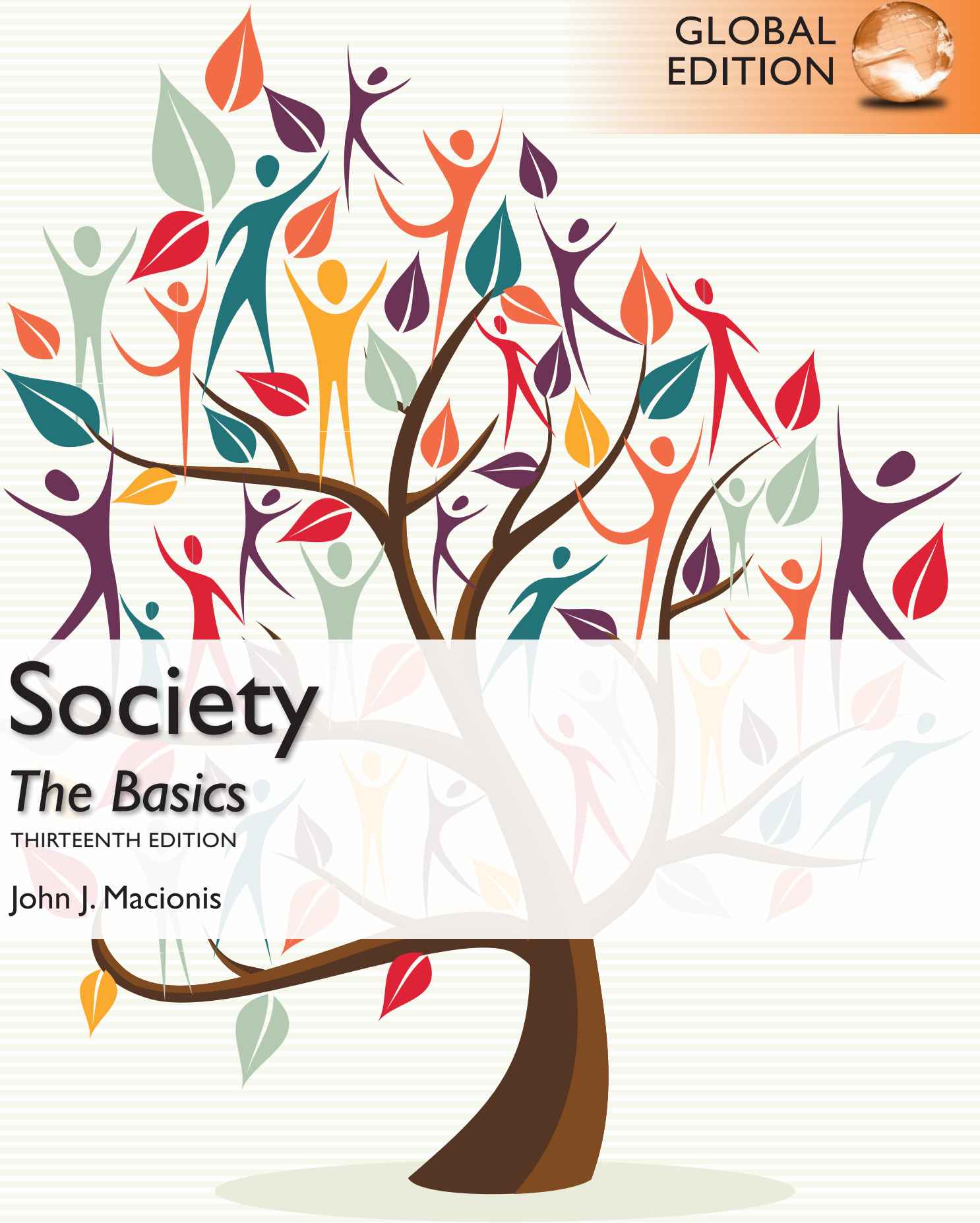


GLOBAL
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Society

The Basics

THIRTEENTH EDITION

John J. Macionis

ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

About the Author

John J. Macionis (pronounced “ma-SHOWnis”) has been in the classroom teaching sociology for almost forty years. Born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, John earned a bachelor’s degree from Cornell University, majoring in sociology, and then completed a doctorate in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania.

His publications are wide-ranging, focusing on community life in the United States, interpersonal intimacy in families, effective teaching, humor, new information technology, and the importance of global education. In addition to authoring this best-seller, Macionis has also written *Sociology*, the most popular hardcover text in the field, now in its fifteenth edition. He collaborates on international editions of the texts: *Sociology: Canadian Edition*; *Society: The Basics, Canadian Edition*; and *Sociology: A Global Introduction*. *Sociology* is also available for high school students and in various foreign-language editions.

In addition, Macionis and Nijole V. Benokraitis have edited the best-selling anthology *Seeing Ourselves: Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Readings in Sociology*, also available in a Canadian edition. Macionis and Vincent Parrillo have written the leading urban studies text, *Cities and Urban Life*. Macionis’s most recent textbook is *Social Problems*, now in its fifth edition and the leading book in this field. The latest on all the Macionis textbooks, as well as information and dozens of Internet links of interest to students and faculty in sociology, are found at the author’s personal website: www.macionis.com or www.TheSociologyPage.com. Additional information and instructor resources are found at the Pearson site: <http://www.pearsonglobaleditions.com/Macionis>

John Macionis is Professor and Distinguished Scholar of Sociology at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, where he has taught for more than thirty-five years. During that time, he has chaired the Sociology Department, directed the college’s multidisciplinary program in humane studies, presided over the campus senate and the college’s faculty, and taught sociology to thousands of students.

In 2002, the American Sociological Association presented Macionis with the Award for Distinguished Contributions to Teaching, citing his innovative use of global material as well as the introduction of new teaching technology in his textbooks.

Professor Macionis has been active in academic programs in other countries, having traveled to some fifty nations.



He writes, “I am an ambitious traveler, eager to learn and, through the texts, to share much of what I discover with students, many of whom know little about the rest of the world. For me, traveling and writing are all dimensions of teaching. First, and foremost, I am a teacher—a passion for teaching animates everything I do.”

At Kenyon, Macionis teaches a number of courses, but his favorite class is Introduction to Sociology, which he offers each academic year. He enjoys extensive contact with students and invites everyone enrolled in each of his classes to enjoy a home-cooked meal.

The Macionis family—John, Amy, and college-age children McLean and Whitney—live on a farm in rural Ohio. In his free time, Macionis enjoys tennis, swimming, hiking, and playing oldies rock-and-roll (available at his website). Macionis is an environmental activist in the Lake George region of New York’s Adirondack Mountains, where he works with a number of organizations, including the Lake George Land Conservancy, where he serves as president of the board of trustees.

Professor Macionis welcomes (and responds to) comments and suggestions about this book from faculty and students. Write to him at the Sociology Department, Ralston House, Kenyon College, Gambier, OH 43022, or send e-mail to macionis@kenyon.edu.

TABLE 6–1 How We View Premarital and Extramarital Sex

Survey Question: “There’s been a lot of discussion about the way morals and attitudes about sex are changing in this country. If a man and a woman have sexual relations before marriage, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all? What about a married person having sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner?”

	Premarital Sex	Extramarital Sex
“Always wrong”	21.0%	78.4%
“Almost always wrong”	5.5	11.9
“Wrong only sometimes”	15.8	6.7
“Not wrong at all”	54.1	1.2
“Don’t know”/No answer	3.6	1.8

Source: *General Social Surveys, 1972–2012: Codebook* (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, 2013), pp. 421–22.

ethnicity, this share is 60 percent among African American students, 49 percent among Hispanics, 44 percent among whites, and 30 percent among Asian Americans. But the sexual experience of high school students who have been sexually active is limited—only 15 percent of them report four or more sexual partners. Over the last twenty years, the statistics tracking sexual activity among high school students have shown a gradual trend downward (Laumann et al., 1994; Martinez, Copen, & Abma, 2011; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012).

A common belief is that an even larger share of young people engages in oral sex. This choice reflects the fact that this practice avoids the risk of pregnancy; in addition, many young people see oral sex as something less than “going all the way.” Recent research suggests that the share of young people between the age of fifteen and nineteen who have had oral sex is 48 percent for boys and 46 percent for girls, which is only slightly larger than the share who have had intercourse (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Therefore, mass media claims of an “oral sex epidemic” are almost certainly exaggerated.

Finally, a significant minority of young people choose abstinence (not having sexual intercourse). Many also choose not to have oral sex, which, like intercourse, can transmit disease. Even so, research confirms the fact that premarital sex is widely accepted among young people today.

Sex between Adults

Judging from the mass media, people in the United States are very active sexually. But do popular images reflect reality? The Laumann study (1994), the largest study of sexuality since Kinsey’s groundbreaking research, found that frequency of sexual activity varies widely in the U.S. population. One-third of adults report having sex with a partner a few times a year or not at all, another one-third have sex once or several times a month, and the remaining one-third have sex with a partner two or more times a week. In short, no single stereotype accurately describes sexual activity in the United States.

Despite the widespread image of “swinging singles” promoted on television shows such as *Sex and the City*, it is married people who have sex with partners the most. Married people also report the highest level of satisfaction—both emotional and physical—with their partners (Laumann et al., 1994).

Extramarital Sex

What about married people having sex outside of marriage? This practice, commonly called “adultery” (sociologists prefer the more neutral term *extramarital sex*), is widely condemned. Table 6–1 shows that about 90 percent of U.S. adults consider a married person having sex with someone other than the marital partner “always wrong” or “almost always wrong.” The norm of sexual fidelity within marriage has been and remains a strong element of U.S. culture.

But, of course, actual behavior does not always live up to the cultural ideal. Research suggests that about 17 percent of married people report having been sexually unfaithful to a spouse. Researchers also report that this share is higher among men (about 19 percent) than among women (about 12 percent). Stating this the other way around, 81 percent of men and 88 percent of women remain sexually faithful to their partners throughout their married lives. Research indicates that the incidence of extramarital sex is higher among the young than the old, higher among people of low social position than among those who are well off, higher among those who report no religious affiliation and, as we might expect, also higher among those who report a low level of happiness in their marriage (Laumann et al., 1994:214; Smith, 2006; NORC, 2013:2549).

Sex over the Life Course

Patterns of sexual activity change with age. In the United States, most young men and women become sexually active by the age of seventeen. By the time they reach their mid-twenties, about 90 percent of both women and men report being sexually active with a partner at least once during the past year (Reece et al., 2010; Chandra et al., 2011; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012).

Overall, adults report having sexual intercourse about sixty-two times a year, which is slightly more often than once a week. Young adults report the highest frequency of sexual intercourse at eighty-four times per year. This number falls to sixty-four times for adults in their forties and declines further to about ten times per year for adults in their seventies.

From another angle, by about age sixty, less than half of adults (54 percent of men and 42 percent of women) say they have had sexual intercourse one or more times during the past year. By age seventy, just 43 percent of men and 22 percent of women report the same behavior (Smith, 2006; Reece et al., 2010).

Sexual Orientation

6.3 Analyze factors that shape sexual orientation.

Sexual orientation is a person's romantic and emotional attraction to another person. The norm in all human societies is **heterosexuality** (*hetero* is Greek for “the other of two”), meaning *sexual attraction to someone of the other sex*. Yet in every society, a significant share of people experience **homosexuality** (*homo* is Greek for “the same”), *sexual attraction to someone of the same sex*. Keep in mind that people do not necessarily fall into just one of these categories; they may have varying degrees of attraction to both sexes.

The idea that sexual orientation is not always clear-cut is confirmed by the existence of **bisexuality**, *sexual attraction to people of both sexes*. Some bisexual people are equally attracted to males and females; many others are more attracted to one sex than the other. Finally, **asexuality** refers to *a lack of sexual attraction to people of either sex*. Figure 6–2 shows each of these sexual orientations in relation to the others.

It is important to remember that sexual *attraction* is not the same thing as sexual *behavior*. Many people, perhaps even most people, have experienced attraction to someone of the same sex, but far fewer ever engage in same-sex behavior. This is in large part because our culture discourages such actions.

In the United States and around the world, heterosexuality emerged as the norm because, biologically speaking, heterosexual relations permit human reproduction. Even so, most societies tolerate homosexuality, and some have even celebrated it. Among the ancient Greeks, for example, upper-class men considered homosexuality the highest form of relationship, partly because they looked down on women as intellectually inferior. As men saw it, heterosexuality was necessary only so they could have children, and “real” men preferred homosexual relations (Kluckhohn, 1948; Ford & Beach, 1951; Greenberg, 1988).

What Gives Us a Sexual Orientation?

The question of how people come to have a particular sexual orientation is strongly debated. The arguments cluster into two general positions: sexual orientation as a product of society and sexual orientation as a product of biology.

Diversity Snapshot

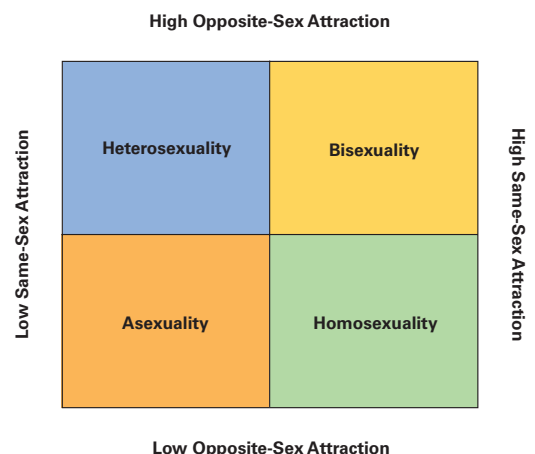
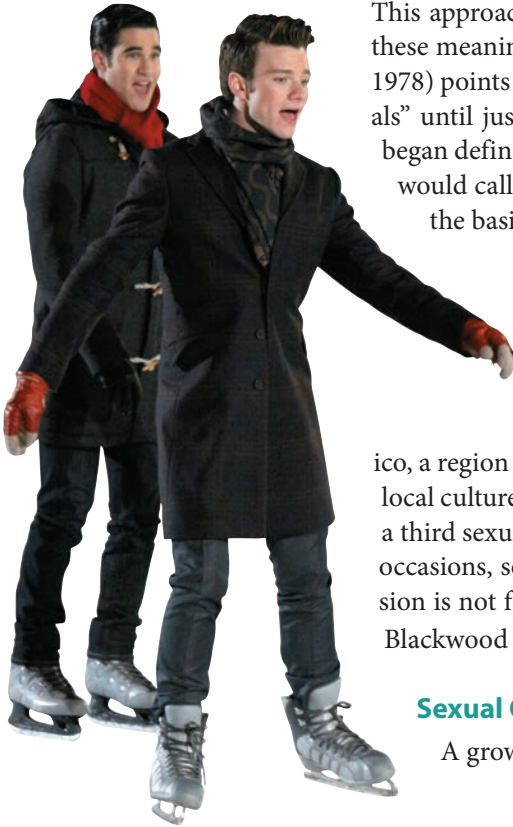


FIGURE 6–2 Four Sexual Orientations

A person's levels of same-sex attraction and opposite-sex attraction are two distinct dimensions that combine in various ways to produce four major sexual orientations.

Source: Adapted from Storms (1980).



One factor that has advanced the social acceptance of homosexuality is the inclusion of openly gay characters in the mass media, especially films and television shows. In the popular musical-drama series *Glee*, Chris Colfer plays Kurt Hummel, who came out as being gay during the first season of the show. How would you assess the portrayal of homosexuality in the mass media?

Sexual Orientation: A Product of Society

This approach argues that people in any society attach meanings to sexual activity, and these meanings differ from place to place and over time. As Michel Foucault (1990, orig. 1978) points out, for example, there was no distinct category of people called “homosexuals” until just over a century ago, when scientists and eventually the public as a whole began defining people that way. Throughout history, many people no doubt had what we would call “homosexual experiences,” but neither they nor others saw in this behavior the basis for any special identity.

Anthropological studies show that patterns of homosexuality differ from one society to another. In Siberia, for example, the Chukchee Eskimo have a practice in which one man dresses as a female and does a woman’s work.

The Sambia, who dwell in the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea, have a ritual in which young boys perform oral sex on older men in the belief that eating semen will make them more masculine. In southeastern Mexico, a region in which ancient religions recognize gods who are both female and male, the local culture defines people not only as female and male but also as *muxes* (MOO-shays), a third sexual category. *Muxes* are men who dress and act as women, some only on ritual occasions, some all the time. Such diversity around the world shows that sexual expression is not fixed by human biology but is socially constructed (Murray & Roscoe, 1998; Blackwood & Wieringa, 1999; Rosenberg, 2008).

Sexual Orientation: A Product of Biology

A growing body of evidence suggests that sexual orientation is innate, or rooted in human biology, in much the same way that people are born right-handed or left-handed. Arguing this position, Simon LeVay (1993) links sexual orientation to the structure of a person’s brain. LeVay studied the brains of both homosexual and heterosexual men and found a small but important difference in the size of the hypothalamus, a part of the brain that regulates hormones. Such an anatomical difference, he claims, plays a part in shaping a person’s sexual orientation.

Genetics may also influence sexual orientation. One study of forty-four pairs of brothers, all homosexual, found that thirty-three pairs had a distinctive genetic pattern involving the X chromosome. The gay brothers also had an unusually high number of gay male relatives—but only on their mother’s side. Such evidence leads some researchers to think there may be a “gay gene” located on the X chromosome (Hamer & Copeland, 1994).

EVALUATE Mounting evidence supports the conclusion that sexual orientation is rooted in biology or “nature,” although it is also likely that nurture plays some part. Remember that sexual orientation is not a matter of neat categories. Most people who think of themselves as homosexual have had some heterosexual experiences, just as many people who think of themselves as heterosexual have had some homosexual experiences. Explaining sexual orientation, then, is not easy.

There is also a political issue here with great importance for gay men and lesbians. To the extent that sexual orientation is based in biology, homosexuals have no more choice about their sexual orientation than they do about their skin color. If this is so, shouldn’t gay men and lesbians expect the same legal protection from discrimination as African Americans?

sexual orientation a person’s romantic and emotional attraction to another person

heterosexuality sexual attraction to someone of the other sex

homosexuality sexual attraction to someone of the same sex

bisexuality sexual attraction to people of both sexes

asexuality a lack of sexual attraction to people of either sex

CHECK YOUR LEARNING What evidence supports the position that sexual behavior is constructed by society? What evidence supports the position that sexual orientation is rooted in biology?

How Many Gay People Are There?

What share of our population is gay? This is a difficult question to answer because, as noted earlier, sexual orientation is not a matter of neat categories. In addition, not all people are willing to reveal their sexuality to strangers or even to family members. Kinsey estimated that about 4 percent of males and 2 percent of females have an exclusively same-sex orientation, although he pointed out that most people experience same-sex attraction at some point in their lives.

The results of research surveys show that how homosexuality is defined makes a big difference in the size of the homosexual population. Some social scientists put the gay share of the population at 10 percent. This is about the share of U.S. adults who say that they have *ever* felt any sexual attraction to a person of the same sex. But feeling some sexual attraction and acting on it are two different issues. As Figure 6–3 shows, 5.6 percent of U.S. men and 12.7 percent of U.S. women between the ages of fifteen and forty-four reported engaging in homosexual activity *at some time in their lives*. Then there is the issue of sexual identity. When asked how they define themselves in terms of sexual orientation, just 1.7 percent of men and 1.1 percent of women said that they defined themselves as “partly” or “entirely” homosexual.

In recent surveys, 1.1 percent of men and 3.5 percent of women described themselves as bisexual. But bisexual experiences appear to be fairly common (at least for a time) among younger people, especially on college and university campuses (Laumann et al., 1994; Leland, 1995; Reece et al., 2010; Chandra et al., 2011). Many bisexuals do not think of themselves as either gay or straight, and their behavior reflects aspects of both gay and straight living.

The Gay Rights Movement

In recent decades, public opinion about sexual orientation has shown a remarkable change. In the United States and in much of the world, public attitudes toward homosexuality have been moving toward greater acceptance. Back in 1973, as shown in the Power of Society figure at the beginning of this chapter, about three-fourths of adults in the United States claimed that homosexual relations were “always wrong” or “almost always wrong.” Although that percentage changed little during the 1970s and 1980s, by 2012 it had dropped to 46 percent (NORC, 2013:422; Pew Research Center, 2012). Among college students, who are typically more tolerant of homosexuality than the general population, we see a similar trend toward acceptance. In 1980, as Figure 6–4 on page 196 shows, about half of college students supported laws prohibiting homosexual relationships; in the following decades, that share declined dramatically. The most recent surveys on this issue asked students whether they supported same-sex couples having the legal right to marry; by 2012, as the figure shows, three-quarters of college students claimed to support legal same-sex marriage (Astin et al., 2002; Pryor et al., 2013).

In large measure, this change was brought about by the gay rights movement, which began in the middle of the twentieth century. Up to that time, most people in this country did not discuss homosexuality, and it was common for employers (including the federal government and the armed forces) to fire anyone who was gay or lesbian (or was even *accused* of being gay). Mental health professionals, too, took a hard line, describing homosexual people as “sick” and sometimes placing them in mental hospitals where, it was hoped, they might be “cured.”

Diversity Snapshot

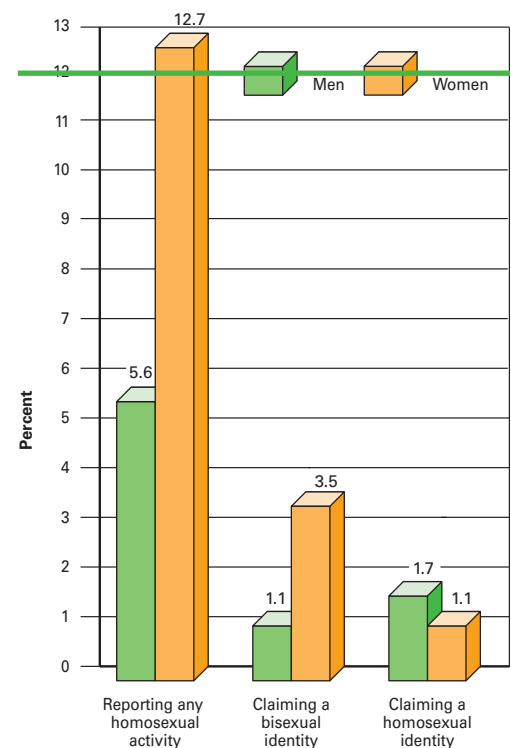


FIGURE 6–3 Share of the Population That Is Bisexual or Homosexual

Although more women than men report having had a homosexual experience, more men than women claim to have a homosexual identity.

Source: Adapted from Chandra et al. (2011).

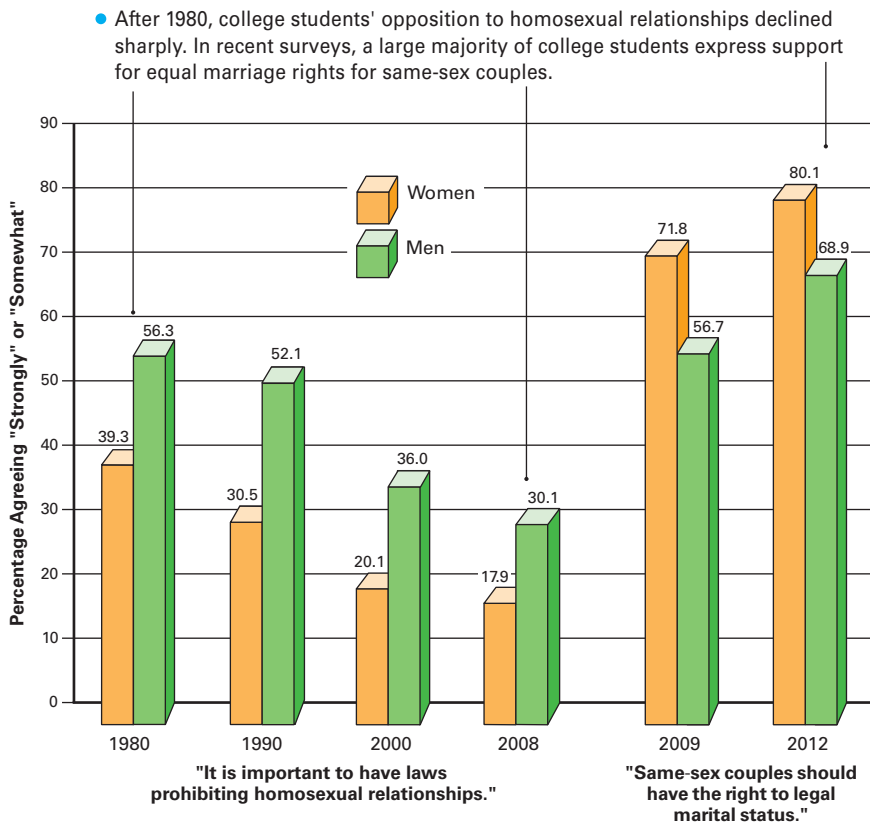


FIGURE 6-4 Attitudes about Homosexual Relationships and Same-Sex Marriage among First-Year College Students, 1980–2012

The historical trend among college students is toward greater tolerance of homosexual relationships, a view now held by a large majority. Three-quarters of first-year college students report that they support legal same-sex marriage.

Sources: Astin et al. (2002) and Pryor et al. (2013).

homophobia discomfort over close personal interaction with people thought to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual

transgender appearing or behaving in ways that challenge conventional cultural norms concerning how females and males should look and act

Facing such prejudice, it is no surprise that most lesbians and gay men remained “in the closet,” closely guarding the secret of their sexual orientation. But the gay rights movement gained strength during the 1960s. One early milestone occurred in 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association (APA) declared that it would no longer define homosexuality as an illness; the organization stated that it was nothing more than “a form of sexual behavior.” In 2009, the APA went a step further and condemned the use of psychological therapy in an effort to make gay people straight (Cracy, 2009).

The gay rights movement also began using the term **homophobia** to describe *discomfort over close personal interaction with people thought to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual* (Weinberg, 1973). The concept of homophobia turns the tables on society: Instead of asking “What’s wrong with gay people?” the question becomes “What’s wrong with people who can’t accept a different sexual orientation?”

In 2004, a number of cities and towns in the United States began to allow gay couples to marry, although these unions were later declared illegal. But gay marriage became legal in Massachusetts in 2004 and now it is also legal in Connecticut (2008), Vermont (2009), Iowa (2009), New Hampshire (2009), New York (2011),

Washington (2012), Maryland (2012), Maine (2012), Delaware (2013), Rhode Island (2013), Minnesota (2013), California (briefly in 2008, then in 2013), and the District of Columbia (2009). Several other states—New Jersey, Oregon, Nevada, Wisconsin, Illinois, Hawaii, and Colorado—recognize either “domestic partnerships” or “civil unions,” which provide most or all of the benefits of marriage. At the same time, a majority of the states have enacted laws that forbid gay marriage and prohibit recognizing gay marriages performed elsewhere (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2013).

Transgender

As the gay rights movement has gained acceptance for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, there has also been greater tolerance of people who challenge conventional gender patterns. **Transgender** is a broad concept that refers to *appearing or behaving in ways that challenge conventional cultural norms concerning how females and males should look and act*. People in the transgender community do not think of themselves or express their sexuality according to conventional standards. In other words, transgender people disregard conventional ideas about femininity or masculinity in favor of combining feminine and masculine traits or perhaps embodying something entirely different.

Transgender is not a sexual orientation. Transgender people may think of themselves as gay or lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual, asexual, as some combination of these categories, or in entirely different terms.

Researchers estimate that about three in every 1,000 adults in the United States have a transgender identity. This amounts to about 700,000 people (Gates, 2011). It is becoming common to speak about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) population. Because someone

may identify with more than one of these categories, no exact number can be placed on the size of the LGBT population. But estimates suggest that almost 4 percent of the U.S. adult population—or about 9 million people—are within the LGBT community (Gates, 2011).

Sexual Issues and Controversies

6.4 Discuss several current controversies involving sexuality.

Sexuality lies at the heart of a number of controversies in the United States today. Here we take a look at four key issues: teen pregnancy, pornography, prostitution, and sexual violence.

Teen Pregnancy

Because being sexually active carries the risk of pregnancy, this behavior demands a high level of personal responsibility. Teenagers may be biologically mature enough to conceive, but many are not emotionally mature enough to appreciate the consequences of their actions. Surveys lead researchers to estimate that there are some 768,000 teen pregnancies in the United States each year, most of them unplanned. This country's rate of births to teens is higher than that of most other high-income countries and is twice the rate in Canada (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2012; Ventura et al., 2012).

Among people in all racial and ethnic categories, low levels of parental education and income sharply increase the likelihood that a young woman will become sexually active and have an unplanned child. In addition, compared to young women who live with both biological parents, those who live with a mother and a stepfather or in some other family arrangement have triple the odds of having a child by age nineteen. To add to the challenge, having unplanned children raises the risk that young women (as well as young fathers-to-be) will not complete high school and will end up living in poverty (Martinez, Copen, & Abma, 2011).

Did the sexual revolution raise the level of teenage pregnancy? Perhaps surprisingly, the answer is no. The rate of pregnancy among U.S. teens in 1950 was higher than it is today, partly because people back then married at a younger age. Because abortion was against the law, many pregnancies led to quick marriages. As a result, many teens became pregnant, but almost 90 percent of these women were already married or married soon after. In recent years, the teenage pregnancy rate has fallen to its lowest level in decades. However, although this rate is lower, about 80 percent of these women are unmarried. In a slight majority (58 percent) of such cases, the women keep their babies; in the remainder, they have abortions (26 percent) or miscarriages (17 percent) (Ventura et al., 2012). National Map 6–2 on page 198 shows the pregnancy rates for women between the ages of fifteen and nineteen throughout the United States.

Pornography

Pornography is *sexually explicit material intended to cause sexual arousal*. But what is or is not pornographic has long been a matter of debate. Recognizing that different people view portrayals of sexuality differently, the U.S. Supreme Court gives local communities the power to decide for themselves what violates “community standards” of decency and lacks “redeeming social value.”

Definitions aside, pornography is very popular in the United States: sexually

pornography sexually explicit material intended to cause sexual arousal



Pregnancy among unmarried teenage women, once a social taboo, has become part of the mass media with shows like MTV's *Teen Mom* and *16 and Pregnant*. Such shows clearly convey the many challenges that face young mothers-to-be. Would you expect these shows to have any effect on the country's teen pregnancy rate? Explain.