5 Building Identity
Socialization

My family once lived in a suburb just outside New York City. One day, when I was 9 years old, my parents sat me down and told me that we were going to be moving. They had narrowed down our ultimate destination to two possibilities: Laredo, Texas, or Burbank, California. After some rather intense debate, they chose Burbank. And so we headed "out West," where from age 9 to age 18 I lived in the shadow of the entertainment industry and all its glamour, glitz, and movie stars. It wasn't long before I became a typical sun-worshiping, Frisbee-throwing, southern California kid.

I often wonder how differently I would have turned out if my parents had chosen Laredo and I had spent my formative years in Southern Texas instead of in the middle of Tinsel Town. Would I have a fondness for 10-gallon hats and snakeskin boots instead of tennis shoes and shorts? Would I have grown up with country music instead of the Beach Boys? Would my goals, beliefs, or sense of morality be different? In short, would I be a different person?

Try to imagine what your life would be like if you had grown up under different circumstances. What if your father had been a harpsichord enthusiast instead of a Cubs fan? What if your family had been Jewish instead of Episcopalian? What if you had had an older brother instead of a younger sister? What if you had lived on a farm instead of in a big city? What if you had been born in the 1940s instead of the 1980s? Your tastes, preferences, and hobbies, as well as your values, ambitions, and aspirations, would no doubt be different. But more profoundly, your self-concept, self-esteem, personality—the essence of who you are—would be altered too.

Consider the broader social and historical circumstances of your life. What kind of impact might they have had on the type of person you are? Talk to elderly people who were children back in the 1930s, and they will speak of the permanent impact that the Great Depression had on them (Elder & Liker, 1982). Imagine spending your childhood as a Jew in Nazi Germany. That couldn't help but shape your outlook on life. The same can be said for growing up black in the American South in the segregated 1950s or white in Colorado Springs during the George W. Bush presidency.

Becoming the person you are cannot be separated from the people, historical events, and social circumstances that surround you. In this chapter I examine the process of

socialization—how we learn what's expected of us in our families, our communities, and our culture and how we learn to behave according to those expectations. The primary focus will be on the development of identity. **Identity** is our most essential and personal characteristic. It consists of our membership in various social groups (race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and so on), the traits we show, and the traits others ascribe to us. Our identity locates us in the social world, thoroughly affecting everything we do, feel, say, and think in our lives. Most people tend to believe that our self-concept, our sense of "maleness" or "femaleness," and our racial and ethnic identities are biologically or psychologically determined and therefore permanent and unchangeable. But as you will discover, these characteristics are social constructions: as much a product of our social surroundings and the significant people in our lives as a product of our physical traits and innate predispositions.

Social Structure and the Construction of Human Beings

The question of how we become who we are has for centuries grabbed the attention of biologists, psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers, and novelists. The issue is usually framed as a debate between *nature* (we are who we are because we were born that way) and *nurture* (we are who we are because of the way we were treated while growing up). Are we simply the predetermined product of our genes and biochemistry, or are we "created" from scratch by the people and the social institutions that surround us?

The answer to this question swings back and forth depending on the dominant cultural mood. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries genetics became a popular explanation for human behavior, including a variety of social problems such as crime, poverty, and mental deficiency. Scientists, borrowing from the selective breeding practices used with racehorses and livestock, advocated programs of *eugenics,* or controlled mating to ensure that the "defective" genes of troublesome individuals would not be passed on to future generations. Theories of genetic inferiority became the cornerstone of Adolph Hitler's horrors in Nazi Germany during World War II. After the war, most people wanted to get as far away from such "nature" arguments as possible. So in the 1950s and 1960s people heavily emphasized environmental influences on behavior, especially the role of early family experiences in shaping children's future personalities (Gould, 1997).

Today, because of the growing cultural emphasis on scientific technology, genetic explanations have again become fashionable. In recent years researchers have claimed that such diverse social phenomena as shyness, impulsiveness, intelligence, aggression, obesity, risk taking, alcoholism, and addiction to gambling are at least partly due to heredity. Some political scientists even claim that people's emotional reactions to controversial issues like the death penalty, taxes, and abortion are strongly influenced by their genetic inheritance (Carey, 2005b). The success of the Human Genome Project—an undertaking meant to identify all the 20,000 to 25,000 genes in human DNA—will no doubt add fuel to "nature" arguments in the years to come.

Yet we are apparently not ready to say that nurture plays no role. Not too long ago, a psychologist named Judith Harris (1998) achieved notoriety for her rather stunning suggestion that the home environment has virtually no effect on children. She claims

that the only thing parents contribute to their child's development is their genetic material; that nothing parents do or say makes much of a difference at all as to what sort of adult the child will eventually become. But even Harris acknowledges that nature alone isn't sufficient to predict a child's development. She points out that later in life, peer groups play a powerful role in shaping a child's personality. Although Harris's book has been roundly criticized, it does ultimately support the view that, when all is said and done, both nature and nurture are responsible for who we become. Both genetic inheritance and social environment matter.

Most sociologists would argue that human beings are much more than a collection of physical and psychological characteristics; they reflect society's influence as well. That's not to say that inborn traits are of absolutely no importance. Certainly our physical appearance and strength, genetic predisposition to sickness, and so on have some effect on our personal development. Furthermore, our every thought and action is the result of a complex series of neurological and electrochemical events in our brains and bodies. When we feel the need to eat we are reacting to a physiological sensation—stomach contractions—brought about by a lowering of blood sugar. Satisfying hunger is clearly a biological process. But the way we react to the sensation of hunger cannot be predicted by physiology alone. What, when, how, and how often we eat are all matters of cultural forces that we learn over time. When you say something like, "I'm starving but it's too early to eat dinner" you're signaling the power of cultural training in overriding physiological demands.

Likewise, society can magnify physical differences or cover them up. We've collectively decided that some differences are socially irrelevant (for example, eye color) and that some are important enough to be embedded in our most important social institutions (for example, gender and skin color), giving rise to different rights, duties, expectations, and access to educational, economic, and political opportunities.

Who we become is influenced by the behaviors and attitudes of significant people in our lives as well as by cultural and institutional forces. As these things change, so do we. This proposition is not altogether comforting. It implies that who we are may in some ways be "accidental," the result of a series of social coincidences, chance encounters, decisions made by others, and political, economic, and historical events that are in large measure beyond our control—such as growing up in California rather than Texas.

Socialization: Becoming Who We Are

The structural-functionalist perspective points out that the fundamental task of any society is to reproduce itself—to create members whose behaviors, desires, and goals correspond to those that the particular society deems appropriate and desirable. Through the powerful and ubiquitous process of **socialization,** the needs of society become the needs of the individual.

Socialization is a process of learning. To socialize someone is to train that person to behave appropriately. It is the means by which people acquire a vast array of social skills, such as driving a car, converting fractions into decimals, speaking the language correctly, or using a fork instead of a knife to eat peas. But socialization is also the way we learn how to perceive our world; how to interact with others; what it means to be

male or female; how, when, why, and with whom to be sexual; what we should and shouldn't do to and for others under certain circumstances; what our society defines as moral and immoral; and so on. In short, it is the process by which we internalize all that cultural information I discussed in Chapter 4.

Although socialization occurs throughout our lives, the basic, formative instruction of life occurs early on. Young children must be taught the fundamental values, knowledge, and beliefs of their culture. Some of the socialization that occurs during childhood—often called **anticipatory socialization**—is the primary means by which young individuals acquire the values and orientations found in the statuses they will likely enter in the future (Merton, 1957). Household chores, a childhood job, sports, dance lessons, dating, and many other types of experiences give youngsters an opportunity to rehearse for the kinds of roles that await them in adulthood.

The Acquisition of Self

The most important outcome of the socialization process is the development of a sense of self. The term **self** refers to the unique set of traits, behaviors, and attitudes that distinguishes one person from the next.

The self is both the active source of behavior and its passive object (Mead, 1934). As an active source, the self can initiate action, which is frequently directed toward others. Imagine, for example, that Rob and Lisa are having dinner in a restaurant. Lisa has a self that can perceive Rob, talk to him, evaluate him, maybe even try to manipulate or persuade him to act in a way that is consistent with her interests. Lisa also has a self that is a potential object of others' behavior: She can be perceived, talked to, evaluated, manipulated, or persuaded by Rob.

Lisa can also direct these activities toward herself. She can perceive, evaluate, motivate, and even talk to herself. This is called **reflexive behavior**. To have a self is to have the ability to plan, observe, guide, and respond to one's own behavior (Mead, 1934). Think of all the times you have tried to motivate yourself to act by saying something such as "All right, if I read 20 more pages of this boring sociology textbook, I'll make myself a hot fudge sundae." To do this you must simultaneously be the motivator and the one being motivated—the seer and the seen.

At this very moment you are initiating an action: reading this book. But you also have the ability (now that I've mentioned it!) to be aware of your reading behavior, to reflexively observe yourself reading, and even to evaluate how well you are doing. This sounds like some sort of mystical out-of-body experience, but it isn't. Nothing is more fundamental to human thought and action than this capacity for self-awareness. It allows us to control our own behavior and interact smoothly with other self-aware individuals.

At birth, human babies have no sense of self. This is not to say that infants don't act on their own. Anyone who has been around babies knows that they have a tremendous ability to initiate action, ranging all the way from Kodak-moment cute to downright disgusting. They cry, eat, sleep, play with squeaky rubber toys, and eliminate waste, all with exquisite panache and regularity. From the very first days of life they respond to the sounds, sights, smells, and touches of others.

But this behavior is not characterized by the sort of self-consciousness that characterizes later behavior. Babies don't say to themselves, "I can't *believe* how loud I can cry"

or "I wonder if Mom will feed me if I scream." As children grow older, though, they begin to exert greater control over their conduct. Part of this transformation is biological. As they mature, they become more adept at muscle control. But physical development is only part of the picture. Humans must acquire certain cognitive capacities through interactions with others, including the abilities to differentiate between self and others, to understand and use symbolic language, and to take the roles of others.

The Differentiation of Self

To distinguish between yourself and others, you must at minimum be able to recognize yourself as a distinct entity (Mead, 1934). The first step in the acquisition of self, then, is learning to distinguish our own faces and bodies from the rest of the physical environment. Surprisingly, we are not born with this ability. Not only are newborns incapable of recognizing themselves, they also cannot even discriminate the boundaries between their bodies and the bodies of others. Infants will pull their own hair to the point of excruciating pain but will not realize that the hair they're pulling and the hair that they feel being pulled is the same hair.

With cognitive growth and social experience, infants gradually recognize themselves as unique physical objects. Most studies in this area indicate that children usually develop this ability at about 18 months (Bertenthal & Fischer, 1978). If you make a large mark on a child's forehead with a washable marker, hold the youngster up to a mirror, and observe whether the child reaches up to wipe away the smudge, you can tell if the youngster recognizes that the image in the mirror is his or her own.

Language Acquisition and the Looking-Glass Self

The next important step in the acquisition of self is the development of speech (Hewitt, 1988). Symbolic interactionism points out that mastery of language is crucial in children's efforts to differentiate themselves as distinct social as well as physical objects (Denzin, 1977). Certainly language acquisition relies on neurological development. But the ability to grasp the nuances of one's own language requires input from others. Most parents talk to their children from the start. Gradually, children learn to make sounds, imitate sounds, and use sounds as symbols for particular physical sensations or objects. Children learn that the sounds "Mama" and "Dada" are the sounds associated with two important objects in their life. Soon children learn that other objects—toys, animals, foods, Aunt Donna, Uncle Marc—have unique sounds associated with them as well.

This learning process gives the child access into the preexisting linguistic world in which his or her parents and others live (Hewitt, 1988). The objects named are not only those recognized within the larger culture but also those recognized within the family's particular social group. The child learns the names of concrete objects (balls, buildings, furniture) as well as abstract ideas that cannot be directly perceived (for example, God, happiness, peace, and idea).

By learning that people and other objects have names, the child also begins to learn that these objects can be related to one another in a multitude of named ways. Depending on who is talking to whom, the same person can be called several different names. The object "Daddy" is called, by various other people, "David," "Dave,"

"Dr. Newman," "Professor Newman," "Honey," and "Bud." Furthermore, the child learns that different people can be referred to by the same name. All those other kids at the park have someone they also call "Mama."

Amid these monumental discoveries young children learn that they too are objects that have names. A child who learns that others are referring to her when they make the sound "Elena," and that she too can use "Elena" to refer to herself, has taken a significant leap forward in the acquisition of self. The child now can visualize herself as a part of the named world and the named relationships to which she belongs.

The self that initially emerges from this process is a rather simple one. "Elena" is just a name associated with a body, which explains why very young children just learning to form sentences may refer to themselves by their name instead of the first-person pronoun (for example, "Elena is hungry" instead of "I am hungry"). A more sophisticated sense of self is derived from the child's ability to learn the meaning of this named object.

Children learn the meaning of named objects in their environment by observing the way other people act toward those objects. By observing people sitting on a chair, they learn what "chair" means. Parental warnings allow them to learn that a "hot stove" is something to be avoided. Similarly, by observing how people act toward them they learn the meaning of themselves. People treat children in a variety of ways: care for them, punish them, love them, neglect them, teach them. If parents, relatives, and other significant people perceive a child as smart, they act toward him or her that way. Thus the child eventually comes to believe he or she is a smart person. One of the earliest symbolic interactionists, Charles Horton Cooley (1902), referred to this process as acquisition of the **looking-glass self**. He argued that we use the reactions of others toward us as mirrors in which we see ourselves and determine our self-worth. Through this process, we imagine how we might look to other people, we interpret their responses to us, and we form a self-concept. If we think people perceive us favorably, we're likely to develop a positive self-concept. Conversely, if we detect unfavorable reactions, our self-concept will likely be negative. Hence feelings of pride or shame are always the product of the reflected appraisals of others.

How the child-as-named-object is defined by others is linked to larger societal considerations as well. Every culture has its own way of defining individuals at various stages of the life cycle. Children are not always defined, and have not always been defined, as a special subpopulation whose innocence requires nurturing and protection (Ariès, 1962). In some societies they are expected to behave like adults and are held accountable for their actions just as adults would be. Under such cultural circumstances, a 5-year-old's self-concept may be derived from how well she or he contributes economically to the family, not from how cute or playful she or he is. Moreover, every society has its own standards of beauty and success. If thinness is a culturally desirable characteristic, a thin child is more likely to garner positive responses and develop a positive self-image than a child who violates this norm (that is, an obese child).

The Development of Role Taking

This process would be pretty simple if everyone in our lives saw us in exactly the same way. But different people expect or desire different things from us. Children eventually learn to modify their behavior to suit different people. Four-year-old Rafael

learns, for instance, that his 3-year-old sister loves it when he sticks his finger up his nose, but he also knows that his father doesn't find this behavior at all amusing. So Rafael will avoid such conduct when his father is around but will proceed to amuse his sister with this trick when Papa is gone. The ability to use other people's perspectives and expectations in formulating one's own behavior is called **role taking** (Mead, 1934).

Role-taking ability develops gradually, paralleling the increasing maturation of linguistic abilities. Operating from the symbolic interactionist perspective, George Herbert Mead (1934) identified two major stages in the development of role-taking ability and, ultimately, in the socialization of the self: the play stage and the game stage. The **play stage** occurs when children are just beginning to hone their language skills. Role taking at the play stage is quite simple in form, limited to taking the perspective of one other person at a time. Very young children cannot see themselves from different perspectives simultaneously. They have no idea that certain behaviors may be unacceptable to a variety of people across a range of situations. They know only that this particular person who is in their immediate presence will approve or not approve of this conduct. Children cannot see that their father's disapproval of public nose picking reflects the attitudes of a larger group and is generally unacceptable. This more sophisticated form of self-control develops at the next stage of the socialization process: the game stage.

The **game stage** occurs about the time that children first begin to participate in organized activities such as school events and team sports. The difference between role taking at the play and game stages parallels the difference between childhood play behavior and game behavior. Play is not guided by a specific set of rules. Play has no ultimate object, no clearly organized competition, no winners and losers. Children playing baseball at the play stage have no sense of strategy and may not even be aware of the rules and object of the game. They may be able to hit, catch, and throw the ball but have no idea how their behavior is linked to that of their teammates. If a little girl is playing third base and the ball is hit to her, she may turn around and throw the ball to the left fielder, not because it will help her team win the game but because that's where her best friend happens to be.

At the game stage, in contrast, children develop a sense of the object of the game. They realize that each player on the team is part of an organized network of roles determined by the rules of the game. Children know they must continually adapt their behavior to the team's needs in order to achieve a goal. To do so, they must imagine the group's perspective and predict how both their teammates and the opponents will act under certain circumstances.

With regard to social behavior at the game stage, not only does the child learn to respond to the demands of several people, but he or she can also respond to the demands of the community or even society as a whole. Sociologists call the perspective of society and its constituent values and attitudes the **generalized other.** The generalized other becomes larger as a child matures, growing to include family, peer group, school, and finally the larger social community. "Mama doesn't like it when I take off my pants in a restaurant" (play stage) eventually becomes "It's never acceptable to take off one's pants in public" (game stage). Notice how such an understanding requires an ability to generalize behavior across a variety of situations. The child realizes that "public" consists of restaurants, shopping malls, school classrooms, neighbors' living rooms, and so forth.

This ability is crucial because it enables the individual to resist the influence of specific people who happen to be in his or her immediate presence. The boy who defies his peers by not joining them in an act of petty shoplifting is showing the power of the generalized other ("Stealing, no matter where or with whom, is bad"). During the game stage, the attitudes and expectations of the generalized other are incorporated into one's values and self-concept.

Real life is not always that simple, though. People from markedly different backgrounds are likely to internalize different sets of group attitudes and values. A devout Catholic contemplating divorce, for instance, is taking the role of a different generalized other than an atheist contemplating divorce. Likewise, the social worlds and social standards of men and women are different, as are those of children and adults, parents and nonparents, middle-class and working-class people, and people who grew up in different societies.

Nor is role-taking ability static. It changes in response to interactions with others. When people feel that they can understand another person's perspective, as say that of an intimate partner, they are likely to become concerned about or at least aware of how their behavior will affect that other person (Cast, 2004). Furthermore, as we move from one institutional context to another, we adopt the perspective of the appropriate group and can become, for all intents and purposes, a different person. At school we behave one way, at church another, at a family gathering still another. We are as many different people as there are groups and organizations of which we are members.

Common sense suggests that people who have a great deal of knowledge and experience should be the best role takers. For example, parents should be more sensitive to their children's views than vice versa, because they are older and wiser and were children once themselves. However, given the dynamics of power and dependence, people in superior positions tend to be less sensitive to subordinates and, as a result, may not be required to conform their behavior to—nor even to be aware of—the wishes and desires of others (Tsushima & Gecas, 2001). You can see this phenomenon in many areas of social life. First-year college students are typically more aware of the actions and interests of upperclass students than vice versa. Low-level employees must be sensitive to the behaviors and preferences of those above them if they want to achieve occupational success and mobility. On a broader scale, less powerful nations must have heightened sensitivity to the activities of their more powerful neighbors. I have heard some Canadians complain that they are expected to know virtually everything about the United States—its culture as well as its economic and political systems—whereas most people in the United States tend to be rather oblivious to even the most accessible elements of Canadian politics and culture.

In sum, the ability to imagine another person's attitudes and intentions and thereby to anticipate that person's behavior is essential for everyday social interaction. Through role taking we can envision how others perceive us and what their response may be to some action we're contemplating. Hence, we can select behaviors that are likely to meet with the approval of the person or persons with whom we are interacting and can avoid behaviors that might meet with their disapproval. Role taking is thus a crucial component of self-control and social order. It transforms a biological being into a social being who is capable of conforming his or her behavior to societal expectations. It is the means by which culture is incorporated into the self and makes group life possible (Cast, 2004).

Resocialization

Socialization does not end when childhood ends; it continues throughout our lives. Adults must be **resocialized** into a new set of norms, values, and expectations each time they leave behind old social contexts or roles and enter new ones (Ebaugh, 1988; Pescosolido, 1986; Simpson, 1979). For instance, we have to learn how to think and act like a spouse when we marry (P.L. Berger & Kellner, 1964), a parent when we have kids (A. Rossi, 1968), and a divorced person when a marriage ends (Vaughan, 1986). Every new group or organization we enter, every new friendship we form, every new life-changing experience we have, requires the formation of new identities and socialization into new sets of norms and beliefs.

Sometimes resocialization is forceful and intense. In prisons, mental hospitals, monasteries, military training camps, and other **total institutions** (Goffman, 1961), groups of individuals are separated from the broader society and forced to lead an enclosed, formally administered life. Previous socialization experiences are systematically destroyed and new ones developed to serve the interests of the group. In an army boot camp, for instance, the individual must learn to look, act, and think like a soldier and learn to see the world from the soldier's perspective. To aid in this transformation, recruits are stripped of old civilian identity markers (clothes, personal possessions, hairstyle) and forced to take on new ones that nullify individuality and also identify the newcomers' subordinate status (uniforms, identification numbers, similar haircuts). The newcomer is also subjected to constant scrutiny. Conformity is mandatory. Any misstep is met with punishment or humiliation.

Eventually the individual learns to identify with the ideology of the total institution. In the boot camp, the uniformity of values and appearance is intended to create a sense of solidarity among the soldiers and thereby make the military more effective in carrying out its tasks. Part of the reason for all the controversy over diversity in the military—first with the inclusion of African Americans, then with women, and now with homosexuals—is that it introduces diverse beliefs, values, appearances, and lifestyles into a context where, from an institutional perspective, similarity is essential.

The mechanisms of resocialization have been tragically exploited from time to time. Two noteworthy examples are the mass suicides of 911 members of Jim Jones's People's Temple in Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978 and the 1993 armed standoff and subsequent destruction of David Koresh's Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. Jones and Koresh told their followers that to achieve better and more meaningful lives, they would have to isolate themselves, severing all ties to their previous lives—all previous values, relationships, emotional bonds, and so on. The members abandoned their past "disreputable" selves so totally and were resocialized and indoctrinated by their leaders so completely that their ability to make decisions on their own behalf was impaired (Coser & Coser, 1993). When people are physically and emotionally cut off from their friends and family, they can be influenced, cajoled, or threatened into doing virtually anything, even injuring others or taking their own lives.

Less drastically, but no less deliberately, certain occupations require the resocialization of new entrants. Often the purpose is simply to make sure people who work in the organization share the same professional values, methods, and vocabulary. Many

large companies, for example, have orientation programs for new employees to teach them what will be expected of them as they begin their new jobs. Sometimes the purpose is to make new entrants abandon their original expectations and adopt a more realistic view of the occupation. Police recruits who believe their job is to protect people must learn that deadly force is appropriate and sometimes necessary in the line of duty (J. Hunt, 1985). Many medical students become less idealistic and more realistic as they learn about the exhausting demands of their profession (H. S. Becker & Geer, 1958; Hafferty, 1991). Such resocialization is especially important in occupations that deal with highly emotional matters, such as the funeral industry.

Spencer Cahill
The Professional Socialization of Funeral Directors

Funeral directors routinely deal with death and corpses. They are exposed to sights, smells, and sounds that most people would find frightening or repulsive. And they must discuss cold, practical matters, such as prices and methods of payment, with grief-stricken clients, without appearing callous. Thus the occupational socialization of funeral directors is as important as that in any other profession that deals with human tragedy (clergy, doctors, nurses, police detectives, and so on). But unlike these other professionals, for whom death is merely one aspect of the job, funeral directors exist solely for the purpose of dealing with death.

To study the process of becoming a funeral director, sociologist Spencer Cahill (1999) spent five months as a participant observer in a mortuary science program at a community college. In most states, funeral directors must complete an accredited program in mortuary science before getting their license to practice. Cahill regularly attended classes on such topics as health and sanitation science, psychology of grief, and embalming. He also talked informally with the other students and interviewed eight of them formally. What was especially unique about his research approach was that instead of taking the stance of the detached, objective researcher, Cahill incorporated his own feelings and emotional reactions into his analysis.

He found that the entire mortuary science education program serves to *normalize* the work, so that students become comfortable with death. Reminders of death are a constant presence. Nothing is hidden. For instance, all the classrooms contain some artifacts of death, such as refrigerated compartments that hold corpses, stainless steel embalming tables, and caskets. All the instructors Cahill observed spread their lecture notes on a body gurney, forgoing the traditional lectern and table. It was also common practice for instructors to leave the door open between the classroom and the embalming laboratory, allowing the lingering smell of decomposing bodies to drift into the classroom.

Because other students on campus tend to shun them, the mortuary science students often stick together, providing an almost constant network of support. From these casual interactions (as well as their conversations with instructors) these students learn an occupational language that communicates professional authority and calm composure toward things most of the public would find upsetting. For example, the students learn to see the corpse not as an individual person with a history and a family,

but as a series of technical puzzles and problems posed by the cause of death (for example, ingested substances, chemical changes, injuries sustained before death).

However, Cahill points out that professional socialization is not enough to create funeral directors. He notes that students for whom death has always been a mystery or students who are predisposed to becoming queasy don't last very long in the program. In contrast, those who are familiar with death or who have somehow worked with the dead before (such as the sons or daughters of funeral directors) were the most likely to succeed.

Eventually the mortuary science students who complete the program adopt the identity of funeral director. They learn to normalize death and acquire the perceptions, judgments, and emotional management skills required of this occupation. As one well-socialized student put it, "What we do is far less depressing than what nurses and doctors do. We only get the body after the death and do not have to watch all the suffering" (quoted in Cahill, 1999, p. 109).

The Self in Cultural Context

When we imagine how others will respond to our actions, we choose from a limited set of lines of conduct that are part of the wider culture. In the United States, the self is likely to incorporate key virtues such as self-reliance and individualism. Hence personal goals tend to be favored over group goals (Bellah et al., 1985). In the United States, people readily change their group membership as it suits them—switching churches or even religions, leaving one employer for another, moving from neighborhood to neighborhood (Goleman, 1990).

In most non-Western cultures, however, the self is more likely to be collectivist; that is, personal identity is less important than group identity in a **collectivist culture** (Gergen, 1991). In India, for instance, feelings of self-esteem and prestige derive more from the reputation and honor of one's family than from any individual achievements (Roland, 1988). In a collectivist setting, a high value is placed on preserving one's public image so as not to bring shame on one's family, tribe, or community (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). Overcoming personal interests and temptations to show loyalty to one's group and other authorities is celebrated. During the 1998 Winter Olympics observers noted that most players on the Japanese hockey team didn't want to score too many goals, for fear of drawing attention to themselves and away from the team.

In contrast, in **individualist cultures** such as the United States, personal accomplishments are a key part of one's self-concept. The amount of respect we deserve is determined in large part by our level of expertise. For example, before a public speech a guest lecturer will likely be introduced to her audience as "a distinguished scholar, a leader in her field" along with a list of her academic credentials and scholarly achievements. In Asia, however, people would consider such pronouncements self-centered and egotistical. Asian lecturers usually begin their talks by telling the audience how *little* they know about the topic at hand (Goleman, 1990).

But even in an individualist society such as the United States, our personal identities are inseparable from the various groups and organizations to which we belong. Consider the network revealed in Exhibit 5.1, which shows the contents of a person's

What can you tell about the owner of the wallet whose contents are shown here? More important, what can you tell from the wallet's contents about the importance of groups, organizations, and institutions in our lives? To lose a wallet is to lose tangible evidence of personal identity and our connections to the social structure.

Depending on whom you talk to, money ❶ is either "the root of all evil" or "what makes the world go "round." There's no denying that money is vitally important in the lives of most people. The entire structure of Western societies is built around it. But the money in our wallets has no intrinsic value. It is merely paper. It is valuable only because we, as a collective, agree to give it symbolic value. In fact, the dollar bill is one of the most internationally recognized symbols, readily accepted throughout the world.

We need identification cards to use the services of many of the organizations and groups to which we belong. Forget your membership card, and you can't work out in your local gym; forget your meal card, and you can't eat in your campus dining hall; forget your video store card, and you can't rent that movie you were dying to see. Some office buildings, in the interest of security, have issued identification cards that employees must use just to get into the building.

Most of us carry a variety of credit cards for department stores or other retail outlets ❷. But credit cards do more than simply enable us to make purchases without having to pay cash right away. They represent power, status, and prestige. Credit card companies have created a whole system of hierarchy and privilege. If you have a regular credit card,

Exhibit 5.1 A Sociological Portrait of Identity

❷ ❺ ❹

you're just a regular citizen; own a gold card and you have access to more money and more privileges; a platinum or titanium card puts you at the top of the heap, giving you even more opportunities. Other organizations have tried to use this status system. The Preferred Reader ❸ card you see here is an example.

Your driver's license ❹ is the most frequently asked-for identification card. What does this say about the cultural importance of automobiles in our lives? What are some of the reasons people ask to see our driver's licenses? The necessity of having this identification card has caused many people who don't need or want to drive to take a driving test.

The library card ❺, like many identification and credit cards, encodes information about you into its bar code. Magnetic strips and bar codes connect you to huge data banks that keep track of your creditworthiness and your record of payments (not to mention whether you have any overdue books). Some of these data banks also sell your name to marketing organizations that provide information about your patterns of consumption—maybe not always accurately—for future marketing campaigns. The catalogs that multiply in your mailbox can probably be traced back to an identification strip on one of your cards.

The contents of a wallet reflect important sociological ideas. As you make your way through this book, notice how concepts such as social identity, deviance, socialization, power, organizations, institutions, race, gender, class, and family can be "seen" by taking a peek inside your wallet.

wallet. Thus to fully understand how we become who we are, we must know the norms and values of our society, family, peers, coworkers, and all the others who are a part of our lives. Beyond that, we must also understand our position in the social structure. We must know to what extent our race and ethnicity, social class, and religion set limits on the kinds of social relationships we can and will form. And we must know how institutions affect the way we're socialized. All of these things affect our identity, as well as our ability to take the roles of people who differ from us.

Socialization and Stratification: Growing Up With Inequality

Socialization does not take place in a vacuum. Your social class, your race and ethnicity, and your sex and gender all become significant features of your social identity. Were you born into a poor or a well-to-do family? Are you a member of a racial minority or a member of the dominant group? Are you male or female? These elements of identity shape your experiences with other people and the larger society and will direct you along a certain life path. In most societies, social class, race and ethnicity, and gender are the key determinants of people's opportunities throughout their lives.

Social Class

Social classes consist of people who occupy similar positions of power, privilege, and prestige. People's positions in the class system affect virtually every aspect of their lives, including political preferences, sexual behavior, religious affiliation, diet, and life expectancy. The conflict perspective points out that even in a relatively open society such as the United States, parents' social class determines children's access to certain educational, occupational, and residential opportunities. But the relationship between class and socialization is not simply about parents providing (or not providing) their children with the resources of a comfortable childhood (for instance, a nice house, plenty of toys, access to good schools). In addition, parents' class standing influences the values and orientations children learn and the identities they develop.

In Chapter 10 you will learn much more about how social class affects attitudes, behaviors, and opportunities. The important point here is that social class and socialization are linked. Sociologist Melvin L. Kohn (1979) interviewed 200 working-class and 200 middle-class American couples who had at least one child of fifth-grade age. He found that the middle-class parents were more likely to promote such values as self-direction, independence, and curiosity than were the working-class parents. A more recent study found that middle-class parents are more likely than working-class parents to foster their children's talents through organized leisure activities and experiences that require logical reasoning (Lareau, 2003). Other researchers have found this tendency especially strong among middle-class mothers (Xiao, 2000).

Conversely, working-class parents were more likely than middle-class parents to emphasize conformity to external authority, a common characteristic of the blue-collar jobs they're likely to have later on (Kohn, 1979). Principally, they want their children to be neat and clean and to follow the rules.

Of course, not all middle-class parents, or working-class parents, raise their children in these ways, and many factors other than social class influence parental values (Wright & Wright, 1976). Nevertheless, Kohn found that these general tendencies were

consistent regardless of the sex of the child or the size and composition of the family. In a study of African American women, those from middle-class backgrounds reported that their parents had higher expectations for them and were more involved in their education than African American women from working-class backgrounds reported (Hill, 1997).

Moreover, others have found that despite cultural differences, social class standing influences child socialization in European (Poland, Germany) and non-Western (Japan, Taiwan) societies (Schooler, 1996; Williamson, 1984; Yi, Chang, & Chang, 2004).

Sudden shifts in social class standing—due, for instance, to an unexpected job loss—can also affect the way parents socialize their children. Parents who lose their jobs can become irritable, tense, and moody and their disciplinary style more arbitrary. They may come to rely less on reasoning and more on hostile comments and physical punishment. As a result, children's sense of self, their aspirations, and their school performance suffer (cited in Rothstein, 2001).

Class differences in socialization are also directly related to future goals. Working-class parents tend to believe that eventual occupational success and survival depend on their children's ability to conform to and obey authority (Kohn, 1979). Middle-class parents are likely to believe that their children's future success will result from assertiveness and initiative. Hence middle-class children's feelings of control over their own destiny are likely to be much stronger than those of working-class children.

Annette Lareau
Unequal Childhoods

Class-based differences in parenting values and approaches to child rearing can also influence how children learn to interact with others. Sociologist Annette Lareau (2003) conducted intensive interviews with 12 families of different racial and class backgrounds with children between the ages of 8 and 10. She and her associates visited each family about 20 times over the span of a month. She found subtle, but important, class differences in the lessons children learned about dealing with others:

> There was quite a bit more talking in middle-class homes than in working-class and poor homes, leading to the development of greater verbal agility, larger vocabularies, more comfort with authority figures, and more familiarity with abstract concepts. Importantly, children also developed skill differences in interacting with authority figures in institutions and at home. Middle-class children . . . learn, [when young], to shake the hands of adults and look them in the eye. . . . Researchers stress the importance of eye contact, firm handshakes, and displaying comfort with bosses during [job interviews]. In poor families . . . however, family members usually do not look each other in the eye when conversing. . . . They [may] live in neighborhoods where it can be dangerous to look people in the eye too long (p. 5).

Children's evolving sense of entitlement also tends to be based on their class standing. Middle- and upper-class children often take for granted the right to be involved in activities like organized sports and music lessons, to attend summer

enrichment programs, and to go on out-of-town class field trips. These activities are not simply recreational. Many of them replicate key aspects of the adult workplace, like meeting new people and learning to work effectively with them. Travel experiences give these children a level of comfort with unfamiliar surroundings that they can use in the future when called on to take a trip for business or interact with people from different regions (Lareau, 2003). The skills that are developed while involved in these experiences will provide a smooth fit with the behaviors and expectations of other social institutions these children will encounter when they become adults.

The importance that middle-class families place on their children's involvement in such activities is hard to miss. Many of these families routinely spend thousands of dollars a year promoting their children's extracurricular activities, which often determine the daily and weekly schedules for the entire family. The pace of life can be hectic as parents and children race from soccer games to tae kwon do practice to piano lessons. Middle-class adults' leisure time is often completely absorbed by their children's involvements, further illustrating the value they attach to such activities and the assumption that they will provide their children with interpersonal advantages in the future.

Lareau found that in working-class and poor families, the organization and rhythm of daily life is quite different:

> Although money was in short supply, children's lives were more relaxed and, more importantly, the pace of life was slower. Children played with other children outside the house. . . . Some children had organized activities, but they were far fewer than in middle-class families. Other times, children wanted to be in organized activities, but economic constraints, compounded by lack of transportation, made participation prohibitive. . . . In addition, since they were not riding around in cars with parents going to organized activities or being directed by adults in structured activities, children in working-class and poor families had more autonomy from adults . . . and long stretches of free time (Lareau, 2003, pp. 35–36).

Although children from working-class and poor families may not be so well socialized for future organizational and interpersonal demands of corporate America, one has to wonder if their upbringing doesn't give them an advantage or two over heavily scheduled middle-class children. For instance, they may be more likely to acquire "street smarts"—being aware of potential interpersonal and environmental threats and being able to deal with them—and to develop resourcefulness and creativity in organizing their own social networks and enterprises.

Race and Ethnicity

Several years ago, shortly after an unarmed West African immigrant was shot and killed by four white police officers in Bronx, New York, some of my students became embroiled in a heated discussion of the incident. One student, who was white, expressed concern that because of the terrible actions of these individual officers, young children of all races would now grow up mistrusting or even hating the police. As a child, she said, she had been taught that the role of the police is to help people and

that if she were ever in trouble or lost she could approach an officer for assistance. She never questioned whether or not the police could be trusted.

Some of the African American students in class quickly pointed out that their socialization experiences had been quite different. Parents and others in their neighborhoods had taught them never to trust the police, because officers were just as likely to harass them as to help them. They were taught to seek out neighbors and relatives, not the police, if they ever needed help. To them the police were not knights in shining armor but bullies with badges. But now, in the wake of several other incidents around the country where police injured or killed people of color, some parents and civic leaders feel it is essential to teach black and Latino/a children how to respond safely when approached by the police. The NAACP, the Allstate Insurance Company, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives have published brochures and held community forums on "guidelines for interacting with law enforcement officials." Among other things, children are being taught to speak when asked to speak, to stop when ordered to stop, to never make any sudden movements, and to always display their open hands to show they aren't armed (Barry, 2000).

Although these two perspectives of my students are not representative of every white or every black person in the United States, the interchange illustrates the stark impact race and ethnicity can have on socialization. For white children, learning about their racial identity is less about defining their race than it is about learning how to handle privileges and behaviors associated with being white in a predominantly white society (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Chances are good that schools and religious organizations will reinforce the socialization messages expressed to white children in their families—for example, that "hard work will pay off in the long run" or "you can be anything you want as long as you work hard."

For children who are members of ethnoracial minorities, however, learning about their race occurs within a different and much more complex social environment (Hughes & Chen, 1997). These children must live simultaneously in two different worlds: their ethnoracial community and the "mainstream" (that is, white) society. Hence, they're likely to be exposed to several different types of socialization experience while growing up: that which includes information about the mainstream culture, that which focuses on their minority status in society, and that which focuses on the history and cultural heritage of their ethnoracial group (Thornton, 1997). Parents often emphasize one type of orientation over others:

> Parents who possess a mainstream orientation are not likely to emphasize race but more so emphasize self-confidence, personal self-esteem, competence, and hard work to defend against societal insults and racial barriers. Those who possess a minority orientation are more likely to emphasize the significance of race in society and the institutional barriers their children will likely confront due to their racial and ethnic background. Parents who possess a . . . cultural orientation are more likely to emphasize the history and achievement of [their group]. Parents possessing this orientation attempt to instill a sense of racial pride in their children (Scott, 2003, p. 523).

In ethnoracial groups that have been able to overcome discrimination and achieve at high levels—such as some Asian-American groups—ethnic socialization can focus

simply on the values of their culture of origin. But among groups that by-and-large remain disadvantaged, such as African Americans, Native Americans, and Latino/as parents' discussion of race is more likely to focus on preparing their children for prejudice, ethnic hatred, and mistreatment in a society set up to ignore or actively exclude them (McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000; Staples, 1992). For instance, these children may be taught that "hard work" alone might not be enough to get ahead in this society. Even African American children from affluent homes in racially integrated neighborhoods need reassurances about the racial conflicts they will inevitably encounter (Comer & Poussaint, 1992). These are lessons that children in the dominant racial group seldom require, for reasons explored in greater depth in Chapter 11.

Gender

As you recall from Chapter 4, the sexual dichotomy—the belief that there are two and only two sexes—is not universal. Cultures are even more likely to differ in what is expected of people based on their sex and in how male and female children are to be socialized.

Before discussing this aspect of socialization, it's necessary to distinguish between two concepts: sex and gender. **Sex** is typically used to refer to a person's biological maleness or femaleness. **Gender** designates masculinity and femininity, the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness (Kessler & McKenna, 1978). This distinction is important because it reminds us that male-female differences in behaviors or experiences do not spring naturally from biological differences between the sexes (Lips, 1993).

The gender socialization process begins the moment a child is born. A physician, nurse, or midwife immediately starts that infant on a career as a male or female by authoritatively declaring whether it is a boy or girl. In most U.S. hospitals the infant boy is wrapped in a blue blanket, the infant girl in a pink one. From that point on, the developmental paths of American males and females diverge. The subsequent messages that individuals receive from families, books, television, and schools not only teach and reinforce gender-typed expectations but also influence the formation of their self-concepts.

If you were to ask parents whether they treated sons any differently from daughters, most would probably say no. Yet there is considerable evidence that what parents do and what they say they do are two different things (Lips, 1993; Lytton & Romney, 1991). In one study, 30 first-time parents were asked to describe their infants at less than 24 hours old. They frequently resorted to common gender stereotypes. Those with daughters described them as "tiny," "soft," "fine-featured," and "delicate." Sons were seen as "strong," "alert," "hardy," and "coordinated" (J. Z. Rubin, Provenzano, & Luria, 1974). A replication of this study two decades later found that U.S. parents continue to perceive their infants in gender-stereotyped ways, although less so than in the 1970s (Karraker, Vogel, & Lake, 1995). Parents also tend to engage in rougher physical play with infant sons than with infant daughters and use subtle differences in tone of voice and different pet names, such as "Sweetie" versus "Tiger" (MacDonald & Parke, 1986; Tauber, 1979).

New parents can be very sensitive about the correct identification of their child's sex. Even parents who claim to consider sex and gender irrelevant may spend a great deal of time ensuring that their child has the culturally appropriate gender appearance. Parents of a girl baby who has yet to grow hair (a visible sign of gender in many cultures) often tape pink ribbons to the bald baby's head to avoid potential misidentification. In many Latin American countries, families have baby girls' ears pierced and earrings placed in them to provide an unmistakable indicator of the child's sex and gender.

In a culture where sex and gender are centrally important and any ambiguity is distasteful, gender identification of babies helps in maintaining social order. When my elder son was an infant, I dressed him on several occasions in a pink, frilly snowsuit in order to observe the reactions of others. (Having a sociologist for a father can be rather difficult from time to time!) Invariably someone would approach us and start playing with the baby. Some variation of the following interchange inevitably ensued:

"Oh, she's so cute! What's your little girl's name?"

"Zachary."

"Isn't Zachary a boy's name?"

"He's a boy."

At this point the responses would range from stunned confusion and awkward laughter to dirty looks and outright anger. Clearly people felt that I had emotionally abused my son somehow. I had purposely breached a fundamental gender norm and thereby created, in their minds, unnecessary trauma (for him) and interactional confusion (for them).

Both boys and girls learn at a very young age to adopt gender as an organizing principle (Howard & Hollander, 1997). By the age of 3 or so most children can accurately answer the question "Are you a boy or a girl?" (see, for example, Kohlberg, 1966). To a young child, being a boy or a girl is simply another characteristic, like having brown hair or 10 fingers. The child at this age has no conception that gender is a category into which every human can be placed (Kessler & McKenna, 1978). But by the age of 5 or so, most children have developed a fair number of gender stereotypes (often incorrect) that they then use to guide their own perceptions and activities (Martin & Ruble, 2004). They also use these stereotypes to form impressions of others. A boy, for instance, may avoid approaching a new girl who's moved into the neighborhood because he assumes that she will be interested in "girl" things. Acting on this assumption reinforces the original belief that boys and girls are different. Indeed, to children at this age, gender is typically seen as a characteristic that is fixed and permanent. Statements like "Doctors are men" and "Nurses are women" are uttered as inflexible, objective "truths." A few years later, though, their attitudes toward gender become considerably more flexible, although such flexibility may not be reflected in their actual behaviors (Martin & Ruble, 2004).

It's important to note that gender socialization is not a passive process in which children simply absorb the information that bombards them. As part of the process of finding meaning in their social worlds, children actively construct gender as a social category. From an early age, they are like "gender detectives," searching for cues about gender, such as who should and shouldn't engage in certain activities, who can play with whom, and why girls and boys differ (Martin & Ruble, 2004, p. 67).

Parents and other family members may also provide their children with explicit instructions on proper gender behavior, such as "Big boys don't cry" or "Act like a young lady." For instance, one recent study of mothers' reactions to their children's misbehaviors found that they tend to be more concerned about injuries and safety issues with their daughters and tend to focus more on disciplinary issues with their sons (Morrongiello & Hogg, 2004).

Evidence suggests that such instructions are particularly rigid and restrictive for U.S. boys (Franklin, 1988). Indeed, the social costs for "gender-inappropriate" behavior are disproportionately severe for boys. Consider the different connotations and implications of the words *sissy* and *tomboy.* The girl who is a tomboy may fight, curse, compete in sports, and climb trees, but her entire gender identity is not called into question by the label. Girls, in general, are given license to do "boy things" (Kimmel, 2004). Indeed, tomboyness, if considered negative at all, is typically seen as transitory, a stage that a girl will eventually grow out of. But the chances for boys to play "girl games" without ridicule are rare and the risks for doing so are steep. The sissy is not simply a boy who enjoys female pursuits. He is suspiciously soft and effeminate. His sissyness is likely to be seen as reflective of his sexual essence, a sign to some of his impending homosexuality.

As children grow older, parents tend to encourage more gender-typed activities. For instance, American boys are more likely to mow the lawn, shovel snow, take out the garbage, and do the yard work, whereas girls tend to clean the house, wash dishes, cook, and babysit the younger children (L. White & Brinkerhoff, 1981). These discrepancies are clearly linked to the different social roles ascribed to men and women, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 12.

Parents maintain their children's gender identity through the things they routinely provide for them: clothes, adornments, books, videos, and so forth. Clothes, for example, not only inform others about the sex of an individual, they also send messages about how that person ought to be treated and direct behavior along traditional gender lines (Shakin, Shakin, & Sternglanz, 1985). Frilly outfits do not lend themselves easily to rough and dirty play. Likewise, it is difficult to walk quickly or assertively in high heels and tight miniskirts. Clothes for boys and men rarely restrict physical movement in this way. Toys and games are an especially influential source of gender information parents provide their children.

❖

Micro-Macro Connection
Girls' Toys and Boys' Toys

Like most people over the age of 40, I can remember a time when toys played a very different role in American children's lives from the role they play today. When I was a child, my friends and I didn't have many toys and we usually ended up improvising playthings out of available materials, like tree branches, empty boxes, and old tennis rackets. When we did receive a new toy it was usually a special occasion, such as a birthday, a holiday, or a cavity-free dental checkup. Every once in a while we'd save up enough money, walk down to the local toy shop, and buy some toy for ourselves that

we'd been coveting for months. The toys were simple and straightforward—wagons, fire engines, dolls, balls, trains, board games—and we'd use them and use them until they broke or wore out. When our parents detected a significant spurt in our maturity, they might get us a toy that required special caution: a chemistry set, an Easy Bake oven, an electric racing car set.

Today toys have changed. Toy making is now a multibillion-dollar business, part of a giant transnational, interconnected industry. It's virtually impossible to buy a toy these days that's not linked to some new film, television show, fast food restaurant, or other high-powered marketing campaign. Toy companies now commonly produce TV cartoons based on their own toy lines. Parents find it difficult to resist their children's wishes, which are likely to be formed by television advertisements. Try taking a child to McDonald's without having to purchase a toy there. The quaint toyshop of the past has been replaced by the massive toy mega-warehouse filled with endless aisles stocked floor to ceiling with boxes sporting eye-popping colors and screaming images. Even serious world events are now linked to toys. In 2003, the video game industry kept a close eye on the war in Iraq for battle weapons and tools that could be turned into toys ("Toymakers Study Troops," 2003). Toys, it seems, have lost their innocence.

But the current state of the toy industry is not simply a result of profit-hungry corporations trying to find new ways to exploit the child market (G. Cross, 1997). Toys have always played a significant role in teaching children about prevailing cultural conceptions of gender. In the 1950s—a time in U.S. history when most adults had endless faith in the goodness of technological progress—Erector sets and chemistry sets were supposed to encourage boys to be engineers and scientists. Dollhouses and baby dolls taught girls to be modern homemakers and mothers during a time when girls typically assumed they'd occupy those roles in adulthood.

A quick glance at Saturday morning television commercials, toy store shelves, or manufacturers' Web sites these days reveals that toys and games remain solidly segregated along gender lines. "Girls' toys" still revolve around themes of domesticity, fashion, and motherhood and "boys' toys" emphasize action and adventure (Renzetti & Curran, 2003). Gender-specific toys foster different traits and skills in children and thereby further segregate boys and girls into different patterns of social development. "Boys' toys" encourage invention, exploration, competition, and aggression. "Girls' toys" encourage creativity, nurturing, and physical attractiveness (C. L. Miller, 1987).

Dolls, makeup kits, and toy kitchens continue to be the most profitable items in the girls' market. The highly stereotypical "Barbie" doll has been one of the best-selling girls' toys for decades. Barbie takes in over $1 billion in annual sales. Ninety-five percent of girls aged 3 to 11 own at least one Barbie, the average number of Barbie dolls an American girl owns is eight (G. Cross, 1997).

Toy manufacturers also continue to make fortunes promoting war toys, competitive games of strategy, and sports paraphernalia for boys. In 1983 the popular action figure GI Joe got his own TV show; by 1988, two thirds of American boys between the ages of 5 and 11 owned Joes (G. Cross, 1997). Today, the boys' toy market is saturated with plastic descendants of Joe: high-tech soldiers, muscle-bound action figures from popular comic books and movies, and intergalactic warriors. In 2003, George W. Bush was immortalized with a Joe-like action figure depicting him in a naval flight suit.

Video games have become a particularly lucrative product in recent years. Most video games are designed by males for other males. Female characters in these games are often provocatively sexual, scantily clad, and voluptuous. The developers of one game, *BMX XXX,* were forced to add clothing to their topless female riders after major retailers refused to carry the game. Many games portray female characters as prostitutes and strippers, who are frequent targets of violence at the hands of psychopathic male characters. In *Duke Nukem 3D,* the player is awarded bonus points for shooting naked, bound prostitutes and strippers who plead "Kill me!" In *Grand Theft Auto 3,* players can beat prostitutes to death with baseball bats after having sex with them (Media Awareness Network, 2005). The gender messages in such games may have a detrimental effect on both boys' attitudes toward girls and women and their conceptions of appropriate male behavior.

From time to time toy manufacturers have attempted—usually only halfheartedly—to blur the lines between boys' and girls' toys. A few years ago, the Hasbro toy company tried to interest boys in troll dolls, which are traditionally popular among girls. What it came up with were old-fashioned action figures in the shape of a troll, with names like "Troll Warrior" and "Battle Troll" (Lawson, 1993). Other companies have tried to sell girls action figures and building blocks, which are typically the province of boys, but have drifted into traditional gender stereotypes. Mattel's "Wonder Woman" action figure fights not with swords or machine guns but with a wand that sprays bubbles. The popular Legos building blocks that many boys use to make towers and monsters still come in vivid primary colors. But they are now also available in pastel colors and come in kits that can be used to make jewelry and doll houses.

For the most part, toy manufacturers are still quick to exploit the gender-distinct roles children are encouraged to pursue when they become adults. For instance, Mattel makes a pregnant version of Barbie's friend Midge (called "Happy Family Midge"). She comes with a distended tummy that, when removed, reveals a 1¾-inch baby nestled in the doll's plastic uterus. The doll comes with everything a girl needs to play out the birth and care of the new baby, including diapers (pink if it's a girl; blue if it's a boy), a birth certificate, bottles, rattles, changing table, tub, and crib. This doll clearly teaches young girls the cultural value of motherhood, a role most girls are encouraged and expected to enter later in life. One would be hard-pressed to find a comparable toy, popular among boys, that prepares them for future roles as fathers.

Institutions and Socialization

It should be clear by now that becoming who we are is a complex process embedded in the larger social structure. We are much more than the sum of our anatomical and neurological parts. Not only can cultural attitudes toward race, class, and gender dramatically affect our personal identities, but various social institutions—in particular, the educational system, religious organizations, and the mass media—exert considerable influence on our self-concept, our values, and our perspectives as well.

Education

In contemporary industrial societies, the most powerful institutional agent of socialization, after the family, is education. In fact, according to the structural-functionalist perspective, the primary reason that schools exist is to socialize young people. Children formally enter the school system around age 5 when they begin kindergarten, although many enter earlier in preschool or nursery school. At this point, the "personalized" instruction of the family is replaced by the "impersonalized" instruction of the school, where children in most developed countries will remain for the next 13 years or longer. No other nonfamily institution has such extended and consistent control over a person's social growth.

Although schools are officially charged with equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to fulfill various roles in society (for example, reading, writing, mathematics), they also teach students important social, political, and economic values. When students set up simulated grocery stores or banks, they are learning about the importance of free enterprise and finance in a capitalist society; when they hold mock elections, they are being introduced to a democratic political system; when they spend time tending a school garden, they are learning to nurture the earth.

More subtly, schools teach students what they can expect for themselves in the world. In many school districts, children are grouped into different programs, or tracks, based on an assessment of their academic abilities. In a typical high school, for example, some students will take a course of study designed to prepare them for college, whereas others will take more general or vocational courses designed to prepare them for work after they graduate. **Tracking** clearly determines future outcomes: Students in the higher tracks often go on to prestigious universities; those in the lower tracks may not go to college at all and, if they do go, might enroll in community colleges. Tracking can, therefore, ultimately affect employment opportunities, income levels, and overall quality of life.

Ironically, although individual accomplishment is stressed in U.S. schools, through grades and report cards, students learn that their future success in society may be determined as much by who they are as by what they achieve. Ample evidence shows that teachers react to students on the basis of race, religion, social class, and gender (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985). It is in school that many children are first exposed to the fact that people and groups are ranked in society, and soon they get a sense of their own standing in the social hierarchy.

Some sociologists argue that schooling in most cultures is designed not so much to provide children with factual information and encourage creativity as to produce passive, nonproblematic conformists who will fit into the existing social order (Gracey, 1991). This training in conformity involves several different dimensions (Brint, 1998). First, there is *behavioral* conformity. Teachers in the early grades typically keep children in line by controlling their bodily movements, such as making them sit still or forcing them to raise their hands before speaking. Second, schools teach *moral* conformity. Teachers often instruct children about such virtues as honesty, courage, kindness, fairness, and respect. Finally, schools teach children to conform to *culturally* approved styles and outlooks. In some societies, teachers reward their students for showing a quick wit; in other societies children are rewarded for demonstrating thoughtfulness

(Text continues on page 162)

Becoming a Mariner

Liz Grauerholz and Rebecca Smith

The U.S. Merchant Marine is the country's fleet of commercial ships, which becomes an auxiliary to the Navy during wartime. In peacetime, merchant mariners are responsible for safely and efficiently transporting cargoes and passengers on the oceans and through inland waterways. Even in peacetime, it is a job fraught with physical and mental challenges.

The importance of the merchant seamen to the war effort was reflected in the establishment of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point on Long Island in New York in 1943. It is a four-year institution of higher learning that prepares young men and women to become naval reserve officers or merchant mariners. It is one of the five official U.S. service academies, in the same category as West Point and the U.S. Air Force Academy. Approximately 950 men and women are enrolled at any given time. Six state marine academies sanctioned by the U.S. Department of Transportation offer training for mariners as well.

❖ Transporting a full load of iron ore through the ice-choked waters of the Great Lakes in winter requires a high level of training and commitment.

All the merchant marine academies put students through an extensive resocialization process. Students not only take academic courses leading to a college degree but also acquire the professional skills of mariners and the norms and values of people who are required to work in harmony in close quarters in difficult circumstances.

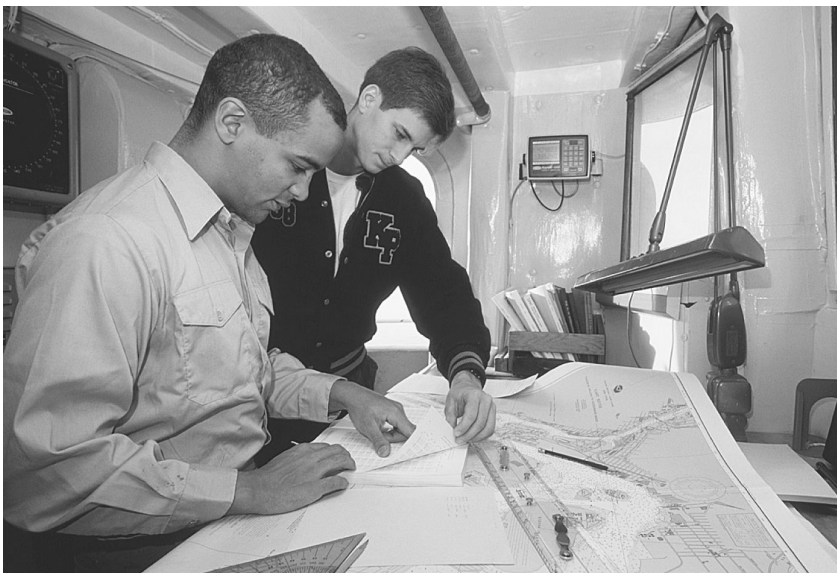
At first, resocialization revolves around confidence- and community-building exercises. Many non-military universities have similar exercises during first-year orientation.

The Merchant Marine has existed in this country since 1775. As a new country with no navy, the United States relied heavily on its merchant seamen for defense against the British during the War of 1812. After the outbreak of World War II, many ordinary seamen were recruited to staff supply ships running a gauntlet of German submarines.

❖ First-year students at the Maine Maritime Academy begin their orientation with a challenge course that requires teams participate to solve problems and watch out for each other's safety.

As midshipmen at the Academy, students are required to take courses in the humanities, social sciences, math, and science. The curriculum is similar to that found in many engineering and business programs. However, Academy students spend almost a year on board a ship. They also learn a wide variety of practical skills, such as reading maps and radar screens, administering to sick shipmates, maintaining and repairing ship engines and other equipment, and deploying lifeboats.

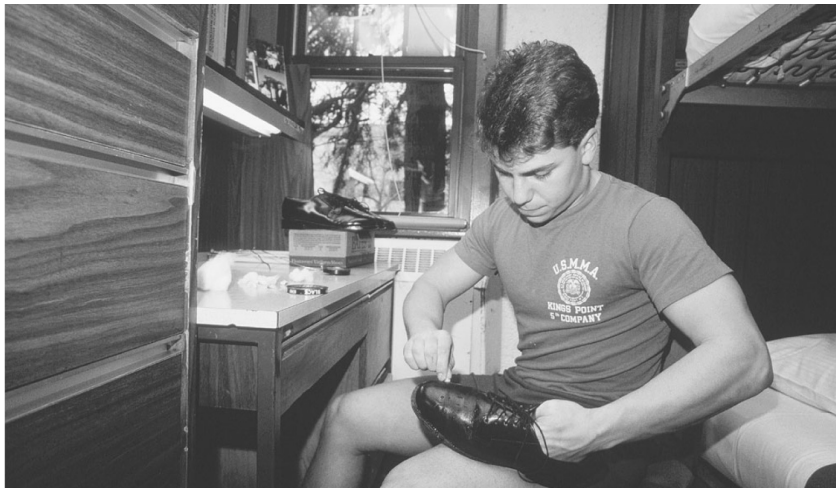
❖ Learning to tie ship cables



❖ Reading maps on the bridge of a ship

Some aspects of indoctrination at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy are more militaristic, as at the other service academies or in ROTC programs at non-military universities. Students at the academy are required to march in formation as they move from one activity to another, learning discipline and the subordination of personal preferences to the unit's needs and rhythms. Unique outward expressions of individuality conflict with the Academy's goal of transforming a motley group of cadets into like-minded mariners.

Much of the responsibility for indoctrination falls on fellow students. Below an upper-class student sanctions an infraction of the academy's norms. None of the other students in the mess hall question this form of discipline; in fact, they studiously concentrate on finishing their meal.



❖ Everyday life is also tightly controlled. Meticulous attention to outward appearance is considered a crucial element of personal discipline.

❖ At the Academy, as at other total institutions, the authorities frequently check the success of the resocialization process. Formal inspections are commonplace.

❖ And in order to graduate, students at the Academy have to take one or more licensing exams administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The solemnity of graduation is broken by a variety of celebratory rituals, including the tossing of caps into the air—much like the ritual at many college graduation ceremonies. Unique to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, though, is a fully dressed leap into the pool. It symbolizes release but is far from spontaneous. Note that the female graduates are wearing bathing suits under their uniforms, indicating that this ritual too is an artifact of the resocialization process.

❖ Unlike their non-military counterparts, the graduating midshipmen must take an oath, pledging their unwavering commitment to the service of their country.

and asking deep, probing questions. Such training socializes students to adopt traits that people consider culturally desirable within that society.

Sometimes these different dimensions overlap. Rules against arguing with the teacher, for instance, teach children the moral "goodness" of respecting authority. But they can also foster passivity and give students their first taste of control by authoritative adults other than their parents. Such classroom regulations, then, help impose discipline while at the same time they prepare children for what they will face in the larger culture. Obeying the kindergarten teacher today prepares the individual for obeying the high school teacher, college professor, and boss tomorrow.

Many of these lessons vary by gender. In an observational study of five preschool classrooms in the United States, sociologist Karin Martin (1998) found, among other things, that teachers tend to discourage girls from speaking loudly and place tighter restrictions on their movement than they do on boys. In addition, preschool teachers are more likely to physically restrain boys—for example, by holding them to stop them from running—than girls. Such actions go a long way in telling boys and girls, even at this early age, that they are being perceived differently and are held to different standards of behavior. Unequal treatment of female and male students persists throughout elementary school, high school, and beyond, creating inequalities in outcomes, as you will see in Chapter 12.

It may seem that the educational system is overwhelmingly dedicated to fitting every student into preordained roles. However, some teachers and alternative schools do instill values at odds with existing social arrangements. The point is that because formal education is so important in the everyday lives of most children, the agenda of a particular school system cannot help but influence the types of people they will eventually become.

Religion

As the structural-functionalist perspective tells us, religion is the social institution that tends to the spiritual needs of individuals and serves as a major source of cultural knowledge. It plays a key role in developing people's ideas about right and wrong. It also helps form people's identities by providing coherence and continuity to the episodes that make up each individual's life (Kearl, 1980). Religious rites of passage, such as baptisms, bar and bat mitzvahs, confirmations, and weddings, reaffirm an individual's religious identity while impressing on her or him the rights and obligations attached to each new status (J. H. Turner, 1972).

Religion occupies a complex and curious place in U.S. life. Structural changes in society have made religious affiliation somewhat unstable in recent years. For instance, as people move from one location to another, many of the ties that bind them to the same religion—most notably networks of family and friends—are broken. Only about 45% of adults attend religious services regularly (The Barna Group, 2005). Over the past couple of decades, many of the most powerful religious groups experienced a decline in membership. For instance, between 1990 and 2000, the Lutheran Church suffered a 3.2% drop in membership, the Episcopal Church 5.3%, the United Methodist Church 6.7%, the Presbyterian Church 11.6%, and the United Church of Christ 14.8% (American Religion Data Archive, 2002).

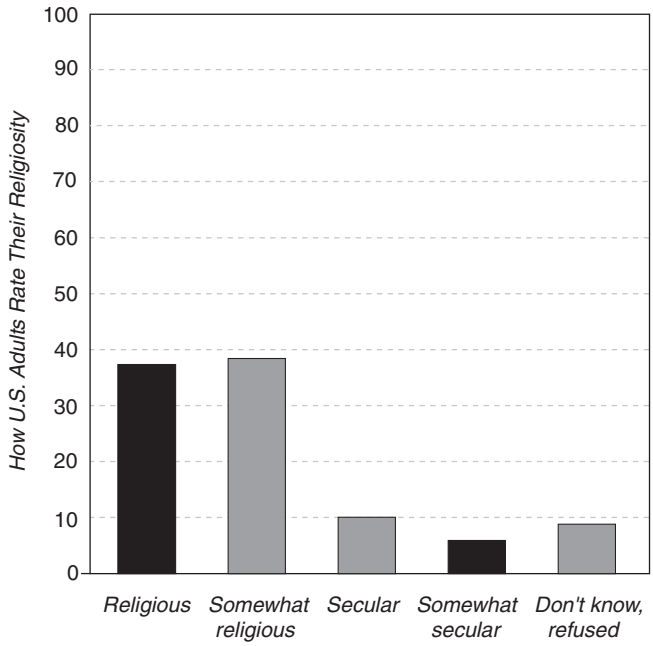
But membership decline does not necessarily mean that religion is losing its socializing influence in U.S. society. Indeed, at the same time that membership in some religions has shrunk, that of so-called conservative churches (Roman Catholic Church, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Assemblies of God, Christian Churches, and Southern Baptists) has increased (American Religion Data Archive, 2002). And new religions are constantly emerging. Of the 1,600 or so recognized religions and denominations in the United States today, half were founded after 1965. Furthermore, immigration has helped fuel an increase in non-Christian religions. The number of Hindus in the United States has grown from 70,000 in 1977 to close to 800,000 today. Between 1990 and 2001, membership in a variety of non-Christian religious groups grew significantly, including Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Unitarian/Universalist, Scientologist, Baha'i, Taoist, New Age, Eckankar, Sikh, Wiccan, Druid, and Santerian.

Religion may not look the same as it did 50 years ago, but it still remains a fundamental socializing agent in most Americans' lives (see Exhibit 5.2). Indeed, compared to most other Western democracies, such as Canada, Australia, Germany, France, and Great Britain, people in the United States stand out for the depth of their religious beliefs (Zoll, 2005). Consider these facts:

- Eighty-four percent of U.S. adults say that religion plays a big role in their lives (cited in Zoll, 2005). In contrast, 52% of Norwegians and 55% of Swedes say that God doesn't matter to them at all (cited in Ferguson, 2004).
- Among U.S. residents, 62% have no doubts that God exists; only 2% express outright disbelief. A greater percentage of U.S. adults, no matter what their religious affiliation, believe in life after death today than in the 1970s (Greeley & Hout, 1999).
- Americans are three times as likely to say they believe in the virgin birth of Jesus (83%) as in evolution (28%) (Kristof, 2003).
- Nine out of every 10 homes contain at least one Bible. About one third of U.S. residents believe that the Bible is the actual word of God and that it was divinely inspired (Shorto, 1997).
- Among U.S. adults, 71% believe in heaven and 57% believe in the devil. Sixty percent say grace at family meals (Niebuhr, 1996).
- Two thirds of Americans feel that it is important that an American president have strong religious beliefs (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2004).
- Over half of U.S. adults feel that the lesson of September 11 attacks was that there is too little (not too much) religion in the world. Close to half say they believe that the United States has special protection from God (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2002).

In short, religion remains a significant part of U.S. life. We still consider ourselves "one nation under God," and our money still proclaims our trust in God. It's virtually impossible to watch a sporting event these days without seeing a baseball player cross himself before batting, a football player point skyward after scoring a touchdown, a basketball player in a postgame interview thank God for guiding the shot that led to his team's victory, or groups of opposing players kneeling together in prayer after a game. Sales of Christian books, computer games, videos, and toys are going up each year. The contemporary Christian music genre is a $1-billion-a-year business in itself. Enrollment in evangelical colleges has grown steadily over the past decade, as has the number of families choosing to homeschool their children for religious reasons (Talbot, 2000a).

Exhibit 5.2 How U.S. Adults Rate Their Religiosity



Source: Kosmin & Mayer, 2001.

In recent years, religion has become a key component of the American political system. Americans are far more likely than people in other industrialized countries to be willing to mix politics and religion. As one author put it, "America is the last country left whose citizens don't laugh out loud when their leader asks God to bless the country" (Ignatieff, 2005, p. 47). In one study, close to 40% of U.S. adults said religious leaders should try to influence policymakers (cited in Zoll, 2005). The Indiana State House of Representatives begins each session with a daily prayer containing phrases such as, "In the strong name of Jesus our savior," "We pray this in Christ's name," and "I appeal to our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ" (Ryckaert, 2005, p. 1).

Nationally, since the re-election of George W. Bush in 2004, conservative religious groups have grown in political influence, in part because of the electoral boost they gave the president. While John Kerry, his opponent in the election, received support from some moderate religious groups, evangelical Protestants and conservative Catholics turned out in higher numbers and voted overwhelmingly for Bush. Members of these groups were more likely than those of less conservative religious denominations to indicate that faith had a direct impact on their vote (Green, Smidt, Guth, & Kellstedt, 2005). Many people went even further, suggesting that Bush's re-election was divinely determined. According to the undersecretary of defense for intelligence, "George Bush was not elected by a majority of the voters in the United States, he was

appointed by God" (quoted in Maharidge, 2004, p. 80). During Bush's administration, some of the most powerful members of Congress (Tom DeLay, Bill Frist, Rick Santorum, to name a few) made the infusion of religion into government their number one priority. The influence of religion in policy making is likely to guarantee that it remains a significant socializing force in American society for many years to come.

Mass Media

Another powerful institutional socializer is the media. Researchers estimate that by the time the average U.S. student graduates from high school, she or he will have spent more time watching television than sitting in classrooms (Croteau & Hoynes, 2000). Newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and film transmit persuasive messages on the nature of reality. They also tell us the type of person we "should" be, from how we should perform our jobs to how different social classes live to what our intimate relationships and families are supposed to look like. The media teach us about prevailing values, beliefs, myths, stereotypes, and trends (Gitlin, 1979) and provide an avenue through which we learn new attitudes and behavior (Bandura & Walters, 1963). Sociologists, psychologists, and, of course, politicians continue to debate the degree to which sex and violence in film, television, and video games influence behavior, particularly among young people.

These lessons begin early. Children's books, for instance, teach youngsters what other little boys or girls in their culture do and what is expected of them. In the early 1970s, Lenore Weitzman and her colleagues studied the portrayal of gender in popular U.S. preschool books (Weitzman, Eifler, Hodada, & Ross, 1972). They found that boys played a more significant role in the stories than girls by a ratio of 11 to 1. Boys were more likely to be portrayed in adventurous pursuits or activities that required independence and strength; girls were likely to be confined to indoor activities and portrayed as passive and dependent. These gender stereotypes in children's books decreased only slightly over the next several decades (S. B. Peterson & Lach, 1990). Recent attempts to publish more nonsexist children's books have had little impact on the overall market. For instance, elementary school reading textbooks still primarily portray males as aggressive, argumentative, and competitive (Evans & Davies, 2000). "Gender equality" in children's books usually involves female characters taking on characteristics and roles typically associated with males. These books rarely, if ever, portray male characters adopting female traits (Diekman & Murnen, 2004).

Television images of males and females also have a strong influence on children's perceptions and behaviors. Children who watch a lot of television are more likely to hold stereotypical attitudes toward gender, exhibit gender-related characteristics, and engage in gender-related activities than children who watch little television (M. Morgan, 1987; Signorielli, 1990). In one study, girls who did not have stereotypical conceptions of gender to begin with showed a significant increase in such attitudes after two years of heavy television watching (M. Morgan, 1982). In another study, 4- to 6-year-old children refused to play with a particular toy after watching two Muppets on TV who said the toy was OK only for the other sex (Cobb, Stevens-Long, & Goldstein, 1982).

These effects are not surprising given the programming that children encounter. Despite some notable exceptions (for example, *Sesame Street*), most

children's television shows continue to portray males and females in stereotypical gender roles. A study of 41 Saturday morning cartoons found that male characters are more likely than female characters to occupy leadership roles, act aggressively, give guidance to or come to the rescue of others, express opinions, ask questions, and achieve their goals. In addition, males are more likely to be portrayed in some kind of recognizable occupation, whereas females are more likely to be cast in the role of caregiver (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995). Even the media coverage of female sports events tends to focus on the physical appearance and sexual attractiveness of the athletes and not just their competitive accomplishments (Shugart, 2003).

Television commercials also perpetuate stereotypes. One study of 467 commercials shown between children's cartoons found that, as in the shows themselves, male characters are more likely than female characters to be in a major role, to be active rather than passive, and to be depicted in an occupational setting (S. Davis, 2003). Similarly, an analysis of over 500 U.S. and Australian commercials targeting children found that girls were much more likely than boys to be portrayed as shy, giggly, and passive (Browne, 1998). The differences were less pronounced in Australia, however, where activists have had more success in countering gender stereotypes in the media than in the United States. Such images are not trivial, given that U.S. children watch over 20,000 TV commercials a year.

The socializing influence of the media extends beyond stereotypical images of gender. Consider the role that televised sports play in teaching people in the United States certain cultural values (Gitlin, 1979). Television has reduced the sports experience to a sequence of individual achievements—a cultural value on which the entire U.S. social structure is based. We have grown used to hearing such descriptions as "world record holder," "superstar," and "greatest player of all time." Praise is heaped not only on individuals and the occasional "dynasty" team but also on more specific actions: "best 3-point shooter," "best backhand," "best at hitting with two outs and runners in scoring position," "best open field tackler," "best chip out of a sand trap." Such characterizations not only perpetuate the importance of individual achievement but also give the impression that it is always possible to find something, however narrowly defined, at which one can be "best" (Gitlin, 1979).

Nowhere is the media emphasis on individual achievement more obvious than in the most emblematic play in professional basketball today: the slam dunk. It's impossible to watch television highlights of a basketball game without seeing a thunderous, explosive, gravity-defying dunk:

> The dunk is a declaration of power and dominance, of machismo. In a team game, an ensemble of five players a side, it is an expression of self. In a sport devoted to selling sneakers, the dunk is a marketing tour de force, the money shot at the end of every worthy basketball sequence. (Sokolove, 2005, p. 42)

To some observers, though, fans' obsession with acrobatic dunks has made the fundamentals of success, namely teamwork and sacrifice, seem irrelevant (Sokolove, 2005). In a world where muscled-up athletes whose only reliable offensive skill is the ability to dunk the ball can earn millions and where ESPN nationally televises the games of

high school phenoms, it's not surprising that individual athleticism has overshadowed the collaborative aspect of the game. Consequently, many young players today are more concerned with perfecting their individual moves than with developing other skills—passing, rebounding, shooting from various spots on the floor, playing defense, and other less glamorous but no less essential elements of a team effort.

Conclusion

Becoming the people we are is a complex social process. Those intimate characteristics we hold so dear—our self-concept, our gender, and our racial and ethnic identity—reflect larger cultural attitudes, values, and expectations. Yet we are not perfect reflections of society's values. Despite all the powerful socializing institutions that pull our developmental strings, we continue to be and will always be individuals.

Sometimes we ignore our generalized others and strike out on our own with complete disregard for community standards and attitudes. Sometimes we form self-concepts that contradict the information we receive from others about ourselves. Sometimes we willingly violate the expectations associated with our social class, gender, or race. Societal influence can go only so far in explaining how we become who we are. The rest—that which makes us truly unique—remains a fascinating mystery.

YOUR TURN

Being a child or an adolescent is not simply a biological stage of development. It is a social identity. People's experiences with this identity emerge from a particular cultural and historical context as well as the process of socialization that takes place within their families. But many other social institutions assist in the process of raising children, often in ways that aren't immediately apparent.

To see firsthand how such socialization works, visit a large shopping mall. Most malls today have children's clothing stores (for example, Baby Gap). If yours doesn't, go to one of the large department stores and find the children's clothing section. Start with the infants' clothes. Is there a difference between "girls' clothes" and "boys' clothes"? Note the differences in the style, color, and texture of boys' versus girls' clothes. Collect the same information for clothes designed for toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary school age children.

Now find a store that specializes in clothes for preteens and teenagers. How do clothing styles differ along gender lines at this age level?

After collecting your data, try to interpret the differences you noticed. Why do they exist? What do these differences say about the kinds of social activities in which boys and girls are expected or encouraged to engage? For instance, which clothes are "rugged" and which are "dainty"? How do such differences reinforce our cultural conceptions of masculinity and femininity? Turning your attention to teenagers, how do popular clothing styles encourage sexuality?

The next stop on your sociological shopping trip is a toy store. Can you detect a boys' section and a girls' section? How do you know? How do the toys differ? What sorts of interactions with other children do the toys encourage? Competition? Cooperation? Which toys are designed for active play? Which seem to encourage passive play? For what sorts of adult roles do the toys prepare children? Provide specific examples.

Finally, find a bookstore that has a children's book section. Which books are more likely to interest boys? Which will interest girls? Are there different sections for "boy" and "girl" books? What are the differences in the sorts of characters and plots that are portrayed? Does the bookstore have a section that contains books designed to help adolescents through puberty? If so, do these books offer different advice to adolescent boys and girls?

Use your findings in all these areas—clothing, toys, and books—to analyze the role that consumer products play in socializing children into "appropriate" gender roles. Is there more or less gender segregation as children get older? Do you think manufacturers, publishers, retail outlets, and so on are simply responding to market demands (that is, do they make gender-specific products because that's what people want), or do they play a role in creating those demands?

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

- Socialization is the process by which individuals learn their culture and learn to live according to the norms of a particular society. It is how we learn to perceive our world, gain a sense of our own identity, and interact appropriately with others. It also tells us what we should and should not do across a range of situations.
- One of the most important outcomes of socialization for an individual is the development of a sense of self. To acquire a self, children must learn to recognize themselves as unique physical objects, master language, learn to take the roles of others, and, in effect, see themselves from another's perspective.
- Socialization is not just a process that occurs during childhood. Adults must be resocialized into a new galaxy of norms, values, and expectations each time they leave or abandon old roles and enter new ones.
- Through socialization we learn the social expectations that go with our social class, racial or ethnic group, and gender.
- Socialization occurs within the context of several social institutions—family first, and then schools, religious institutions, and the mass media.

KEY TERMS

anticipatory socialization Process through which people acquire the values and orientations found in statuses they will likely enter in the future

collectivist culture Culture in which personal accomplishments are less important in the formation of identity than group membership

game stage Stage in the development of self during which a child acquires the ability to take the role of a group or community (the generalized other) and to conform his or her behavior to broad, societal expectations

gender Psychological, social, and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness

generalized other Perspective of the larger society and its constituent values and attitudes

identity Essential aspect of who we are, consisting of our sense of self, gender, race, ethnicity, and religion

individualist culture Culture in which personal accomplishments are a more important component of one's self-concept than group membership

looking-glass self Sense of who we are that is defined by incorporating the reflected appraisals of others

play stage Stage in the development of self during which a child develops the ability to take a role, but only from the perspective of one person at a time

reflexive behavior Behavior in which the person initiating an action is the same as the person toward whom the action is directed

resocialization Process of learning new values, norms, and expectations when an adult leaves an old role and enters a new one

role taking Ability to see oneself from the perspective of others and to use that perspective in formulating one's own behavior

self Unique set of traits, behaviors, and attitudes that distinguishes one person from the next; the active source and passive object of behavior

sex Biological maleness or femaleness

socialization Process through which one learns how to act according to the rules and expectations of a particular culture

total institution Place where individuals are cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period and where together they lead an enclosed, formally administered life

tracking Grouping of students into different curricular programs, or tracks, based on an assessment of their academic abilities

STUDY SITE ON THE WEB

Don't forget the interactive quizzes and other learning aids at www.pineforge.com/newman6study. In the Resources File for this chapter, you'll also find more on building identity, including:

Sociologists at Work

- Wade Clark Roof: Abandoning Religion

Micro-Macro Connections

- Gender in Structural Context
- Language and Gender