

GLOBAL
EDITION



Sociology

SIXTEENTH EDITION

John J. Macionis





This book is offered to teachers of sociology in the hope that it will help our students understand their place in today's society and in tomorrow's world.

John J. Macaronis

Diversity Snapshot

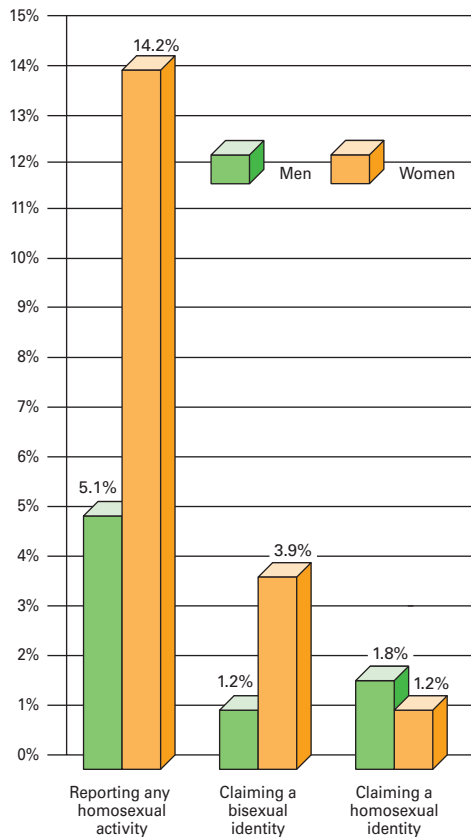


Figure 8–3 Share of the Population That Is Bisexual or Homosexual

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

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014).

scientists put the gay share of the population as high as 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 8–3 shows, 5.1 percent of U.S. men and 14.2 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 1.8 percent of men and 1.2 percent of women said that they defined themselves as “partly” or “entirely” homosexual.

In recent surveys, 1.2 percent of men and 3.9 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; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014). 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 (Pew Research Center, 2012; Smith et al., 2013:422).

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 8–4 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



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. Laverne Cox, who is transgender, portrays the transgender character Sophia Burset on the television show *Orange Is the New Black*. Do you think transgender characters will advance social acceptance of transgender people?

Student Snapshot

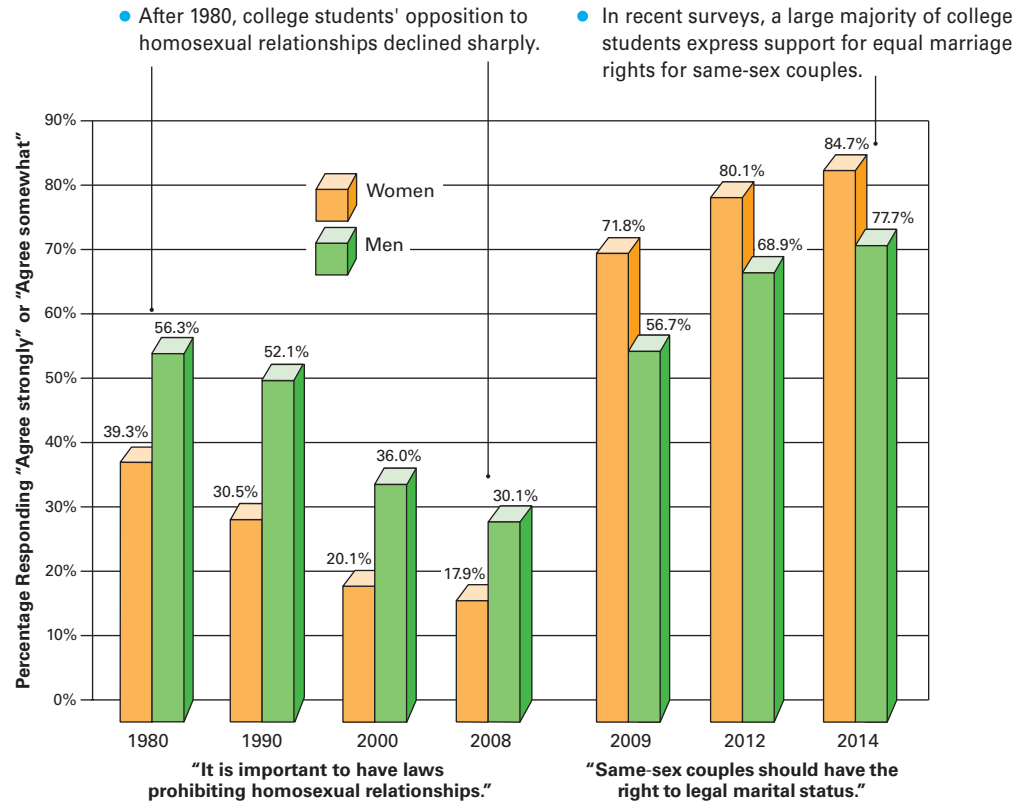


Figure 8-4 Attitudes about Homosexual Relationships and Same-Sex Marriage among First-Year College Students, 1980–2014

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

SOURCES: Astin et al. (2002) and Eagan et al. (2014).

supported same-sex couples having the legal right to marry; by 2014, as the figure shows, more than three-quarters of college students claimed to support legal same-sex marriage (Astin et al., 2002; Eagan et al., 2014).

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.”

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 within ten years had become legal in thirty-six states. Then, in 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court (*Obergefell v. Hodges*) declared that all states are required to license same-sex marriage and also to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states. This decision effectively ended the national debate over the legality of same-sex marriage.

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).

Transgender people are at high risk of rejection and discrimination, as well as physical or sexual violence. For a majority of people who report any of these experiences,

the events were serious enough to cause them to consider or attempt suicide (Hass, Rodgers, & Herman, 2014).

Sexual Issues and Controversies

8.4 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 625,000 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 almost twice the rate in Canada (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2014; Ventura, Hamilton, & Mathews, 2014).

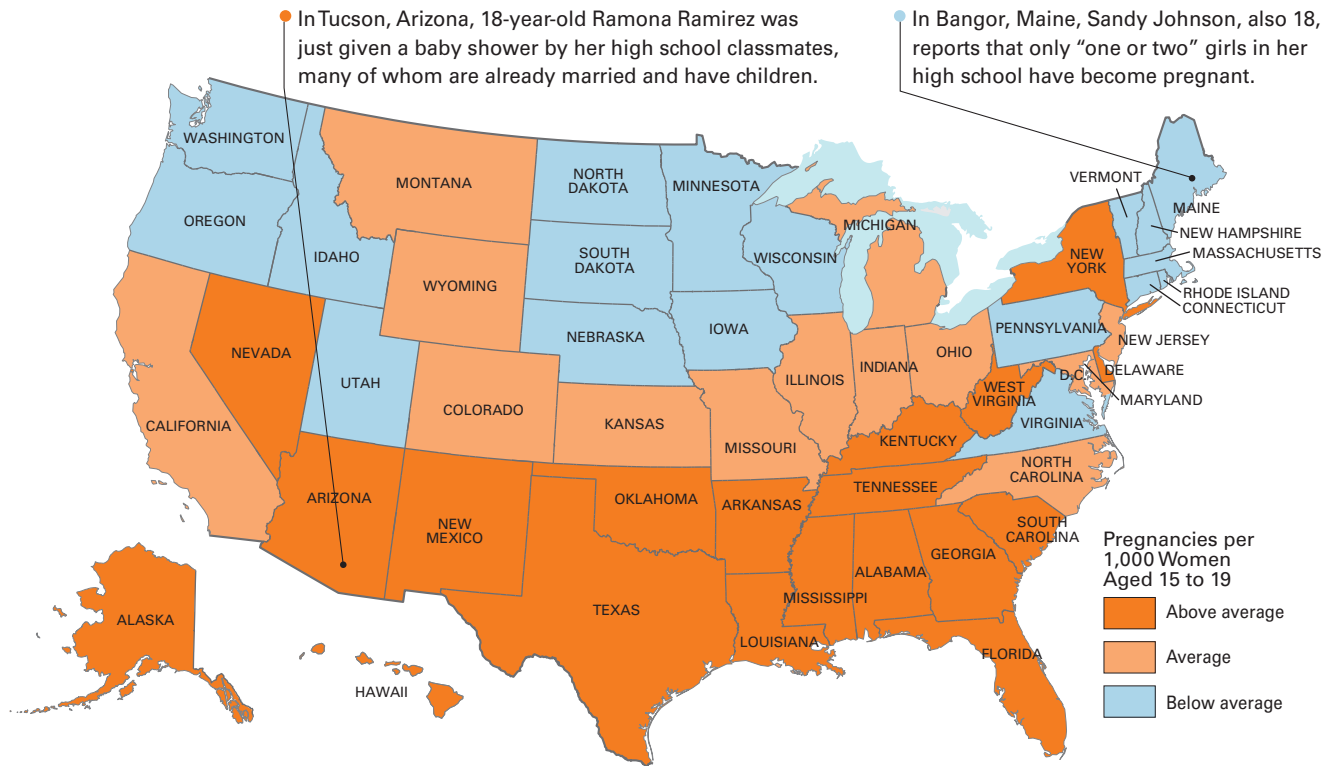
Among people in all racial and ethnic categories, low levels of parental education and income sharply increase the likelihood that a young woman will become sexually active and have an unplanned child. In addition, compared to young women who live with both biological parents, those who live with a mother 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



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.

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 8-2 Teenage Pregnancy Rates across the United States

The map shows pregnancy rates for women aged fifteen to nineteen in 2010. In what regions of the country are rates high? Where are they low? What explanation can you offer for these patterns?

SOURCE: Alan Guttmacher Institute (2014).

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 (60 percent) of such cases, the women keep their babies; in the remainder, they have abortions (26 percent) or miscarriages (14 percent) (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2014; Ventura, Hamilton, & Mathews, 2014). National Map 8-2 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 and throughout most of the world. Sexually explicit videos, movies, and magazines, telephone “sex lines,” and thousands of Internet websites make up

a thriving industry that takes in at least \$10 billion each year in the United States and about \$100 billion worldwide. Most pornography in the United States is created in California, and the vast majority of consumers of pornography around the world are men (Steinhauer, 2008).

Traditionally, people have criticized pornography on *moral* grounds. As national surveys confirm, 60 percent of U.S. adults are concerned that “sexual materials lead to a breakdown of morals” (Smith et al., 2013:423). Today, however, pornography is also seen as a *power* issue because most of it degrades women, portraying them as the sexual playthings of men.

Some critics also claim that pornography is a cause of violence against women. Although it is difficult to prove a scientific cause-and-effect relationship between what people view and how they act, the public shares a concern about pornography and violence, with almost half of adults holding the opinion that pornography encourages people to commit rape (Smith et al., 2013:424).

Although people everywhere object to sexual material they find offensive, many also value the principle of free speech and the protection of artistic expression. Nevertheless, pressure to restrict pornography is building from an unlikely coalition of conservatives (who oppose

pornography on moral grounds) and liberals (who condemn it for political reasons).

Prostitution

Prostitution is the selling of sexual services. Often called “the world’s oldest profession,” prostitution has been widespread throughout recorded history. In the United States today, about one in eleven adult men reports having paid for sex at some time (Smith et al., 2013). Because most people think of sex as an expression of intimacy between two people, they find the idea of sex for money disturbing. As a result, prostitution is against the law everywhere in the United States except for parts of rural Nevada.

Around the world, prostitution is most common in poor countries, where patriarchy is strong and traditional cultural norms limit women’s ability to earn a living.

TYPES OF PROSTITUTION Most prostitutes (many prefer the morally neutral term “sex workers”) are women, and they fall into different categories. *Call girls* are elite prostitutes, typically young, attractive, and well-educated women who arrange their own “dates” with clients by texting or telephone. The classified pages of any large city newspaper contain numerous ads for “escort services,” by which women (and sometimes men) offer both companionship and sex for a fee.

In the middle category are prostitutes who are employed in “massage parlors” or brothels under the control of managers. These sex workers have less choice about their clients, receive less money for their services, and get to keep no more than half of the money they earn.

At the bottom of the hierarchy are *streetwalkers*, women and men who “work the streets” of large cities around the

country. Some female streetwalkers are under the control of male pimps who take most of their earnings. Many others are people with a substance addiction who sell sex in order to buy drugs. Both types of people are at high risk of becoming the victims of violence (Davidson, 1998; Estes, 2001).

The lives of sex workers, then, are diverse, with some earning more than others and some at greater risk of violence. But studies point to one thing that most of these women have in common: They consider their work degrading. As one researcher suggested, one minute the sex worker is adored as “the most beautiful woman,” while the next she is condemned as a “slut” (Barton, 2006).

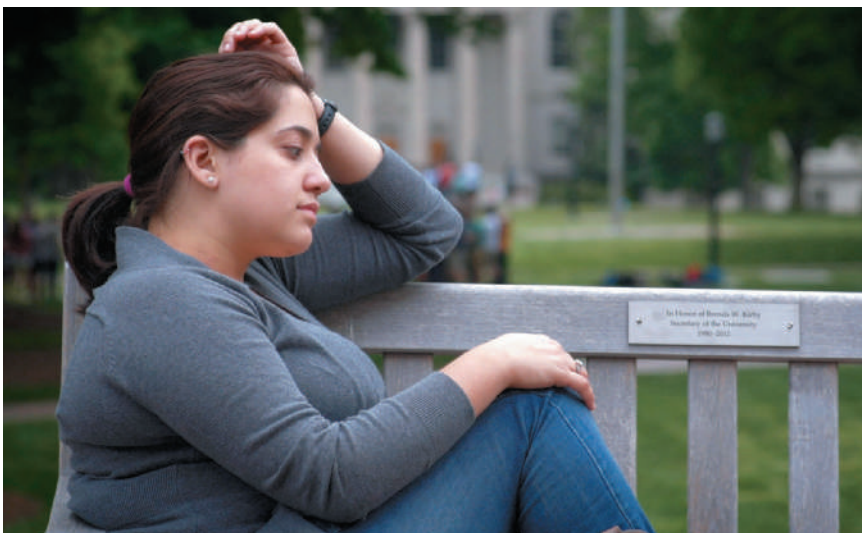
Most prostitutes offer heterosexual services. However, gay male prostitutes also trade sex for money. Researchers report that many gay prostitutes end up selling sex after having suffered rejection by family and friends because of their sexual orientation (Weisberg, 1985; Boyer, 1989; Krus, 1991).

A VICTIMLESS CRIME? Prostitution is against the law almost everywhere in the United States, but many people consider it a *victimless crime* (defined in Chapter 9, “Deviance,” as a crime in which there is no obvious victim). As a result, instead of enforcing prostitution laws all the time, police stage only occasional crackdowns. This policy reflects a desire to control prostitution while also recognizing that it is impossible to eliminate it entirely.

Many people take a “live and let live” attitude about prostitution and say that adults ought to be able to do as they please so long as no one is harmed or forced to do anything. But is prostitution really victimless? The sex trade subjects many women to kidnapping, emotional abuse, and outright violence and also plays a part in spreading sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.

In addition, many poor women—especially in low-income nations—become trapped in a life of selling sex. Thailand, in Southeast Asia, has as many as 2 million prostitutes, representing about 10 percent of all women in the labor force. The younger the person is who begins to work in prostitution, the greater the risks of harm. About half of the women working as prostitutes in Thailand are teenagers—many begin working before they even reach their teens—and these women typically suffer physical and emotional abuse and run a high risk of becoming infected with HIV (Wonders & Michalowski, 2001; Kapstein, 2006; UNAIDS, 2010; Silverman, 2011).

In the past, the focus of attention has been on the women who earn money as sex workers. But prostitution would not exist at all if it were not for demand on the



The recent documentary film *The Hunting Ground* provides a close-up and disturbing look at the problem of sexual assault on the college campus. The film investigates the scope of rape and other assault at U.S. colleges and universities and includes personal accounts by victims, including the young woman shown here. What programs and policies are in place on your campus to address the issue of sexual violence?

part of men. For this reason, law enforcement is now more likely to target “Johns” when they attempt to buy sex.

Sexual Violence: Rape and Date Rape

Ideally, sexual activity occurs within a loving relationship between consenting adults. In reality, however, sex can be twisted by hate and violence. Here we consider two types of sexual violence: rape and date rape.

RAPE Although some people think rape is motivated only by a desire for sex, it is actually an expression of power—a violent act that uses sex to hurt, humiliate, or control another person. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2014), around 80,000 women each year report to the police that they have been raped. This reflects only the reported cases; the actual number of rapes is almost certainly several times higher.

The official government definition of rape is “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will.” Thus official rape statistics include only victims who are women. But men, too, are raped—in about 11 percent of all cases. Most men who rape men are not homosexual; they are heterosexuals who are motivated by a desire not for sex but to dominate another person.

DATE RAPE A common myth is that rape involves strangers. In reality, however, only about 15 percent of rapes fit this pattern. About 85 percent of known cases of rape involve people who know one another—more often than not, pretty well—and these crimes usually take place in familiar surroundings, especially the home and the campus. For this reason, the term “date rape” or “acquaintance rape” is used to refer to forcible sexual violence against women by men they know (Laumann et al., 1994; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

A second myth, often linked to date rape, is that the woman must have done something to encourage the man and made him think she wanted to have sex. Perhaps the victim agreed to go out with the offender. Maybe she even invited him into her room. But, of course, acting in this way no more justifies rape than it would any other type of physical assault.

Although rape is a physical attack, it often leaves emotional and psychological scars. Beyond the brutality of being physically violated, rape by an acquaintance also undermines a victim’s sense of trust. Psychological scars are especially serious among the two-thirds of rape victims who are under eighteen and even more so among the one-third who are under the age of twelve. The home is no refuge from rape: One-third of all victims under the age of eighteen are attacked by their own fathers or stepfathers (Snyder, 2000).

How common is date rape? One study found that about 10 percent of a sample of high school students in the

United States reported being the victim of sexual or physical violence inflicted by boys they were dating. About 15 percent of high school girls and 6 percent of high school boys reported being forced into having sexual intercourse against their will. The risk of abuse is especially high among girls who become sexually active before reaching the age of fifteen (Dickinson, 2001; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

Nowhere has the issue of date rape been more widely discussed in recent years than on college campuses, where the danger of date rape is high. The collegiate environment promotes easy friendships and encourages trust among young people who still have much to learn about relationships and about themselves. As the *Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life* box explains, the same college environment that encourages communication provides few social norms to help guide young people’s sexual experiences. To counter the problem, many schools now actively address myths about rape through on-campus workshops. In addition, greater attention is now focused on the abuse of alcohol, which increases the likelihood of sexual violence.

Theories of Sexuality

8.5 Apply sociology’s major theories to the topic of sexuality.

Applying sociology’s various theoretical approaches gives us a better understanding of human sexuality. The following sections discuss the three major approaches, and the Applying Theory table highlights the key insights of each approach.

Structural-Functional Theory

The structural-functional approach highlights the contribution of any social pattern to the overall operation of society. Because sexuality can have such important consequences, society regulates this type of behavior.

THE NEED TO REGULATE SEXUALITY From a biological point of view, sex allows our species to reproduce. But culture and social institutions regulate *with whom* people reproduce. For example, most societies condemn a married person for having sex with someone other than his or her spouse. To allow sexual passion to go unchecked would threaten family life, especially the raising of children.

The fact that the incest taboo exists everywhere shows that no society permits completely free choice in sexual partners. Reproduction by family members other than married partners would break down the system of kinship and hopelessly confuse human relationships.