The levels are enumerated in figure 1 (courtesy Vanderbilt

University Center for Teaching). While the earlier chapters in the textbook introduced readers to information about theory, research and findings about adolescence and youth, they mainly address the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy of learning. This chapter aims to offer opportunities for the learner to integrate the various ideas and concepts introduced in the textbook and think about real world issues in a more analytical manner. Students can engage with the subject matter in an inductive fashion and hope to achieve a grasp on the many issues surrounding adolescence from more complex perspectives. They can learn the material from Bloom's higher levels by applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating new ways of exploring the topics we examined.

Each case study has a short introduction and a narrative. The cases could be broken down into : a) identifying and getting an accurate description of the case and the protagonist's predicament; b) the major contributing factors that form the basis of the case; c) finding ways of addressing the specific issue or issues; d) coming up with larger social policies that might have an impact on all youth in the long-term.

Students can be encouraged to go back to the book to find relevant information that may help them understand the cases better and answer its central questions. In addition, they can attempt to identify the institutional levels where these factors were active – family, social institutions or larger political factors. They can then think about what additional information they may need to collect and where they could gather the material from. Finally, they can explore studies that have attempted to address the dilemmas that they conceptualized, what their findings

were and the strengths and weaknesses of these experiments.

As Bronfenbrenner describes eloquently in his theory (described in Chapter 1), it is important to explore how people are influenced by forces that range from biological predispositions to the family and the neighborhood and the larger social structural factors. The interactions between these various institutions historically and in the present often help in understanding contemporary phenomena. It is important for a holistic assessment of a problem to have the breadth of understanding that includes the genesis of the situation, how these issues are defined in public discourse and understanding who benefits and who loses as a result of framing of issues.

Case Study: Ahmed:

Ahmed is one of the many Syrian children who had to flee their homes when the violence started inside Syria. There are about 31 million children who are currently displaced because of war, strife and social unrest. A little more than half are displaced internally while the rest have had to leave their national borders to seek refuge in other countries. Many of these children and youth cannot return because of the fear of being persecuted in their own countries. About 52 % of refugees are children and youth below the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2018). There are 5 million refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria.

Ahmed's family was middle class before the war, and they lived in the city of Homs in Syria. His father was an engineer and his mother, a teacher. Before the war started, Ahmed wanted to be a medical doctor when he grew up. After the beginning of the war in 2014, his family was forced to flee even as the bombs were falling over Homs. The family moved from place to place trying to find a path out of the destruction that large parts of the country was increasingly being subjected to. Ahmed saw his brother being killed from bomb shrapnel that fell too close to their temporary shelter. He has witnessed people being tortured and murdered. Now Ahmed lives in a camp on the northern Iraqi border that was built for 10,000 and now holds close to 50,000 people— almost half of them children. With the onset of winter, there is a scarcity of necessities youth like Ahmed find themselves with few resources to adapt to the changing seasons. He had fled his home with nothing but his summer clothes on. He remembers his past with his family with a great deal of fondness, but he feels an anger that seems to consume him when he thinks about how his life was thrown into chaos because of decisions that others made.

Any Syrian family seeking to come to the US must go through extreme vetting because Syrians are predominantly Muslim. The first level of screening is conducted by the United Nations which then passes on the family dossiers to the US. The families are then interviewed several times by Homeland Security after which they are forced to wait for the FBI and other criminal screenings to come back clean. The chances of approval are slim but if they are allowed in, they are given 'cultural' training where they learn the norms and mores? in the US. Against all odds, Ahmed's family has just been allowed to enter the US

but with the US immigration policy under a great deal of flux, Ahmed and his family feel a lot of uncertainty about their future. His neighbors assure him that he is fortunate but all he can feel is great despair at having to leave his home and extended family and settle in a land that he knows little about and whose language he does not understand.

Reflection Questions:

- Why are there so many children who end up being refugees when a country goes through civic strife? What might be precipitating factors in the Syrian context?
- What might be some of the impact of war and displacement on Ahmed and other children like him in the short term? As an adult, what might be the challenges he is likely to face?
- How do social identities like religion, socioeconomic class, gender and sexual identity affect life after displacement for youth?
- What are the services that youth need under conditions of displacement? Why?
- Explore in your own readings, how international organizations have stepped in to aid with youth in the conflict in Syria and elsewhere. Are they effective in reaching their goals?
- What are some factors that led to successful interventions in your readings? What are some barriers to helping youth who are caught under conditions of war?

Case-Study: Sophia

Sophia traveled from El Salvador with her mother when she was just a baby. Her family was forced to escape and undertake the long arduous journey because they were caught in the crossfires of a drug war in their neighborhood. Her father was killed in a conflict and her mother had little access to safety. The mother made the difficult choice of traveling through inhospitable terrain with her two children to escape the much worse fate that she felt awaited them if they stayed. During her long crossing of Mexico, Sophia's mother was raped by a fellow traveler and beaten and robbed by another.

Sophia has spent more time in the US than in the country where she was born. She is now a student in a local mid-western high school, but she is confronted with the harsh reality that she may be deported without warning. Her mother is cut off from mainstream American society and Sophia must play the role of the translator in any engagement they may have with any social institutions they may encounter. In the last few months, Sophia has also increasingly become aware of her sexual identity as being non-normative but she dare not talk about it to anyone, especially her mother. She knows her mother has too much to contend with and she does not want to burden her any more than is necessary; she does not really know if her mother would understand either. When her teachers talk about civic engagement and democracy, her own disenfranchisement becomes clear to her – she has few rights in the country she has spent much of her life in.

Attending college is almost impossible considering that she was not born here and has no social security number. The new immigration crackdowns have heightened the stress for her family since they are not sure when one of them might be caught, jailed or worse, deported; separation from her family is so painful for her that she tries not to think about the rather likely possibility that it might happen. The family has stopped going out unless it is absolutely necessary. More recently, Sophia has been complaining of increasing anxiety and distress. She sees her young brother of ten burst into tears and try to harm himself by throwing himself against the wall and she feels powerless to help him (Sherman, Mendoza & Burke, 2019).

Reflection Questions:

- Why does Sophia exhibit symptoms of distress? How will it affect her functioning in the short-term and in the future?
- How does separation from one's family and incarceration affect youth and children?
- Why does the Academy of Pediatrics think unaccompanied minors need urgent help? What are some concepts that you studied in your readings that might help explain the distress these children are feeling?
- What is Sophia's immediate need in order to regain her mental and physical health? What are some of her long-term needs?
- What are some factors that facilitate or impede the full development of undocumented children?

Case Study: Jonathan

Jonathan grew up in a suburb outside of a large US city. His upbringing was relatively normal; his European immigrant parents worked long hours to help make ends meet. As he advanced through school, his parents had little capacity to help him with schoolwork since they barely spoke English. Despite his family's social background, Jonathan was a regular 14-year-old boy, playing video games and occasionally engaging in smoking marijuana and binge-drinking alcohol. School did not interest him very much, but he was an average student and did well enough in school that he was left alone. He did have feelings of inferiority because he felt that he was not very popular and charming; few girls expressed an interest in spending time with him. He did not make many overtures either since he felt that he would only be ignored by girls. He is told by his peers that he should be strong and controlling as a white male, but his experiences do not reinforce his peers' assertions. He does not know what he wants to do with his life, and he is worried about his economic future. Jonathan sees that many people in his neighborhood are being laid off frequently and their new jobs often pay less than what they had earned before. His immigrant family on the other hand emphasizes the importance of working hard and being independent and successful in life; his parents are strict and demand complete obedience.

Recently, Jonathan has been spending a lot of time online in order to distract and entertain himself; his favorite website is 4-Chan from which he gathers that the current

way of life for Americans is under threat. The sites direct him to speakers who present their views on life in very emotional terms; they reject women's rights, disparage any non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality, demonize immigrants and intellectuals. They emphasize that happiness comes from belonging to an exclusive community that rejects what the rest of society might believe in. The speakers make him feel special and valuable and he finds that his feelings are validated when he goes online to chat with other like-minded people. Jonathan has started to articulate some of his thoughts on the depravity of the people involved in the Black Lives Matter movement on the Chan board that he belongs to online and has been delighted by the positive expressions of support he has been receiving from other people. This gives him the courage to try out an anti-woman meme he had been working on for a while now. Sometimes in the dead of night, he is alarmed at the rather radical turn the online community has taken, but he loves his group and does not want to alienate them by resisting some of the obnoxious sentiments that he has seen others express. In the meantime, he has alienated his former friends in school and in the neighborhood, who perceive him as odd and a little scary. Some of his former acquaintances have reached out to the teachers and the administration at school. They report the changes in Jonathan's behavior and the racist thoughts that he expresses online and among friends. They are informed that there is little the school can do since he poses no visible threat to anybody, even if his statements are objectionable. When Jonathan reports his experiences in school back to his online community, they assure him that his schoolmates are snowflakes and crybabies.

Reflection Questions:

- 1.What are some factors in Jonathan's life that make him susceptible to white supremacist messages?
- 2.How are social media platforms easy spaces to spread hate messages? What are some concepts in your readings that illuminate this idea?
- 3.How can advocates for Jonathan intervene to help him see the groups for what they are – hate groups? Why is it hard to achieve this end?
- 4.What are some social, political and economic factors that have led to the increase in hate crimes against immigrants, people of color, homosexuals and trans people in the last few years? How can social institutions like families, schools and other social institutions respond?

Case Study: Angela

Angela is a young woman of 16. Her family belongs to an upper middle-class background; her father is a manager of a multinational company and her mother makes a living as a photographer. Even though both parents work, they make sure that the food made and served at home is local and freshly prepared. The family mostly eats together except when Angela has gymnastics practice; the mother is usually the one to drop and pick Angela up from practice and is her most avid champion. The mother recognizes that Angela

has a real gift in the sport, and she wants her daughter to excel in everything that she undertakes. Angela is a top student at school and is popular with both teachers and peers. Both parents are physically active and very health conscious. They would both be considered highly attractive by viewers. Angela occasionally observes her mother in front of the living-room mirror examining her body closely and pinching her waist disparagingly. During one of those moments, the mother notices Angela watching her and comments that middle age is not for the faint of heart and that she is working hard to keep her youthful appearance. She comments that it is hard work to be fit, and people who are not healthy and fit have themselves to blame. She emphasizes to Angela that the girl should aspire to be the best and the sky is really the limit. Sometimes Angela's dad joins in, in making fun of his wife's weight gain, though he claims it is all in jest. Her parents subscribe to several health magazines and have extended conversations about calories in different foods and appropriate ways to cook and eat them.

Angela loves flipping through fashion magazines and participates extensively in both viewing Instagram photographs as well as commenting on them when her friends put up pictures. Angela thinks it is harmless fun – she thinks about how attractive she is and the social media site is a great way to reward herself for all the hard work she does on herself. However, she has recently begun following a famous teen icon on Instagram and is in awe of her beauty and talent. The icon seemed to have flawless skin and a perfectly proportioned body. Her photographs reflect the kind of life that Angela aspires to; she wants to be recognized for her talent in gymnastics and she believes that if she works hard enough, she can achieve the kind of

success this icon seems to have achieved. She has increased the time that she spends at the gym and has started to fast until late afternoon. Her mother notices that she eats a lot less than she did a year ago and is glad that her child is conscious about her health.

Reflection Questions:

- 1.What are some factors in Angela's life that makes her susceptible to body dysmorphia?
- 2.How are social media platforms easy spaces to spread messages that lead to body dysmorphia? What are some concepts in your readings that illuminate this idea?
- 3.How can advocates for Angela intervene to help her see that she may be engaging in self-destructive behavior? Why is it hard to treat body dysmorphia and some forms of eating disorders?
- 4.What are some social, political and economic factors that have led to the increase disordered eating? How can social institutions like families, schools and other social institutions respond?

Case-Study: Keira

As far back as anyone could remember of Keira's early childhood, she was better than other children her age at

whatever task she undertook. She was speaking in full sentences by 12 months and could write and do simple mathematical computations by 2 years. Her parents were proud of her achievements and often wanted her to display her talents to visitors and guests to their house. She had impeccable grades all through elementary school and the teachers loved her even though she appeared distracted and seemed to be daydreaming in class.

In middle school she was tracked into the most difficult courses because she seemed to handle her work easily and was usually successful in gaining mastery over the subject matter. She seemed to be initially continuing her trajectory of past successes but more recently her grades have been falling, mostly because she has not been able to get to class on time. She routinely fails to turn in her homework and leaves quizzes unwritten and unfinished. Her teachers have called her parents in for a meeting. The parents report that Keira's grandmother with whom Keira had been close to, passed away after an illness that lasted over two years. The family had been to counseling after the grandmother's death, but Keira did not seem visibly perturbed and the parents thought that perhaps being a child, Keira was more resilient than they had given her credit for.

Keira has trouble sitting still in her seat during class and can barely stop herself from wanting to get up and jump in order to not fall asleep. In addition, Keira doodles endlessly on her notebook but even that does not stimulate her enough and she does incur the teacher's anger occasionally. While she had had no trouble forming friendships in elementary school, she feels that she is not well-liked now because her classmates complain that she is rude and does not consider their needs. Some of her former friends now try to avoid her in school. A couple of

friends called her ‘retarded’ and ‘an idiot’ after an altercation at lunch and Keira screamed back throwing a milk carton across the table at her friends. The school psychologist works with Keira and reports to the principal that Keira reports feeling extremely distracted and unable to concentrate in class, especially when the task seems repetitive and undemanding. She reports to the psychologist that she plans strategies for her video game while in class and loves to go home and implement those game strategies. The school psychologist suspects that Keira might have AD/HD and recommends further testing and medication if needed.

Reflection Questions:

- What are some factors in Angela’s life that make her susceptible to body dysmorphia?
- How are social media platforms easy spaces to spread messages that lead to body dysmorphia? What are some concepts in your readings that illuminate this idea?
- How can advocates for Angela intervene to help her see that she may be engaging in self-destructive behavior? Why is it hard to treat body dysmorphia and some forms of eating disorders?
- What are some social, political and economic factors that have led to the increase disordered eating? How can social institutions like families, schools and other social institutions respond?

Case Study: Robin

Robin was promoted to principal in Dewey High School. The school is situated in an economically and racially diverse area on the outskirts of a large city. After many decades of being economically distressed, it has been enjoying a rebirth as new technology venture companies have moved into the area in the last decade. The result is that many older residents are being priced out and taxed out of their homes, a process known as gentrification. In Robin's school, over three-fourths of the students come from low-income families, while there is a small minority of students whose parents are in the tech industry and could be considered upper class or in the upper-middle-class. As reflected in many of the standardized testing scales, Robin's was a failing school. The school had been put on probation by the state. Analysis by some local professors of education revealed that the city's distribution of funding is unequal and disadvantaged Dewey High School students. Comparisons reveal that the teachers at this school are less experienced, and there is a high turnover of teachers and staff than other wealthier schools. Even as Robin is struggling to get the remedial help for students that need it the most, there is pressure from middle- and upper-class families to offer more for their children in the form of advanced placement classes or even an international baccalaureate degree. At the same time, as the school is being forced to make dramatic cuts in the arts and in music because of budgetary constraints, families of privilege push for more arts, music and sports in an after-school setting. These families feel that the facilities are not conducive to extra-curricular activities and put pressure on Robin and her staff to allocate more resources and personnel to after school programs. The after-school activities participation

of the working-class students in the school district had been dropping over the last decade and Robin spent many evenings pondering the ethicality of the current unequal system of funding for different programs in the school. At the same time, she is aware that in order to draw qualified workers, the technology companies need schools that cater to their needs. They contribute valuable tax dollars to the area.

Reflection Questions:

- What is gentrification and what are the ways that it affects the lives of adolescents in and out of school?
- How can parents of all backgrounds in the district participate in the decision making of how resources get spent in school? Why is it hard to achieve equity in participation?
- What are some social, political and economic factors that have led to the increased racial and social class segregation of schools in the country even after Brown v Board of Education overturned the practice 60 years ago?
- What are some issues that Robin needs to think about as she makes choices about how to spend valuable school resources?

Case-Study: Javed

Javed is a high school teacher who is attending a workshop on using findings from brain research to enhance teaching. The participants spent the first half of the day talking about the structure of the brain and how they affect behavior. Two neuro psychologists were the facilitators of the workshop. By the end of the morning session, Javed felt confident that they understood the basics of the structure and functioning of the brain. They gathered that there were basically three 'layers' to the brain which roughly could be termed reptilian, early mammalian and the exclusively human brain. The second half of the workshop focused on groups differences in brain structure and functioning and how this affects learning and emotions. The discussion became especially heated when gender differences were the topic. One of the facilitators Gregory, maintained that there were clear gender differences in the brain, and this was the cause of performance differences in cognitive tasks between boys and girls – Gregory asserted that the corpus callosum was bigger in girls and hence the brain hemispheres are more specialized for boys.

Javed was informed by Gregory that some of the structures in the brain, like the hippocampus and the amygdala, were bigger in boys. When solving problems or performing mental tasks, girls used different parts of the brain as compared to boys. Gregory asserted that many of the gender differences in behavior and academic performance can be traced to these brain differences. Girls were supposedly better at verbal tasks and boys in numerical tasks. Girls were more compliant and better planners while boys were impulsive and excitement seeking. The other facilitator of the workshop, Kiersten,

disputed that these findings had validity and maintained that social differences from birth onwards are a significant factor leading to differences in brain and behavior, especially as they related to cognitive achievement. Javed is confused; they had thought that perhaps organizing groups by gender, focusing on learning styles and aptitudes of the different genders would help them become a better teacher. They were discovering that perhaps it was a little more complicated than simply identifying brain difference.

Reflection Questions:

- From your reading of the textbook, what are some issues discussed in the connection with gender and behavior in your text?
- What other information might help in the project of sorting out the importance of gender in schools?
- What are some social, political and economic influences that lead to group differences in academic performance?
- In the context of the large variation in experts' thinking on the influence of gender on school performance, how might Javed attempt to use the information that they have on the brain?

Case-Study: Shefali

Shefali's family goes to church every Sunday together and the parents typically go one other day of the week by themselves for mass. Her basic values were formed and crystallized in the Sunday school that she remembers attending all her life. She recalls her childhood as a happy one. She has always enjoyed singing and writing the most of all the activities her parents encouraged her to attend. People often commented on her several talents and her dedication to cultivating all of them. At the age of thirteen, Shefali's father lost his job and this placed an enormous stress on her mother who had been a homemaker before that. Her father had a specialized occupation in medical transcription, and this occupation was fast disappearing. All the alternative jobs that her father applied for paid less and he was mulling the idea of going back to school to retrain in a more employable profession even though he was in his forties. Her mother has had to go back to work at a retail store where she is paid hourly and receives no benefits. The family had to move to a smaller house in a neighborhood with lower property taxes. Shefali lost many of her neighborhood friends who now more or less ignore her in school. Initially, she had tried to make overtures to her old friends, but they seemed preoccupied with their newfound freedoms and independence. While Shefali once wanted to become a medical doctor, she feels that there is little chance she could fulfil her dream. It was not lost on her that her parents constantly bickered about money and would not talk to each other for days after exchanging harsh words. Her mother had been engaged deeply with Shefali but now seems preoccupied and stressed. Shefali hated going home and she was beginning to hate her school. She recently struck up a friendship with a girl who

others often labeled as a bully but who was also known to be a loyal friend. Shefali appreciated that this newly found friend made her feel less lonely and she always seemed to have time for her. Shefali maintains passing grades but her teachers notice that there is little enthusiasm that the girl exhibits around schoolwork and the quality of her schoolwork is dropping. They also notice with alarm that her friendships are changing, and she no longer wants to sing at school plays and other events.

Reflection Questions:

- What are some concepts and research findings in your textbook that may help you to understand Shefali's situation?
- What role does social class in the US play in family life and cohesion? How is parental employment related to child welfare?
- Why are Shefali's teachers concerned about the company she keeps? What do research studies assert about peer relationships and behavior?
- How can Shefali's advocates help her navigate her difficult youth?

Case-Study: Tara

Tara was a sixteen-year-old girl who had never engaged in sex or even been kissed by boys before she met David. She had plenty of friends who identified as boys, just no one that she was romantically interested in. She gathered from her girlfriends that relationships are fraught with heartbreak and these were experienced by her friends as emotional rollercoasters. Her parents have had the sex talk with her when she was 12 and got her first period. They told her that young people are not ready to have a relationship when they are in high school and they themselves were glad that they waited until college to go out with someone. Tara had plenty to occupy her and was not really looking for a relationship, but then she met David. Tara met him at a friend's birthday party; it was a fun affair with plenty of alcohol in circulation. Tara had been pressured to have a drink and she felt her usual reserve float away. She felt drawn to David because he seemed to have many friends in the gathering, but she felt him eyeing her appreciatively. She had one more drink to make her panic go away. The two struck up a conversation and after the party they took a long walk and by the end of it, they decided they were in love. David was older and had just graduated high school and was taking a gap year. In a few weeks' time, Tara was spending all her time with David. He was a voracious reader and introduced her to exciting new books. He played acoustic guitar and wrote beautiful love songs to her. Tara felt that she must be the luckiest person on the planet. She was hanging out a lot less with her friends and if she had to confess, she would admit that she even liked them a little less. Also, she was secretly afraid that David may not like her friends and think them to be shallow. A couple of times when they did have dinner

with her friends, David had later commented that he found this or that person to be vacuous and silly. On another occasion when she wanted to go to the movies with a couple of girlfriends, David appeared angry and said that he had made plans for them for that evening and that Tara was so inconsiderate that she forgot all about it. A friend who Tara had known from her earliest years expressed her concern for Tara; Tara reassured her that David loved her dearly and cared for her.

On a warm June day, David and Tara were returning from a concert of his favorite musician when David stopped the car and asked her if she really loved him. Of course, Tara said. Then I'd like for you to show it, David hissed through his breath. He had been drinking and smoking pot all evening. How? Responded Tara. I want us to have sex; it's time. I know you said you were not ready, but I think it's time and if you loved me, you would trust me and not keep me hanging. Tara was dumbfounded. She weakly protested, "I've promised my parents, I will discuss this with them." David appeared enraged at the thought of her parents having a say in their relationship. He walked around, opened the passenger side door of the car and pulled her on to the grass by the side of the road. Tara froze in her terror.

Reflection Questions:

- What are some concepts and research findings in your textbook that may help you to understand Tara's situation?
- What role does gender play in both peer and

romantic relationships? How common is it for girls in the US to experience what Tara has?

- Why is the US considered by many experts to be a hostile place for girls? What needs to happen legislatively for the situation to change for the better?
- How can Tara's advocates help her navigate her difficult youth?

Case-Study: Jared

Jared is an African American teen who lives in a predominantly white neighborhood. He is one of a handful of students of color in his predominantly white school. More recently, a handful of immigrants, refugees from the Syrian crisis have moved into the neighborhood. Jared's everyday life has always been filled with microaggressions as far back as he can remember. On his first day in Kindergarten, a white classmate said that his mother was just plain ugly because she is Black. He remembered a time when other kids would not allow him in the local pool because they said the water would turn brown. In middle school, another student pushed him and told him to go the back of the line because that is where he belonged. The student used the N-word to address him. He found a racist message in the bathroom once. His teachers were not overtly racist, but they mostly ignored him. One teacher once told him that she does not see race; that she only cares about his character. Jared would go home and

discuss the events with his parents; initially they complained to the school about at least the big acts of discriminations that he faced. The principal would call the perpetrators of the bullying actions and punish them. That did not stop the microaggressions. When Jared got his driver's license, his parents sat him down to go over what he might need to do if he was stopped when driving – they called the experience Driving While Black. They warned him that the consequences could be deadly if he made a mistake. They instructed him to be respectful to the cop and make sure his hands were always visible. It was a steep learning curve for Jared, but his parents' training was helpful and even during times when he was angry that he was being unfairly targeted at school and outside, he negotiated the encounters with authority with civility. As he grew older, he simply learned to avoid his classmates and mostly hung out with the two or three other Black students in the school. Jared was taller than most other students in the school and few students dared bully him in high school. On a rainy night when he was driving home from an after school activity, he spotted that a fellow student of Syrian origin was lying in the side-walk with handcuffs while a law enforcement personnel who Jared had had encounters with before was standing over the boy with a gun pointed at him.

Reflection Questions:

- What are some concepts and research findings in your textbook that may help you to understand Jared's experiences?
- How does race interact with gender in school social

life?

- Why is the US considered by many experts to be a hostile place for African Americans? What policy changes facilitate justice for people of color, especially Latinx, Black and Native peoples?
- What should Jared do in the situation he finds himself in?

Concluding Reflections

Bloom's higher levels of learning suggests that analysis, synthesis and creation allow you to engage in a deeper fashion with their subject matter. Case studies facilitate the immersion of the reader in the complexity of adolescent lives and explore the many pathways to development and growth. As additional exercises, you could compare theories and their power to explain the adolescences described here. You could synthesize theories and research to better help describe, understand and engage with youth lives. How about picking one issue that you are passionate about and writing a case study about a context where your knowledge can help you construct the basic elements of the case?

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PART II

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I wish to acknowledge my students over the years who willingly engaged with my essays in class, enthusiastically discussing them, giving me feedback and calling me out when I made mistakes. Writing my own textbook allowed me to be my most passionate and engage with my students in an authentic fashion. I was able to introduce concepts from a wide variety of fields and it was indeed a gift to be able to see students connect the dots and form a comprehensive picture of the world around them. Students today stand at the edge of great changes both personally and as subjects and actors in the larger world. My desire in writing the book was to help students articulate their experiences with clarity and engage in constructing a vision for the future with each other. I am grateful to my students for providing me with encouragement and feedback in this journey.

I stand on the broad shoulders of the many giants that helped shape the edifice of the various disciplines that I have drawn from in trying to understand the experiences of young people. The great theorists in psychology, from Sigmund Freud, Uri Bronfenbrenner, to Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky have always drawn me to their work. Some of the philosophers who had a deep impact on me include Michel Foucault, Edward Said, John Rawls and Hannah Arendt all of whom I have introduced in the book. The number of theorists and philosophers who inspired me to think more deeply about the subject and weave them into holistic understanding are too many to mention in this page.

I am grateful to my colleagues and co-workers who make my workday rich and fulfilling. The State University of New York at New Paltz has given me the space and autonomy to dabble in creative thought and writing; I often think of my good fortune in being able to come to work excited to be engaging in the work that I do. Too many workers in the American economy are left to feel like cogs

with few rewards for the effort they put in. My departmental co-workers inspire me to be the best teacher and writer I can be. Autumn Joy Floencio-Wain has been crucial to the current form the book ; I am so grateful to her. A special shout out to the departmental administrative assistant Terri Maphis who is the backbone of the department. She has been a friend, a guide and an assistant for so many years and makes my work life possible. I am so obliged to my research assistant Laura Arias who has helped with research, writing, proof-reading, providing charts, graphs and photographs. Her boundless enthusiasm for social justice and transformational change is so infectious, she takes me right along for the ride.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for inspiring me in their special ways. My parents loved learning and impressed upon me the value of a creative life. My father was himself so well read in many different areas that before the age of the internet he was called by friends a walking encyclopedia. My mother made sure her two daughters understood the need for a career and independence. My children Adityan and Ananthan with their critical political sensibilities, provide me with unique insights about growing up in the margins of a settler colonial country. My partner Daniel James keeps me laughing even when I feel discouraged. Thanks.

Gowri Parameswaran

PART II

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gowri Parameswaran (pronouns used: she/her/hers) is a professor of education at the State University of Education at New Paltz where she teaches adolescent development and child psychology at the graduate and undergraduate level for over 20 years. She has been chairing the Department of Educational Studies and Leadership for the past 10 years. Prior to teaching in New Paltz, she was a professor in Missouri State University and instructor at Rowen State College in New Jersey.

Parameswaran has published widely in the areas of diversity, equity and cognitive development. Her early years of research included explorations into the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky and the ways they could be synthesized when understanding learning and development. She works on cross-cultural comparisons of developmental issues were published in peer reviewed journals. She co-edited two books on culture, equity and education. She also co-edited a collection of essays on women and activism which is widely used in college classrooms across the country. She has written and published articles about teaching issues in diversity, social justice and pedagogy. Her chapters and essays have included ideas for teaching about gender, racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. More recently, she has explored the theoretical and historical issues behind life-span development, adolescence, childhood and developmental psychology as a field of study. She has problematized the notion of unidirectional growth as outlined in mainstream developmental theory.

Parameswaran is active in initiatives that center communities of color and their struggle for justice. She is active in her professional union and serves as the vice-president of academics. She has explored the history of labor activism as both theory and praxis. She is a member of the Movement for Black Lives in her community

and belongs to several organizations that support equity-oriented groups in her community.

PART II

PERSONAL NOTE TO READER

I've been teaching issues related to lifespan changes for over 4 decades. I was moved to write the book because I found that there was no textbook currently available in the market that I felt covered the topics from a broad multi-disciplinary, multicultural and critical perspective. There are some good textbooks that I've used in the past, but they mainly covered the important issues affecting young people from a dominant biological-psychological framework. Thus, adolescence is typically considered universal and if there are manifest differences in how young people live out their years, the differences were in social factors that influences the trajectory but did not change the essential qualities of being an adolescent. This was deeply unsatisfactory to me. There were researchers currently working in the social sciences who questioned these assumptions and offered other frameworks to engage with the topic of adolescence. In addition, my personal experiences growing up in India made me question some of the theories proposing universal trajectories of growth.

Historians of childhood were exploring the major historical factors that influenced the concept of childhood and adolescence and the frameworks established to understand them. Sociologists were engaging in ethnographic research with youth participants in the many settings where they were living and functioning and were discovering that adolescence is not one phenomenon but multiple experiences. While cross-cultural researchers within psychology were asking these questions, they did little to interrogate the concept of adolescence itself. Political scientists were exploring the role of youth as citizens and as populations that one term as oppressed, in that they had few rights that adults had and few protections that children had. Poststructuralists used theory and

language to interrogate the notion of adolescence itself and established that the term was a product of industrialization, especially the early years of the industrial revolution and colonialism. They wrote about how language that framed adolescence was often used to control a vulnerable population at a time when science served as a colonial project to subdue whole populations.

All these new questions and frameworks were missing from the standard account of adolescence in major textbooks. I started writing the essays you are about to read for my own students. I had been using them for a few years and my students loved what I had introduced to them; I felt it was time to formally publish for others who were seeking a more comprehensive framework to view adolescence but who had no time to write a book for their students. I hope you enjoy reading the book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Appendix

This is where you can add appendices or other back matter.