ELLIOT TURIEL

THE CULTURE OF
MORALITY

SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT,
CONTEXT,
AND
CONFLICT

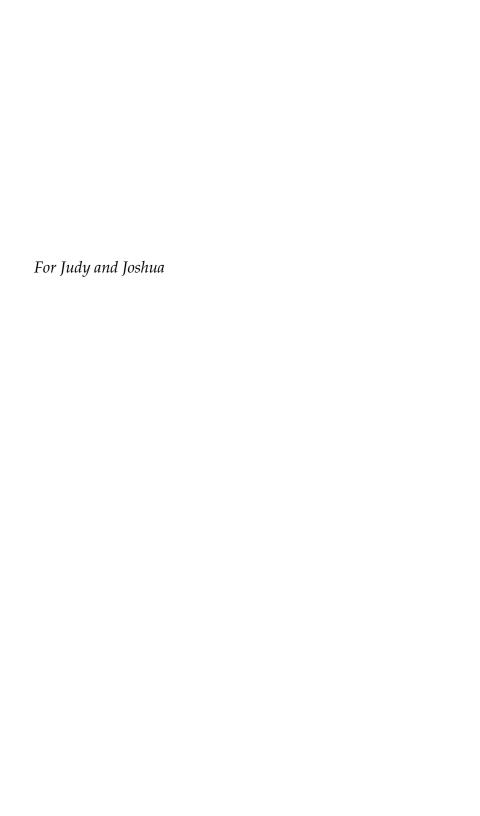This page intentionally left blank

The Culture of Morality

The Culture of Morality examines how explanations of social and moral development inform our understandings of morality and culture. A common theme in the latter part of the twentieth century has been to lament the moral state of American society and the decline of morality among youth. A sharp turn toward an extreme form of individualism and a lack of concern for community involvement and civic participation are often blamed for the moral crisis. Elliot Turiel challenges these views, drawing on a large body of research from developmental psychology, anthropology, and sociology. He also draws from social events, political movements, and journalistic accounts of social and political struggles in many places throughout the world. Turiel shows that generation after generation has lamented the decline of society and blamed young people. Using historical accounts, he persuasively argues that such characterizations of moral decline entail stereotyping, nostalgia for times past, and a failure to recognize the moral viewpoint of those who challenge traditions. He also argues that people's discontents with the unfairness of many aspects of societal arrangements, traditions, and established practices are often misinterpreted as a lack of commitment to society or community.

The positions put forth in the book are grounded in research showing that people develop judgments that entail deep understandings of issues of welfare, justice, and rights and that such judgments stand alongside people's conceptions of social systems and realms of personal choice. Individuals are part of their culture and yet they scrutinize societal arrangements and cultural practices. Social life often includes conflicts and discontents stemming from social hierarchies framing relationships of dominance and subordination. Turiel's penetrating analyses go well beyond American society. Drawing on work from diverse cultures, he shows that people in positions of lesser power in the social hierarchy, such as women and minorities, often oppose cultural arrangements and work to subvert and transform the system. Generalizations often made regarding the cultural sources of morality in traditions and general orientations like individualism and collectivism serve to obscure the heterogeneous nature of people's judgments and social interactions. Analysis of the moral and social problems faced in many societies requires recognition of people's multiple moral, social, and personal goals and of the ways social arrangements provoke opposition from those who are treated unfairly.

In this thought-provoking book, Turiel presents original positions on moral development, social justice, and culture. *The Culture of Morality* is an important work that shows how social interactions and social practices involve dynamic processes of participation in culture and efforts at transforming culture.

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For Judy and Joshua

The Culture of Morality

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, CONTEXT, AND CONFLICT

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Contents

Preface

For many years, my colleagues and I have been conducting research on the development of social judgments and actions from childhood to adolescence and into adulthood. That work – some of which is discussed in this book – has shown that people in the United States and many other places form deep understandings of moral matters – of matters pertaining to people's physical and psychological welfare, to human rights, and to justice. The research also indicates that we cannot simply divide up the world into people who are more committed and those who are less committed to issues of welfare, rights, and justice. Almost everyone is committed to these issues in one way or another. And for most people, morality is not the only social concern in their lives; they are concerned with personal goals as well. Most people are also concerned with other social goals, such as matters of interdependence, efficiency, and pragmatics in social relationships.

During the time my colleagues and I were accumulating and scrutinizing these research findings, others made many claims about morality and society that do serve to divide people into categories of those who are or are not committed to all or some of the moral matters we have identified as of concern to most people. One claim is that contemporary American society is in a dire moral state, and there is urgent need for renewal, revival, and recommitment. The existing or impending moral crisis is attributed to abandonment and loss: abandonment of traditions, a loss of a sense of community, and a sharp decline in civic participation and trust. In their place, it is said, we see a pervasive orientation to individualism – an individualism that has taken hold in such a way that it has become radical and threatening.

And youth is often to blame. The new generation is accused of narcissism, caring only about their self-interest, and of being unconcerned with the welfare of others, of the community.

Another way people are characterized as differing in their moral, personal, and interpersonal orientations is through a division drawn by some cultural psychologists and anthropologists between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. A number of terms have been used to generalize about each type of cultural orientation, including egocentric and sociocentric, independent and interdependent, bounded and unbounded. Whatever the terms, the idea is that some cultures (usually non-Western ones) are structured by close networks of interdependence in which people adhere to duties and traditions, look out for each other, and make little distinction between self and others. Other cultures (usually Western ones) are said to revolve around the importance given to the individual and the separation of people from each other.

In these ways of looking at social relationships, people in a culture supposedly agree on most social mores. To put it simply, they share one orientation or the other. However, the research done over the years has shown otherwise. One way only of approaching social matters is not very common. From childhood, people form distinctly different types of judgments and attempt to weigh and balance different concerns and goals in their multifaceted social world. With flexibility of mind, people typically apply in purposeful ways their judgments to the particularities of social contexts. The research also revealed that with flexibility of mind people do not simply accept their lot in life or the conditions given by societal arrangements and cultural practices. People accept and critique. They seek to cooperate, but will disagree and oppose when they judge conditions unfair. Oppositions of either organized or covert kinds are especially prevalent when conditions and practices favor some at the expense of others through institutionalized hierarchies based on social class, racial groups, and gender.

I believe that overarching characterizations of societies or cultures as of one type or another or as in serious decline obscure the heterogeneity of social thought, the multiplicity of influences on children's development, and the variety of types of social relationships

experienced. Generalizations about cultures also fail to account for the social struggles so common in people's efforts to achieve justice or to assert their own legitimate interests. Research conducted in several places in the world revealed the heterogeneity of social judgments and social relationships and that one person's traditions and role responsibilities can be another person's freedom and autonomy. In so-called collectivistic cultures, individualism is alive and well. Traditions of social hierarchy, whether in Western or non-Western cultures, embody freedom, autonomy, and entitlements for those in dominant positions. Those in subordinate positions, such as women relative to men, are restricted in freedom of activity and rights accorded. Therefore, the cultural dichotomy breaks down. Moreover, because people in lower positions on social hierarchies are not always content with, or appreciative of, their treatment, the ideas of harmony and shared perspectives within cultures fail to capture essential features of social relationships – even in close relationships.

This book is about the dynamics of social relationships and how people's judgments – moral and otherwise – make for cultures of their own. Research on the psychology of social and moral development is the starting point of these formulations. Other disciplines, however, have influenced my thinking. I have drawn in substantial ways from philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. I have also found very useful – and have used – journalistic accounts about social life in many cultures. Such journalistic accounts sometimes provide insights about relationships between men and women that have not yet made their way into research efforts. There is, however, enough research to suggest that those accounts are valid.

Nevertheless, the arguments I put forth rest on evidence from research. I am very fortunate to be part of a broad program of research with a number of former students who are now good friends, colleagues, and collaborators all at once. They have their own well-established and highly respected research programs, but we have also formed a network that entails a good deal of interchange and collaboration. Much of what I presented in this book has been influenced by the thinking and research of Larry Nucci, Judi Smetana, Melanie Killen, Marta Laupa, Marie Tisak, Cecilia Wainryb, Charles Helwig,

Introduction

The social and moral development of individuals, and the relations of cultural contexts to individuals' thought and actions are broad topics that have been approached in a variety of ways. Especially with regard to morality, there have and continue to be sharp differences and heated controversies about their defining features, how they are formed during childhood and adolescence, the role of judgments and emotions, and relations of individuals and society. In the early part of the twentieth century, some of the major social scientific theorists, including psychologists like Jean Piaget (1932), Sigmund Freud (1930), and those of the behavioristic movement (John Watson, 1924, but later articulated more explicitly by B.F. Skinner, 1971), addressed issues of morality and its development in different ways. Emile Durkheim (1925/1961), a sociologist, also presented a point of view that included propositions about children's development.

One perspective on the development of morality was that it entailed the construction of judgments about justice, equality, and cooperation. In line with his general theoretical approach, Piaget proposed that children's moral development stems from their reciprocal interactions with others, including adults and peers. He also theorized that individuals and society are in reciprocal relationship, and individuals make judgments that are both in accord with society's traditions and accepted practices and that serve to potentially transform those traditions and practices (Piaget, 1950/1995). Alternative perspectives were presented by Freud, the Behaviorists, and Durkheim. Although there are significant differences among these three approaches, they share the viewpoint that moral development primarily involves

accommodations to, and internalization of, the norms, standards, and practices of society. In those approaches, it is important to mention, the role of biological factors is also taken into account. The most elaborated form of this is in Freud's theorizing that societal norms place severe restrictions on biological needs and instincts. As a consequence, social life involves a good deal of conflict for individuals. Durkheim's position, as another example, included the assumption that there are "natural" propensities for individuals to become attached to social groups. In Durkheim's view, as a consequence of these natural propensities social life is mainly harmonious for individuals.

In general, views of morality as entailing the construction of judgments or the acquisition of societal norms have continued to be debated during the last part of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. In each approach, there have been extensive modifications and extensions of the early work. The approach I present in this book is based on the proposition that individuals construct judgments through their social interactions and that they form several different kinds of judgments about a multifaceted social world. The approach is consistent with philosophical conceptions of morality as entailing judgments about welfare, justice, and rights. Within this approach, I account for relations between morality and culture. Morality can be a source of social harmony since it concerns how people ought to relate to each other. Societal arrangements, social norms, and cultural practices do embody ways for people to relate to each other with fairness, and to respect the welfare of others. Societal arrangements, social norms, and cultural practices, at the same time, can embody ways that allow for injustices and can be detrimental to the welfare of groups of people, especially those situated in lower positions on the social hierarchy. Under those circumstances, morality is a source of conflict because people make judgments about injustices and inequalities embedded in the social system.

The approach I present is grounded in analyses of the psychology of the development of moral and social judgments of individuals, and how those judgments are applied to societal arrangements and cultural practices and can result in harmony, conflict, and opposition in people's social lives. In the course of discussing the approach my

colleagues and I have taken to social and moral development, I consider several alternative approaches, including ones that presume that morality is formed through either accommodation to or identification with one's culture. In those approaches, cultures are seen as entailing generally shared beliefs that make for social harmony. In those perspectives, conflicts and tensions arise mainly when people have not adequately acquired the morality of the culture.

Social conflicts, tensions, and moral failings are matters that in the United States have been very much part of public discussions during the last half of the twentieth century. These discussions about morality and society, engaged in by politicians, social leaders, and social scientists, often have taken two forms. Especially in the latter part of the century – during the 1980s and 1990s – many have maintained that American society is in decline and facing a serious moral crisis stemming from the failure of many people, especially the young, to adequately incorporate the moral values and ideals of the society. Often, the era of the 1960s is identified as contributing to the moral decline because of an abandonment, at the time, of traditional values.

Others attribute social conflicts not to a decline in the morality of the society, but to long-standing social injustices having to do with matters like racial discrimination, the rights of women, and economic inequalities. From that perspective, the 1960s was an era in which issues of social justice were confronted and discussed publicly. I believe that the social and political events, as well as public discussions that have occurred during the last half of the twentieth century – especially as articulated in the 1960s and 1990s – inform our understanding of some important differences in social scientific thinking about morality, development, social conflicts, and the relations of individuals to society. The events and discussions also highlight different views of social opposition. To provide an overview of the contrasting approaches, in this chapter I consider perspectives put forth in the 1960s and in the latter part of the century.

A salient characteristic of the 1960s in the United States, as well as in other parts of the world, was social and political protest against governmental policies and social practices considered unjust. One issue that galvanized public protests and demonstrations was the

engagement of the United States in the war in Vietnam. Large numbers of people labored greatly to have the U.S. government end its involvement in the war. A second issue resulting in social and political activities, including public protests and demonstrations, was the treatment of black people. Many people strived to end racial discrimination, unequal treatment, and the lack of economic opportunities. A third issue, the role of women in the larger society and within the family, did not often involve large public demonstrations. Instead, this issue was the topic of discussion and debate in political arenas, the workplace, the family, and in written expositions.

The antiwar movement mainly pertained to events occurring at the time in that it focused on the perceived injustices of the Vietnam war (though issues were raised regarding war in general and the long-term actions of the United States as a powerful nation). Both the civil rights and the feminist movements were not solely limited to events occurring at the time. Attention was given to matters pertaining to long-standing practices of discrimination, prejudice, inequalities, injustices, and poverty. Martin Luther King, Jr., the universally acknowledged leader of the civil rights movement, articulated the moral and long-term goals of the protests and demonstrations in a well-known letter he wrote while in jail in Birmingham, Alabama, in April 1963. King, who had been jailed for leading a nonviolent demonstration, wrote his letter in response to a public statement from eight Alabama clergymen. The clergymen wrote that the demonstrations were unwise and untimely and violated the principles of law and order and common sense. They also complained that the demonstrations were directed by outsiders (King resided in Atlanta, Georgia).

In his lengthy letter, King made it clear that he viewed the demonstrations as necessitated by the injustices of racial prejudice, unjust laws supporting racial discrimination, and freedoms denied to some because of their color: "I am in Birmingham because injustice is here . . . Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (King, 1963, p. 3). Moreover, King regarded the civil rights movement as part of a historical process entailing oppression and struggle: "History is the long and tragic story of the fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily . . . we know through painful experience

that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed" (p. 6). And inevitably freedom will be demanded: "Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The urge for freedom will eventually come. This is what happened to the American Negro" (p. 12). Oppression produces discontents among those oppressed and leaves society in a state of tension. Tension can also be used for positive ends: "I have earnestly worked and preached against violent tension, but there is a type of constructive tension that is necessary for growth . . . to create the kind of tension in society that will help men to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood" (p. 5).

King's perspective, along with that of many others concerned at the time with the war in Vietnam, civil rights, and the treatment of women, reflects an orientation to society, culture, morality, the psychology of moral behavior, and the acquisition of morality. In this orientation, morality is not equivalent to adherence to existing or traditional societal values or norms. Rather, the principles of justice, equal respect for persons, and freedom from oppression are the standards by which individuals and society should be guided. Indeed, in his letter to the clergymen, King was critical of those in authority within established social institutions, such as the church, for their acceptance of existing ways: "Where were their voices of support when tired, bruised, and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest . . . Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent and often vocal sanction of things as they are" (King, 1963, p. 15). Nor is it the case that moral wisdom necessarily resides in traditions or established practices. In his famous address at the March on Washington (August 28, 1963), King called for transformations in the ways blacks had been treated since the end of the Civil War: "Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of social injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood."

Similarly, the movement for the rights of women was seen by its proponents as an attempt to correct past wrongs of injustice, inequalities,

and exploitation. Feminists regarded the power structure of many communities, societies, and cultures that were controlled by men as perpetuating injustices and, in some cases, involving oppression.

It was implicit in the feminist and civil rights movements that acceptance of the ways of society or the practices of a culture is not always beneficial. King himself made this explicit in social scientific terms when he addressed the annual convention of the American Psychological Association in 1967. Recognizing that psychologists often cast psychological health in terms of adjustment to social conditions and arrangements, he urged them to think otherwise: "There are some things concerning which we must always be maladjusted if we are to be people of good will."

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, public social activities and much public rhetoric has taken a different turn from the 1960s. This is not to say that people, in general, had different ways of making moral judgments during the two periods. Rather, different perspectives were more or less frequently espoused in public activities and discourse. One contrast is that there has been less in the way of public social and political protest. To be sure, many issues of justice and rights engage people – including the rights of women, sexual harassment, civil rights, gay rights, abortion, and euthanasia. However, a good deal of the political and social commentary, and in many instances the analyses of social scientists, have involved laments about the dire moral state of the nation and the lack of civility in people's social interactions, a nostalgia about times past, and implicit or explicit critiques of the events of the 1960s. The tone has been that too many have failed to incorporate the traditional values of the society (often referred to as family values), so they are unable to form the appropriate traits or habits of character and are unwilling to sacrifice personal freedoms and desires for the good of the society. Embedded in these perspectives is the idea that adjustment to, or acceptance of, the norms, mores, standards, and practices of society is good and necessary.

These assessments of moral failings have been made by politicians and by social scientists. The pronouncements of politicians, though perhaps also aimed at obtaining benefits in the electoral process, are

informative of the perspective on individuals, society, and morality. An interesting example comes from responses to large-scale demonstrations in 1992 that took place in the inner city of Los Angeles, which included rioting, looting, and burnings. The demonstrations were, themselves, in reaction to the acquittal of four white Los Angeles policemen in their trial on charges of severely beating a black man upon arresting him after a car chase. The beatings had been captured on videotape, broadcast nationally, and discussed on television news shows and in the newspapers. As a consequence, the trial of the policemen received a great deal of attention in the media and by the public – as, of course, did the reaction by blacks in Los Angeles to the acquittal of the policemen.

Several politicians attributed the demonstrations and riots to a lack of "traditional values" in communities of the type that had taken part. They claimed that the events reflected "a poverty of values" in the inner cities, where there is a breakdown of family structure, personal responsibility, and social order. The poverty of values, it was said, resulted in such moral ills as the bearing of children outside of marriage, drug use, and dependence on welfare. More generally, the view has been espoused that there has been a decline of morality by virtue of permissiveness and changes in the structure of families. A common theme has been that there is a connection between family values and traditional values. It is thought that the underpinnings of morality are due to the preservation of a set of values or ideals in the traditions of society handed down from generation to generation. It is presumed that the process of transmitting the traditions occurs within the family. Therefore, the family structure must be maintained so that each generation can learn from previous ones. Another common theme is that the process went awry in the era of the 1960s because traditional values were overthrown in favor of self-interest, unbridled freedoms, casual sex, drug use, evasion of responsibility, disrespect for authority, a rejection of morality by relativistic attitudes, and a devaluing of marriage and the heterosexual family. The prevalence in the inner cities of single mothers has exacerbated the situation. To properly acquire moral values, children need to be part of intact families, with a mother and a father. One group that has been negatively affected is

the so-called underclass from the inner cities, since they fail to develop the appropriate values derived from society's traditions.

The causes of moral decay also presumably stemmed from another group in society – a class of elites who themselves have the wrong values, espouse relativistic positions on morality, and steer others into improper directions. The media have been singled out for blame. Back in 1992, one of the most vocal politicians was then Vice President Dan Quayle. In one of his speeches, the vice president criticized a popular weekly television program ("Murphy Brown") for depicting its lead character as bearing a child while unmarried (A. Rosenthal, "Quayle Says Riots Sprang from Lack of Family Values," *New York Times*, May 20, 1992). Quayle's suggestion that a fictional television character contributed to the nation's moral decline by "mocking the importance of fathers" (p. A20) was itself mocked by many. Nevertheless, part of Quayle's message in this regard is shared by many. It is the message that there are elites in the society, represented by those in the media, intellectuals, and academics, who contribute to the decline of morality by criticizing traditional values. Ordinary people, with their common and moral sense, stand in between the elites and the underclass of the inner cities.

Several aspects of these messages are mirrored in positions taken by people who try to account for social scientific evidence and who include scholarly analyses that go beyond political rhetoric. In one instance, a direct link was made to the pronouncements of politicians through the very title of the essay, "Dan Quayle Was Right" (Whitehead, 1993). Dan Quayle was right, according to Whitehead's interpretations of social scientific evidence, in his claim that the absence of fathers in the family has very negative consequences for children. Whitehead, too, traced the problem to a rapid rise, in the 1960s, in the rates of divorces and out-of-wedlock births. These trends were supported by a set of new beliefs that emerged from American cultural orientations: that it would be better economically for women to join the work force, that divorce would not be harmful to children, and that diversity in the structure of families would be better for the nation. These beliefs, argued Whitehead, are in accord with American orientations to individual choice, freedom, self-expression,

and social progress. However, the changes in family structure resulted in regress rather than progress because "the social arrangement that has proved most successful in ensuring the physical survival and promoting the social development of the child is the family unit of the biological mother and father" (Whitehead, 1993, p. 48). Moreover, the family is a needed communitarian institution that serves to teach children self-restraint, responsibility, and right conduct. As shown by social scientific evidence, these goals cannot be accomplished within single parent or divorced families. The consequence of the changes in families has been greater poverty and a greater likelihood that children will have emotional and behavioral problems, drop out of high school, get pregnant as teenagers, abuse drugs, be in trouble with the law, and be at much higher risk for physical and sexual abuse. Movies and shows on television provide children with models to emulate who display improper and destructive behaviors and life styles.

Several other writings have appeared that convey the themes in Whitehead's essay. Whitehead's writings were directed to the public at large, citing social scientific evidence. The writings of two others, Allan Bloom and William Bennett, have also reached a wide readership. Bloom, a philosopher from the University of Chicago specializing in ancient Greek philosophy, wrote a tome (1987) about the highly negative influences of the culture of the 1960s especially on American universities and, in turn, on society as a whole. *The Closing of the American Mind* (with the subtitle, *How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*), in spite of its scholarly tone and somewhat obscure language, reached a large audience. It was a national best-selling book. For Bloom, too, the 1960s created a crisis for the nation. His focus was on the lowering of standards and capitulation to militant students in universities during that period, and an associated doctrine of moral relativism. A major consequence is that decades later university students, and older people, embraced a radical individualism that leaves them narcissistic and preoccupied with themselves, with a psychology of separateness or detachment from others. Bloom also attributes a major cause of the decline to feminism, which, he believes, is contrary to the natural attachment of

mother to child that is a foundation for family life. Family life, however, has experienced a breakdown, as evidenced by the high divorce rate, due to the feminist turn against the attachment of mother and child. The breakdown in family life contributes to individualism and detachments, which in turn has negatively affected university life and the moral state of society.

William Bennett, too, is a philosopher by training (with Ph.D. from the University of Texas). He has straddled the academic and political arenas, putting forth similar moral messages and critiques of society in each persona. He is best known to the general public for his governmental and political activities as first, Secretary of Education in President Ronald Reagan's administration during the 1980s, and then as director of drug policy in the administration of George Bush. Less well known is that Bennett was Director of the National Humanities Center at Research Triangle Park (North Carolina), during which time he wrote extensively about moral education and critiqued those psychological theories of moral development (e.g., Kohlberg, 1969) guiding the implementation of programs of moral education in the schools (Bennett, 1980; Bennett & Delattre, 1978, 1979). In those writings, as well as in the later periods, Bennett, (1992, 1993, 1995, 1998), put forth the views that morality consists of dispositions or traits of character consistent with cultural traditions and the "memory of society," and that children need to incorporate habitual virtuous behaviors through firm control on the part of adults (see also Kirkpatrick, 1992; Ryan, 1989; Sommers, 1984; Wynne, 1979, 1985, 1989).

Bennett and his colleagues took great issue with the ways children were taught morality in the schools because, they argued, such programs typically were designed to stimulate changes in moral judgments, deliberation, reflection, and the consideration of alternative moral choices and decisions. In this view, morality neither involves judgments (as claimed in theories of moral development like those of Piaget, 1932, or Kohlberg, 1969) nor making choices in values (as claimed in the values clarification approach of Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1972). Judgment, reflection, and decision making were deemed largely tangential to morality and, therefore, detrimental to its acquisition because they divert children from learning to behave in

habitual ways consistent with traditions and virtues. Bennett (1980, p. 30), for instance, has proclaimed that "emphasis on morality as 'cognition' can lead to a serious error in a child's understanding of what a moral life consists." Moreover, "it is often the case that the more a person has a fixed and steady disposition, the less, not the more, he has to make a decision at all" (Bennett, 1980, p. 30). The emphasis needs to be on following rules and the inculcation of traits in children, with a focus on influencing how they act and not on their "states of mind" (Wynne, 1985). Character traits are to be taught or transmitted not only through rewards and punishments, but especially, through example: most important, example as provided in the constant and consistent actions of adults practicing the values and in the telling and retelling of stories or narratives about people habitually behaving in accord with those values. The moral life entails "developing good habits, which come about only through repeated practice" (Bennett, 1995, p. 12). Bennett and others provide a lengthy list of traits presumably shared by the vast majority of Americans, part of a common world, which reflect the ideals of the nation: honesty, compassion, courage, perseverance, responsibility, loyalty, kindliness, fairness, self-discipline, and love of country.

The idea of inculcating traits of character is a long-standing one, and a variety of methods to accomplish this goal have been proposed. A common thread in the various proposals is that practice makes perfect. For example, in nineteenth century America handwriting was connected to character (Thornton, 1996). A person's handwriting (usually that of males) was seen by some to reflect trustworthiness, industry, and self-discipline. Instruction in handwriting presumably contributed to character formation through the triumph of the student's will over his body. Penmanship instruction was viewed as a way of inducing obedience, compliance, and conformity to rules and authority. Instruction was especially needed for those who would otherwise act in antisocial ways. As put by Thornton (1996, p. 55): "Because writing was conceptualized as an act in which the will masters the body to conform to a standard prototype, penmanship was a natural for creating the model male self of Victorian America, the generic man of character."

In late twentieth century America, practice of good deeds and repeated exposure to stories of virtue is connected to the formation of habits of character (Bennett, 1993). Perhaps stating it in the strongest terms, Bennett proclaimed that there has been a steep decline in the state of morality in the nation. In a seeming paradox, in 1992 Bennett maintained, on the one hand, that traits of character reflected in American ideals are ingrained in cultural traditions and held in respect by the majority of the American people and that, on the other hand, American society had lost its moral compass. In *The De-valuing of America*, Bennett juxtaposed the two themes by contending that there is a discrepancy between the beliefs and values of the majority of Americans, who constitute the mainstream, and a highly influential minority of "elites," who "have waged an all-out assault on common sense and the common values of the American people" (Bennett, 1992, p. 13). Beginning with the culture and politics of the 1960s, elites from universities, as well as from the literary and artistic communities, Hollywood, the media, and some religious leaders, have sufficiently dominated the major institutions, including the schools, and exerted enough influence to bring to the fore beliefs and values producing the moral decline of society. The elites have rejected the time-honored values and traditions of America, perpetuating nihilism and relativism (see also Himmelfarb, 1994). Even though the American people had maintained their good common and moral sense, they had not done enough to counteract vocally the views counter to American ideals of the elites. There have been serious negative effects on social institutions, especially on the schools: "Contemporary education needed, and yet had drifted away from, a firm belief in traditional moral values: right and wrong, the importance of character, a concern for the hearts of children as well as their minds" (Bennett, 1992, p. 215).

Political events of much interest to the American people led to some reappraisals by Bennett a few years after he wrote about the devaluing of America by the elites. In 1998 the president of the United States, William Clinton, was the subject of an intensive investigation by an independent counsel. The investigation focused on President Clinton's sexual affair with a young woman and accusations of perjury in a deposition and in testimony to a grand jury, as well as obstruction of

justice. The independent counsel's report resulted in impeachment by the House of Representatives, but acquittal by the United States Senate (in January 1999). These events were followed very closely by much of the American public, and many held strong positions on the merits of the intense investigation and the resulting impeachment. The majority of people opposed the impeachment and, and in a number of public opinion surveys, the president received high approval ratings for his performance in office.

For Bennett (1998), Clinton's actions and especially the reaction of the American public constituted another example of how the elites had undermined the morality of the nation – as put forth by Bennett in *Death of Outrage: Bill Clinton and the Assault on American Ideals*. He argued that Clinton's actions had implications for the lessons taught to youth, and that it was imperative that Clinton be removed from office, primarily because the president had committed perjury and obstructed justice. According to Bennett, Clinton's deviation from sexual norms was also relevant since "sex is a quintessentially moral activity" (1998, p. 18).

Bennett's position, as conveyed in the book's subtitle, was unequivocal. Clinton's actions, as well as those of his supporters, constituted an assault on the society's core ideals and traditions. The main title of the book conveyed another aspect of the situation, namely that the American people were not outraged at what was going on. Bennett regarded the approval of the president to reflect an ominous shift in the sentiments of Americans, such that they no longer maintained their good common and moral sense. They had succumbed to the relativism and nonjudgmentalism of the elites. In turn, because of relativistic attitudes they were willing to accept the president's moral failings, for reasons of self-interest, since the country was experiencing economic prosperity.

According to Bennett, an example of the shift to relativism and the failure to judge others is reflected in differences in public attitudes toward Clinton and toward President Richard Nixon at the time of the Watergate events in the early 1970s. In contrast with Clinton, the majority of people thought that Nixon should have been removed from the presidency in the aftermath of a failed burglary aimed at

influencing the presidential election. In 1974, Nixon resigned from his office instead of facing certain impeachment and conviction. Bennett argued that Clinton's actions were equally as serious as those of Nixon because each involved lying and obstruction of justice. Bennett attributed the differences in public opinion to a decline in the morality of the American people during the intervening years "since during the last thirty years we have witnessed a relentless assault on traditional norms and a profound shift in public attitudes" (Bennett, 1998, p. 170).

However, the perspectives of the majority of the American people to the two events are more complex than Bennett thought. Public opinion surveys indicate that people drew distinctions between the two events. A burglary aimed at influencing the presidential election was viewed differently from events instigated by sexual activities. People were less judgmental about sexual activities than they would be about the circumstances around Nixon's actions. It was evident from public discourse and public opinion surveys that the attitudes of many people were influenced by various facets of Clinton's actions and the ways people who opposed him acted. With regard to the impeachment, the attitude of the public was influenced by the fact that the president's fabrications were related to consensual sexual activities. Although people were troubled that Clinton had not been entirely truthful, they were also troubled by an investigation of what they considered a personal and private matter. It is also the case that people did not always accept the morality of Clinton's behavior. His sexual activities were viewed differently from accusations of possible illegal activities to obtain financial benefits for himself or for his political causes. American people were, indeed, judgmental in nonrelativistic ways about the latter types of events. They were also judgmental about what they thought were heavy-handed and partisan activities of the independent counsel and those leading the impeachment process.

These reactions and the distinctions people drew between different actions are in line with a great deal of research showing that Americans, as well as others, maintain distinctively different types of social judgments. Different types of judgments are made about arenas of personal jurisdiction, matters of social convention, and the morality of welfare,

justice, and rights (Turiel, 1998a). The research has shown that many people regard sexual norms to have a large conventional component, and that sexual activity is personal and private. In contrast with the view of morality as entailing a fixed set of traits reflecting the incorporation of traditional values, the research demonstrates that individuals make complex moral, social, and personal judgments that often entail taking into account the context of people's activities. Research also has demonstrated that in their moral decisions people take circumstances into account – not in the relativistic sense nor simply as accommodation to the situation. Rather, people often weigh and struggle with different and competing moral considerations, as well as try to balance nonmoral with moral considerations.

Particularly suggestive of people's applications of moral judgments to societal events are findings of public opinion polls of Clinton's behavior and job performance by black and white respondents (polls taken from February to August in 1998 and reported in K. Sack, "Blacks Stand by a President Who 'Has Been There for Us'," the *New York Times*, September 19, 1998, p. A1). The results of these polls, too, suggest that blacks (and probably whites) were not indifferent to or relativistic about the moral issues involved. They took strong positions in the face of the long investigation of President Clinton and in the context of highly morally charged race relations in the country. As discussed in the *New York Times* article, black people evaluated the president's reactions to his sexual activities in conjunction with other issues that they judged of great importance. Those other issues included Clinton's defense of affirmative action for minorities, his long record of appointments of black officials and judges, his critical stands on racism, and the social and economic gains made by blacks during his administration. Insofar as economic prosperity did influence people's judgments about Clinton's actions, it is likely that they considered both the pragmatic and moral consequences of the economy on people's well-being – especially for people of poverty or those fearing unemployment. In addition, blacks judged in nonrelativistic ways the investigation and prosecution of the president as unfair. They believed that the tactics were similar to ones used historically to persecute and oppress black Americans.

The reactions of the vast majority of black people, as well as the majority of white people, to the investigation and impeachment of President Clinton reveal that many of the concerns of the 1960s with civil rights, racial injustice, and poverty had not gone away at the end of the twentieth century. People still were critical of social leaders, institutions, and societal arrangements. In my interpretation, people's perspectives on social and moral matters generally are discrepant with the positions put forth in the 1980s and 1990s by politicians and scholars like Whitehead, Bloom, and Bennett. In any event, very different views of moral and societal problems were expressed by leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., in the 1960s and in some of the discussions of the 1990s. In these views, the power structure and the complacency of some social institutions can perpetuate long-standing societal injustices. People's concerns with justice, equal treatment, rights, freedoms, and the wrongs of oppression lead to tensions, discontents, and efforts to transform society into new arrangements and practices. In the views of Whitehead, Bloom, and Bennett, a failure to promote the values and traditions of the society has resulted in moral decay. From their perspective, it is renewed accommodations to traditional societal values, rather than permissiveness and assertions of self-interest, that will revert society to its earlier and better moral state.

These issues do not pertain solely to social and political movements. Often the issues addressed the everyday lives and activities of the citizenry, and large numbers of people have been involved with the social problems. Moreover, these issues are not unrelated to explanations of morality and its development in psychological and other social scientific analyses. Embedded in the two perspectives are different ways of explaining the bases of moral functioning, the relations of individuals to society, the ways children develop socially, the dynamics of social systems, and the nature of changes in cultures. In one perspective, morality entails judgments about human welfare, justice, equal treatment, and rights. This view of morality has been articulated by a number of contemporary moral philosophers (e.g., Dworkin, 1977; Gewirth, 1978, 1982; Habermas, 1993; Okin, 1989, 1996; Nussbaum, 1999, 2000; Rawls, 1971, 1993, 2001). The proposition that morality involves judgments, which can result in conflicts, discontents, and efforts

to transform societal practices and arrangements, has implications for explanations of development. If morality involves judgments, then it would be expected that moral development would involve a process of constructing such judgments. The theoretical perspective I present in this book, consistent with the philosophical view of morality as entailing judgments, is based on the proposition that children construct ways of thinking about welfare, justice, and rights through a variety of social experiences. In addition, it is proposed that social development involves the formation of other domains of social judgments. Alongside moral judgments, people develop ways of understanding social systems, with their conventional regulations or uniformities, and judgments about arenas of personal jurisdiction. In this view, moral development does not involve accommodations to the social system, and existing or past social practices are not necessarily the sources of the moral. In coming to understand social, personal, and moral matters, children begin to evaluate social norms and practices. They form judgments about situations that require the weighing and coordination of different domains. With the development of a multiplicity of social judgments, individuals are part of their culture and can stand apart from it, scrutinizing societal arrangements and cultural practices. Therefore, tensions and conflicts exist within societies insofar as their arrangements and practices perpetuate injustices and unequal distribution of rights. A primary source of conflict comes from social hierarchies of greater power and status among groups that entail norms and practices favoring some over others and allowing for relationships of dominance and subordination. Although at certain points in history tensions and conflicts become public and take the form of organized protests (as in the United States in the 1960s), the tensions and conflicts exist at other times in less public ways. I discuss in later chapters how this is so in people's orientations to cultural practices and societal arrangements in circumstances that do not necessarily involve public or organized protests. The analyses of judgments about societal arrangements and cultural practices presented in this book are connected to analyses of development proposed to entail constructions of judgments in the moral, social, and personal domains.

Some of the ideas put forth in public discourse during the latter part of the twentieth century regarding society's moral decline presuppose a different perspective on morality, its acquisition, and the relation of individuals to society. Among those ideas are the propositions that the acquisition of morality entails acceptance of, and identification with, the long-standing values, standards, and traditions of the society, and that within cultures standards and values are generally shared. A central component of analyses of the state of morality in these times is either that many have failed to adequately learn societal values or that society has taken a negative turn toward shared beliefs in radical individualism and the pursuit of self-interest. In the next chapter, I consider some of those social scientific analyses that contrast with the perspective I present. It is important, however, to stress that social scientists who have put forth some of these propositions do not necessarily agree with the moral and social policy positions of politicians who have espoused elements of the propositions.

Striving for Community

I think Americans are the only people in the world today, I really do, who really, literally, spend most of their time – whether it's in politics, whether it's in satire, art, fiction, you name it – breast beating, baring its soul and proclaiming to the heavens how rotten it is.

—Jean Shepherd, storyteller, essayist, circa 1970 (Strum, 2000)

The political scientist Robert Putnam found it symptomatic of society that American people are "Bowling Alone" (1995, 2000). Although the number of people who bowl has increased, they no longer come together as much in organized bowling leagues. These trends in what goes on in bowling alleys is significant, according to Putnam, because they reflect a general shift toward activities in isolation and away from activities in groups for either recreation or altruistic and civic pursuits. Putnam maintained that "social capital" had declined substantially over the past several decades. The notion of social capital is meant to capture features of social organization, such as participation in civic organizations, family activities, and neighborhood networks, that facilitate social trust and cooperation for the benefit of all. Social capital is measured primarily through data on the number of people who participate in group activities. Evidence of the decline of social capital, as cited by Putnam, includes fewer political activities (e.g., lower voter turnout and less attendance at public meetings or political rallies), less engagement with organized religion, unions, parent-teacher

associations, and civic or fraternal organizations, loosening of family bonds, and a decline in socializing within neighborhoods.

The main reason provided by Putnam for these shifts, which he claims have produced a notable decline in the vibrancy of American civil society, is a radical shift to private leisure time that has come about to a fair extent from the increased time spent watching television. Putnam considered several other potential causes – such as the movement of more women into the labor force, greater mobility, disruption of marriages and family ties through divorce, economic downturns or upturns, and changes in the structure of the economy, such as chain stores replacing small, family-run businesses. According to Putnam (1996, 2000), sprawl into the suburbs and time pressures have contributed to the changes, but not as much as television.

The general moral injunction that there is a great and urgent need for renewal by reverting to a greater sense of community is at the heart of several interrelated themes raised over and over again in the political discussions of the 1990s and in the writings of Bloom and Bennett. Those themes are that there is skepticism about morality, which has produced a moral decline and impending crisis in society; the skepticism about morality, along with an emphasis on individual autonomy, personal choice, rights, and judgments, has undermined habitually derived and emotionally based commitments to a community life of interdependence and resulted in increased crime, drug abuse, sexual freedom, and an erosion of families; and there is a need to return to earlier ways when society was in a better moral state. These themes and the emphasis on community are evident in several analyses by social scientists, who present somewhat different perspectives from each other in several other respects. Moreover, in the social scientific analyses these themes are connected, in systematic ways, to cohesive theoretical propositions. In this chapter, I first consider two types of formulations that together encompass a series of propositions pertaining to biology, emotions, children's early social experiences in the family, and the role of community. The first type is presented by James Q. Wilson (1993) in *The Moral Sense*, and the second by Robert Bellah and colleagues (1985) in *Habits of the Heart* and Amitai Etzioni (1993) in *The Spirit of Community*. Each type, in its own way, argues for the

importance of emotionally based, habit-driven morality connected to societal order and cultural traditions. Whereas Wilson emphasizes the biological groundings of morality, Bellah and Etzioni emphasize societal and cultural groundings. I then consider sociological and anthropological explanations of morality in societies or cultures that can be seen as forming the theoretical bases for these formulations.

GOOD GENES AND GOOD FAMILIES

James Q. Wilson is a public policy analyst who has attempted to integrate research and thought from psychology, anthropology, economics, philosophy, and biology in an effort to provide a comprehensive set of theoretical propositions regarding moral development and behavior (Wilson, 1993). His thesis is that morality is natural, mainly derived from emotions, and that it emerges most effectively in the context of children's experiences at an early age within supportive, intact heterosexual families. Wilson is among those who believe that in spite of its source in people's biological makeup, there has been a decline in the morality of the society. In fact, he proclaimed that he was motivated by a need to address a prevailing moral skepticism fostered by intellectuals that has resulted in a loss of confidence in the use of the language of morality by laypersons:

> I wrote this book to help recover the confidence with which they once spoke about virtue and morality. . . . Why have people lost the confidence with which they once spoke publicly about morality? . . . I believe it is because we have learned, either firsthand from intellectuals or secondhand from the pronouncements of people influenced by intellectuals, that morality has no basis in science or logic. To defend morality is to defend the indefensible. (pp. vii–viii)

Unlike most of the others, Wilson names names. He is clear as to who are the main culprits in the intellectual world serving to undermine morality. They are, especially, well-known figures like Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, B. F. Skinner, and Ruth Benedict, as well as philosophers like Richard Rorty and Ronald Dworkin. These writers have undermined beliefs in morality through their propositions that the

moral is not part of humans' natural propensities, that it is relative to culture and circumstances, and that it revolves around individual choices and rights. These questionings of a scientific basis for morality, along with an ideology of relativism, individual autonomy, and choice have undermined commitments to personal responsibility and, thereby, contributed to an increase in crime rates, drug abuse, and political corruption.

Some of the named intellectuals have put forth the view that morality is not part of human nature and entirely filled in by culture; hence humans have no nature apart from culture and morality is relative. Freud's influence went further. He argued that human nature is counter to morality since it involves the need to express instincts. Morality resides originally in society and, for individuals, requires the restriction of biological nature. Wilson's argument has its foundation in the opposing idea that "mankind has a moral nature." And it is because of the existence of a biologically based moral nature that Wilson makes a distinction, akin to that made by Bennett, between intellectuals (or elites) and ordinary people. The natural moral sense immunizes most people from the "philosophical doubts, therapeutic nostrums, and ideological zealotry with which the modern age has been so thoroughly infected" (p. 11). The immunity is not complete or foolproof – partly because self-interest, which is also natural, can conflict with people's moral inclinations. However, those who are at-risk for criminal activity, often because of biological factors, are also most likely to be influenced by "intellectual currents."

In the context of his strong evolutionary presumptions, Wilson presents a fairly common view that combines the biological and environmental. Indeed, he does not exclude the types of experiences and learning put forth by Freud, Skinner, and Benedict since family life, conditioning, and cultural experiences influence moral acquisition: "people have a natural moral sense, a sense that is formed out of the interaction of their innate dispositions with their earliest familial experiences" (Wilson, 1993, p. 2). Several propositions are embedded in this general thesis. One is that successful moral development is facilitated by growing up in an intact family, where mother and father are together and where they provide love and nurturance, act

authoritatively, and stress the need to meet duties and fulfill responsibilities. The experiential components occur in the context of an evolutionary process that has selected for "prosocial instincts and a central nervous system's favoring of society-regarding impulses" (Wilson, 1993, p. 132). It is presumed that the necessary elements of morality emerge early in life, and that because morality emerges so early it is natural or biologically based. In turn, the family is deemed crucial for the emergence of morality since most of the child's early social experiences are within the family.

Through these formulations, Wilson placed emphasis on emotions and downplayed the role of thought, judgments, or intellectual analysis. Wilson's dichotomy between "intellectuals" and "ordinary people" is informative in this regard since moral reasoning and deliberation are much more the province of the intellectual than the so-called ordinary person. The ordinary person's naturally based behaviors are determined largely by emotions and habits:

> When people act fairly or sympathetically it is rarely because they have engaged in much systematic reasoning. Much of the time our inclination toward fair play or our sympathy for the plight of others are immediate and instinctive, a reflex of our emotions more than an act of our intellect, and in those cases in which we do deliberate, . . . our deliberation begins not with philosophical premises (much less with the justification for them), but with feelings – in short, with a moral sense. The feelings on which people act are often superior to the arguments that they employ. (pp. 7–8)

It appears here that Wilson does assume that people make moral judgments and that sometimes they do deliberate about moral problems. Nevertheless, emotions are primary: "By a moral sense I mean an intuitive or directly felt belief about how one ought to act" (p. xii). It is direct feelings transformed into habits that constitute the moral sense and produce better outcomes than intellectual analysis. Laypersons maintain habitual behavior through continual practice of virtues acquired early in life. Ideas fade, but habits last.

In Wilson's formulation, although reasoning, reflection, and deliberation may emerge later in life than the reflexive and habitual, they are nevertheless less advanced and less adaptive, from the moral point

of view, than the earlier emerging moral sensibilities. Such a reversal of often-held conceptions of development (where reasoning and reflection are built on earlier reflexive processes) is based on the idea that morality stems from the innate. It is not clear what constitutes innate features in Wilson's formulation, nor how he distinguishes the innate from the natural. Wilson maintained that people possess a natural moral sense that is formed through an interaction of "innate dispositions" with the "earliest familial experiences." The moral sense, therefore, is natural, but it is not innate. It seems that the natural is that which inevitably emerges when there is a mix of the innate and appropriate experiences. The innate is that which has been selected for in evolution, which, Wilson argues, has selected for attachment or affiliative behavior (including the biological disposition to care for one's young). In addition to natural selection for reproductive success, with a disposition toward self-interest, there is a biologically based disposition for bonding and attachment that takes the form of sociability. Innate sociability is the overriding component in producing four sentiments identified as constituting the moral life: sympathy toward the feelings and experiences of others, a sense of fairness, self-control to delay rewards and goals, and conscience or duty.

In Wilson's view, experiences in the very early years of life are key because of their necessary connections to the inborn. Wilson relies heavily on research showing that young children display attachments to others, show emotions of sympathy and empathy, engage in prosocial actions, and are amenable to conditioning. This grouping of social sentiments and actions is used as evidence for both the contention that morality appears early and the proposed contribution of early experiences to the formation of the moral sensibilities. Because these experiences occur early and entail attachments to others, they are best facilitated in the family. Moreover, a particular type of family is necessary – the traditional two-parent heterosexual family.

The presumption that it is necessary for children to be reared in a two-parent heterosexual family leads Wilson, also, to the conclusion that many of society's ills (e.g., greater poverty, less education, emotional problems, antisocial behaviors) are a consequence of an increase in alternative family configurations, and especially the increase

in single mothers. Perhaps the heterosexual family is deemed necessary because, in Wilson's view, natural selection results in different propensities for females and males. As a consequence of natural selection, females care for offspring to a much greater extent than males. For Wilson, however, biology clearly makes for gender differences in moral orientations. Boys are more difficult to socialize than girls, especially because of their propensities to aggression – due largely to hormones, enzymes, and neurotransmitters. To a much greater likelihood than females, males will be alcoholics, addicted to drugs, and commit crimes. Moreover, the innate aggressiveness of males and nurturance of females means that males are more likely to be oriented to fairness and duty and females to sympathy. One source of antisocial or immoral behavior stems from inadequate self-control, entailing an inability to sustain attention or inhibit impulses. Although he does not propose that it is the whole story, Wilson attributes much of an ability to sustain attention and inhibit impulses to inheritability.

Two general features of Wilson's formulation are of special interest for a developmental analysis of morality. First, it is a deterministic perspective, even in its inclusion of biological and experiential factors in moral sentiments and behavior. Wilson treats biologically based dispositions broadly, encompassing the positive sentiments, gender differences, and sources of antisocial and criminal acts. Second, in Wilson's view, it is children's very early experiences mainly in one type of social situation (the family), that have strong influences on later life. This configuration of the innate with early experiences omits the possible influences of a variety of social experiences and the transformations that might occur, through those experiences, over a broader age span. Wilson also downplays judgment or rationality in the moral realm, and ultimately renders the existing standards of society as setting morality. As put by the philosopher Alan Ryan (1993) in a review of Wilson's book:

> [H]is insistence that morality is intuitive and reactive rather than rational, and that it springs from our innate sociability, leaves him without resources for explaining how it can happen that we can learn from our teachers and then go on to dissent from them. . . . To give any sensible account of how it is that we can acquire standards which we turn

against the society that taught them to us, we need a coherent picture of how the individual can be shaped by his upbringing and yet become an active, intelligent moral agent – one more reason for being cautious about exaggerating the extent to which morality is emotive and reactive. (p. 54)

Ryan (1993, p. 54) went on to state that Wilson does not have anything "new to say about the undeniable fact that human beings aren't only the creations of the combined operation of nature and culture, but are themselves creators of new and different ideas, new and different standards, and new and different ways of living." Another feature of Wilson's formulation that is of special interest for developmental analyses of morality stems from this combined operation of nature and culture. He proposed that the two go hand-in-hand to produce social harmony. Since the moral sense is so closely linked to social attachments in the family, it is at its roots local and parochial. That is, the moral sense usually applies to small groups, to those who are similar and familiar to oneself. Prior to the Enlightenment in Western cultures, and currently in simple agricultural communities, morality is mainly directed to kin or those in the local community, and is not generalized to have universal applicability. The idea that moral considerations should be applied in a universal way is a Western concept – stemming from the Enlightenment and the advent of individualism. Taking personal freedoms seriously results in concepts of choice and rights, in which there is an attempt to extend the boundaries of the natural localism of the moral sense beyond one's group. Whereas the expansion of the moral sense serves to include a wider range of persons than kin or group members, it has two drawbacks in Wilson's view. One is that it can serve to lose sight of the most fundamental aspects of morality – attachment to and cooperation with those who are familiar and close. The second is that the idea of freedoms and rights can be, and often is, applied in extreme ways at the expense of self-control, as well as responsibilities, and duties to kin, friends, and the local community. Communitarianism, according to Wilson (1993, p. 248), gives "philosophical voice to the yearnings of ordinary folk who wish to preserve their liberties while reclaiming their vision of a decent community, one

in which the moral senses will become as evident in public as they are now in private life."

GOOD HEARTS AND GOOD COMMUNITIES

We certainly do not know if communitarianism gives voice to "ordinary" people or if, as a group, they have shared yearnings and a common vision of what constitutes a decent community. No evidence is presented by Wilson for any of his assertions about the good moral sense of what he refers to as ordinary people or for his claims as to what, if anything, the majority of people yearn for or envision in common. It is more likely that groups of people disagree on matters of freedoms and rights; the distribution of resources; equality of opportunities to education and jobs; and the ways to balance rights, responsibilities, and privileges for one's own and other groups. Groups of people who are in different positions on the social hierarchy (i.e., females and males, people of different racial groups, people of varying social classes) may very well disagree on some or all of these matters. In later chapters, I have much more to say about commonalities and differing perspectives among people in different groups, as well as about the importance of accounting for different social positions and understandings that are not shared within cultures or societies.

However, Wilson's characterization of a conflict between issues of individualism, freedom, choice, or rights, and issues of responsibilities or commitments to the local community does capture the concerns of several social scientists who emphasize the group or societal grounding of morality, including those of Putnam (1995, 2000), Etzioni (1993, 1996), and Bellah and colleagues (1985). In each of those approaches, there are also calls for a return to some of the ways of times past. Both Putnam and Etzioni have agendas prescribing how people need to act to restore the well-being of society. Putnam's "agenda for social capitalists" dictates new activities, structures, and policies so as "to facilitate renewed civic engagement" (2000, p. 403). Putnam provides a series of needed commitments, especially from the young, to achieve the renewed state. These, too, are far-reaching. They include changes

in the workplace to make it more family friendly and community congenial, efforts to get people to participate more in public life, and efforts to get them to participate in activities so that they "will be more deeply engaged than we are today in one or another spiritual community of meaning, while at the same time becoming more tolerant of the faiths and practices of other Americans" (Putnam, 2000, p. 409). Putnam's agenda also calls for Americans to spend less time traveling and more time connecting with neighbors, participate in more cultural activities (such as group dancing, songfests, community theater, and rap festivals), and, of course, spend less time sitting alone in front of screens.

These recommendations are in line with Etzioni's communitarianism. A prevailing theme of communitarianism is restoration – through recommitment to moral values, restoration of law and order, reaffirmation of responsibility, and a return to living in communities. Times past were not necessarily morally perfect, in Etzioni's view. It was not wrong to question a number of traditional values in the 1960s. However, the absence of solid new values in their place has resulted in rampant moral confusion and social anarchy. One of Etzioni's major claims is that in place of the questioned traditional values, prominence has been given to the individual over the community – or as he put it, on the *I* over the *we*. For Americans, this has taken two interrelated forms. One is an "elevation of the unbridled pursuit of self-interest and greed to the level of social virtue" (Etzioni, 1993, p. 24). The second is that Americans have become overly concerned with rights, especially expanding rights, and there is an "incessant issuance of new rights" (p. 5). From the 1960s to the 1990s, according to Etzioni, there was an erosion of social order in the effort to expand individual liberties. The consequence is that "some societies have lost their equilibrium, and are heavily burdened with anti-social consequences of excessive liberty" (Etzioni, 1996, p. xvii).

According to Etzioni, to restore morality there is a need to return to the language of social virtues and responsibility, including a better balance of rights and responsibilities, as well as autonomy and social order. The most important change that must occur to reverse the moral decline is the reestablishment of cohesive communities. The

institutions of society would then embody shared values and practices, as well as collective responsibility. One key institution requiring strengthening is the family, because of its importance to children's acquisition of core values and habits of character that allow control over impulses. Parents are faulted for not spending more time with their children: "Child care centers, especially the kind that are most common in the United States, are a poor substitute" (Etzioni, 1993, p. 88). As a consequence, two-parent families must be maintained. In order to preserve the traditional family structure, specific legislative steps are recommended by Etzioni – such as a lengthy waiting period for remarriage after divorce – as well as particular family activities – such as reinstituting the ritual of the family meal. Etzioni also has recommendations for career choices that would facilitate family life (e.g., less time at work) and the spirit of community (e.g., emergency medicine rather than plastic surgery for physicians; public defense rather than divorce law for attorneys).

Etzioni has a four-point agenda regarding rights and responsibilities in his call for people to "join with one another to forge a communitarian movement" (Etzioni, 1993, p. 20). The first of the four points on the agenda is perhaps the most sweeping recommendation designed to restore society. It is that there be a moratorium on new rights. The other points on the agenda are reestablishing links between rights and responsibilities, recognizing that some responsibilities do not entail rights, and adjusting some rights to the changed circumstances over time. Although individual and civil rights are usually put forth as ways of ensuring fair treatment of persons and groups, from the communitarian perspective, the assertion of rights has served to displace responsibilities and a sense of community. The assertion of rights is also seen as symptomatic of a radical individualism that feeds into the unbridled pursuit of self-interest and greed that has become dominant in society. Radical individualists, including many affiliated with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), treat individual rights in an absolutist, uncompromising way. They, thereby, completely ignore needs of the community that may override individual rights and "help set the stage for a major right–wing, authoritarian backlash" (Etzioni, 1993, p. 164).

The advent of radical individualism in American society is also of great concern to Bellah and his colleagues (1985). For Bellah et al., individualism, which is at the heart of American culture, dates back to the 1830s when Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about *Democracy in America*. According to Bellah et al., "individualism has marched inexorably through our history" (p. vii). Throughout history, American identity has shared core features of individualism: "We believe in the dignity, indeed the sacredness of the individual. Anything that would violate our right to think for ourselves, judge for ourselves, make our own decisions, live our lives as we see fit, is not only morally wrong, it is sacrilegious. Our highest and noblest aspirations, not only for ourselves, but for those we care about, for our society and for the world, are closely linked to our individualism" (p. 142).

The individualism that has existed in the past and was first chronicled by Tocqueville was characterized by personal autonomy, self-reliance, individual initiative in conjunction with valuing of equality, and questioning of fixed social ranks and subjugation of persons. Moreover, individualism was combined with connections to political community. As put by Putnam (1995, p. 65), "When Tocqueville visited the United States in the 1830s, it was Americans' propensity for civic association that most impressed him as the key to their unprecedented ability to make democracy work." Yet, according to Bellah et al., Tocqueville was also anxious about American individualism, fearing that it could eventually isolate Americans from each other and undermine the conditions of freedom. Bellah et al. would agree with Putnam's assertions that connection and civic involvement have disappeared in American society. They believe that individualism has turned radical and that, consequently, it "may have grown cancerous – that it may be destroying those social integuments that Tocqueville saw as moderating its more destructive potentialities, that it may be threatening the survival of freedom itself" (p. vii).

Such sweeping assertions about American society then and now, with its continuities and discontinuitites, are made because Bellah et al. adhere to the idea of national character (an idea more in vogue among psychologists during an earlier period of the twentieth century; see, for example, Gorer, 1948): "The fundamental question we

posed . . . was how to preserve or create a morally coherent life. But the kind of life we want depends on the kind of people we are – on our character. Our inquiry can thus be located in a longstanding discussion of the relationship between character and society" (Bellah et al., 1985, p. vi). Their inquiry, revolving around in-depth analyses of the lives of several individuals with regard to matters like love and marriage, work, civic participation, and political activism was framed by the presumption that the American character is one of individualism. They also attempted to examine changes in subtypes of individualism. In the twentieth century, two subtypes – the Manager and the Therapist – have displaced the earlier subtypes, which were the Independent Citizen and the Entrepreneur. Both new subtypes constitute a new form of individualism. The Managerial type has been shaped by the bureaucratic organization of the business corporation into a primary concern with economic effectiveness. The Therapist type has a general outlook on life that focuses on self-fulfillment and personal satisfaction.

The aspects of individualism that have taken hold in society are isolation, personal choice, and independence from the past (from a "community of memory"). Freedom is now viewed as separation from others, and involves breaking away from family, social institutions, and one's community. According to Bellah et al. (p. 84), "the quintessential American task is of finding oneself." The ultimate goal of the good life involves achieving personal goals and the meaning of people's lives is viewed as becoming one's own person. As a consequence, Americans lack commitment to interpersonal relationships. Individuals are unable, for the most part, to understand themselves and their actions as interrelated in morally meaningful ways with other Americans. Shifts have occurred in moral standards and definitions of the good. Aesthetic tastes and the achievement of technical skills have taken priority over moral standards. The good is now viewed as accomplishing things well and having the right answers. Moreover, it is the self that sets the standard for choosing values, in the absence of any other criteria perceived as legitimate. According to Bellah et al., each self now constitutes its own moral universe and one's own good is put ahead of the common good.

This portrayal of American society by Bellah et al. might appear rather bleak. In fact, their view is bleak – but not hopeless. Recall that they began with the assertion that American individualism may have grown cancerous. In their final chapter they assert the following:

> For over a hundred years, a large part of the American people, the middle class, has imagined that the virtual meaning of life lies in the acquisition of ever-increasing status, income, and authority, from which genuine freedom is supposed to come. Our achievements have been enormous. They permit us the aspiration to become a genuinely humane society in a genuinely decent world, and provide many of the means to attain that aspiration. Yet we seem to be hovering on the brink of disaster, not only from international conflict but from the internal incoherence of our society. What has gone wrong? How can we reverse the slide toward the abyss? (p. 284)

Not unlike Putnam and Etzioni, Bellah et al. believe that the way to avoid the abyss is to attenuate individualism and restore traditions and a sense of family, church, and community. Individuals must reconnect to public realms. The church has a role to play by showing people that independence can be connected to interdependence among people and to participation in the authority of social institutions. The necessary transformation in society so that we do not have "very little future to think about" (p. 286) requires changing our cultural ethos and national character, and the habits and emotions of individuals.

THE QUESTION OF RELATIVISM, COMMUNITY, AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

In the views of Wilson, Etzioni, and Bellah et al., morality is centrally connected to ideas about character, community, and culture. Propositions regarding the character traits of individuals are most clearly evident in the perspective taken by Bennett and others (Kirkpatrick, 1992; Ryan, 1989; Wynne, 1979, 1985, 1989). In Wilson's conception, too, character formation is necessary because it allows for the translation of natural sociability into habitual behaviors that serve to provide a balance with natural propensities to self-interest. Etzioni believes that character formation entails the acquisition of core values, transmitted

from one generation to the next, that allow persons to control impulses and defer gratification. Whereas some propose lengthy lists of specific character traits comprising morality, Bellah et al. conceive of character as a general societal or national orientation with some limited number of subtypes. In all these conceptions, with the exception of Wilson's biological attributions, both the source and ends of morality are in community, society, or culture.

These propositions have implications for questions of moral relativism. The issue of relativism has been pervasive in debates within moral philosophy, anthropology, and psychology. Often the question has been couched in terms of whether moral values, standards, or judgments are or are not particular to a community, society, or culture. Usually, those taking a relativistic position place the sources of morality within groups, maintaining that the morality of different groups cannot be compared with each other regarding their adequacy. Each of the approaches I have considered takes, at least implicitly, a non-relativistic stance. Those who propose that morality consists of traits of character have explicitly argued against relativism. They have asserted that an espousal of relativism is a cause of moral decline. Clearly, in these approaches, there is a presumption of more or less adequate morality, as well as the idea that society can change for the better or worse. It is maintained that character traits stem from society, such as through a long-standing set of national ideals (Bennett, 1998) or the traditions of the culture (Bennett & Delattre, 1978; Wynne, 1985). If social and pedagogical conditions are properly established, individuals will acquire the appropriate traits of character. It is because of the failure of new generations to acquire traits and habits rooted in traditions that society is in moral decline.

Similarly, the idea of moral decline is present in the communitarian and sociological perspectives of Etzioni and Bellah. They have evaluated American society in accord with moral adequacy. Etzioni, for instance, contends that the 1950s were a time of a well-established society, but that the times were unfair to minorities and women. In his view, the 1960s resulted in a disestablishment of society and its values. This was followed by moral regression in the 1980s, when there was unbridled pursuit of self-interest. Even more serious

societal deterioration followed in the 1990s. By characterizing decades in these ways, there is an assertion of time-related shifts in moral adequacy. During the decades of the 1960s, 1980s, and 1990s, there were regressive changes. Moral progression is also possible – as would occur if society embraced the idea of community, with a deemphasis on self and rights along with increased commitment to responsibility to others and the group. A similar scenario was provided by Bellah et al., but it encompassed longer-term changes in the character of American society. The shift from an earlier, balanced type of individualism to contemporary, radical individualism brought with it societal regression to a state of incoherence. Progress would be possible if there were restoration of traditions and greater participation in communities.

The basis for some of these nonrelativistic claims is clear in Wilson's formulation, since he relies on evolutionary and biological sources for the morality of individuals, but it is ambiguous in the character trait and communitarian–societal approaches in two key respects. One is that criteria or rationales for more or less adequate morality are left unspecified. It is, for example, simply asserted that the presence of particular character traits constitutes the morally good – without justification. At best, it is argued that the presence of the traits would result in a decrease in social ills like crime and drug use and produce a better society. Second, little consideration is given to whether societies (or cultures) may have different traditions, value different character traits, or possess different general societal orientations. Is it that a particular society's traditions define the good? If so, then societies with different traditions would be said to have different but morally adequate traits and values. Or is it the case that the traditions of American society embody valid moral values and traits? If so, then societies with different values and traits would not be as morally adequate. Similarly, it can be asked if a spirit of community is a moral end in itself or if it serves to produce desirable moral goals. Can different societies with a spirit of community and coherence embody different moral standards and values? In one of his writings, Etzioni (1996) attempted to address some of these questions by positing that communities need to have shared values of autonomy and social order, implying that values

may cut across communities and cultures. However, no criteria were given for the legitimacy of those values designated to transcend local communities. Moreover, criteria are not specified as to why it is necessary to value autonomy and social order. The main criterion for the communitarian views seems to be a functional one – that commonly accepted values work to hold the community together. Since group values are ultimately the bases for morality, fundamental questions regarding moral ends are left unresolved.

One means of avoiding some of the tension, evident in both the character–trait and communitarian–societal approaches, between the emphasis placed on society or culture as the source of morality and proposition that there is greater and lesser moral adequacy, could be to apply nonrelativism only to what occurs within a culture and relativism to comparisons between cultures. That is, it could be maintained that it is possible to evaluate greater or lesser moral adequacy in changes within a culture, but that different cultures have moral systems that are not comparable. Although they are not explicit about it, perhaps Bellah et al. (1985) would take the position that within a society with an individualistic orientation, changes to a radical form of individualism can be evaluated on moral grounds. More detailed and extensive analyses of society or culture than evident in the character–trait or communitarian–societal approaches have attempted to draw the distinction between nonrelativistic moral adequacy within cultures and relativism in comparisons between cultures. Indeed, some of these analyses are, historically, sources for ideas in the communitarian–societal approaches – in particular, the work of Durkheim (1925/1961) and cultural anthropologists writing in an earlier period of the twentieth century (Benedict, 1934; Herskovitz, 1947; Mead, 1928). The work of Durkheim and the cultural anthropologists also influenced later analyses of relations between culture and morality, as well as their connection to concepts of persons (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Markus, Mullaly, & Kitayama, 1997; Miller, 1994; Miller & Bersoff, 1995; Sampson, 1977; Simpson, 1973; Shweder, et al., 1997; Shweder, Mahapatra & Miller, 1987). As discussed below, in all these approaches, it has proven difficult to

avoid tension between analyses of culture and issues of moral relativism and nonrelativism.

ATTACHMENTS TO SOCIETY AND CULTURAL PATTERNS

The two salient features of the communitarian-societal approaches, a reliance on tradition and shared sentiments, are central in Durkheim's theory of morality and its formation. Durkheim's complex and far-ranging formulations were presented in several contexts, including his studies of religion (1912/1965), the division of labor in society (1893/1947), and moral education (1925/1961). For the present purposes, however, certain features are key. One is that morality must be rooted in sentiments about an entity regarded superior to individuals, that is, superior to the self and others. Morality entails a deep-seated respect for society, which constitutes a supraindividual entity. Morality does not involve judgments of principle; nor does morality involve respect for particular persons regarded as superior to the self. Respect for individuals considered superior, such as that accorded to those in authority or positions of leadership, is symbolic of the collective or shared respect for the society.

Morality, therefore, is attained through emotionally based, symbolically driven attachments to, and respect for, the social order. Two central elements are attachment to society and a "spirit of discipline." Shared attachments involve people feeling at one with society and with their subordination to it. Acceptance of standards, rules, authority, and social sanctions all flow from the attachment to and respect for society. According to Durkheim, rules or maxims, such as the maxim "Thou shalt not kill," have no moral force in and of themselves. They must be collective sentiments that transcend individual desires, interests, goals, or judgments. Insofar as rules or maxims have moral authority, it comes from society. Hence, different rules and maxims may be accorded moral authority in different societies.

Individuals acquire their moral sensibilities by forming a spirit of discipline, which includes a sense of regularity and authority. The

spirit of discipline allows for an acceptance of regulation and for constraints on behavior. It is through participation in groups – with rules, authority, and collective or shared sentiments and a sense of solidarity – that individuals come to form their morality. According to Durkheim, moral acquisition occurs best in the schools and not in the family, which is too personal and individualized. The attainment of collective sentiments yields social order and social harmony.

In Durkheim's view, however, participation in communal life stems from people's natural social propensities. Autonomy, or the willing acceptance of the group through feelings of sacredness for ends higher than individual interests or goals, is the third element of morality. Individuals' transcendence of self through the willing acceptance of the norms, rules, and authority embedded in the social order represents a commitment to tradition and shared sentiments and understandings. Insofar as society functions properly, individuals participate without conflicts or disagreements over societal arrangements – including social hierarchical arrangements with roles or positions of dominance and subordination. Regardless of one's place, there is respect for society as a whole and transcendence of one's position, roles, and interests. Social life, therefore, is largely harmonious. A lack of harmony, that is, a predominance of disagreements and conflicts, is indicative of a breakdown in society due to the failure of individuals to share sufficiently in the sentiment of respect. Whereas rules, maxims, and social arrangements may differ among societies, the moral adequacy of a society depends on its internal coherence and the adequate integration of the individual into collective life.

Internal coherence, shared understandings, social harmony, and acceptance of rules and standards were also part of the approaches taken by cultural anthropologists (Benedict, 1934; Herkovitz, 1947; Mead, 1928). However, with regard to morality, the major emphasis of cultural anthropologists was upon differences in cultural practices and the incommensurability of standards in different cultures. Cultures were viewed as constituting integrated cohesive patterns of social interaction, with the patterns of one culture differing from another. One of the most influential proponents of this view was Ruth Benedict,

who asserted that "the diversity of cultures can be endlessly documented" (1934, p. 45). Cultures may vary in the extent to which areas of human behavior even exist. In one culture, according to Benedict (1934, p. 45), an area of human behavior "may be ignored . . . until it barely exists" or is unimagined. In another culture, the same area of behavior may "almost monopolize the whole organized behavior of the society." Great diversity also exists in morally relevant cultural practices, even with regard to a matter like killing, which is often treated as fundamental or foundational to morality. As put by Benedict:

> We might suppose that in the matter of taking life all peoples would agree in condemnation. On the contrary, in a matter of homicide, it may be held that one is blameless if diplomatic relations have been severed between neighbouring countries, or that one kills by custom his first two children, or that a husband has a right of life and death over his wife, or that it is the duty of the child to kill his parents before they are old. It may be that those are killed who steal a fowl, or who cut their upper teeth first, or who are born on a Wednesday. (pp. 45–46)

Simply in using the one example of taking a life, Benedict encompassed several cultural practices supposedly reflecting differences in moral codes. She went on to include parricide, infanticide, suicide, and family relationships of inequality. There is order, however, to these variations, which stems from the integration and cohesiveness of cultures. Culture constitutes a general context for social interactions that encompasses the different practices:

> The diversity of custom in the world is not, however, a matter which we can only helplessly chronicle. . . . The significance of cultural behaviour is not exhausted when we have clearly understood that it is local and manmade and hugely variable. It tends also to be integrated. A culture, like an individual, is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action. Within each culture there come into being characteristic purposes not necessarily shared by other types of society. (p. 45)

Like Durkheim, Benedict viewed social interactions as embodying elements that form a coherent and shared entity. The development of

children occurs through participation in the cultural community:

The life-history of the individual is first and foremost an accommodation to the patterns and standards traditionally handed down in his community. From the moment of his birth the customs into which he is born shape his experience and behaviour. By the time he can talk, he is the little creature of his culture, and by the time he is grown, and able to take part in its activities, its habits are his habits, its beliefs his beliefs, its impossibilities his impossibilities. Every child that is born into his group will share them with him, and no child born into one on the opposite side of the globe can ever achieve the thousandth part. (pp. 2–3)

The fundamental propositions, then, are that there is diversity between cultures but that they form organized integrated patterns that produce consistencies in thought and action. The specific standards forming part of these patterns are acquired by members of the culture and shared among them. People hold the standards they hold as a consequence of the culture in which they were adopted. By virtue of the existence of varying patterns and standards in different parts of the world, it is not valid to draw evaluative comparisons between cultures. The positions of cultural relativism taken by cultural anthropologists often were in reaction to those who had previously compared cultures on their relative worth (moral and otherwise). In the late nineteenth century, many anthropological analyses were aimed at classifying cultures on a hierarchy from lower to higher on intellectual, scientific, social, and moral dimensions. Distinctions were drawn between lower and higher cultures, or primitive and civilized peoples. Subsequently, it was argued by cultural anthropologists, like Benedict, Mead, and Herkovitz, that there were no valid criteria for ranking cultures relative to each other or for classifying them on a scale of progress.

More often than not, in the late nineteenth century analyses, Western cultures were placed highest on the hierarchy by those who were themselves from Western cultures. In contrast with those views, it was argued that the hierarchies were based on the idea that the moral standards and values of one's society were the best or highest, relegating the values of other societies to lower levels. The classifications of cultures in a hierarchy of progress or development, it was further argued,

were made because of a bias in favor of the values of Western cultures, and intolerance and lack of respect for the equally valid values of other cultures. As put by Boas (1901; quoted in Hatch, 1983, p. 39):

> [I]t is somewhat difficult for us to recognize that the value which we attribute to our own civilization is due to the fact that we participate in this civilization, and that it has been controlling all our actions since the time of our birth; but it is certainly conceivable that there may be other civilizations, based perhaps on other traditions and on a different equilibrium of emotion and reason, which are of no less value than ours, although it may be impossible for us to appreciate their values without having grown up under their influence. The general theory of valuation of human activities, as taught by anthropological research, teaches us a higher tolerance than the one which we now profess.

Along with relativism, therefore, it was asserted that cultures should be treated as different and equal, and each accepted as functioning on its own moral standards with moral ends endemic to its system. As has been noted by others (Hatch, 1983), the position of cultural relativism actually includes moral prescriptions of a nonrelativistic nature. The moral prescriptions revolve around a rejection of a hierarchy of cultures and entail espousal of the values of tolerance (as noted by Boas), freedom, self-determination, and equality. Tolerance is valued since it is argued that the validity of a culture's standards should be accepted and that one culture should not exert its greater power over another. Moreover, it is important that a culture have the freedom and self-determination to follow its own standards. The ways that nonrelativistic values can be embedded in the very assertion of relativism is evident in the statement made by the anthropologist Melville Herskovitz (1947), as quoted in Hatch (1983, p. 86):

> Cultural relativism is a philosophy which, in recognizing the values set up by every society to guide its own life, lays stress on the dignity inherent in every body of custom, and on the need for tolerance of conventions though they may differ from one's own. . . . [T]he relativistic point of view brings into relief the validity of every set of norms for the people whose lives are guided by them, and the values they represent.

(See Hatch, 1983 for a detailed review of these issues, including discussion of the progress in thinking about morality represented by the cultural anthropologists' conceptions of relativism as well as its shortcomings.)

In the formulations of the cultural anthropologists working during the first part of the century, little was specified about the morality of different cultures. At best, lists were provided of some of the varying standards. A similar listing of variations between cultures has been a starting point for some analyses of morality and culture in the latter part of the century. It is also believed that documenting such varying standards and practices provides an empirical grounding for the proposition of cultural variations in morality:

> On the basis of the historical and ethnographic record we know that different people in different times and places have found it quite natural to be spontaneously appalled, outraged, indignant, proud, disgusted, guilty and ashamed by all sorts of things: masturbation, homosexuality, sexual abstinence, polygamy, abortion, circumcision, corporal punishment, capital punishment, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, capitalism, democracy, flag burning, miniskirts, long hair, no hair, alcohol consumption, meat eating, medical inoculations, atheism, idol worship, divorce, widow remarriage, arranged marriage, romantic love marriage, parents and children sleeping in the same bed, parents and children not sleeping in the same bed, women being allowed to work, women not being allowed to work. (Shweder, 1994, p. 26)

A simple list of standards and practices – even one this exhaustive – is open to varying interpretations of their meaning and functions within the structure of social arrangements. The particular interpretation given by many who attribute a cultural source to the moral development of individuals is that standards and practices are part of coherent orientations within cultures to self, persons, interpersonal relationships, and moral codes. By specifying the nature of those general orientations, substance is given to the earlier proposition that cultures form integrated patterns. Two general orientations – collectivism and individualism – have been described and attributed to differences between non-Western and Western cultures, respectively. The spirit

of these two orientations (which I describe in some detail in a later chapter) was conveyed by MacIntyre (1981) in his philosophical treatise on an emotivist and tradition-based morality:

> In many pre-modern, traditional societies it is through his or her membership in a variety of social groups that the individual identifies himself or herself and is identified by others. I am a brother, cousin, and grandson, member of this household, this village, this tribe. These are not characteristics that belong to human beings accidentally, to be stripped away in order to discover 'the real me.' They are part of my substance, defining partially at least and sometimes wholly my obligations and my duties. Individuals inherit a particular space within an interlocking set of social relationships. . . .
>
> This conception of whole human life as the primary subject of objective and impersonal evaluation . . . is something that ceases to be generally available at some point in the progress – if we can call it such – towards and into modernity. It passes to some degree unnoticed for it is celebrated historically for the most part not as loss, but as self-congratulating gain, as the emergence of the individual freed on the one hand from the social bonds of those constraining hierarchies which the modern world rejected at its birth and on the other hand from what modernity has taken to be the superstitions of teleology. (pp. 33–34)

MacIntyre does not see the freeing of social bonds or roles from hierarchies as progress. The traditions and authority of social roles and hierarchies are necessary for justice and virtue (see especially, MacIntyre, 1988). Anthropologists and cultural psychologists have, in many instances, maintained that the orientations to collectivism and individualism are cultural alternatives encompassing attitudes or concepts toward self or persons and morality. In traditional, non-Western cultures, the self is unbounded, whereas there is a "Western conception of the person as bounded, unique, more or less integrated universe" (Geertz, 1974/1984, p. 126). The morality said to exist in collectivistic cultures is based on duties and the maintenance of social order. The morality said to exist in individualistic cultures is based on rights and the freedom of persons to enter into contractual arrangements. Such a distinction between collectivistic and individualistic

moral codes brings us back to the communitarian-societal views of Etzioni and Bellah. However, the proposition that the distinction applies to the orientations of different cultures raises questions about the communitarian critiques of American society. Etzioni, Bellah et al., Putnam, and others maintain that individualism has become radical or extreme in American society. They also maintain that to avoid the abyss the society must shift to greater commitments to community and interpersonal obligations. This would mean that Western culture would embrace ways of thinking and acting that have been attributed to other cultural ways. From the perspective of those proposing that individualism and collectivism represent varying cultural orientation, this entails judging a Western society by non-Western standards.

Discontents Revisited

Morality Through the Centuries: The history of thought not only deals with philosophy but ethics and morality as well. I offer the advanced student of moral history the following summary:

Roman era: anything goes
Medieval era: nothing goes
Renaissance: anything goes
17th Century Spain: nothing goes
18th Century France: anything goes
19th Century England: nothing goes
1920s America: anything goes
1950s America: nothing goes
1990s America: anything goes

—Steve Martin, actor, comedian, writer from "The Third Millennium: So Far, So Good"
January 2, 2000

I believe that we may be seeing, in the character trait and communitarian approaches, something analogous to the hierarchical rankings of cultures promulgated during the late nineteenth century. By this I mean that in each case there were negative moral evaluations of the culture or society *as a whole*. In the late nineteenth century, some cultures, relative to others, were considered to be less developed, less civilized (more primitive), more base by virtue of desires to fulfill needs, and more deficient in applying moral standards. In the communitarian perspective, society has been described as having regressed to a lesser state of development, at risk of disintegrating, and overly committed to the pursuit of pleasure and self-interests.

One difference, of course, is that in the earlier manifestations of negative moral evaluations, it was usually people judging cultures other than their own, whereas in the contemporary manifestations, people are judging their own culture. Judging a culture from the outside is different from judging it from an inside perspective. It may be, as argued by Boas and others, that people judge other cultures negatively because they are biased in favor of their own. However, judgments about one's own culture are not necessarily accurate or unbiased. Within a culture or society, there exist different viewpoints and different group perspectives. Negatively evaluating the morality of society as a whole may reflect the biases of one group against another. It may also be that in the context of ongoing transformations in some social practices and in the application of some moral judgments within a society, people wishing to maintain existing practices perceive the changes as morally negative. A distinction also needs to be made between critiques of the morality of particular practices or societal arrangements and judgments about the overall moral conditions of the society – which can involve stereotyping.

IT IS ALWAYS THE GOOD OLD DAYS

In actuality, the theme of moral crisis and decay in society as a whole has recurred in different times and places. Most frequently, it is a nation's youth that are seen as a large part of the problem (Fass, 1977; Norris, 1996). In fact, some times of the past currently pointed to as periods in which traditional values prevailed and moral cohesion existed were, at those very times, described as undergoing moral crisis and societal disintegration. A prime example is the 1920s in the United States. According to Fass (1977), a historian, the 1920s was a period of social change, and in particular change for the youth of the nation. Changes were occurring for the young in life styles, recreational activities, sexual patterns, sex roles, and peer relationships. These changes were connected to more general societal changes in work patterns, schooling, and political participation. One type of reaction to these changes paralleled the contemporary reactions of proponents of character traits and communitarian perspectives: namely,

that a serious moral decline was occurring and that society was in disorder.

As conveyed by Fass (1977) in her historical account, many politicians, educators, journalists, religious leaders, and social scientists were alarmed by the changes occurring among young people. The alarm was over a lack of restraint in the behavior of young people involving rejection of traditional roles, societal norms, and moral standards. It was thought that, instead, the actions of youth were characterized by licentiousness, personal gratification, and expedience. Some of the terms used then were different from terms used now, but the characterizations of extreme individualism are similar. Also similar to contemporary characterizations was the assessment that the language of right and wrong or of morality was under attack: "The word 'moral' itself is going into ill repute" (Carlson, 1927, p. 151). It was said that people were concerned not with moral standards but with "prudence, practicality, caution" (p. 152); they were concerned with what was expedient: " 'Getting by' is almost the twentieth century equivalent for morality" (p. 152).

Among the activities contributing to the moral decline were jazz and modern dancing – decadent activities signifying the collapse of civilized life and the disintegration of a previously stable society. Likening it to the fall of Rome, it was said, using a term also used by Bellah et al. (1985), that society was headed into the abyss (McMahon, November 1921, p. 13). Currently, Hollywood is often blamed for spreading social ills to the rest of the nation. Then, it was thought that New York "sets the pace and distributes the vogue to the remotest corners of the land" (McMahon, November, 1921, p. 13). The effects of jazz were viewed in ways similar to how the media is currently seen to affect negatively people's morality. It was then said that jazz "affects our young people especially. It is degrading. It lowers all the moral standards . . . those moaning saxophones and the rest of the instruments with their jerky rhythm make a purely sensual appeal. They call out the low and rowdy instinct" (McMahon, December, 1921, p. 34).

Of great concern were the attitudes and actions of young women – who were regarded as self-indulgent and irresponsible ("an unchecked indulgence in appetite and impulse; a coarseness and

looseness in speech, dress, manner, and habit of life," Gilman, 1922, pp. 349–350). Many complained about young women's dress, dancing, and listening to jazz ("a flapper . . . who drinks whisky, smokes cigarettes, wears diaphanous, clinging frocks, parks her corset at dances and rolls stockings below the knees," Editorials, the *Ladies Home Journal*, November, 1921, p. 24). Fass (1977, p. 24) relates the more general view of women in those times: "The right to freedom of choice, to broad social participation, and to sexual satisfaction seemed to threaten above all the stability of the home, once the keystone of the social order, for it undermined the imperatives to marriage."

So in the 1920s, as well, people were alarmed at a perceived deterioration of family life and its effects on the social order. Too many women working was also a concern. Moreover, it was thought that parents were abdicating their responsibilities within families. They were indulgent, permissive, and allowed themselves to become subservient to their children (Carlson, 1927). A not untypical commentary, according to Fass (1977, p. 37), was made by the Dean of Women at Ohio University who proclaimed that mothers allowed their children to glorify "personal liberties and individual rights to the point that they are beginning to see lack of self-control and total irresponsibility in the matters of moral obligation to society." Another commentary, in the *Literary Digest*, was that a survey regarding the younger generation showed that "all through the mass of horrified onlookers runs the censuring of the American home. The great need, we are told, is a reassertion of parental authority." Therefore, the words used to condemn the state of the American families were as strong in the 1920s as in the 1990s. The consequences of erosion of authority in the family were also perceived to be serious. According to sociologists and social workers, the results of the erosion of the family unit were crime, delinquency, prostitution, and insanity. The anonymity and autonomy of families, along with the lack of controls by the community, brought with it extreme individualism. The words are familiar: "Cut loose from the family and the community, the individual stood alone" (Fass, 1977, p. 109).

The problems were not limited to the family, but included the church, schools, universities, and other social institutions (Carlson,

1927). The authority of religion had waned, it was said. The authority of the teacher had also weakened. It was thought that maintaining discipline was the hardest problem faced by teachers (at least, in urban settings). Even students in universities no longer had the same interest in learning. The State did not fare much better since many laws (e.g., traffic laws, prohibition) were routinely violated by the young.

Not surprisingly, it was thought that traditional values were undermined in society as a whole. The family, however, was viewed by some sociologists as most important to the stability of society. In prior times, the late-Victorian family (the 1890s) served society better with a unity based on hierarchically defined roles, obligations, rights, privileges, and responsibilities. It was argued that during those previous times parents were willing to forsake their self-interests for the good of the family unit, and that children deferred to parents, subordinating their self-interests. Late-Victorian families, in contrast with the 1920s, were characterized by mutual responsibilities and order. In turn, society was well-ordered in communities of mutual responsibilities. To avert the crisis facing a society at a crossroad (at the abyss?), it was deemed necessary that parents reassert their authority and provide moral training based on traditional values. Schools, too, needed to revert to previous means of moral education to reverse the trend toward "undisciplined individualism, self-indulgence, self-expression" of the present times (i.e., the 1920s) (Fass, 1977, p. 47).

It is important to note that these types of laments about society are not solely an American phenomenon. As one example, in *fin-de-siècle* France (late nineteenth century) there was great concern with the moral degeneration of society (Norris, 1996). Many thought that the nation had declined and that national renewal was imperative. In keeping with the tone of the 1920s and 1990s in the United States, there was acute concern with the lack of morality among youth. The deterioration of society was reflected in a great propensity for dishonesty on the part of children and in increasing juvenile crime rates. A focus of much analysis and debate was a perceived propensity of children to engage in widespread lying, which was regarded as symptomatic of a "sick" society (Norris, 1996). The moral decline of French society was connected especially to those holding lower positions on the social

hierarchy: the working classes, women, and children. As in American society during the 1920s, girls and women were identified as among the worst offenders.

IS INDIVIDUALISM ALWAYS TO BLAME?

A common theme does emerge in the recurring assessments that society as a whole is in moral crisis and falling apart. The common theme is that the society is characterized by individualism. The individualistic cultural orientation is highlighted by detachment from others, nonconformity, self-reliance, a lack of respect for authority, indulgence of the young by parents, and the pursuit of personal needs, desires, interests, and pleasures. Individualism also entails a predominance of concerns with individual rights. During each period, people have judged the society as highly individualistic, contrasting it with prior periods perceived as much less individualistic. Perhaps these recurrent themes demonstrate that, indeed, American society is individualistic. When commenting on the present, whether it be in the 1920s or the 1990s, society as a whole is construed to be individualistic. However, the very presence of relatively large numbers, during each period, who express great dissatisfaction with individualism itself may demonstrate that not all is individualistic. Those people espouse nonindividualistic conceptions, supporting the ideas of order, subordination of self to the group, and one type or another of communitarianism. In addition, it appears that with hindsight the society is judged not to have been so individualistic. This is so for many in the 1920s who looked back to the late Victorian age, as well as those in the 1990s who looked back to the 1920s or 1950s.

These historical patterns of commentary on the moral state of American society raise questions. Are the commentators' perceptions of society as individualistic accurate, or are the commentators' views reflective of significant nonindividualistic aspects of the society? Do the commentators' perceptions of the state of society in the past reflect a nostalgic misrepresentation, or are they more accurately representing those times with the benefit of hindsight? Another interpretation is that society is actually composed of some groups of people who

are individualistic and some who are not. Still another interpretation is that overarching categories like individualism and collectivism are stereotypes that do not adequately portray individuals, social interactions, culture, or society.

Other characterizations of American society demonstrate that there are fundamental disagreements as to which orientations characterize the society, and suggest that there may be a fair amount of stereotyping in efforts to portray the society as a whole. One example comes from the ways people thought about changes occurring in social life in the 1920s. In contrast with those who provided negative moral evaluations of the changes, there were those who thought that the changes in behavior; attitudes; and the structure of the families, church, and school all represented moral progress. They believed that society was undergoing a progressive reorganization and that the old order was being transformed into a more just system with greater attunement to legitimate individual freedoms and more healthy social relationships (Fass, 1977). The family, for instance, was seen by some as undergoing changes that were beneficial to children's psychological development. Close emotional connections between parents and children were seen as promoting emotional and psychological adjustment. Whereas some interpreted the changes as producing an erosion of the family unit, others thought the family was becoming a closer unit.

Reflecting on the same society, on similar events and changes, during the same time period, different people came to different conclusions regarding what existed, as well as what should exist. Further indicating that there is stereotyping in overarching characterizations of society is that at various points during the twentieth century popularly embraced social scientific analyses have portrayed American society with features sharply in contrast with individualism. The best known of these analyses include Erich Fromm (1941), in *Escape from Freedom;* David Riesman (1953), in *Lonely Crowd*; C. Wright Mills (1956), writing about the American middle class in *White Collar*; and William Whyte (1956), in *The Organization Man*. The common theme among this group of psychologists and sociologists is that American society is dominated by people who lack personal freedom or initiative

and, instead, are dependent, conformist, and overly concerned with roles and status within the group. The effects of the economic system loom large in these analyses. For instance, Erich Fromm, a psychologist writing in the late 1930s, maintained that modern capitalism fosters authoritarianism or conformity. In fascist societies, there is a renunciation of the individual to the group through an acceptance of authoritarianism. In democratic capitalist societies, it is automatization and conformity that take hold. Capitalism has produced self-negation on the part of individuals, whose activities are determined by their roles in the economic system. Acknowledging that American society is regarded by some as individualistic, Fromm argued that there is only the appearance of freedom and personal initiative: "He keeps up the illusion of being the center of the world, and yet he is pervaded by an intense sense of insignificance and powerlessness which his ancestors once consciously felt toward God" (Fromm, 1941, p. 118).

Fromm, too, thought there was social crisis, but not because of extreme individualism. The crisis was, instead, due to the emptiness that came from constant conformity to external forces. Denying the self and a loss of identity requires that people be confident of themselves only by meeting the expectations of others. In modern capitalist society, the majority of individuals adopt the personality offered by cultural patterns, becoming like others and acting as others expect them to act. The discrepancy between the self and the external world is minimal. In Fromm's view, however, in those circumstances persons are neither individuals nor connected to others. They lost freedom and power, but at the same time feelings of isolation had increased. It appears that for Fromm a sense of self is needed for a sense of connection to others.

The subordination of self in personal relationships was strongly influenced by the forces of the economic system. The individual became a means toward economic ends, or as Fromm put it, a cog in the economic machinery. This was true for businessmen (in contrast with the entrepreneurs of prior times) and for the larger number of white collar workers. As an insignificant component of the machinery, "the individual is confronted by uncontrollable dimensions in comparison with which he is a small particle. All he can do is to fall in step like a

marching soldier or a worker on the endless belt. He can act; but the sense of independence, significance, has gone" (Fromm, 1941, pp. 131–132). Fromm's characterization is striking by virtue of its attribution of nonindividualistic features. Equally striking language was used by Mills (1956) and Whyte (1956) in their sociological perspectives on social institutions and organizations. A shift from entrepreneurship to modern capitalism for all three is central because of the new power of the bureaucracy of large corporations. According to Mills, individuals are stripped of their rationality and rendered helpless by social institutions with their bureaucratic overlay. People are interchangeable parts (akin to cogs) of large systems of authority in the corporation and the government.

In Whyte's (1956) analyses, we see an explicit assessment directly opposite to the proposition that the society has become too individualistic. He argued that an emphasis in the early part of the twentieth century on social cohesion and the perfectibility of society resulted in a swing of the pendulum too far away from a concern with individuals – in spite of the continuing rhetoric of individualism. In an effort to make organizations productive, the society had come close to deifying and worshiping organizations. Consequently, he asserted that the thrust of modern society was in the direction of subordinating the individual to the group in most areas of endeavor, including employees of organizations and those in the hierarchy of the church, the world of medicine, the legal system, and scientific fields. The subordination of the individual to the group reflects what Whyte referred to as a "Social Ethic" (encompassing an organization ethic and a bureaucratic ethic) that had replaced the Protestant Ethic. The Social Ethic, which serves to legitimize a dominance of society over individuals, is characterized by the beliefs that the source of creativity is in the group; the most fundamental need of individuals is to sociability, that is, to belonging and participating in the group; and science can be applied to achieve social solidarity. In the Social Ethic, conflicts and oppositions to the established social system are disavowed through the idea that it is part of the natural order for the individual and the community to be at one. The consequences for most members of society is that they "have left home, spiritually as well as physically, to take the vows of

organization life, and it is they who are the mind and soul of our great self-perpetuating institutions" (Whyte, 1956, p. 3).

THE TYPING OF SOCIETIES AND PERSONS

During the twentieth century, therefore, American society has been characterized in very different terms. Often it has been characterized as individualistic, but sometimes with an extreme or radical form of individualism. The society has also been described in terms contrary to individualism – as too oriented to the organization, fitting into the machinery of the economic system, and the chains of authority that hold society together. Conformity to the behavior of others, which is a hallmark of each of the nonindividualistic characterizations, was most explicitly articulated by Riesman (1953) in describing the other-directed character of the American middle class as possessing an exceptional sensitivity to the actions and wishes of others. The chief source of direction of the modern other-directed character type is to be liked by others and to be like them.

It may seem, then, that those who characterized society as too individualistic and those who characterized it as too conformist would take different approaches to social development and the relations of individuals to society. The differences between them, however, lie mainly in how the society is perceived and not in approaches to development or the relations of individuals to society. All view social development as an accommodation to society or culture, as is the case in the character trait and communitarian approaches. Those lamenting the prevalence of conformity in American society also connected accommodation to global character types in ways similar to the ideas proposed by Bellah et al. (1985). Again using Riesman's (1953) analysis as illustrative, the idea of social character types was central. In addition to the other-directed type, Riesman identified two types more prevalent in other places and in times past: the tradition-directed type (directed by cultural arrangements and duties) and the inner-directed type (directed by goals internalized early in life). The character types, which may differ by regions, groups, and eras, are "the more or less primarily socially and historically conditioned organization of an individual's

drives and satisfactions" (Riesman, 1953, p. 18). The ideas of social character, national character, or cultural patterns are meant to provide global descriptions either of society as a whole or large groups within the broader society. However, in using the term "conditioned," Riesman did not mean conditioning in the classical behavioristic sense. Rather, he used the term more in the sense of incorporation of cohesive patterns through growing up in society: "[T]he years of childhood are of great importance in making character." Moreover, he believed that a significant link of character to society is in the way society ensures a degree of conformity from individuals. This holds for all character types, each of which constitutes different ways of ensuring conformity.

The positions taken by Fromm and Whyte are more ambiguous because, while they both give importance to the need for individual creativity and resistance to society, each holds that people in America during their respective times adopted the type of character or personality embedded in the cultural patterns. For Whyte, it was what he referred to as a Social Ethic, which had replaced the Protestant Ethic, that captured how society as a whole functioned. The masses of people in the society had adopted the Social Ethic.

In the context of similar developmental propositions, the differences in characterizations of society as individualistic or conformist are telling. Also telling are the differing emphases on perceived social crises and problems. Those who see radical individualism, as already noted, believe there is serious moral crisis for society because of exaggerated concern with personal gratification and too little concern with responsibility and community. Those who see extreme conformity believe there is a crisis for the psychological well-being of the members of society due to unhappiness, alienation, and a dearth of creative expression or productivity. All these differences show, at the least, that there are sharp disagreements among those who have attempted to characterize society.

There are several possible interpretations of this state of affairs. One is that each type of analysis accurately portrays different groups in the society. In that case, it would be argued that analyses of societal character need to be narrowed to particular groups or broadened to

include the diverse groups within society. It may also be possible to argue that all the perceptions of moral crisis in the history of the nation were accurate and that the alarm sounded at each point in time served to alleviate the problems, only to result in crisis at later times that then required renewed vigilance.

I believe such interpretations are implausible because they involve a juxtaposition of the idea of deep and far-reaching societal character or cultural patterns with the idea of rapid transformations in character or cultural patterns. The patterns of opposite characterizations of societal orientations and the historical shifts in perceptions of moral crisis suggest that there is stereotyping of complex social relationships that cannot be reduced to global cultural orientations like individualism or collectivism. The propositions of social or group character are based on the idea that it is "shared among significant social groups and . . . is the product of the experience of these groups" (Riesman, 1953, p. 18). However, experiences of groups of people are varied and can entail conflicts, disagreements, and differing perceptions of events and evaluations of societal arrangements. Along with what may be shared among social groups, there are many areas that are contested, that people disagree about. Along with social harmony, in social life there are typically – not only when there is crisis – conflicts and resistances to cultural practices and societal arrangements.

The stereotyping of societies and a nostalgia for times past (entailing its own form of stereotyping), is also indicated by the ways social scientists have contrasted their own eras with previous eras. Previous eras (e.g., the 1920s or the 1950s) have been regarded as stable, morally positive, and maintaining traditional values, in contrast to the instability and crisis of a recent era (e.g., the 1990s); but the previous era (e.g., the 1920s) was regarded during its time by many as unstable and in moral crisis and in contrast to the stability of the previous era (e.g., the 1890s). Furthermore, during the previous era, crisis was attributed to the same sources as in the current era, and the previous era had less consensus on the moral state of society than is currently presumed to have existed. As already discussed, during the 1920s there were sharp disagreements regarding the moral state and direction of

society. Correspondingly, the 1960s, an era regarded then and later by many social commentators and critics as a time entailing nihilism, self-gratification, and the abandonment of values, was then and later also regarded by many as a time of reassertion of important values and moral progress. In particular, many see the assertion of moral values in the protests of the war in Vietnam, struggles for the rights of black people, and efforts to alleviate poverty. The feminist movement, too, has been judged negatively by those who see it as a cause of erosion in families and positively by those who see it as a force for greater justice and equality for women. Whereas some, such as the communitarians, have seen a morally regrettable proliferation of rights in the latter part of the twentieth century, others have seen moral efforts to promote rights for those faced with discrimination.

Consider again some of the communitarian assertions regarding rights. According to Bellah et al. (1985), the violation of individualistic tenets, such as the right to think for oneself, judge for oneself, and make independent decisions, is strongly regarded by many people as morally wrong. Yet, Bellah et al. believe that some of society's deepest problems are closely linked to individualism. Inherent in Bellah et al.'s assessments is the idea that people's morality can produce moral failings. As a consequence, it is very likely that the views of Bellah et al. will also reflect disagreements and conflicts within society, since they propose a viewpoint that would be in contrast with what they say are strongly held moral positions. A similar source of conflict is embedded in Etzioni's proposal that there be a moratorium on the "manufacturing of new rights" for the next decade. Etzioni's contention in this regard is that there has been a proliferation of rights claimed for moral aims that actually devalues the morality of the concept of rights. However, calling for a moratorium on new rights raises questions and issues over which members of the society are likely to disagree. For instance, it can be asked, what is to constitute a new right rather than the application of the general claims to rights in areas of activity that involve a denial of persons' rights? When people asserted the right of women to vote, for instance, would that have been seen as part of the proliferation of rights in an era of radical individualism? Similarly, could claims to freedoms and civil rights in the 1960s be regarded as

part of an incessant issuance of new rights by those who may then have objected to the ways the civil rights movement was disrupting the sense of community and traditional values in American society? More generally, would some regard the call for a suspension of new rights, insofar as they are seen to have a moral foundation, a contradictory state of affairs because it involves a call for a suspension or freezing of moral claims? It is likely that many would judge the call for the suspension of new rights itself a violation of traditional values of equality and freedom of speech.

Etzioni does not dispute the validity of women's right to vote or the rights claimed during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. He also unequivocally supports freedom of speech. Among the examples provided by Etzioni of claims to rights put forth in the 1980s and 1990s that should be suspended are rights to health care and adequate housing. The claims to those rights are problematic, according to Etzioni, because their proponents do not take responsibility for determining how they would be paid for. However, these examples illustrate that there are likely to be fundamental disagreements regarding rights and responsibilities. Many would judge society to have failed to meet its responsibilities to the well-being of its members by failing to provide basic health care and housing because some people are unwilling to forego some of their personal resources for the greater good. Etzioni also seems to apply his strong support of the right to free speech even in contexts that involve what has come to be known as hate speech (e.g., racial slurs, ethnic insults, sexist language). In this regard, there is an apparent reversal of communitarian roles with those who support the restriction of certain types of speech that they believe are contrary with efforts to incorporate different racial and ethnic groups into community life or contrary to responsibilities for the welfare of persons.

The sweeping claims of moral decline in society usually have been impressionistic. The main evidence provided, which is open to varying interpretations, is based on data of increases in rates of crime, out-of-wedlock births, and suicide (Wynne, 1985). There is statistical documentation of the prevalence of violence and homicide in contemporary society, but there are good indications that violence and homicide are part of a long tradition in American society and that

they were prevalent in the past (Butterfield, 1995). Moreover, during the latter part of the 1990s, rates of crime throughout the nation, as well as teenage pregnancies, have decreased dramatically. Those data, coupled with the earlier increases, are also open to varying interpretations as to the causes. Perhaps of more importance is that vast societal changes over a long period of time make it very difficult to simply assert that there has been societal deterioration. A few salient examples can be noted for now that are often regarded as positive societal shifts over the long run. There have been changes in race relations and the treatment of minority groups, as well as in the roles, burdens, privileges, and opportunities for women. The welfare of children, including their conditions of work, has been improved. More generally, conditions in the workplace and in labor relations have also changed in ways that many would regard as positive. Other changes include levels of political representation of many groups (e.g., women, blacks), in the number of people receiving higher levels of education, and in the relative power and nature of authority relationships among those of higher and lower social classes.

There has been little in the way of social scientific analysis (or acknowledgment) as to how these types of changes might constitute betterment of the welfare of people or how practices in the past may have been unjust and produced harm. There is social scientific evidence indicating that, taken metaphorically, we may not be "bowling alone" – the activity Putnam used to dramatize his contentions that there has been a decline in group and civic commitments. Much of the evidence, showing that there has been an upsurge and not a depletion of social capital, was compiled in a volume by Ladd (1999), entitled *The Ladd Report*. The data were derived from studies done at the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research (of which Ladd is the director) and other organizations, such as the National Opinion Center at the University of Chicago and the Gallup Organization. One of Ladd's general assessments is that laments about a deterioration of American society have occurred throughout the nation's history, and that "present-day worries about the depletion of vital social capital are the latest expression of this persistent American anxiety . . . it's the

sense of broad moral decline and insufficiency that has really shaken us in every era" (Ladd, 1999, p. 153).

Putnam (2000) has presented data in support of his propositions in greater detail than he had in the original article on "bowling alone" (Putnam, 1995). Scrutiny of much of his data actually serves to support Ladd's contention that the appearance of moral decline occurs during different eras. It turns out that levels of participation in civic associations, unions, PTAs, and professional organizations were similar during the earlier and later parts of the twentieth century. By contrast, there was a sharp increase in membership and participation in those types of groups after World War II that peaked around 1960. Since then there has been the decline that Putnam has bemoaned. However, the decline is to the levels of participation that existed prior to the sharp increases in the aftermath of World War II. It is likely, therefore, that the ways the nation came together in common purpose to confront the dangers of World War II produced an unusual degree of civic involvement and social participation that lasted beyond the war itself. Eventually, people reverted to the levels of participation that existed prior to the traumatic events of World War II (Putnam reports that these levels are greater than in other Western industrialized countries). Incidentally, the pattern for bowling leagues is the same. It does appear that people are bowling alone, in the sense that there has been the decrease in bowling leagues – since the late 1950s and early 1960s, that is. People were bowling alone prior to World War II (see Putnam, 2000, p. 112).

In spite of the decrease in participation in certain groups, Ladd's evidence shows that social life goes on in America at a respectable rate. With regard to recreational activities, there has been an increase in the number of people participating in soccer leagues, as well as in other sports. The number of children and adolescents participating in organized activities around baseball, softball, and soccer has increased dramatically since the 1970s. Moreover, many adults participate actively in these organizations in a variety of capacities. These particular trends suggest not only that certain organized activities have replaced others, but also that there may be more participation than in the past

of adults and youth together – parents and their children – in organized social activities.

Going beyond bowling and soccer, the data presented in *The Ladd Report* indicate that there have been changes in groups joined and patterns of activities. Ladd argues that the decreases in membership in associations documented by Putnam (associations like the Lions Club, Shriners, Jaycees, Elks, Parent-Teacher Associations, and labor unions), must be understood in the context of participation in new groups and in different types of civic and community activities. During the nation's history, organizations have waned, only to be replaced by others. Since the 1970s, organizations that have emerged with large membership growth are ones concerned with environmental issues. Groups like the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, and Greenpeace have experienced great growth since 1970.

Parental involvement in schooling is another example of changes that do not represent an erosion of social capital. Membership in local chapters of the PTA has decreased dramatically and rapidly, according to data provided by the National Congress of Parent and Teachers (though there has been some recovery since the early 1980s). According to findings presented in *The Ladd Report*, however, parental participation in school activities and organizations remained high and even increased during this period. While parents participated less in the PTA, they participated more in other groups in local communities. A survey conducted by the Roper Center showed that parental participation in several types of local groups (most calling themselves parent-teacher organizations or PTOs) was high and that large numbers of parents engaged in a variety of school activities (other surveys obtained similar findings). Much of the parental involvement brought them together with their children and other children in school or school-related activities. It was also found that parents' attendance at school meetings and school board meetings increased. With regard to parental involvement in schools, Ladd (1999, p. 43) concludes that, "If there's an empirical case for the argument that America's social capital is eroding, the experience of parents and schools doesn't provide it. Instead, the PTO story makes the case for the existence of expansive, energetic local engagement."

The Ladd Report makes a case for involvement in other areas of activity, as well. These include memberships in churches and other religious activities. There has also been a proliferation of small groups within local communities that compete for the time and attention people have given to larger groups. As examples, there are community youth groups, typically with local community control, which are in competition for membership with groups like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Similarly, volunteering for work in some organizations like the American Red Cross has decreased, but it has increased in other groups.

On the basis of the analyses reported by Ladd, it may be said that it does not matter that we are bowling alone. We are engaging in many other activities together in ways that contribute to the life of society. As put by Ladd (1999, p. 5):

> My own conclusion, from two years of rummaging through the assembled findings, is that we have allowed our persistent anxieties about the quality of our citizenship to blind us to the many positive trends that have been occurring. What emerges ringingly from the diagnosis presented here is that civic America is being renewed and extended, not diminished, and that the new era – here in the United States but worldwide as well – will be more participatory, not less so.

STEPPING BACK?

Putnam, too, has rummaged through the assembled findings and stuck to his conclusions even after Ladd's rummaging. In the volume published after the publication of *The Ladd Report*, Putnam (2000) still expressed the same persistent anxieties about the quality of our citizenship. He maintained that social capital has indeed eroded in ways that have serious consequences for the fabric of society. During the last third of the twentieth century, according to Putnam (2000, p. 27), "we were overtaken by a treacherous rip current" and "we have been pulled apart from one another and from our communities." He also maintained that the decline in social capital "threatens educational performance, safe neighborhoods, equitable tax collection, democratic responsiveness, everyday honesty, and even our

health and happiness." Putnam supplemented data on the decline in group activities with an argument that much of the increased participation in new activities and organizations, including the types discussed by Ladd, does not contribute to social capital (though failing to address that often participation simply reverted to their prewar levels).

One part of the argument involved, it seems to me, a selective depreciation, as nonsocial, of those activities that have shown increases in group participation, along with the presumption that the activities showing a decrease over the years are truly social. As one example, consider Putnam's treatment of soccer and bowling. On the one hand, he painstakingly tries to pick apart trends in participation in soccer leagues in an effort to show that they do not constitute increases in social capital. On the other hand, he pretty much takes it at face value that bowling leagues, which became more popular from 1945 to 1960, are indicative of social participation. Putnam also downplayed a variety of changes that have occurred. These include increased activities in support groups and the attendance of many more people in cultural activities, at parks, and at street fairs.

However, Putnam does make an explicit argument regarding several of the organizations that in Ladd's view have shown increased membership: those concerned with environmental issues, the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), the National Rifle Association (NRA), and political watchdog groups, such as People for the American Way and Common Cause. Putnam's argument is that these types of organizations require virtually no active involvement or social participation on the part of the membership. Instead, all that is necessary and most commonly done is payment of money. Most people do no more than take the time to write a check to pay membership dues or contribute to the cause. For Putnam, the AARP is a clear example. Membership in AARP grew from 400,000 in 1960 to 33,000,000 in the mid-1990s. Putnam believes that membership in such an organization has more in common with organizations like the American Automobile Association (AAA) than with the older face-to-face organizations. The AARP and the AAA provide services for members and have little to do with social capital.

In my view, Putnam should have paid more attention to Ladd's perspective. In the first place, many of the activities Ladd discussed, such as involvement in PTOs, constitute social participation at local levels and reflect desires to shift from centralized organizations. In addition, Putnam may be misconstruing the importance of large membership in those organizations that may not involve active participation. He misconstrues because of his theoretical orientation and heavy reliance on the idea of social capital. In many respects, Putnam's orientation is in line with Durkheim's, but with a decidedly behavioralist bent. For Putnam, the fabric of society is largely determined by amount of action – in groups. Putnam shows hardly any concern with social activity in the context of how people are thinking or why they do what they do. It is activities of getting together that are of importance, and not what people are pondering, or their reasons for joining or avoiding groups, or what they might be attempting to accomplish when they decide to participate or not in group activities. Putnam does not see it as decision making or deliberation that has social or moral motivations when people do not participate in group or civic activities. People either act in certain ways – which is good for society because it constitutes social capital – or they fail to act in certain ways – which is bad for society because it signifies a lack of social capital. This is why I say that the orientation is decidedly behavioralistic. The closest Putnam comes to considering motivations is in acknowledging that groups or organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan, sometimes exploit social capital for antisocial ends.

An alternative is to consider the motivations and reasons people have for joining or not joining, as well as what they are trying to accomplish when deciding not to join. Such a project would require in-depth analyses of people's judgments about how to best achieve their moral, social, and personal goals. It would also be necessary to examine how people think about existing groups and civic associations, including their possible criticisms of those groups.

As far as I know, research to address these questions has not been carried out. However, some hypotheses that do not rely on the notion of social capital are plausible. I hypothesize that aspects of the shifting patterns in social participation, including the decreased active

involvement in certain organizations, may entail moral judgments, concerns with social justice, and evaluations of group activities. First, it should be noted that the decreases in group activities occurred in times of increased awareness of a variety of issues of social justice: the rights of women, sexual harassment, equal opportunities for minorities, gay rights, the welfare and care of the elderly, and environmental issues. My speculation (and at this point it is only a speculation) is that concern with social issues is one of the reasons people have stepped back from some of the traditional forms of civic engagement and many of the groups people were joining with increasing frequency after World War II. It may be that we have witnessed a transitional phase that entails a "stepping back" motivated by involvement in moral questions about societal arrangements. People would step back or become less involved if they perceived certain dominant or mainstream groups to be insufficiently concerned with matters of social justice and too accommodating to the status quo. It may be, therefore, that people make judgments about the efficacy of group activities. Perhaps there has been a decrease in participation in group activities because some people perceive that some groups fail to adequately address or ameliorate problems, such as those of social justice, inequalities, and the gap between rich and poor. In such a case, people might look for other ways of addressing social problems. Putnam assumes that there is a causal connection between less participation and less trust. It is conceivable that less trust in the social and moral accomplishments of groups produces less participation.

One example of this type of phenomena that I can point to with confidence is the decline, beginning in the 1960s and into the 1970s, of membership in college fraternities and sororities (Horowitz, 1987). Joining fraternities and sororities surely is a fine example of social capital from Putnam's perspective. As members of fraternities and sororities, students live together, party together, and attend collegiate activities together. If we look only at the numbers, it would appear that during the 1960s and 1970s the level of group participation among college students went down dramatically. Many fraternity and sorority houses were forced to close because of the shortage of members. The meaning of this shift is another matter, however, since it occurred

mainly because fraternities and sororities came under criticism for their lack of serious concern with moral matters and issues of social justice, and were perceived as frivolous, elitist, and discriminatory.

In a somewhat different way, changes in labor union membership and religious participation provide other examples of how people's judgments can affect group involvement. In the 1970s and 1980s unions came under much scrutiny by workers and were subject to critical attack by employers and government officials (especially during the Reagan administration). It was argued that unions did not always serve the interests of workers and that their policies had an adverse effect on the economy. Rightly or wrongly, these criticisms produced a different attitude toward unions, even among workers, that may have resulted in a decline in membership.

Changes in religious participation have not been as clear-cut. In fact, Ladd (1999) argues that religious participation has not declined. In any case, religion is a complicated matter that for some involves reflection on existential issues and the meaning of life. Analyses of such thoughts and feelings would be necessary in order to understand the societal or cultural significance of changes in religious participation.

The possibility that there may have been a stepping back from group activities due to moral issues and questions of social justice is not unrelated to the increased membership in environmental and political watchdog organizations. (Putnam reports that the number of members in nonprofit organizations doubled from 1968 to 1997.) Putnam is correct that many of their members do not participate in group activities. However, people's involvement cannot be assessed at solely the behavioral level. It is not just a simple matter of the time "it takes to sign a check." Membership in these organizations might be perceived as an effective way to further moral ends in the context of other traditional organizations that fail to do so. Even the AARP, which does provide services to its dues-paying members, has more to it than that. Since the AARP is an organization that also works for the welfare of the elderly, it is supported by many for reasons very different from the AAA. Writing a check for the AARP is not the same as writing a check for the AAA. Putnam's reliance on behavior leads him to also assert that the bond between members of organizations like the AARP, the

NRA, environmental groups, or children's advocacy groups are much like "[t]he bond between two Yankee fans on opposite coasts (or perhaps two devoted L. L. Bean catalogue users)." This is strictly true at the behavioral level, but not at the level of shared concerns with the welfare of people or common efforts at achieving moral, societal, and political ends.

The idea that people are judging and pondering the merits of the types of group activities that showed sharp increases after World War II is, as I have said, a speculative one. It does appear, however, that with regard to those types of activities Americans are reverting to levels of participation that were the norm prior to the war. What is not speculative, as I discuss throughout, is that from a young age people make judgments about the multitude of social matters they experience and know about.

CHAPTER FOUR

Social Judgments and Social Contexts

To do as others do is therefore not more fundamental
than to deviate from them.

—Solomon Asch, *Social Psychology*, 1952

Since much of the debate about social capital is over whether matters have gotten worse or not, the idea is not unrelated to the often stated view that American society is experiencing moral decay. If social capital has decreased, as Putnam asserts, then it is claimed that the social fabric has deteriorated. If social capital is at the same or higher levels, as Ladd asserts, then it is claimed that the social fabric is vibrant and functioning well. Moreover, the idea of social capital gains importance in these views because it is presumed to be closely linked to trust among members of society. Part of Putnam's analysis was that the decrease in civic and social participation brought with it less trust in others and in society. Putnam offers as evidence of a decrease in trust findings from surveys that asked whether most people can be trusted. In 1960, 58 percent stated that most people could be trusted, whereas in 1993 only 30 percent thought so. Putnam (1995) argues that social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated, and that they are two facets of social capital. Ladd (1999, pp. 91–92) agrees that trust and civic engagement are both important aspects of social capital: "He is absolutely correct. Any serious decline of trust in one's fellow citizens or erosion of confidence in the integrity and moral standing of the social system are bound in time to corrode citizenship itself." Ladd, however, maintains that

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shifts in trust will occur as a consequence of specific events at given times (e.g., changes in the economy, Watergate). Ladd also argues that overall Americans have maintained trust and confidence in the institutions of government, in the economy, and in the nation's social ideals.

Putting the issue in terms of social engagement and trust, however, still presupposes that we can speak of attitudes toward society generally. As conceptualized in the debates over social capital, a decline of trust will eventually corrode citizenship itself. Conceptualizing trust, confidence, and social capital in these ways is consistent with the Durkheimian (1925/1961) proposition that individuals do or do not cohere around respect for their society and with the anthropological proposition (Benedict, 1934) that individuals do or do not adequately acquire the integrated patterns of their culture. However, knowing about and evaluating the effects on society of trust and confidence in others, social institutions, societal norms, and cultural practices may be much more complicated than a straightforward correlation of social capital and societal well-being. Levels of trust and mistrust may vary greatly in accord with different aspects of societal arrangements and different types of social practices. In other words, whether there is trust, and its significance, depends on the situation, the issue, and the goals involved.

Similar considerations apply to the way that Etzioni (1996) has discussed the health of society. In arguing that by the 1980s and 1990s American society was overtaken by individualism, anarchy, and self-interest rather than social responsibility, Etzioni pointed to a rise of alienation as an example. Evidence of a rise in alienation among Americans, according to Etzioni, was the extent to which people agreed with statements like "Do you feel the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer?" and, "Do you feel that people running the country don't really care what happens to you?" Whereas in 1966 only 29 percent agreed with such statements, 61 percent were in agreement in 1990. As with participation in group activities, agreement with these types of statements may well reflect judgments about the situations presented rather than alienation. There may have been a rising awareness, over

time, that social class differences are entrenched such that the poor do get poorer. Similarly, the actions of politicians may have made it more apparent that the needs of people are not met.

We can again consider events of the 1960s, and especially the positions articulated by Martin Luther King, Jr., as a means of illustrating the difficulties in the idea of social capital, as they has been used, and in straightforward assessments of trust, confidence, or alienation to gauge the state of society. Many people engaged in large group activities that involved discussions (such as teach-ins, public seminars, public forums) and protests (marches, demonstrations) with regard to the war in Vietnam. Those activities were organized in order to criticize the country's involvement in the war and to pressure the government and others to put a stop to it. Many others came together to counter the views of the opponents to the war and to support the country's involvement in it. Similar activities (protests, teach-ins, sit-ins, marches) drew many together with regard to civil rights. Many others came together in group activities in counterprotest to the civil rights movement. Does the engagement of large numbers of people in these types of activities, which were undoubtedly important to the nation, constitute civic engagement and social capital? Is trust in the society the issue, when mistrust of the government or other citizens is connected to efforts that some believe would produce a more just system? And are the conflicts that clearly existed among groups of people indicative of an erosion of society, or can conflicts be viewed positively as reflecting a recognition of moral inadequacies and efforts to improve aspects of society needing improvement? In the 1960s there was more conflict and open mistrust over racial issues than during the previous decade. It can be asked if the conflict and mistrust reflects deterioration or progress.

Martin Luther King, Jr., of course, did not regard the conflicts as indicative of social deterioration or moral decay. Nor would he have measured the moral state of society by the numbers of people engaged in social institutions. For instance, it will be recalled that his assessment of the impact of the church on morality and society was

based not on the numbers of people participating in its activities, but in the stands its leaders and members failed to take regarding matters of justice. He faulted the church for its acceptance of societal arrangements perpetuating racial discrimination. It appears that King thought that participation in group activities and trust in the social system often occur when those groups or social institutions, like the church, help perpetuate long-standing social injustices. In King's view, conflicts and tensions are not necessarily morally negative or to be avoided. He maintained that oppression produces discontents among those oppressed, with a resulting tension that can produce positive changes. In that context, mistrust and a lack of confidence would not be regarded as issues of social capital, but recognition of social practices requiring change. Producing conflict is necessary since privileged groups are not very likely to give up their privileges otherwise. Conflict, with its inherent lack of confidence in (some) others or in aspects of societal arrangements pertaining to relations between racial or social class groups, can potentially lead to growth or development.

The idea of changes of a developmental kind was most evident in several of the metaphors articulated by King. For instance, in the letter from the Birmingham jail he referred to tensions that would help people "rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood," and "rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest." In the speech delivered at the March on Washington, he used similar language in his call for transformations in the ways blacks had been treated: "Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of social justice."

King's calls for change and progress were not about society as a whole, nor even about a particular institution, such as the church, as a whole. He called for changes in the treatment of groups of people and for the application of justice and equality in an encompassing way. Although a strong supporter of the church, he criticized its leaders specifically with regard to their stands regarding prejudice and discrimination. In addition, issues of trust and mistrust were placed in the context of the justice or injustice of particular social arrangements

that allowed greater power, opportunities, freedoms, and rights to some at the expense of others.

CULTURAL PRACTICES AND SUBVERSION

The issues I have raised pertaining to the meaning of social capital, the societal well-being of conflict, and social involvement in opposition to national policies are not specific to a time, place, or persons. The issues are not specific to the 1960s in the United States; or to social leaders and social movements; or to elites, liberals, academics, or media people blamed by Bennett, Wilson, and others. Nor are the issues particular to Western cultures. In the context of participating in the society and identifying with it, there can be areas of discontent, conflict, and a lack of trust. It is not that individuals either participate in the culture or oppose it. It is not that there is trust or there is mistrust. For most people, taking part in culture entails also standing apart from it in critical ways, sometimes with mistrust. Similarly, interpersonal relationships that are stable can include conflicts, discontents, and mistrust. As an example, feminist concerns with injustices and inequalities often have been voiced in the context of close interpersonal relationships within the family.

Concerns with justice, freedoms, and rights for and by people whose activities are controlled and constrained by people in positions of greater power in the social hierarchy existed in the United States and elsewhere before the 1960s and have been evident since that time. These concerns are evident in non-Western (supposedly nonindividualistic) cultures, as well. These concerns, along with people's attachment to and support of their culture, stem from people's moral, social, and personal judgments – as documented by a good deal of research. Before discussing the research, however, I consider some examples that are not based on research in order to illustrate the issues and to set the stage for the discussions of research. The first example, which comes from Fatima Mernissi's *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Childhood* (1994), pertains to cultural practices, social hierarchy, and relationships between husbands and wives, as well as between parents and children. Mernissi, who is a sociologist living and working in Morocco, grew

up during the 1940s in a harem in the city of Fez. *Dreams of Trespass* is a recollection of her life as a young girl in the harem. One of her tales is rich in its account of restrictions dictated by cultural practices, as well as hidden activities, and subversion in people's daily lives (Mernissi, 1994, pp. 7–8):

> The men were the only ones in the house supposed to have access to a huge cabinet radio which they kept in the right corner of their salon, with the cabinet doors locked when the radio was not in use . . . Father was sure that he and Uncle had the only two keys to the radio. However, curiously enough, the women managed to listen to Radio Cairo regularly, when the men were out. Chama and Mother often would be dancing away to its tunes, singing along with the Lebanese princess Asmahan "Ahwa" (I am in love), with no men in sight. And I remember quite clearly the first time the grownups used the word Khain (traitors) to describe Samir and myself; when we told father, who had asked us what we had done while he was away, that we had listened to Radio Cairo. Our answer indicated that there was an unlawful key going around. More specifically, it indicated that the women had stolen the key and made a copy of it. "If they made a copy of the radio key, soon they will make one to open the gate," growled Father. A huge dispute ensued, with the women being interviewed in the men's salon one at a time. But after two days of inquiry, it turned out the key must have fallen from the sky. No one knew where it had come from. Even so, following the inquiry, the women took their revenge on us children. They said that we were traitors, and ought to be excluded from their games. That was a horrifying prospect, so we defended ourselves by explaining that all we had done was tell the truth. Mother retorted by saying that some things were true, indeed, but you still could not say them: you had to keep them secret. And then she added that what you say and what you keep secret has nothing to do with truth and lies.

Several of the issues raised by critics of the moral condition of the family and society in the United States during the latter part of the twentieth century are embedded in Mernissi's tale. We can imagine Moroccan counterparts to Quayle, Whitehead, Bennett, and Wilson, claiming that the behavior of Mernissi's mother and the other women reflects an erosion of traditional values and the undermining of family structure in favor of the pursuit of individual pleasures and unbridled

freedom. Perhaps they might have claimed that the women undermined respect for authority and the role of parents in teaching children moral values and how to behave properly in society. They indulged their children by exposing them to pleasurable activities that violated cultural values. We can imagine counterparts to Etzioni claiming that women were too concerned with freedoms and issuing new rights, they ignored their responsibilities, and they failed to participate enough in the community of the harem. Counterparts to Bellah may have seen extreme individualism in the actions of the women – especially in the lessons they conveyed to children – and worried about the dire state of the culture. And counterparts to Putnam might have thought that the mutual mistrust of husbands and wives would corrode a sense of participation in the culture and, therefore, its viability.

An alternative interpretation is that the actions of the women, including the lessons conveyed to the children, reflect the dynamics of social relationships in the context of cultural practices and social norms that are regulated by people in positions of greater power or dominance and imposed on people of lesser power and in subordinate positions. The women's actions may have represented the type of urge for freedom and justice, and the resulting tensions and conflicts, that Martin Luther King, Jr., referred to with regard to black people in America. Although not organized in a social movement or political protest, the women's actions exemplify how concepts about personal choices and moral judgments about rights and fairness can produce oppositions, subversion, and conspiracy. The women's discontent with aspects of cultural arrangements was evident in their defiance of the taboo on listening to the radio imposed by the men. The women reacted with no remorse when caught, but instead stood fast in a conspiratorial way in the face of two days of interrogation. Their resolve to continue their subversive, hidden activities is seen in the steps they took to ensure that the children would not again give them away.

As conveyed by Mernissi, the women did identify with the culture and generally participated in it. In that respect, there were ways they maintained trust in others (including the men) and shared in social

understandings and practices. The women participated in family life and most probably agreed with their husbands on many cultural norms that should be acquired by their children. However, the women did oppose aspects of the cultural arrangements and in certain situations conveyed to children different messages from the ones conveyed by the men.

The opposition of the women to aspects of their culture judged unfair was often reflective and deliberate. Complaints were voiced about certain traditions ("This tradition is choking me," Mernissi's mother told her). Many rules were regarded as designed to deny rights, impose inequality, and place greater burdens on women than men. As one woman told the then young Fatima: "Unfortunately most of the time, the ga'ida [a term used for an implicit rule, a custom, a behavioral code] is against women" (Mernissi, 1994, p. 62). Women's discontents were also with cultural practices regulating male and female relationships, including polygamy and wearing of the veil. The women hoped for changes that would provide their daughters with greater freedoms, independence, and education. The restriction of women to the walls of the harem was viewed as one of the main ways that men kept women dependent. Mernissi writes:

> Mother . . . said that much of the reason why men kept women in harems was to prevent them from becoming too smart. "Running around the planet is what makes the brain race," said Mother, "and to put our brains to sleep is the idea behind the locks and the walls." She added that the whole crusade against chewing gum and American cigarettes was in fact a crusade against women's rights as well. When I asked her to elaborate, she said that both smoking cigarettes and chewing gum were silly activities, but men opposed them because they gave women opportunities to make decisions on their own, decisions which were unregulated by either tradition or authority. "So you see," said Mother, "a woman who chews gum is in fact making a revolutionary gesture. Not because she chews gum per se, but because gum chewing in not prescribed by the code." (pp. 186–187)

Indeed, the walls of the harem were on the minds of the women constantly: "[W]omen dreamed of trespassing all the time. The world beyond the gate was their obsession" (pp. 1–2).

Another example comes from a social, political, and historical context different from that of the Moroccan harem. It comes from Iran of the 1990s and pertains more to restrictions imposed by governmental and religious authorities than restrictions on the family. Journalistic accounts of life in Iran surfaced in the American press in May of 1997 after the election of President Mohammed Khatami, who was considered more moderate that the previous president, Hashemi Rafsanjani. Khatami was a candidate opposed by the religious leaders of the country. Since the revolution in 1979 that brought the Ayatollah Khomeini to power, many restrictions were placed on dress, forms of entertainment, alcohol, reading materials, and contact between males and females. As put dramatically by V.S. Naipul ("After the Revolution," *The New Yorker*, May 26, 1997, p. 65), the efforts to enforce those restrictions were great: "And helicopters flew over Northern Tehran looking for satellite dishes, just as the Guards walked in the park to watch boys and girls, or entered houses to look for alcohol and opium."

Nevertheless, apparently many engaged in underground activities, which entailed "quietly resisting laws that restrict their private pleasures" (S. Kinzer "Beating the System, with Bribes and the Big Lie," *New York Times*, May 27, 1997, p. A4). The list includes widespread use of satellite dishes (hidden from the helicopters by tents), videocassettes, compact disks, fashion magazines, and alcohol. A complicated means of subterfuge exists to smuggle, obtain, and use these items. Even policemen sometimes partake in these underground activities by accepting bribes from offenders. It is also reported that women carry lipstick and makeup to use in places where it is expected they will not meet police or religious authorities. Public contact between unmarried males and females, considered a grave transgression, also occurs. As put by V.S. Naipul (*New Yorker*, May 26, 1997, p. 69): "There was a sexual revolution among the young, and a falling away from the too strict, too pervasive faith. After all the pain, a new nihilism seemed to be preparing." An Iranian school teacher, with reference to "a bold urban underground of young people" (who were not part of the prerevolutionary times) put it into a political context ("Beating the System, with Bribes and the Big Lie," *New York Times*, May 27, 1997, p. A4): "When I was growing up in the Shah's days, the way to rebel

was to become a Marxist or, even better, an Islamist. Now the way to do it is to drink, use drugs, and go to secret parties. We used to have girlfriends, but we never had sexual relations with them. Now kids have sex as a form of political protest."

The veil has also been turned into an instrument of protest. According to Azar Nafisi ("Rebels with a Veil," *New Republic*, February 22, 1999), young girls have done so by wearing it in provocative ways, such as by leaving part of their hair showing. Similarly, Farzaneh Milani recounted a story about lipstick that parallels the attitude of Fatima Mernissi's mother toward chewing gum. On one of her visits to Teheran, Milani went to a restaurant with a friend. While waiting for the food, someone announced that the "vigilantes" (the self-appointed morals police monitoring the dress code for women) had come to the restaurant. Milani's friend rapidly wiped off her lipstick with paper napkins. Other women covered their hair and their painted nails. In some fear, Milani and her friend managed to quickly leave the restaurant and get into a taxi. Just as rapidly, the friend reapplied her lipstick. As the friend explained it, "Lipstick is not just lipstick in Iran. It transmits political messages. It is a weapon" ("Lipstick Politics in Iran," *New York Times*, August 19, 1999).

For many who voted for President Khatami, greater freedom was an important goal. Here is how one person, a jewelry and crafts vendor, put it: "This was a referendum about freedom. The voters were saying that we're tired of people snooping into our private lives. What we can do at home is our own business" (S. Kinzer, "Many Iranians Hope Mandate Brings Change," *New York Times*, May 26, 1997, p. A1). Listening to music and dancing were of concern in the Iranian context – as in the harem of Morocco and in the United States during the 1920s. One woman, reflecting on the nature of underground activities, stated "We live a double life in this country. My children know that when their school teachers ask whether we drink at home, they have to say no. If they are asked whether we dance or play cards, they have to say no. But the fact is that we do drink, dance and play cards, and the kids know it. So they are growing up as liars and knowing that to survive in this country we have to be. That's a terrible thing, and I want to change it" ("Beating the System, with Bribes and the Big Lie,"

New York Times, May 27, 1997, p. A4). As in the harem in Morocco, in Iran dancing is involved, lying is judged necessary, and children receive mixed messages.

The tensions around restrictions of social activities and private pleasures have continued into the twenty-first century. Many newspaper accounts have reported that youth especially were engaged in defiance and resistance. Moreover, listening to music and dancing had not ceased to be one of the concerns – as told by Afshin Molavi in "Letter from Iran" (*The Nation*, July 19, 1999). Molavi reports that an 18-year-old named Ali from a lower class neighborhood in Teheran stated (p. 22): "I'm tired of someone telling me I can't dance or can't read this book or watch that movie. It's gone too far and I'm ready to fight back." According to Molavi, one of the ways Ali and his friends fought back was to sing banned popular songs and dance at a celebration of an Islamic holiday in a public park (p. 23):

> "O beautiful girl, like a flower, please come to my side," Ali crooned, mimicking one of those songs, much to the delight of a large crowd that encircled him, clapping their hands to the beat. "One girl to dance with, that's all we need," Ali exhorted continuing to push the bounds of "propriety" and, indeed, law, in the severe Islamic Republic of Iran, which punishes such public displays of gaiety. Finally, one brave young girl, her brown scarf displaying dangerously large amounts of her chestnut-colored hair, accepted Ali's exhortations and joined the circle of boys dancing. It was a defiant moment, its importance not underestimated by the crowd, who gave the girl a rousing cheer for her courage. After all, Iran's morals police, the Komiteh, could punish the offending dancers harshly for the sin of dancing in public and mixing with members of the opposite sex.

As I have already noted, these examples are not presented as evidence but to help frame the discussion. The events took place in social and political contexts that differed from each other in several respects. In Mernissi's account of life in the harem, the activities, often hidden and sometimes overt, were part of social interactions within families, and the power relationships were between husbands and wives. However, cultural arrangements outside the family and beyond the gates of the harem supported arrangements and practices in families. The

primary direct aim of subversive activities among the women of the harem was to change practices within the family. In the accounts of life in Iran, the activities – also often hidden and sometimes overt – were connected to societal, governmental, and religious arrangements and restrictions. However, the governmental and religious practices also supported relations of differential power between males and females and, thus, pertained to life within families, as well. The direct aim of subversive activities was to change political and governmental practices.

Each of the examples illustrate that people do not solely accept cultural practices, social norms, or societal arrangements involving inequalities. People do not simply accept ideologies that may be propounded by those in power or in positions of dominance. People do not simply accept social hierarchies that entail greater freedoms and rights for some and lesser freedoms and rights for others. It is important to reiterate that I am not simply suggesting that people in lower positions in the social hierarchy oppose the culture or society and that those in higher positions uphold it. Rather, individuals typically do both, often with internal conflict and ambivalence. In later chapters, I consider all these propositions within the context of research findings.

FREEDOMS, RIGHTS, AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS

One clear implication of the events recounted by Mernissi and in the reports from Iran is that freedoms and rights are of concern among people in non-Western cultures. Often it is believed that freedoms and rights characterize Western cultures and are of minimal concern in non-Western cultures. Indeed, the distinction between individualistic and collectivistic cultures is, in part, based on the idea that freedoms and rights are prominent in the former and minimized in the latter. Whereas individual freedoms and rights are said to be central in a rights-based morality of Western cultures, duties, fulfillments of social roles, and maintenance of social order are said to be central in the duty-based morality of non-Western cultures.

Research on concepts of rights indicates that these characterizations are inaccurate for both Western and non-Western cultures. Two

types of studies have been conducted in the United States. One type consisted of large-scale surveys mainly of adults' attitudes toward freedoms and rights, whereas the second type has analyzed children's and adolescents' concepts of rights. The results of both types of studies show more complicated conceptions of freedoms and rights than the proposition that Westerners are primarily oriented to upholding freedoms and personal rights.

American sociologists and political scientists, especially, have been concerned with attitudes regarding freedoms, civil liberties, and tolerance for dissenting views and actions. In addition to extensive philosophical and political analyses of these issues, several surveys have been conducted at various points dating back at least to the 1930s (see Hyman & Sheatsley, 1953; McClosky, 1964; McClosky & Brill, 1983; Stouffer, 1955). The most recent large-scale national surveys, which obtained results consistent with prior surveys, were conducted in 1976–1977 and 1978–1979 and reported in detail by McClosky and Brill (1983). In the view of McClosky and Brill, freedoms and civil liberties have not been easy ideas for Americans to embrace from the very start of the nation (see McClosky & Brill, 1983, Chapter 1). Tolerance for freedoms of religion and speech, they argue, has not been evident over the centuries. Basic civil liberties often were not granted to people on the basis of race, color, and nationality. However, McClosky and Brill did not argue that the ideas of freedoms and rights are absent or rejected by Americans. Rather, their argument, also supported by the public opinion surveys, was that freedoms and rights are accepted, but that they are often evaluated in the context of other social and moral considerations: "[I]n analyzing freedom and tolerance, we would be oversimplifying matters greatly if we were to assume that every form of permissiveness is an example of tolerance and every form of restraint an instance of intolerance . . . Tolerance is not a universal condition or principle that retains the same appearance in all circumstances" (McClosky & Brill, 1983, p. 23).

The sample of respondents and items presented to them were extensive. The study of 1978–1979 included a random sample of 1,993 adult Americans, as well as 1,891 people referred to as community leaders and activists (including people of a range of political persuasion

from government, colleges and universities, the press, the clergy, the law, the police, school administrators and teachers, voluntary organizations, and trade unions). The 1976–1977 study included a national cross-sectional sample of 938 respondents and samples of leaders (a total of 2,987). Each survey included a large number of items (327 in 1978–1979 and 265 in 1976–1977) pertaining to issues of freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, dissent, as well as to issues of due process, privacy, and life styles. These are issues often identified to be at the core of American ideals of freedom, liberty, and rights. They are part of public documents, including the Constitution of the United States. The First Amendment of the Constitution refers to freedoms of speech, press, religion, and assembly.

The survey presented two types of questions. One stated the freedoms or liberties in general terms. An example of this type of item regarding free speech was: "I believe in free speech for all no matter what their views might be" (respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed). General statements of freedoms were presented in more than one form; other examples are the following: "We could never be free if we gave up the right to criticize our government" and "The idea that everyone has a right to his own opinions is being carried too far these days." The second type of question stated freedoms in the context of particular situations. Two examples of this type are the following: "Free speech should be granted to: everyone regardless of how intolerant they are of other people's opinions, [or] only to people who are willing to grant the same rights of free speech to everyone else"; and "Should a community allow the American Nazi party to use its town hall to hold a public meeting?"

With regard to all the areas surveyed in these studies, freedoms and rights when stated in general terms were endorsed by the majority of people, whereas fewer endorsed the freedoms and rights when put in contextualized terms. The nature of the findings can be conveyed through the examples just given regarding freedom of speech. When stated in general terms, the large majority endorsed the freedoms: 90 percent stated they believed in free speech for all no matter what their values might be, and 86 percent disagreed with the idea that the right to one's opinion is being carried too far. When stated in the

context of particular situations the results were different: 58 percent stated that free speech should be granted to everyone regardless of how intolerant they are of others' opinions, and 18 percent stated that a community should allow the American Nazi party to use its town hall for a public meeting.

These ranges of levels of endorsement were typical for freedom of speech and the several other areas investigated. McClosky & Brill presented results from far too many items for me to provide a comprehensive sense of their findings. I can only give a general sense of the findings for other items on freedom of speech and for other issues included in their surveys. On the topic of speech, from about 50 percent to only a minority endorsed the rights of individuals to express opinions if the majority voted to ban them, would permit foreigners to criticize the government, allow a group to use a public building to denounce the government, or believe that one has a right to protect one's diary from being made public in the course of a trial. Similar findings were obtained with regard to academic freedoms for university professors and school teachers (e.g., refusing to hire a professor with extreme political beliefs, or allowing a high school teacher to express in class opinions that are not acceptable to the community).

Speech is probably the most publicized freedom in the United States. Nevertheless, the findings on speech were similar with other areas. This was the case for freedom of the press, which was endorsed in some situations but not others. For instance, obscenity and pornography were not regarded as appropriate for discussion in the media. Freedoms of assembly and association, including demonstrations and political protests, were also seen as freedoms that could be legitimately restricted. The majority of Americans endorse freedom of religion for any and diverse groups, but most would restrict atheists from preaching against religion in a community's civic auditorium. However, most would not restrict such use to a Protestant group wanting to hold a revival meeting.

Privacy and matters of lifestyle are other areas of individual freedoms and rights that are not always endorsed. Rights to privacy would be subordinated by many to efforts of police or government officials to stop crime, catch criminals, and protect society against radical

political activities. In several contexts, the majority would give primacy to upholding community standards over freedoms regarding obscene material and pornographic books, magazines, and films. In general terms, the majority accept freedoms of lifestyle pertaining to sexual conduct, such as premarital sex, and homosexual relations in privacy. However, fewer endorse the right of homosexuals to teach in schools, hold certain public positions, use the community's auditorium to promote homosexual rights. Overall, the findings from the public opinion surveys show that most Americans do endorse freedoms, civil liberties, and rights, but that under many circumstances they do not accept the enactment of those freedoms and rights. Some have interpreted such findings to mean that most people have little understanding of the idea of rights (Protho & Grigg, 1960; Sarat, 1975). It is presumed that people espouse those rights in the abstract but fall short when it comes to knowing when and how to apply the idea of rights. If that interpretation were correct, it would mean that so-called American individualism is poorly understood by most people, who more readily grasp nonindividualistic ideas. It would also mean that communitarians have little to worry about since the general populace is not very committed to freedoms and rights.

An alternative interpretation of the survey findings is that people do have understandings of freedoms and rights, which they apply along with judgments about a variety of competing or conflicting moral and social issues (Helwig, 1995a, 1995b; Turiel, Killen, & Helwig 1987). Some philosophers (Dworkin, 1977; Gewirth, 1982) have maintained that valid use of the concept of rights does not presuppose that rights are inviolable or that they must be applied in an absolute or unyielding way. Rights are stated in general or abstract ways, but also are placed in contexts and need to be weighed in relation to possible competing moral or social considerations. As put by Dworkin (1977, p. 93): "An abstract right is a general political aim the statement of which does not indicate how that general aim is to be weighted or compromised in particular circumstances against other political aims." The McClosky and Brill findings are similar to results obtained since the 1930s, and show systematic patterns that are in accord with the interpretation

that people do attempt to balance different considerations. Specifically, the endorsement of freedoms and rights, in general, reflects understandings that are also evaluated in light of conflicting issues, such as harm, fairness, general welfare, and the maintenance of conventional social standards in a community or society. In some situations where the enactment of freedoms or rights might produce harm to people, negatively affect the welfare of the group, or violate strongly held conventional standards, people do subordinate freedoms and rights. In the various conflictful situations there can be greater or lesser agreement among people as to whether freedoms and rights should be subordinated.

The surveys themselves, however, provide no direct evidence regarding judgments about rights or about the balancing of different types of judgments. The surveys have not examined judgments or reasoning about rights since respondents were asked solely to indicate whether they agreed with statements. Other research, conducted with children, adolescents, and young adults, has examined judgments about freedoms and rights in general and in situational contexts (Clemence et al., 1995; Helwig, 1995a, 1997, 1998; Ruck, Abramovitch, & Keating, 1998; Turiel & Wainryb, 1998). One study of the judgments of U.S. adolescents (seventh and eleventh graders) and young adults (college students) used procedures that paralleled the distinction drawn in the survey studies between freedoms put in general terms and in contexts of conflict (Helwig, 1995a). The study focused on freedom of speech and freedom of religion. In the study, however, people's judgments were examined systematically, and the nature of the conflicts with freedoms or rights were specified deliberately. In order to uncover the types of judgments made about rights in general, participants in the study were asked not only if they endorsed freedoms of speech and religion, but also if such freedoms are contingent on existing laws and if the freedoms should hold in countries other than their own. Freedoms in general terms were presented in the abstract and through specific situations describing the exercise of the freedoms. An example of the latter is a depiction of a person who gives a public speech in a park expressing disagreement with a governmental policy. It was found that the large majority at each age

supported both freedoms of speech and religion when stated in these general terms, judged that the rights should not be particular to the United States, and thought that laws should not exist in the United States or elsewhere restricting the freedoms. Furthermore, the large majority of eleventh graders and college students thought it would be legitimate to violate laws that placed general restrictions on speech or religion; the seventh graders were about evenly split on this matter. Moreover, at all ages, they were cognizant, and supportive, of a variety of reasons for the importance of maintaining freedoms of speech and religion – including self-expression, autonomy, psychological needs, maintaining traditions, promoting democratic principles, and facilitating communication within societies.

Assessments were also made of judgments about each freedom in conflict with psychological harm, physical harm, and equality of opportunity. The conflicts were depicted in hypothetical situations. As an example, the situation of conflict between speech and psychological harm depicted an individual making a public speech containing racial slurs. For the conflict with physical harm, the speech advocated violence against members of a rival political party. For the conflict with inequality, a resident of the community gives a speech advocating the exclusion of low-income people from political parties. Placing rights into contexts invoking conflicts did make a difference in how people responded. There was a fair amount of variation among the situations and between speech and religion. About 50 percent of the participants subordinated freedoms of speech and religion to preventing physical harm. About the same number of the oldest group subordinated freedom of speech to preventing physical harm and freedom of religion to equal opportunity. In general, the youngest participants were more likely than the older ones to subordinate each freedom to preventing harm and inequalities. Although the younger participants in this study, like the older ones, upheld freedoms and rights in the abstract and judged that it was legitimate to violate laws restricting rights, they were more likely to subordinate rights across the different situations.

Still younger children judged freedoms and rights in the abstract in ways similar to the seventh graders. A study with Canadian children (first, third, and fifth graders) showed that the majority (but a smaller

majority among first graders) endorsed freedom of speech and judged that it should be upheld in other countries. They also negatively evaluated laws that would restrict the exercise of speech. As was the case with the young adolescents, the fifth grade children were about evenly divided as to whether it would be legitimate to violate laws placing restrictions on speech. A minority of the younger ones judged violations of such a law legitimate. The study also showed that understandings of freedoms and rights vary with age. At the youngest ages, freedom of speech was seen as necessary primarily because of psychological needs, such as for emotional or self-expression. By 8 or 9 years of age there was a recognition of societal, moral, and democratic functions of the right to speech. The children thought that freedom of expression was of utility to society and contributed to democratic processes. The older children coordinated their concepts of rights and democratic processes, such that rights could be overridden in some circumstances by decisions made in a democratic way. Unlike younger children, some of the older ones thought that laws restricting speech were acceptable if they came about democratically.

In still other research, Helwig (1997) showed that in late adolescence and early adulthood there are increased differentiations about the contexts in which people in authority can legitimately restrict freedoms. For instance, they judged that parents, but not school or governmental authorities, could restrict children's practice of religion because they were not yet sufficiently mature to make their own decision in that realm. The age differences indicate that the source of concepts of rights is not mainly in cultural ideology. We see different interpretations at different ages. It also appears that in certain respects, with age, there is more attunement to freedoms and rights. It was found that older people were less likely than younger ones to subordinate rights to competing considerations. In other respects, with age there is more attunement to considerations of societal process and community. It was found that younger people judge in accord with psychological needs and older ones in accord with societal utility and processes of democracy.

Research on concepts of rights has been conducted in places other than North America – with similar results. Studies with adolescents

and young adults in four nations (Costa Rica, France, Italy, and Switzerland), of evaluations and judgments about possible violations of human rights, also yielded the pattern of differences between rights as put in general terms and in particular contexts (Clémence et al., 1995; Doise, Clémence, & Spini, 1996). In those nations as well, in some situations, the welfare of the community was seen as legitimately overriding individual freedoms and rights (e.g., the government tapping telephone conversations in some circumstances, requiring people with infectious diseases to go to the hospital). We also have available the findings of a study from a non-Western traditional culture that would be classified as nonindividualistic (Turiel & Wainryb, 1998). The people interviewed in that study were Druze inhabitants of villages in Northern Israel. Although they are from Israel, they live in segregated and relatively isolated villages and maintain traditional social and religious practices within the context of a patriarchical system. The Druze constitute a religious community based on the Koran. Islam plays a central role in Druze customs and in the religious laws applied in their courts (see Abu-Izzedin, 1984; Layish, 1982). In the patriarchical family structure, men, husbands, fathers, as well as brothers and uncles have considerable authority over women and girls in the family (see Turiel & Wainryb, 1994; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994).

Within the context of this partiarchical culture with strict religious and societal restrictions on many activities that are not restricted in Western cultures, individuals do make judgments about rights. Adolescents (13- and 17-year-olds) and adults (34 to 70 years of age) were posed with questions about freedoms of speech, religion, and reproduction (having to do with the number of children a couple can have). Again, each freedom was endorsed, with respect to one's own country and other countries, by individuals at all ages – who also thought that there should not be laws restricting the freedoms. Except with regard to the issue of reproduction, they also thought it would be acceptable to exercise the freedoms even if there were a law prohibiting the actions. Their reasons for supporting rights included the need for self-expression and autonomy, as well as the notions that people should maintain a hand in governance and keep a check on government. In this study, situations were depicted placing the freedoms in

conflict with harm, considerations of community interests as enforced by the government, and directives from an authority, specifically a husband in relation to a wife and father in relation to son and daughter. A number of interesting findings emerged, which I discuss in Chapter 10 in the context of other studies among the Druze. For now, I want to point out that in some of the conflict situations the freedoms were upheld but not in others. This research demonstrated that in a traditional non-Western culture rights are endorsed, but in some circumstances they are subordinated to other moral and societal considerations.

OBEDIENCE, CONFORMITY, HELPING OTHERS, AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS

In spite of all the rhetoric about individualism, liberties, and the overemphasis on rights in American society, the data on attitudes toward rights are such that some scholars have been led to the conclusion that Americans do not have an adequate understanding of freedoms and rights, not because rights are overapplied, but because they are not applied enough. However, an alternative interpretation is that rights are understood in contexts, and thus sometimes subordinated to competing considerations (Dworkin, 1977; Helwig, 1995a; Turiel, Killen, & Helwig, 1987; Turiel, 1998a).

The findings of studies on concepts of rights in North America and in the Druze community demonstrate two central points regarding culture. One is that cultures cannot be characterized through particular orientations to individuals, freedoms, and rights. Much scholarly and political discussion, as we have seen, has revolved around the idea of individualism in Western cultures, as contrasted with non-Western collectivistic cultures. However, in supposedly individualistic Western cultures, rights are often subordinated to perceived welfare of the social system or community, and in supposedly collectivistic non-Western cultures, rights are supported. It is also the case that in the former rights are upheld, and in the latter rights are often subordinated to community welfare. The second and related point demonstrated by these findings is that contexts for thought and action are not adequately defined at the level of culture or society. In the proposition

that cultures form integrated patterns differing from each other, contexts are located primarily at the broad or general level of the culture. Contextual variations are defined by differences between cultures, such as the cohesive pattern of individualism as it differs from the cohesive pattern of collectivism. Similarly, the idea of national character, implicit or explicit in all the views considered above regarding the deterioration of American society, is also based on the notion of social context at the level of society as a whole. The findings on freedoms and rights tell us something very different: that attitudes and judgments vary in accord with social contexts much less general than the levels of culture or society. Moreover, the contextual variations exist with regard to features that are supposedly central to the societal or cultural contexts – freedoms and rights.

Contextual variations are by no means limited to attitudes and judgments about rights. A number of experiments from the field of social psychology have shown that contexts, at levels more local or situational than the global culture, make a difference in people's obedience to authority, conformity to the group, and the conditions under which they help others in need. These are behaviors that are often involved in characterizations of American society. Obedience to authority, conformity to the group, and sacrificing for others were seen as contrary to individualism and, therefore, foreign to the American psyche. (It is not clear that all the commentators called for more obedience and conformity, but they did call for more sacrifice in helping others.) In addition, those (Fromm, Mills, Whyte) who characterized the society as nonindividualistic – as lacking creativity and initiative – portrayed Americans as obedient and conformist.

The experiments from social psychology – especially the ones on obedience to authority and conformity – are very well known among psychological researchers. They are discussed in psychology textbooks because of dramatic findings of obedience to authority even when given extreme directives and of conformity when it would not be expected. Some of the results of the experiments are also known beyond psychology – to other social scientists and, to some extent, to the general public. However, there is a sense in which the seemingly dramatic findings of these experiments tend to be treated in an isolated way and

remain largely unexamined in their totalities. The findings are treated in an isolated way in the sense that the implications for broader explanations of social actions – such as whether people in society are individualistic or not – are usually not considered. The findings are unexamined in their totalities in that the various sets of experimental findings usually are not taken together.

Consider first the experiments on obedience to authority (Milgram, 1963, 1974). This is a line of research that has received a fair amount of criticism because it involved deceiving people into believing that they were participating in a study of the effects of punishment on learning. They were told that they would be asked to administer increasing levels of electric shock to another person as a means of testing the role of punishment in learning. They were also deceived into thinking that the other person was experiencing intense pain and physical danger from the electric shocks, when in fact no shocks were being delivered. With each "error" on a learning task, the person was commanded by the experimenter (the person in authority) to administer an increased level of shock; the person supposedly receiving the shocks feigned experiencing intense pain. The findings from the first experiment (Milgram, 1963) received a great deal of attention because two-thirds of the participants complied with the commands and continued to administer shocks to the other person throughout the experiment (and presumably to the point of inflicting intense pain). The extent to which people obeyed authority was surprising to many and discussed as part of the human condition. Since the participants were Americans from different socioeconomic backgrounds and educational levels, the findings are not in line with the proposed individualism of American society that includes questioning and defiance of authority. Findings of this sort are not restricted to this set of experiments. More extensive analyses of attitudes and behaviors in both research and natural settings have led Kelman and Hamilton (1989, p. 167) to the conclusion that "strong social norms in support of the duty to obey are deeply rooted in Western tradition. These norms have generated widespread attitudes in favor of obedience in hierarchically structured situations – attitudes that consider obedience the expected, necessary, and right response."

Before we decide, however, that Americans are actually obedient types who reify authority, it is necessary to look at the research in a broad way. For it turned out that in several of the experimental conditions studied by Milgram (1974), most people defied authority and refused to inflict pain on another. The well-known finding – that the majority obeyed – comes from an experimental condition in which the participant was alone, face to face, with the experimenter while the person being shocked was in an adjacent room where he could be heard but not seen. Other conditions varied the location and proximity of the person being shocked (e.g., in the same room) or the place and role of the experimenter (e.g., commands given by telephone or delegated to a person supposedly not part of the team of researchers). As in the case of the research on freedoms and rights, contexts made a difference. In several of the experimental conditions, the large majority of the participants refused to go along with the commands of the authority (see Turiel, 1983, and Turiel & Smetana, 1984, for discussion of the experimental conditions and findings).

Social conformity, too, is contrary with individualism. Another set of classic social psychology experiments yielded high levels of conformity even with regard to unambiguous perceptual judgments (Asch, 1952, 1956). People in groups of seven, eight, or nine were asked to discriminate the length of lines by choosing one of three that matched that of a standard line. Each group actually consisted of only one research subject, while the others were confederates of the experimenter. At some point the confederates began to give incorrect responses in a prearranged way. The results would seem to be in line with the characterizations of Americans proposed by Fromm, Mills, and Whyte, because participants often went along with the group and gave the incorrect responses. However, in this research, too, during other experimental conditions that varied the proportion of the group giving incorrect responses, participants did not conform to the group (see Turiel & Wainryb, 1994).

Another set of experiments, on bystander intervention, also shows contextual variations (Darley & Latané, 1968; Latané & Darley, 1970). In this case, the research had to do with whether people take responsibility for the welfare of others by intervening to help them. The

research was stimulated by a few well-publicized events in which people failed to help others in distress. In a famous example publicized in the newspapers, a number of people did nothing to help a woman who was being stabbed. Participants in the studies were placed into situations in which they could choose to help others who appeared to be in distress or danger. Examples are situations in which a person hears someone taking a bad fall or sees someone who is ill. Whether people take responsibility to help also depends on the social context. A typical experimental manipulation was to vary the number of persons witnessing the person in distress. It was found, consistently, that people were much more likely to intervene and help if they were alone than if others were present.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND SOCIAL CONSTRUALS

The findings of the research on attitudes and judgments about rights and of behaviors in the social psychological experiments do not support the idea of a general orientation or character shaped by society, since there is not consistency from one situation to another. The research also does not support propositions by Bennett and others that morality consists of specific character traits – at least for traits of obedience and responsibility. Similar findings of situational variability were obtained many years ago in research with children (Hartshorne & May, 1928–1930). Situational variability was typically found in studies of children's behaviors pertaining to honesty, helping others, and self-control (see also Mischel, 1973).

On the surface it may seem that all those findings show that people simply are very malleable. They readily shift with the situation, failing to maintain any stability in their moral or social outlooks. In my view, such an interpretation would miss the essence of the research findings. Variations in attitudes and behaviors exist because people do think systematically about matters moral, social, and personal. In thinking systematically, they interpret situations and apply different social considerations insofar as they are applicable. Moreover, people approach social situations not with one type of judgment, but with multifaceted judgments. In the next chapter, I discuss work

investigating the development of the different domains of the moral, social, and personal. Before doing that, it would be helpful to consider how social construals and social judgments are involved in some of the behaviors studied in the social psychological experiments.

Most informative is the explanation given by Asch (1952, 1956) of the ways participants approached the experimental situations he put them in. Asch did not think that the research was about social conformity, per se. He did not think that participants in the studies who gave the incorrect judgments when others did so were simply going along in order to fit into the group. According to Asch, the participants were attempting to make sense of a perplexing situation and the actions of the other people in deciding what to do. One component of the situation was the straightforward physical event regarding the relative lengths of lines that were being presented. A second component was the actions of the other people involved. When the rest of the group began to give judgments about the length of lines that seemed blatantly incorrect, the research subjects were drawn to notice and attempt to explain their judgments and acts. A conflict was posed by the agreement among the rest of the people. That the length of the lines seemed so unambiguous highlighted the conflict because it led subjects to give credibility to the judgments by others in the group and to question their own perceptions. As put by one subject (Asch, 1952, pp. 463–464), "To me it seems I am right, but my reason tells me I'm wrong because I doubt that so many people could be wrong, and I alone right." Those who did not go along with the group were also conflicted over judgments about others and assessments of the accuracy of one's own judgment: "Looking at it logically I must say that I am wrong – since all the others disagree – but looking at it subjectively, I must say I am right" (Asch, 1952, p. 466).

Asch's interpretation, therefore, was based on the proposition that there was a combination of judgments about social interactions, the psychological reactions of others, and one's own perceptions. Other research (Ross, Bierbrauer, & Hoffman, 1976) supported Asch's interpretation through the finding that when participants could attribute the actions of the others to a particular motive or source, such as attaining a material payoff, there was much less conformity than when

no reason for their behavior was evident. If it were a desire to fit into the group that was at work, then they should have done so regardless of the perceived motivations of the others. A similar explanation involving interpretations of the actions of others has been given by Ross and Nisbett (1991, pp. 41–42) as one of the main reasons an individual may not intervene to help when others do not: "To the extent that there is ambiguity about the nature of the situation or the nature of the appropriate response to that situation, the failure of other people to act serves to support interpretations or construals that are consistent with nonintervention ('it must just be a domestic dispute,' or 'she must not be hurt as badly or be in as much danger as she seems' . . .)."

Asch proposed that individuals make judgments about the total context experienced. A situation in which a motive can be attributed to the actions of others makes for a context different from one in which no motive is known. In Asch's terminology, each situation constitutes an "object of judgment." How situations can differ because of surrounding circumstances was demonstrated in another study showing that the authorship attributed to a statement has an effect on how the statement is evaluated (Asch, 1952, Chapter 15). In one example, the statement, "I hold it that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical," was evaluated more positively when attributed to Jefferson than to Lenin. Asch was able to show that this kind of difference in evaluation of the one statement was due not so much to a greater liking for one person than another, but to the meaning people gave to the statement because of its source. When attributed to Jefferson (who actually made the statement), the statement was often taken to refer to peaceful, democratic change. When attributed to Lenin, it was taken to refer to a call for violent, revolutionary change. Knowledge about the supposed author contributed to the overall context and the perceived meaning of the statement, that is, to the "objects of judgment." In this view, people actively interpret events or situations so that even small or subtle variations can lead to differences in judgments and actions. This was the case in the studies on obedience to authority, conformity, and bystander intervention.

The Development of Moral and Social Judgments

We have seen thus far that the notion of character has been used in more than one way – some uses more general than others. The general uses of character refer to group, cultural, or national types and subtypes, and are seen to be represented in the makeup of individuals. The link of this type of use of the term *character* to morality is ambiguous. On the one hand, group or national character is seen to encompass the moral perspective of society. On the other hand, the national character identified is often criticized on moral grounds. When Bellah et al. (1985) and Etzioni (1993), for example, criticize the individualism of American society, they are simultaneously trying to capture the nation's character and scrutinize it from a moral vantage point. However, the moral criteria for the criticism of the society are left largely unspecified. Character types like the inner-directed and other-directed, as put forth by Riesman (1953), appear to contain moral and nonmoral features – but without specification of characteristics that would distinguish the moral from the nonmoral.

The less general uses of the notion of character are closely linked to morality through identification of particular traits – such as honesty, compassion, courage, responsibility, and loyalty. Possessing the specific traits, along with associated habits of behavior, is seen to constitute morality. The term *character* is also used (sometimes colloquially, as well) to refer to individuals who live in a moral way – in the sense that they are "persons of character." A related concept is that of conscience, which has also been used to describe how people possess morality. Like character traits, conscience is meant to portray an internalized way of regulating and controlling behavior in accord with moral standards.

Through at least the first half of the twentieth century, psychological explanations of morality were most often based on the ideas of character, habits, and conscience. It was proposed that the acquisition or development of morality involves an internalization of traits, habits, or conscience that represent the values, standards, or ideals of the society. The two most prominent theories of this kind were psychoanalysis and behaviorism. In Freud's (1923, 1930) psychoanalytic account, individuals, because of their biological, instinctual makeup, are in conflict with the moral requirements of societal living. Conflict exists because of the incompatibility of biological and psychological needs of individuals with the strivings for long-term survival of individuals and the species. Society has the function of ensuring survival and protecting people from each other's aggressive tendencies. Relationships among people must be regulated and controlled since civilization is posed with great danger by people's aggressiveness, which in Freud's (1930, p. 33) words is "a piece of unconquerable nature . . . a piece of our own psychical constitution." In a dramatic fashion, Freud (1930, p. 58) also stated that "men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness." It is society that must limit this unconquerable piece of nature. Normally, aggression becomes restricted during childhood through the formation of a conscience, or what Freud also referred to as a superego, that entails incorporation of society's moral standards and the acquisition of emotional mechanisms, mainly based on guilt, for the internal control of behavior. Once the superego is formed, individuals have taken on society's standards as their own, but they also internalize, in an unconscious and ongoing way, the conflict between control and needs for instinctual gratification (in Freud's view, aggression is never fully conquered).

In behavioristic theories, the development of morality is not described in such dramatic fashion since it is not presumed that biology makes for complex instincts with great force. Nevertheless, the general idea is similar – that children's needs, drives, or desires require control. For behaviorists, new behaviors that are consistent with society's norms are acquired through straightforward learning to behave

habitually in accord with society's standards (Aronfreed, 1968; Miller & Dollard, 1941; Skinner, 1971; Watson, 1924). Through rewards, punishments, and imitation, children learn to act in ways expected and taught by parents and others – who themselves reflect society's moral expectations. Insofar as natural behaviors are altered through the formation of morality, it is straightforward needs, desires, and impulses of self-interest that are involved. In behavioristic explanations, the idea of conscience referred to the internalized control of behavior that comes about from the anxiety associated with acts that have been punished (Aronfreed, 1968). The general viewpoint on morality and development is conveyed in a later version of this general approach (Kochanska, 1993, pp. 325–326): "Few developmental issues are more central in the process of socialization than the development of conscience. The gradual developmental shift from external to internal regulation that results in a child's ability to conform to societal standards of conduct and to restrain antisocial and destructive impulses, even in the absence of surveillance, is the essence and hallmark of successful socialization."

The ideas that development involves a shift from external to internal regulation and that the outcome is conformity to societal standards are consistent with the cultural (Benedict, 1934) and sociological (Durkheim, 1925/1961) perspectives discussed in Chapter 2. There are differences between the processes proposed by psychoanalytic and behavioristic theories, in which morality comes about through the learning of societal norms, and Durkheim's proposition that children's immersion in the group and participation in social life results in a natural attachment to society and a willing adherence to its norms. Nevertheless, all these perspectives share the view that the individual's morality is an emotionally based (anxiety, guilt, respect) accommodation to the social system.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS, SOCIAL JUDGMENTS, AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although the psychoanalytic, behavioristic, and related approaches (some attempted to combine the two) were the dominant perspectives

in psychological research on moral development during the first half of the twentieth century, the second half of the century saw a substantial increase in research taking a different kind of psychological approach to moral development, which was based on a different philosophical perspective on morality. The original impetus for these changes was mainly the work of Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1963, 1969). Piaget's research was presented in the early 1930s (during the time of Durkheim's writings) but did not gain influence until many years later. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, when psychologists began to give much more attention to processes of thought, Piaget's theory of cognitive development became quite influential. Moreover, interest in that approach to the development of morality was stimulated by Kohlberg's research, which included extensions of Piaget's early ideas.

Piaget summarized his general view of social development as follows (1951/1995, p. 276):

> [S]ocialization in no way constitutes the result of a unidirectional cause such as the pressure of the adult community upon the child through such means as education in the family and subsequently in the school. Rather, . . . it involves the intervention of a multiplicity of interactions of different types and sometimes with opposed effects. In contrast with the somewhat academic sociology of the Durkheim school which reduces society to a single whole, collective consciousness, and its action to a unidirectional process of physical and spiritual constraint, the concrete sociology which the personal and social development of the child obliges us to construct must be wary of sweeping generalities if it is to make sense of the systems of relations and interdependencies actually involved.

Piaget's theory of cognitive and moral development centered on the ideas that children's development stems from their reciprocal interactions and entails constructions of understandings of experiences. As he stated, development is not the result of a unidirectional cause, such as that of the adult community upon the child. Also, Piaget did not simply view development as the result of a combination of multiple causes upon the child. A common view is that some combination of hereditary and environmental causes produces development.

Researchers have sometimes attempted to estimate the amount to be attributed to each, with the estimates ranging from those placing most emphasis on the hereditary (e.g., Herrnstein & Murray, 1994) to those placing most of the emphasis on the environment.

In most cases, quantitative estimates of this sort have not been made in explanations of morality. However, general assumptions are made about the relative strength of each. Behavioristic theorists placed more emphasis on the environment, as is the case in explanations of cultural anthropologists (e.g., Benedict, 1934). Evolutionary psychologists, by contrast, have placed the emphasis on heredity. As an example, it has been proposed that "altruism, compassion, empathy, love, conscience, the sense of justice . . . have a firm genetic basis" (Wright, 1994, p. 12). Others, such as psychoanalytic theorists, have assumed that heredity and environment combine in some way to determine moral development. Wilson's (1993) position (discussed in Chapter 2) provides a good example of how heredity and environment are combined as causal determinants. In his view, biologically based sociability combines with nurturance, control, and direction by parents during the early years to produce a child's morality. Not all identify the same environmental factors, however. For instance, it has been proposed, in contrast with Wilson's views, that parents have little influence on children's development. According to Harris (1995, 1998), it is heredity in conjunction with the influences of peers that are the causal determinants of development. Social development is still viewed, in this case, as an accommodation to societal standards, but it comes about through the influences of peers rather than parents.

Piaget's propositions were very different since his focus regarding the multiplicity of interactions was on both the variety of children's experiences and, especially, their interaction with those experiences. He explained development as a process stemming from interactions of children with the environment, which entailed systematic application of judgments to those experiences. Like Asch, Piaget presumed that people, including children, make sense of their social environments and interpret events they experience. Piaget analyzed morality from the perspective of how social experiences result in the construction of

judgments and actions about social relationships, rules, laws, authority, and social institutions. In Piaget's view, people's moral judgments have implications not only for explanations of the development of individuals, but also for analyses of societies. He proposed that analyses of societies need to account for both historical influences and contemporary happenings (Piaget, 1950/1995). He faulted Durkheim for attending mainly to an historical analysis of stable features over time, such as traditions, existing rules and laws, and the prior elements of society (Piaget referred to this as a diachronic approach). It is also necessary to account for contemporary events as they affect the makeup of society (which he referred to as a synchronic approach). Historical patterns can take on transformed meanings through their integration into new situations and social interactions. Durkheim's position, in Piaget's view, represented solely a morality of constraint in which a fixed social order imposes a moral system on its members.

Individuals, though influenced by societal traditions, construct judgments through their social interactions. Children's moral development is influenced by a variety of experiences, including emotional reactions (especially those of sympathy and empathy), relationships with adults, and relationships with other children. The differences in the ways children relate to adults and to other children were very important in Piaget's explanation of the development of moral judgments. The two types of relationships constitute two very different contexts of social interactions – one of constraint, the other of cooperation. Relationships with adults, which predominate in early childhood, are usually of an unequal kind and do not facilitate reciprocity. However, young children's relationships with adults provide the means by which they first develop a sense of obligation. A sense of obligation, which Piaget saw as a necessary ingredient of morality, first comes about from young children's respect for adults. Children's unilateral or one-way respect, therefore, constitutes the young child's entry, so to speak, into a moral orientation to the social world. Respect for adults structures their moral judgments, which are based on obedience to authorities and maintenance of social rules. Piaget referred to the young child's thinking as heteronomous. In Piaget's depiction, rules are seen as fixed and unchangeable for young children, and authority

is regarded as always right. As summarized by Piaget (1960/1995, p. 304): "By reason of the very structure that generates the morality of obedience (i.e., unilateral respect leading to acceptance of orders), the value of imperatives will owe less to what they impose than to their imperative character and the authority of those from whom they emanate. From this, it follows, for example, that if distributive justice is brought into conflict with adult authority . . . the youngest subjects will believe authority right and justice wrong."

Although heteronomous morality involves emotions and judgments that pertain to adult authorities, and especially parents, in Piaget's formulation, it is not only the actions and methods of parents that determine the formation of heteronomy. Piaget stressed that even if parents were to attempt to strongly transmit different ideas about rules and authority, young children would still first develop a heteronomous morality. This is because the development of moral judgments at each level is a consequence of an interactive process that includes children's cognitive capacities, features of experience, and how at a given level of development children interpret features of adults. In particular, unilateral respect stems from children's perceptions and interpretations of the size, power, and status of adults. These features of adults both make up the set of judgments associated with heteronomy and impede further development.

With age, there is a reversal in beliefs about authority and justice. With age, there is also an increase in children's relationships with their peers and a change of influences of those relationships relative to relationships with adults. Because relationships with other children are more equal than with adults, they can engage in reciprocal relations and, thereby, construct judgments of equality, fairness, and cooperation. In place of unilateral respect, there is mutual respect. The development of understandings of justice are best facilitated, therefore, by social interactions that are not heavily influenced by features of authority: "But the most direct effect of adult ascendancy is the feeling of duty, and there is a sort of contradiction between the submission demanded by duty and the complete autonomy required by the development of justice. For, resting as it does on equality and reciprocity, justice can only come into being by free consent. Adult

authority even if it acts in conformity with justice, has therefore the effect of weakening what constitutes the essence of justice" (Piaget, 1932, p. 318). In Piaget's formulation, the development of morality, therefore, requires an element of liberation from the constraints of authority and rules in favor of conceptions of fairness and justice in the service of mutual respect and cooperation. The morality of heteronomy shifts to a morality of autonomy, in which maintaining the moral purposes of rules or laws replaces the idea that they are fixed and unalterable and in which justice is judged over authority when the two are in conflict. A central aspect of this formulation is that at the level of autonomy, children are not simply judging by tradition or existing standards. Indeed, by autonomy, Piaget (1960/1995, p. 315) meant "that the subject participates in the elaboration of norms instead of receiving them ready-made as happens in the case of the norms of unilateral respect that lie behind heteronomous morality." It is thus the interactive and interpretive nature of children's ways of relating to the world that led Piaget to propose that peer relationships were a necessary component of the development of an autonomous morality.

The idea that moral development involves the construction of judgments about matters like justice, equality, and welfare guided Kohlberg's (1963, 1969) later research. During the intervening period of time, Piaget had conducted a great deal of research on the development of children's thinking in nonsocial realms (e.g., on number, classification, space, and physical casualty) and formulated a general and comprehensive theory of thought and development. He did not conduct any other research on morality. Kohlberg's revisiting of the development of moral judgments from the perspective of Piaget's general theory included an emphasis on sound definitions of morality. He cogently argued for the necessity of basing explanations of how morality is taught and learned on analyses of what constitutes the realm of morality (Kohlberg, 1970, 1971). As he demonstrated (see Kohlberg, 1971), psychologists often attempted to provide explanations of how morality is learned and how it should be taught without anything but a minimal conception of the realm being taught or learned and without distinctions between morality and other realms. With regard to requests to provide assistance in morally educating

children, Kohlberg (1970, p. 58) put the issue as follows: "If I could not define virtues or the ends of moral education, could I really offer advice as to the means by which virtue could be taught? Could it really be argued that the means for teaching obedience to authority are the same as the means for teaching freedom of moral opinion, that the means for teaching altruism are the same means for teaching competitive striving, that the making of a good storm-trooper involves the same procedures as the making of a philosopher king?"

Defining morality as conformity or adherence to societal standards does imply that the means of teaching and learning obedience to authority (or altruism) would be the same as teaching freedom of moral opinion (or competitive striving), insofar as they are part of society's standards. Kohlberg argued against the moral relativism implied in the notion that altruism may be the standard to be taught in one society (say, a collectivistic one) and that competitive striving may be the standard to be taught in another society (say, an individualistic one). He also maintained that a nonrelativistic position on morality required that explanations of development be combined with analyses of the nature (definition, meanings, substance) of the topic (Kohlberg, 1971). He looked, in part, to moral philosophy for such substantive analyses (such as those of Rawls, 1971).

This is not solely a philosophical position. Embedded in the idea that the psychological study of morality should be combined with philosophical analyses is the proposition that moral psychology includes thought about moral matters. In this view, social scientists and philosophers are not the only ones who engage in systematic thinking about psychological, social, and moral issues. Laypersons, beginning in childhood, do too. For this reason, Kohlberg (1968) coined the phrase "the child as a moral philosopher." This metaphor was not meant to convey the idea that children engage in reflective intellectual deliberations or formulate conceptual systems of the types seen in the writings of professional moral philosophers. Rather, it was meant to convey the idea that through their social experiences, children construct ways of thinking about right and wrong, about how to relate to others, and about how people ought to treat one another. These ways of thinking include substantive understandings of moral concepts like welfare,

justice, rights, and equality. Part of the formulation is that morality is not imposed upon the child nor solely based on avoiding negative emotions like anxiety and guilt. Children generate ways of thinking, built on emotions like sympathy, empathy, respect, love, and attachments (Kohlberg, 1969).

If the viewpoint that laypersons make systematic moral judgments is supported by the evidence, it would mean that it is not correct to draw a dichotomy between ways of approaching morality by laypersons and by elites, scholars, or intellectuals – as was done by Wilson (1993), Bennett (1992), and others. It will be recalled that Wilson asserted that laypersons ("ordinary" people) do not act morally through deliberation, reflection, or philosophical premises; they act instinctively and emotionally. The positions put forth by Piaget and Kohlberg are also in contrast with Wilson's view that morality is determined by innate, evolutionary-based social inclinations in that they proposed that development is a process of construction.

If it is a process of construction, an important question is, when do children start to think in moral terms? Piaget's answer was that young children (by ages 3 to 5 years) do so when they begin to form a sense of obligation due to respect for adults and their rules (albeit a unilateral respect, which later in age changes to mutual respect). On the basis of his research, Kohlberg questioned the sequence proposed by Piaget and presented a reformulation with a sequence of six stages. According to Kohlberg, young children (up to about 10 years of age) make moral judgments that are based not on feelings of respect for adults, but structured by considerations of rewards and punishments, a perceived need to obey authority due to a concern with sanctions, and judgments that take into account the needs of others (the second stage). However, thinking in that stage revolves around facilitating the attainment of needs, desires, and interests – of self and others. There is an understanding of a system of exchange so that each person's needs are met (the first two stages are labeled a "preconventional" level). It is not until adolescence that individuals develop a sense of obligation based on respect for rules and authority. This comes with the development of conceptions of social systems and perceived needs for social order. At the next two stages (grouped into a "conventional" level),

judgments are based on role obligations; stereotypical conceptions of good persons; and respect for uniformities, rules, law, and the authority legitimated in the social system. There is a sense in which thinking at the conventional level (stages 3 and 4) is closely connected to the existing social arrangements. Morality is defined by the need to maintain social order and adherence to rules and laws. It is not until development into the next stages that there may be perceived discrepancies and conflicts between conceptions of morality and societal arrangements. At the last two stages (grouped into a "postconventional" level), judgments are based on contractual agreements; mutual respect; and differentiated principles of welfare, justice, and rights. It is through the application of those principles that individuals might critique and protest societal practices and arrangements (this way of thinking was referred to as entailing a "prior to society" perspective).

DEVELOPMENT AND OPPOSITION TO CULTURAL PRACTICES

In Chapter 4, I recounted events from Mernissi's (1994) recollection of life in the harem of Morocco and contemporary events in Iran. The resistance, subterfuge, and subversion described indicate that people do not simply accept cultural practices, societal norms, or social arrangements (in the sense of hierarchical orderings). I used these examples to illustrate that people's lives in culture involve more than it would seem from the idea that development entails an increasing conformity to societal standards. These are examples of how people, even in contexts of strongly sanctioned practices and arrangements, make moral judgments about the existing social system that include opposition to it. The oppositions in those cases included judgments about injustices and unmet rights, as well as assertions of areas of personal jurisdiction and choice. As examples, listening to music and dancing, and chewing gum, are not activities usually thought to constitute fundamental rights or civil liberties. For many, these are taken for granted as personal choices causing no harm. In cases where they are forbidden or limited, however, listening to music and dancing

became symbolic of resistance to what were perceived to be unfair restrictions – as was the case for chewing gum in the view of Mernissi's mother.

These examples are, in many respects, in line with the propositions put forth by Piaget and Kohlberg. They are examples illustrating that people do scrutinize their social world; that is, they make judgments about social relationships. The examples indicate that social development, as held by Piaget, is not due to a unidirectional cause from the community to the individual. The activities suggest that the women of the harem and people in Iran participate in the elaboration of norms, and are not willing to accept them ready-made. They even participate in efforts at transforming social norms and societal ways. In addition, the examples illustrate that there is a multiplicity of interactions of different types, as Piaget maintained. The women in the harem had multiple ways of interacting with the men (and the system), and they were not always in opposition to them. The examples show, moreover, that children have a variety of types of interactions with adults. In the harem, they sometimes received different and conflicting messages from fathers and mothers. In Iran, children received different messages from parents and religious or governmental leaders, as well as different messages from different religious or governmental leaders. Children must ponder and interpret the variety of communications they receive and what is more often than not a perplexing social world with its share of conflicts.

In certain respects, however, the examples from Morocco and Iran are not in line with the formulations of Piaget and Kohlberg. In Kohlberg's formulation, it is only at the highest stages of moral development that people understand moral concepts in ways that they can scrutinize, critique, resist, or attempt to change the practices, laws, or arrangements of their society. The idea of a prior-to-society perspective, which is not formed until the highest stages, is that the individual is able to make judgments allowing evaluations of existing societal arrangements. The stages prior to the postconventional level supposedly involve ways of thinking in which conventions, rules, laws, authority, and social order define the moral. At those stages, therefore, there is a concordance between people's moral thinking and the cultural or

societal ways. Individual and society are not in conflict. Insofar as there is conflict in earlier stages (the preconventional), it is due to thinking based on avoidance of sanctions and fulfillment of personal needs and desires. At these stages, morality is not distinguished from sanctions or personal ends.

The examples from Morocco and Iran suggest that resistance, critique, and attempts to change certain social practices are not tied to ways of making moral judgments characterized as developmentally advanced ways of thinking. In those situations, many people of varying ages engaged in hidden, subversive activities, as well as open defiance. My interpretation, based on research findings discussed in this and subsequent chapters, is that, at different ages, people make moral judgments that can include recognition of unfair or unjust practices and arrangements. For children and young adolescents, this is likely to occur with regard to practices in the family and school and among peers. For older adolescents and adults, it occurs also with regard to cultural practices, societal arrangements, and the political system. From childhood to adulthood, people's moral judgments can lead them to support aspects of societal arrangements and be critical of other aspects. Furthermore, nonmoral judgments regarding personal jurisdiction and choice appear to have been involved in the Moroccan and Iranian events. Activities like listening to music and dancing are often judged to be part of a domain that involves a personal sphere of action (Nucci, 1996). Judgments about the personal domain often are coordinated with moral judgments about fairness and rights in the types of hidden or defiant activities seen in the harem and in Iran.

My interpretation of the events in the harem and in Iran contrasts with the types of developmental progressions proposed by Piaget and Kohlberg. In their respective developmental sequences, moral judgments become increasingly differentiated or distinguished from personal considerations (as in the shift from stages 1 and 2 to 3 and 4 in Kohlberg's sequence) and conventions, rules, and authority (as in the shift from heteronomy to autonomy in Piaget or from stages 3 and 4 to 5 and 6 in Kohlberg). My contrasting interpretation is based on the proposition, supported by extensive research, that children begin to

make distinctively moral judgments of welfare, justice, and rights that differ from their judgments about personal spheres of action, as well as judgments about the conventions of social systems.

DISTINCTIONS IN JUDGMENTS: THE MORAL AND CONVENTIONAL

One set of studies, conducted in the United States and Korea, has shown that young children's moral judgments are not formed by respect for authority and that they have nuanced understandings of the roles and jurisdiction of adults and peers in such positions within social systems (Braine, et al., 1991; Damon, 1977; Kim, 1998; Kim & Turiel, 1996; Laupa, 1991, 1994; Laupa & Turiel, 1986, 1993; Tisak, 1986; Tisak et al., 2000). This body of research directly examined different facets of children's understandings of authority, consistently finding that children do not regard adults as the only sources of legitimate authority; they do not regard adults in positions of authority as all-knowing or their dictates and rules as synonymous with the good or right; and they do not believe, when justice is in conflict with authority, that authority is right and justice is wrong.

In evaluating commands from persons in authority, children do grant legitimacy to peers, as well as adults, in positions of authority (such as in a school) and they do not necessarily grant greater legitimacy to the commands of an adult authority over those of a peer authority. Children do take seriously the type of act commanded and will consider an authority's command wrong if they judge the act wrong. Children also place boundaries on an authority's jurisdiction within social institutions or contexts. These features of children's judgments were revealed through research that examined how they evaluate different types of acts commanded by individuals of different ages (peers or adults) and in different positions in the social institution (i.e., a school). It has been found consistently that with regard to acts like stealing or inflicting physical harm, children as young as 5 or 6 years of age judged by the nature of the actions rather than by what is commanded by persons in authority in schools (Kim, 1998; Kim & Turiel, 1996; Laupa & Turiel, 1986). For instance, whether or not

they hold positions of authority, commands from peers or adults that children stop fighting were judged legitimate. In addition, commands from peers (with or without positions of authority in a school) that children stop fighting were judged more legitimate than conflicting commands from adult authority, such as a teacher, that children be allowed to continue fighting. By contrast, children do give priority to adult authority over children or other adults who are not in positions of authority when it comes to other types of actions, such as turn-taking and interpretations of game rules. These types of findings were similar in studies with children from Korea, where supposedly there is much reverence for adult authority, and in studies with children from the United States, where supposedly reverence for adults is not as strongly felt. Studies in the United States also showed that children do not accept the legitimacy of a parent's directives to engage in acts like stealing and inflicting harm (Damon, 1977; Laupa, Turiel, & Cowan, 1995).

The context of authority commands includes their status as authorities, their position in a social institution, and the actions involved. The same person in authority commanding one type of act makes for a different "object of judgment" from the same person in authority commanding another type of act. These objects of judgment or total contexts differ because people bring to bear on the situations different domains of judgment, including their moral judgments of welfare, justice, and rights, as well as judgments about the conventions of social systems. The application by even young children of domains of reasoning to authority and rules can be illustrated with an example of interview responses given by a 5-year-old boy. The boy's responses come from a study in which children from 5 to 11 years of age were presented with hypothetical stories of preschools in which certain actions are permitted. In one story, children are allowed to be without clothes on warm days (a conventional issue). In a second story children are allowed to hit each other (a moral issue). Prior to the presentation of these hypothetical stories, the children had judged both acts as wrong. The first interview excerpt begins with the boy's responses to the question of whether it is all right for a school to allow hitting, and the second, with his responses as to whether it is all right

to allow children to remove their clothes (the excerpts come from Turiel, 1983, p. 62):

> No, it is not okay. (WHY NOT?) Because that is like making other people unhappy. You can hurt them that way. It hurts other people, hurting is not good. (MARK GOES TO PARK SCHOOL. TODAY IN SCHOOL HE WANTS TO SWING BUT HE FINDS THAT ALL THE SWINGS ARE BEING USED BY OTHER CHILDREN. SO HE DECIDES TO HIT ONE OF THE CHILDREN AND TAKE THE SWING. IS IT OKAY FOR MARK TO DO THAT?) No. Because he is hurting someone else.

> Yes, because that is the rule. (WHY CAN THEY HAVE THAT RULE?) If that's what the boss wants to do, he can do that. (HOW COME?) Because he's the boss, he is in charge of the school. (BOB GOES TO GROVE SCHOOL. THIS IS A WARM DAY AT GROVE SCHOOL. HE HAS BEEN RUNNING IN THE PLAY AREA OUTSIDE AND HE IS HOT SO HE DECIDES TO TAKE OFF HIS CLOTHES. IS IT OKAY FOR BOB TO DO THAT?) Yes, if he wants to, he can, because it is the rule.

For this child, all rules are not alike and the type of act involved is evaluated in relation to the jurisdiction of a person in authority. With regard to removing one's clothes, the justification of the act and the school policy are based on rules and authority. Although the principal is the "boss and in charge" of the school, it matters in one case but not in the other. This boy's responses provide an example of the general findings of the study (Weston & Turiel, 1980). The majority of children at all the ages responded in similar fashion, distinguishing between moral and conventional issues regarding rules and authority.

Drawing distinctions between domains is important not only to an understanding of the different paths of thought in children's development, but also to an understanding of morality itself. Many of the confusions about society and morality that I have considered may, indeed, stem from a failure to draw boundaries between the moral and nonmoral. Too often, too much is grouped into the moral in ways that do not correspond to how people, starting in childhood, think about welfare, justice, and rights. Moral judgments defined this way need to be distinguished from judgments about social organization

and the conventions that further the coordination of social interactions within social systems. Conventions are shared behaviors (uniformities, rules) whose meanings are defined by the social system in which they are embedded. Therefore, the validity of conventions lies in their links to existing social systems. Morality, too, applies to social systems, but contrasts with convention in that it is not determined by existing uniformities. As delineated by moral philosophers, moral prescriptions are not specific to a given society; they are not legitimated by agreement; and they are impartial in the sense that they are not determined by personal preferences or individual inclinations (Dworkin, 1977; Gewirth, 1978; Habermas, 1990a, 1990b; Rawls, 1971, 2001).

The responses of the 5-year-old boy just presented, which reflected a distinction in his thinking, came from one of our early studies that examined how children and adolescents make judgments in the moral and conventional domains. The 5-year-old's responses well illustrate some of the ways young children distinguish between morality and convention. I wish to stress, however, that the evidence regarding the domain distinctions in childhood and adolescence is solid and quite extensive. Over a period of more than twenty years, nearly 100 studies have been conducted that support the proposition that children make judgments that differ in accord with the moral and conventional domains. The studies cover a range of issues, and they used a variety of methods. In the context of related issues, I do consider in this book many of the studies. But this is not the place to provide a review of the research. Several reviews are available in the literature (see Killen, McGlothin, & Lee-Kim, in press; Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 1995b; Tisak, 1995; Turiel, 1983, 1998a, 1998b). These reviews provide details of the research findings, which yield, in my estimation, extremely strong evidence in support of the proposition that starting at a young age, children's moral judgments are distinct from their judgments about social conventions. Studies that have tested possible alternative interpretations of the initial findings (Miller & Bersoff, 1988; Tisak & Turiel, 1984, 1988) also support this proposition. The majority of the studies were conducted in the United States, but a substantial number, obtaining similar results, were done in non-Western countries, including

India (Bersoff & Miller, 1993; Madden, 1992; Miller & Bersoff, 1992), Korea (Song, Smetana, & Kim, 1987), Indonesia (Carey & Ford, 1983), Nigeria (Hollos, Leis, & Turiel, 1986), and Zambia (Zimba, 1987).

On the assumption that the evidence is very well grounded, my aim here is to provide an outline of the central features of the research and thinking within the domains. One of the ways of studying children's thinking has been to present them with a series of social acts or transgressions classified in accord with the distinctions among the domains. Thus, moral actions pertained to physical harm (e.g., hitting others, pushing them down), psychological harm (e.g., teasing, name calling, hurting feelings), and fairness or justice (e.g., failing to share, stealing, destroying others' property). These acts were depicted as intentional and resulting in negative consequences to others. By contrast, conventional issues pertained to uniformities or regulations serving functions of social coordination (e.g., pertaining to modes of dress, forms of address, table manners, forms of greeting). Two dimensions of thought, in particular, have been examined with regard to domains. One pertains to the criteria for domains (referred to as *criterion judgments*); the second pertains to the ways individuals reason about courses of action (referred to as *justifications*). Assessments of criterion judgments have included questions as to whether the actions would be right or wrong in the absence of a rule or law, if the act would be all right if permitted by a person in authority (e.g., a teacher in a school context), whether an act would be all right if there were general agreement as to its acceptability, and whether the act would be all right if it were accepted in another group or culture.

The results of the studies show that children's moral judgments are based, initially, primarily on concepts of harm or welfare and subsequently on concepts of justice and rights, as well. Children and adolescents judge moral obligations not as contingent on rules or authority and as applicable across social contexts. Moral transgressions, such as hitting or stealing, are not judged by the existence of rules, the directives of authorities, or commonly accepted practices (e.g., the act is wrong even if it were acceptable practice in a culture). Rather, rules pertaining to moral issues are judged as unalterable by agreement, and such acts would be considered wrong even if there were no

rules governing them. Instead of rules and authority, moral judgments are grounded in concepts of avoiding harm, protecting people's welfare, and ensuring fairness. At the same time, children do develop understandings of the conventions, including rules and authority, of social organizations (e.g., the conventional rules in the organization of a classroom or school; conventions pertaining to matters like dress or forms of address). In contrast with moral issues, conventions are judged to be contingent on rules and authority, and as particular to groups and institutional contexts. Justifications for judgments about conventional issues are based on understandings of social organization, including the role of authority, custom, and efficiency in coordinating social interactions.

That children form judgments in the different domains does not mean that emotion plays an unimportant role in moral and social development. As already stated, Piaget theorized that emotions like sympathy and empathy contribute to the process. Indeed, young children do show reactions of sympathy and empathy when witnessing distress in others (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1991; Hoffman, 1991; Lennon & Eisenberg, 1987). Such emotions are related to children's judgments about harm. Furthermore, there is research indicating that different emotions are associated with moral and conventional events (Arsenio, 1988; Arsenio & Ford, 1985; Arsenio & Fleiss, 1996). As an example, in one study (Arsenio, 1988) children from 5 to 12 years of age were presented with descriptions of several different types of acts, and asked which emotions would be experienced by different participants (actors, recipients, and observers). For events entailing positive moral actions, such as helping and sharing, children generally attributed positive emotions, like happiness, to the actors. For conventional transgressions, children attributed neutral or somewhat negative emotions (sadness, anger) to the participants. In the case of moral transgressions entailing one person victimizing another, such as by stealing a toy, children attributed very negative emotions to the recipients and observers, and attributed somewhat positive emotions to the perpetrators of the acts. In addition, children can use information about emotional responses to infer the types of experiences that would lead to such reactions.

Similar results were obtained in a study which also assessed children's reasons as to why people in the events would experience the emotions attributed to them (Arsenio & Fleiss, 1996). These reasons, too, varied by domain of event and role of participants. With regard to conventional transgressions, children thought that negative emotions would be felt by those in authority who tend not to want rules violated. The negative emotions expected of victims of moral transgressions were thought to occur because of the harm, loss, or injury resulting from the acts. For people who transgress, however, it was thought that the material gains obtained by them would result in some feelings of happiness. Older children tend to attribute mixed emotions to transgressions, expecting that, in addition to positive emotions for a desired outcome, they would experience negative feelings as a consequence of the effects of their acts on others. Since the moral transgressions were evaluated as wrong by the children, it would appear that their attributions of positive emotional outcomes to victimizers do not determine their moral judgments about the acts. Instead, with regard to moral evaluations, the victims' reactions seem to be what is taken into account. It would also appear that older children are able not only to give priority to the victim in their moral judgments but also to understand that a victim's reactions can feed back upon an actor (the victimizer) and produce in that person a mixture of positive and negative reactions. (For more extensive discussion, including of similar findings in a study conducted in Korea, see Arsenio and Lover, 1995.)

Emotional attachments and attributions are particularly strong in people's religious lives. Religious rules, maxims, and authorities are deeply felt. Even so, it is not necessarily the case that people with strong religious commitments judge moral issues by religious dictates. Nor is it the case that religious people do not understand the conventional features of religion. Although it is sometimes thought that religious doctrines determine the moral course for religiously committed persons, our research has shown that more involved processes are at work. A set of studies (Nucci, 1985, 1991; Nucci & Turiel, 1993) looked at judgments about morality and religious precepts among children and adolescents from devout religious groups. The groups in the research were Amish-Mennonites, Dutch Reform Calvinists, and two Jewish

groups, conservative and orthodox. The judgments of members of these groups were studied with regard to moral rules pertaining to stealing, hitting, slander, and property damage and to nonmoral rules connected to the authority and rituals of the religion such as day of worship, women's or men's head covering, circumcision, and keeping kosher.

Although the nonmoral religious practices are strictly maintained by these groups, most judged that those rules should be dependent on the religious context. The nonmoral religious rules were judged to be relative to one's religious group and contingent on God's word. Thus, it was thought that religious rules were not applicable to people of other religions, and that members of their own religion would not be obligated to follow the rules if there were nothing in the Bible about them. Judgments about the moral rules entailed a different kind of connection to religion. It was thought that members outside one's religion were also obligated to follow those rules, and evaluations of the moral acts were not judged to be dependent on God's word. Acts like hitting others or stealing would be wrong even if there were nothing in the Bible or if God had not said anything about these acts – because of harm or injustice. As an 11-year-old boy (a conservative Jew) put it when asked if it would be all right for Jewish people to steal if it were written in the Torah that they should: "Even if God says it, we know he can't mean it, because we know it is a very bad thing to steal . . . maybe it's a test, but we just know he can't mean it." When questioned on why God would not mean it, he said, "because we think of God as very good – absolutely perfect person" (taken from Nucci, 1991, p. 32).

The boy evaluated religious dictates in conjunction with an evaluation of the act, and did not solely presume that religion determines the good. Similarly, the Dutch Reform Calvinists in the research, who have a strong belief in the compelling nature of God's commands, generally thought that a command from God would not make it right – and that God would not give such a command. As an example, a 15-year-old female reasoned that God would not give such a command "because it is the right thing to do, and He's perfect, and if He's stealing He can't be perfect" (Nucci, 1985, pp. 168–169). These responses and the

data more generally indicate that the relation between religion and morality entails an interweaving between moral judgments and what is given and should exist in religious precepts. Moral criteria of welfare, justice, and rights are applied to religion to at least the same extent as religious doctrine is seen to establish the good. Practices of importance to the religion, but of conventional type, are judged differently in that they are seen as binding only to members of the religion and contingent on rules and authority within the religious system.

PERSONAL CHOICES AND FREEDOMS

In discussing the roles that listening to music and dancing came to play in the harem and in Iran, I alluded to another significant strand of development – the domain of personal jurisdiction. The uses to which listening to music and dancing are sometimes put serves to demonstrate that a range of activities can have implications for morality, politics, society, and individual choices. Although listening to music, dancing, and chewing gum took on the status of social opposition with moral implications in Morocco and Iran, in many (if not most) social contexts, these are taken for granted as choices people make at their own discretion. Restrictions of such activities that are judged to be arbitrary or connected to the domination of one group by another can be linked to claims of personal and civil rights.

Underlying the judgment that restrictions like these are unfair is the judgment that the activities should be left to personal choice. Along with the development of judgments in the moral and conventional domains, children develop judgments about autonomy and personal jurisdiction. Activities that do not entail inflicting harm or violating fairness or rights and that are not regulated in conventional ways are considered part of the personal domain. Activities categorized as personal may vary by context and culture. Many activities that are conventionally regulated in one context are left to personal choice in another. Similarly, conventional restrictions on certain activities may vary from one culture to another. Research in the United States, for example, has shown that issues like choices of friends, the content of one's correspondence, self-expressive works of creativity, many

recreational activities, and the state of one's own body are judged to be up to individual choice and within the boundaries of personal jurisdiction. Criteria applied to these types of activities differ from those applied to moral and conventional issues (Nucci, 1981, 1996, 2001).

Again, a large group of studies document that the personal domain entails ways of thinking that differ from thinking in the moral and conventional domains. My purpose here is to convey some of the underpinnings of thinking about the personal domain and its differences from the other domains. Events that occurred in my university in the early part of the 1990s provide an illustrative example of how people accept areas of personal choice. People at the University of California at Berkeley, like many at other universities in the United States, take great interest in their sports teams and especially the basketball and football teams. The recent history of both basketball and football at Berkeley has been that members of the university community hope that the teams will excel and attain high national rankings. A constant aspiration is for the basketball team's success in the prestigious year-end tournament of the National Collegiate Association of America (NCAA). Year after year, however, these hopes and aspirations are frustrated since the teams are usually mediocre or, at best, only moderately successful. Hopes skyrocketed when Berkeley was able to recruit into the entering class of 1992 a very highly touted high school basketball player named Jason Kidd. With Jason Kidd's leadership during his first two years as a college student, the basketball team indeed fared much better, did achieve some success in the NCAA tournament, and generated enthusiasm in the university community.

Alas, hopes for real success in basketball at Berkeley were dashed when at the end of only his second year Jason Kidd decided to leave the university in order to play professionally in the National Basketball Association (NBA). In the midst of this disappointment, the prevailing sentiment on the campus was, according to an article in the campus newspaper (D.Bulwa, "Reactions from the Masses," *Daily Californian*, March 25, 1994, p. 20), "unwavering support for the sophomore All-American." There were very few, if any, feelings expressed that Jason Kidd had made a selfishly, immoral, or disloyal

decision, or that he was letting down his team or community. A few thought that he would have been better off finishing his college education. But this was not persuasive to most, given that he was going to be offered a multimillion dollar contract to play in the NBA and given his prospects for a successful and lucrative career as a professional basketball player. Although many on campus wished he had stayed to play at the university for two more years, "most students and faculty were able to keep any selfishness in check and realize that this was a very personal decision" (*Daily Californian*, March 25, 1994, p. 20). A member of the faculty put the issue as follows (p. 20): "I think it's a real loss for Berkeley. But he's probably doing the right thing for himself." Some students put it more starkly. One said, "It's his decision. What's he got to look out for except his own career?" Another said, "If someone offered me six million dollars to drop out of school and do the thing I love, then of course – you take the money and screw the degree." And one other student said, "I am not surprised that he's leaving. It was inevitable. With that much talent, might as well capitalize on it." Jason Kidd has capitalized on his talents, becoming one of the best players in the NBA. Of course, he is very highly paid.

Perhaps some of the students' comments would be taken by Bennett, Etzioni, and Bellah as more evidence of rampant individualism or selfishness. However, statements like "what's he got to look out for except his own career" reflect not rampant individualism or selfishness, but a judgment that choices of this sort do involve personal decisions, and that people, in some areas of life, legitimately can choose what is right for themselves. The general view on campus was that this was not an issue of selfishness or pursuing self-interest at the expense of others or in place of moral decisions. The perspective on career choices as personal extends beyond this one example at the University of California, of course. Research has documented that adolescents and young adults do regard career decisions as choices that people can legitimately make to further their own growth and autonomy (Bregman & Killen, 1999).

People in many cultures judge that there are areas of activity that involve personal jurisdiction (Nucci, 1996). This is one of the domains of judgment formed in childhood. Starting at an early age, there is an

acceptance of the idea of personal agency that includes judgments about a sense of separateness of persons and the legitimacy of personal needs, interests, and goals. As demonstrated by a number of studies, people judge that there is a bounded sense of social identity, and that individuals can legitimately maintain control over certain areas of conduct (Nucci, 1996, 2001).

As noted earlier, some who have described non-Western cultures as collectivistic claim that the idea of separateness of persons, or a bounded notion of self, is a Western one (e.g., Geertz, 1984; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Shweder & Bourne, 1982). In later chapters, I consider further the two sides of this claim, that is, the idea of personal autonomy and agency is culture specific, and the idea that in Western cultures independence overrides interdependence. The research on domains is, however, consistent with propositions in the social theories and philosophical conceptions of William James (1899), John Dewey (see Ryan, 1995), and Jurgen Habermas (1990a, 1993), each of whom argued that personal agency and individual freedom cannot be offset from collectivism or a sense of social solidarity. They held that the self and the social, individual growth and social engagement, as well as personhood and social identity, are not opposing orientations, restricted to particular societies. Habermas maintained that anyone who has formed an identity in a network of reciprocal expectations and perspectives will have acquired moral orientations entailing "the reciprocal dependence of socialization and individuation, the interrelation between personal autonomy and social solidarity" (Habermas, 1993, p. 114). It would be a mistake to conclude that Jason Kidd's decision and the reactions of faculty and students at Berkeley tell us that they are insufficiently concerned with welfare, justice, community, or interdependence.

CHAPTER SIX

Social Thought and Social Action

Much of the research on morality and the other social judgments that I have discussed tells us about the judgments of children, adolescents, and adults. Some might argue that this does not tell us much of importance to what really counts – which is how people act. It might be said that it is actions and not moral judgments that ultimately make a difference for people and societies. One version of this argument is that people espouse moral values or articulate good moral arguments, but then often act in self-interested ways. Another version of this argument is implicit in Putnam's analyses of social capital. For Putnam, it is the activity of people getting together that is of importance for the well-being of society. Because of this orientation to actions, Putnam discounted the value of increased memberships in, for example, environmental and political watchdog groups. I argued, in contrast, that people's judgments and evaluations of group activities must be taken into account in efforts at understanding levels of social or civic participation. In that case, stepping back from participation in some groups may reflect moral judgments about the goals and activities of those groups. As I proposed, large memberships in environmental and political groups that mainly involve support through financial contributions may reflect moral concerns that led people to step back from some group activities. Similarly, conflictful activities, such as seen in protests and demonstrations, are often motivated by moral concerns and aimed at achieving social justice.

People's judgments are not disconnected from their actions. In considering actions, as well as a seeming lack of action (as when people step back from group activities), it is important to examine the

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connections among thoughts, emotions, and actions, which are interrelated in three ways. First, social interactions and actions substantively influence the development of judgments. Second, judgments, once formed, structure how people interpret events and influence their actions – actions that, in turn, influence the further development of judgments. Third, the different types or domains of moral, social, and personal judgments interact in complex ways to influence people's actions and interactions. Although there is a relation between moral judgments and actions, it is not simply a matter of transferring moral judgments directly into actions.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

The intersection of action and thought is part of the process of development. In most explanations, social experiences are seen to have influence on development. However, one common approach to influences on moral development, I would say, is not truly interactional. A noninteractional perspective is taken by those who propose that people, usually adults, have a direct influence on children through teaching with rewards and punishments, modeling or setting an example, and exposure to stories of good deeds and lives led well. All these proposed means of development are limited to, in one way or another, adults revealing the path to goodness for children.

Those propositions regarding development, and the associated conceptions of morality, leave out four key factors in social experiences evident in some of the examples and issues I have already discussed. First is that multiple messages, sometimes mixed and contradictory, are conveyed to children by adults, social circumstances, cultural practices, and societal arrangements. Second, people's judgments, as related to actions, are not limited to the moral domain. Third, children are influenced by direct experiences of actions. And fourth, communications about social events vary in accordance with the domain of events.

Mixed Messages

We have seen in the examples from the harem in Morocco (Mernissi, 1994) and from events in Iran that children can, and I would say often

do, receive different messages from their parents, or from their parents and from their teachers, or, on the one hand, from parents and teachers and, on the other hand, religious and governmental leaders. This list could go on since within those groups people can also provide different messages. The story told by Mernissi is of special interest because it involved a complex set of relationships and messages conveyed within the family. It will be recalled (see Chapter 3) that the mothers surreptitiously engaged in actions prohibited by their husbands. The mothers did not hide from the children their defiance of the rules and expectations of the fathers. The mothers castigated the children for giving away their secrets and tried to educate the children as to the differences between keeping secrets and telling truths and lies. Consequently, children received different messages from fathers and mothers regarding the validity of certain societal norms and the fairness or unfairness of restrictions placed on the freedoms of women. This brought with it different perspectives on the validity of the position of power and control held by husbands. It is also very likely that the mothers did not oppose or disagree with the fathers on all or even most social norms. We can imagine these mothers, at other times, telling the children to listen to their father. In that sense, the children would have received mixed messages from the same parent.

It appears that in Iran, as well, there were similar mixed messages regarding secrets, truths, and lies when parents conveyed a different view of the societal norms from that of teachers and other authorities. Moreover, in each setting, the very structure of cultural practices and societal arrangements is many sided. For instance, the perspectives of females and males differ on certain social norms and cultural practices. Children are likely to recognize that duties, responsibilities, rights, freedoms, advantages, disadvantages, benefits, and burdens are not necessarily the same for those in dominant and subordinate positions. Children in both non-Western and Western cultures also participate in social institutions, including the family, which have implications for moral, social, and personal understandings. As I discuss further in Chapter 10, in the United States women are underrepresented in the political system and in positions of power

and influence in business and professions. Okin (1996) and others have argued that families most often are organized hierarchically and that inequalities and injustices are part of gender relationships. In Western cultures, too, children receive mixed messages within the family.

Moral and Nonmoral Judgments

These are some examples of how social institutions, including the family, as well as cultural practices and communications from parents all constitute complex social environments and experiences with regard to morality. A second key factor omitted in the presumption that children are taught through methods of revelation is that people's judgments and actions are not limited to the moral realm. Consider again the example of Jason Kidd's decision to leave his university and its basketball team, to the disappointment of the community, in order to pursue his basketball career and earn a great deal of money. Although the details, publicity, and remuneration are different for most, such personal choices are part of most people's lives. Children experience such ongoing decisions and pursuits among adults they know, such as parents, teachers, and others. As they grow into adolescence, they make such decisions for their own lives as well. It is true that adults can attempt to explain to children differences between personal decisions and moral decisions, as well as how to coordinate personal choices with moral considerations. However, the social experiences of children and adolescents involve much more than direct communications from others, including the vagaries of people's lives. Children and adolescents also coordinate personal and moral considerations with considerations regarding participation in groups.

Children's Direct Experiences

Therefore, there is much for children to sort out and understand that does not come readily from training, instruction, teaching, and example. From the point of view of explaining development, perhaps

the third (and most important) factor left out is children's direct experiences of actions and social interactions. Like adults, children are in direct contact with others, experiencing the substance of people's reactions to events. It is this aspect of social experiences that Piaget (1932) was attempting to capture through the proposition that in middle and late childhood children's peer interactions are the most influential in changes in moral judgments. With regard to peer interactions, Piaget did not propose that children accommodate to the morality of other children or the peer group. Rather, he proposed that they develop understandings of reciprocity and mutuality through interactions with others who are in relationships of greater equality than is the case in children's interactions with adults.

Piaget also thought that younger children could not understand reciprocity and mutuality, and, therefore, their morality was heteronomous and framed by unilateral respect for adults. This particular feature of Piaget's formulation, however, also leaves out an important aspect of young children's experiences. Even young children can attend to direct experiences around specific actions or activities. I am referring to actions like children inflicting harm on each other or helping each other. Children are involved in situations in which people share with each other and ones in which people do not share. Many children are aware that the distribution of goods is not a simple matter of giving to others and that exhortations to give do not account for perceived needs to consider issues of property rights and fair shares for oneself (Damon, 1977). Furthermore, children observe and participate in disputes, conflicts, and disagreements that include adults and other children (Dunn, 1987; Dunn & Munn, 1987).

Experiences of these kinds are part of children's social interactions in daily life. Research has documented that by 4 or 5 years of age, children have formed understandings of emotional states of self and others (Harris, 1989), and that they react with sympathy and empathy to the distress of others (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998; Hoffman, 1984, 1991). By those ages, children also form conceptions about psychological states (Flavell & Miller, 1998). Young children, therefore, are not oblivious to the social interactions they experience, including the reactions of people when, for instance, pain or harm is experienced. We saw in the

previous chapter that young children do make moral judgments that are based on harm experienced or perceived unfairness, and that they distinguish morality from social convention.

Varied Communications

These distinctions are made in less consistent and comprehensive ways by younger children (2 to 5 or 6 years) than by older children and adolescents. Nevertheless, the origins of these domain distinctions are in early childhood, and studies show that they are related to early social experiences. Accordingly, the fourth factor unaccounted for in explanations of the formation of morality is communications about social events that vary systematically with the domain of events. Adults communicate to children in varied ways, as do children with each other. This has been documented by a series of observational studies in schools, playgrounds, and homes with children ranging in age from 2 or 3 years to about 10 or 11 (Killen & Smetana, 1999; Nucci & Nucci, 1982a, 1982b; Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Nucci, Turiel, & Gawrych, 1983; Nucci & Weber, 1995; Smetana, 1984, 1989b; Tisak et al., 1991). It has been found that children's experiences around moral transgressions (e.g., when one child hits another, a failure to share, taking another's objects) usually entail communications about the effects of acts on others, the welfare of others, and attention to the perspectives and needs of others. At an early age, children respond to moral transgressions and focus on the consequences of actions, the pain and injuries experienced, and emotions felt. However, young children do not respond to conventional transgressions to the extent they respond to moral transgressions. Adults' responses to children's conventional transgressions focus not on consequences to persons or perspectives and needs, but to issues of social order, rule maintenance, authority, and more generally to social organization.

Contributing to the multiple nature of early social experiences is that parents also communicate to children that desired activities do not always have to be restricted. As shown in a study (Nucci & Weber, 1995) of social interactions in the home between children (3 to 4 years of age) and mothers, there are aspects of behavior revolving around

personal issues in which children are given a fair amount of freedom and discretion. Mothers allow their children choices in activities, show a willingness to negotiate, and accept challenges from them. Allowing children personal choices does not reflect a generalized orientation on the part of some mothers to freedom or unbridled individualism. Rather, mothers show very different patterns of interaction with their children over moral and social conventional issues than with regard to personal issues (as do teachers; see Killen and Smetana, 1999).

HOW PEOPLE THINK AND HOW PEOPLE ACT

How moral judgments develop does not in itself tell us whether people act on their judgments. Still, it is important to consider the process of development in understanding if and how thought is related to action. If the development of judgments is influenced by children's actions and interactions, then it may be more likely that a schism does not exist between judgments (once developed) and behaviors. However, it is often presumed that thought is largely unrelated to action – again, with the assessment that it is action that counts. There are various reasons people maintain these presumptions. In some cases, it is believed that moral actions come from psychological sources other than judgments. For those who frame morality as the possession of traits of character, the issue is straightforward. If people have acquired firm habits of character, they are very likely to act in moral ways, and their reasoning is not very relevant. It is also assumed by some that judgments are disconnected from actions because moral behaviors are largely based on emotions. Wilson's (1993) perspective provides a good example. He maintained that morality is not a function of judgment and deliberation, but of reflexive and emotional reactions. In that view, to explain actions, we must look to features other than thought.

Even among some who accept that people's judgments are a source of action, it is maintained that many may not act upon those judgments because of a weakness of character or a lack of strength of will – especially in situations entailing temptations of self-interest. A related view calls upon the idea of personal identity as a way of explaining connections between moral judgments and actions (Blasi, 1984, 1993;

Colby & Damon, 1992). In addition to moral judgments, it is said that people construct a sense of self that can include morality as a central component. The more central morality is to personal identity, the more likely that one will act in ways consistent with his or her moral judgments. In this view, moral judgments are part of the process, but people do not always act in accord with their moral judgments. The levels of consistency between thought and action are dependent on definitions of self. Insofar as one's definition of self revolves around morality, then there is a motivation to act morally. In turn, such motives will result in consistency between judgments and actions. It is, therefore, the extent to which individuals regard moral concerns as important to their sense of identity (what kind of persons they are) that results in action.

In these various propositions, the question of relations between moral positions taken by individuals and their actions is framed in terms of consistency and inconsistency. Consistency is regarded as positive and reflects the morally desirable outcome. For those who do not see morality to be based on judgments, the issue is framed in terms of whether people live up to traits they possess or values they uphold. For those who do assume that people make moral judgments, the issue is still framed in terms of consistency, with other factors like will or identity mediating between thought and action.

The idea that nonjudgmental features serve to motivate people to act in moral ways runs the risk of reducing morality to personality or other psychological variables that are largely independent of judgments. At least in an implicit way, it is assumed that people with similar moral judgments can differ in their personal commitments to morality and, therefore, in their moral actions. This minimizes the role of people's judgments and their flexibility of thought when dealing with social situations because it is other psychological features like will and identity that are most likely to determine how they act. It is also not explained why it is that people do not act in accord with their judgments. Why people develop moral judgments and yet do not act in commensurate ways requires explanation, beyond the idea that some people are less virtuous than others. Furthermore, in these positions, the role of social judgments other than the moral, such as the personal

and conventional, is ignored, and morality is treated as one general type.

It is because of the sole focus on one kind of judgment, with the presumption of one general type of moral judgment, that the question of relations between thought and action has been framed in terms of consistency. If we presume, instead, that in most situations people are making multiple judgments, including those in the other domains, then we have to understand how that works before we can even raise the specter of consistency and inconsistency. Much of the research, however, has been directed by the quest for levels of consistency or inconsistency between individuals' moral evaluations or judgments and their actions. From that perspective, assessments of people's moral evaluations and judgments are compared with assessments of the ways people act. Two types of studies have been done. In one, assessments were made of people's endorsements of a particular moral standard and their actions on that dimension. In the other, assessments of some way of characterizing an individual's moral judgments have been compared with measures of behavior (see Blasi, 1980, for a review). Most frequently, the assessments of moral judgments were based on the stages proposed by Kohlberg (see Chapter 5). Not surprisingly, varying levels of consistency were obtained in both types of studies. In studies assessing stages of moral judgment, the findings were not consistent from one study to the next (Blasi, 1980). Focusing on the findings of low levels of consistency, some have maintained that judgments and actions are not closely related (Aronfreed, 1968; Bandura, 1991; Mischel & Mischel, 1976), and that, therefore, the psychological processes determining behaviors are different from those governing judgments. Their argument is that if assessments of moral judgments and actions are not highly correlated, then actions are learned in ways that are not influenced by judgments. By no means, however, is there consensus on whether and how judgments and actions are related, since some studies have also shown relatively high levels of consistency (Blasi, 1980; Kohlberg, 1984).

In studies that have assessed endorsement of a particular standard, honesty has been the most frequently examined. Typically, children have been placed in experimental or classroom situations in which

they have an opportunity to act dishonestly by cheating or lying on, for example, classroom tests, athletic contests, or party games (Aronfreed, 1968; Grinder, 1964, 1961; Hartshorne & May, 1928–1930). It was found that most children sometimes acted dishonestly, and that there were low correlations between those acts and evaluations that dishonesty is wrong.

One problem in this type of research is that the assessments of moral values simply involve asking, in a general way, whether dishonesty is wrong. Although people may judge deception as wrong in the abstract, they may consider it morally necessary in some situations. A combination of judgments from the moral and personal domains bearing on cultural practices and conventional regulations can lead people to engage in deceptive acts. Research with adults has shown that they do sometimes accept deception on moral grounds (Freeman et al., 1999). The research was conducted in the United States with nearly 200 physicians, who were asked to judge six hypothetical stories depicting a doctor who considers deceiving a third-party payer (i.e., insurance company or health maintenance organization) in order to obtain approval for a treatment or diagnostic procedure. In these stories, it is stipulated that it is known that the insurance company or HMO will not approve the treatment under the existing circumstances, and that the patient cannot afford to obtain it without the payment. By altering the description of symptoms, or some other features, the doctors would be able to be sure that the patient gets appropriate care. The six stories depicted medical conditions of different degrees of severity and health risks. The most severe was life threatening and required coronary bypass surgery; 58 percent of the physicians in the study judged that the doctor should engage in the deception in order to obtain the treatment for the patient. In the least severe situation, the patient seeks a surgical alteration of nasal bones for cosmetic purposes. In that case, only 3 percent of the physicians judged the deception legitimate. The conditions depicted in the other stories were as follows: bypass grafting of an artery (56% judged deception necessary); intravenous pain medication and nutrition for a patient with incurable ovarian cancer (48%); a psychiatric referral for depression (32%); and a

mammography screening referral for a woman with a family history of breast cancer (35%).

That study assessed only evaluations of deception and not behavior. However, there is evidence that doctors do engage in these types of deceptive acts (Freeman et al., 1999; Wynia et al., 2000), as I discuss in Chapter 11. Nevertheless, the findings on evaluations of deception point to the shortcomings in simply comparing or correlating general evaluations or judgments with behaviors in particular situations. We can safely conclude that most of the physicians in the study would generally judge dishonesty to be wrong. In fact, almost all evaluated deception regarding cosmetic surgery unjustified; there were also variations in evaluations of the other situations. Therefore, it is not only behaviors that vary by situational contexts. The evaluations, themselves, varied in accord with situations. People take into account various features of situations in their judgments – let alone in their actions. It appears that the physicians judged that the well-being of patients was more important than the wrong in deception. This means that it is inappropriate to compare evaluations of honesty or dishonesty in general or in the abstract with behaviors in particular situations. It is necessary to consider the actor's intentions and goals when being deceptive in particular situations. Similar considerations apply to other issues, as clearly documented by the survey studies (discussed in Chapter 4) on attitudes toward rights. Most people endorsed rights when stated generally, but in many situations, most did not endorse the rights. For rights, too, general evaluations cannot be compared to behaviors since they occur in particular, contextual situations. For honesty, rights, and probably most social issues, it is necessary, at the least, to assess actions and evaluations in comparable situations.

It is also necessary to go further and assess judgments about specific situations in addition to evaluations. But it is insufficient to only assess moral judgments because many situations include components relevant to other aspects of social judgments. We have already seen that this is the case in judgments about rights (Helwig, 1995a). In certain situations, people balance their judgments that rights should be

upheld against judgments about harm, social order, and community interests.

An example of how judgments in particular circumstances may be related to actions comes from a study of children's judgments about inflicting physical harm (Astor, 1994). In this study, Astor examined judgments about inflicting physical harm within two types of contexts among children with and without histories of violent activities. In one context, children made judgments about situations depicting unprovoked acts of one child hitting another. Both groups of children, violent and nonviolent, judged the unprovoked acts as wrong. From these findings alone, it might appear that the moral judgments of the children without a background of violent acts were generally consistent with their actions, whereas the other children's moral judgments were discrepant with their actions. The latter group, it might appear, often are unwilling or unable to act upon their moral judgments. The second context of judgments assessed, however, yields a different picture. In that case, assessments were made of judgments about situations in which a child hits another after a provocation (for instance, a child teases or calls another names). Unlike the nonviolent group of children, those with a background of violence judged the provoked acts of violence as acceptable on the grounds that they are fair retribution for unjust acts. It may well be, therefore, that both groups of children would usually act on their judgments about unprovoked and provoked harm. A good deal of specificity about the situations involved is needed to know if there is consistency or inconsistency between judgments and actions.

In specifying the parameters of situations, it is also necessary to examine the ways behaviors may be consistent with one type of judgment – say, a judgment about preventing harm to others – and other types of judgments – say, judgments about conventional features. The studies on obedience to authority that I discussed in Chapter 4 illustrate how different domains of judgment can complicate assessments of levels of consistency between thought and action. It will be recalled that in some of the experimental conditions, participants continued administering (supposedly) electric shocks to another person at the commands of a person in authority, whereas in other conditions they

defied the authority and refused to inflict pain on the other. Given that in some situations people resisted the firm injunctions of the authority, and given the intense emotional conflicts of those who did administer the shocks (Milgram, 1974), we can assume that they considered inflicting pain on another to be wrong. These experimental situations posed people with a conflict between the morality of avoiding inflicting pain and harm on another and the press to support authority in social organizations (Turiel & Smetana, 1984). Consequently, it is likely that people were attempting to coordinate two domains of judgments. If so, it would make for multiple aspects of consistency and inconsistencies between judgments and actions. When participants refused to administer the electric shocks, their behavior would have been consistent with their moral judgments but inconsistent with their judgments about authority and social organization. When participants did administer the shocks, behavior would have been inconsistent with their moral judgments but consistent with their judgments about authority and social organization. However, even those who continued to administer the electric shocks did so reluctantly and with much conflict. Moreover, in several experimental situations most people acted in accord with their moral judgments since they refused to administer the shocks. Consequently, in these types of multifaceted situations, there are inconsistencies from one situation to another.

BEYOND CONSISTENCY: UNDERSTANDING JUDGMENTS AND ACTIONS

The nature of moral, social, and personal judgments, along with the multifaceted elements in behavioral situations, necessitates that the study of thought and action be more involved than assessing levels of consistency. Even within the context of moral evaluations only, it is not a matter of assessing consistency since evaluations systematically vary by the situational context. The research on honesty and rights showed such variations in judgments, and the research on obedience to authority showed such variations in behaviors. Of course, to better understand the relations of judgment and behavior, it is necessary to conduct research assessing both judgments and actions. However, it

is also essential to specify in a detailed way the different features of behavioral situations, the different aspects of moral judgments that might be involved, the different domains of judgment brought to bear on the situation, and the possible conflicts in the situation.

Since for the most part, researchers have not addressed these issues, there is a great deal unknown about how thought and action intersect. Actions need to be seen as part of a larger context of sequences of events, with people responding to each other's actions and reactions. As a means of approaching the problem this way, I have conducted research in elementary and junior high schools with children and adolescents from first, third, fifth, and seventh grades (ages of about 6 to 13 years). The research included detailed observations of spontaneously occurring social interactions and actions, examination of judgments about those actions among those who participated, and examination of the same children's judgments about comparable situations presented in hypothetical terms. Such procedures do not directly answer questions as to whether people act upon their moral judgments. They were used as an alternate to the common way of approaching the problem. It is important to know what types of judgments children make about events they experience, as well as whether such judgments are similar to judgments about situations put in hypothetical terms. Furthermore, to understand possible connections between thought and action, it is necessary to go beyond identification of specific acts or discrete outcomes. By that, I mean that it is not sufficient to measure single acts, such as a child hits another, or a child does not share candy, or a child lies, or a child violates a classroom rule.

Given what we know about distinctions that children make in their judgments about morality and social convention, it is also important to specify the domains of events. Therefore, the research examined events that could be reliably classified as moral or conventional. We also know that people encounter events that include mixtures or combinations of moral and conventional components. For that reason, events of a mixed kind were included in the research. Prior to the study itself, systematic observations were made, which showed that many spontaneously occurring events of the three types (moral, conventional, and mixed) occurred across grades and in different school settings

(classrooms, free-play, lunch). These general observations also revealed that children engage in a variety of social interactions, involving disputes, arguments, conflicts, and cooperation. The opportunities for conflicts and cooperative interactions came primarily outside of the classroom, during lunch periods and while engaged in free-play.

Events identified as moral, conventional, and mixed were observed in classrooms, at playtime or recess in the schoolyards, and during lunch periods. Shortly after an event was observed, some of the participants were interviewed to ascertain how they perceived the situation, how they evaluated the event, their judgments about it (referred to in Chapter 5 as criterion judgments), and their reasons (or justifications) for evaluations and judgments. The children interviewed had been in different roles in the situation, including those who initiated an act or transgression, those who were victims, and those who were observers. Approximately a month after the observations and interviews about the event, the same children were interviewed about hypothetical situations describing moral transgressions, conventional transgressions, and mixed events.

The study, therefore, included a variety of events from different domains that occurred in several contexts within schools. A large number of events (108) were observed and recorded, and over 300 children were administered the two interviews. About half of the events classified as moral had to do with issues of fairness in distribution and property rights, including taking someone else's goods, violations of privacy, unequal treatment, and sharing. Other events involved physical and psychological harm (fighting, name calling). One example of a moral event that entailed psychological harm occurred in the schoolyard. Two fifth-grade girls became involved in a heated dispute, for a number of minutes, in which they traded insults about race, their mothers, their weight, and their clothing. For the most part, the dispute did not become physical, although they lightly slapped each other once (there were many threats, however). Several other girls, some of whom did try to stop it, observed the dispute. In another example with seventh graders, a group of boys attempted to bully a group of smaller boys in order to take over a desirable basketball court. This event also came near to a physical confrontation. Some events

classified as moral included infractions by adults in positions of authority. In one case, the principal punished an entire fifth-grade class for an incident involving two boys. While a group of boys was playing in an area in the yard, one pushed and hurt another. The principal came over to see what had happened. He then announced that everyone had to leave the area and that the entire class would not be allowed to play there for a week. Students in the class considered the punishment of the class unfair and a letter of protest was written by two of them (on behalf of the class) to the principal (who eventually did rescind the punishment).

Over half of the conventional events were violations of rules governing classroom order and school organization (such as lining up for activities, and uniformity about places for eating lunch and playing on school grounds), and disobedience of authority commands regarding such rules. Among children in the lower grades, these events often involved violations of rules regarding seating assignments at lunch and playing with food. Other types of acts within the conventional domain involved deviations from uniformity in classroom procedures, such as not sitting in assigned places and not requesting permission to leave activities. Seventh graders were most likely to violate classroom rules of this sort. In one observation of a seventh-grade class session with a substitute teacher, a series of conventional transgressions occurred. These included eating in class, playing with food, putting on makeup, and sitting in unassigned places.

The mixed events included both moral and conventional components; these typically entailed rules, practices, or authority dictates involving unfair and unequal treatment. One event illustrative of the mixture of moral and conventional components occurred in the playground among third graders playing a game of soccer. In this event, a boy was excluded from the game on the basis of a playground rule pertaining to how players are chosen. When playing with a ball belonging to a child (as opposed to the school), the owner is permitted to choose players. The boy wanting to play was not allowed to do so even though another boy who came later was included in the game. In another event of a mixed kind, a moral issue was implicated in the course of a conventional violation of rules regarding the treatment of

food at lunch. Children in the class complained to the teacher that one of the boys had violated the rules by playing with his food and making a mess. The teacher's punishment was that he would not be allowed to eat with the rest of the class for a week. The boy then accused another boy of a similar violation at lunch. However, several of the other children maintained that this was a false accusation.

Three general features of the patterns of interactions observed should be noted. First, the acts involved in events with a substantive mixture of moral and conventional considerations were of the same types as those observed in the moral or conventional events. Therefore, in events that involve complex combinations of domains, the features of each domain are identifiable as such. This shows that in some situations, there is a combination of acts that in other situations may occur separately. Second, there were age differences in the settings of the events. Overall, a greater number of the moral, conventional, and mixed domain events among seventh graders occurred in the classrooms than in the other settings observed (i.e., recess and lunch). By contrast, for the youngest children, who were in the first grade, fewer events were observed in the classroom. In particular, relatively few moral transgressions occurred in first-grade classrooms. Nevertheless, they did occur in the settings outside of class. Among the children from the middle two grades, the events occurred about equally in the classroom and nonclassroom settings. These findings suggest, again, that social contexts do make a difference in actions. However, the same types of actions appeared across ages. The different contexts seem to have a bearing on how children of different ages act. These findings also demonstrate that it is necessary to look across contexts in order to understand children's behaviors. If we had looked only at classrooms, it would have appeared that younger children engage in fewer moral transgressions. However, the younger children were more likely to engage in moral transgressions outside of the classroom. The third feature to be noted is that children were active in attempting to resolve moral transgressions, but not conventional ones. For the most part, it was an adult authority (and sometimes a peer authority) who intervened to put a stop to a conventional transgression – as found in other studies (Nucci & Nucci, 1982a, 1982b; Nucci & Turiel, 1978).

As I have already indicated, the events observed in the research occurred in the context of ongoing social interactions in which the children and adults reacted to each other and communicated with each other. The nature of those social interactions and the communications among participants were different when they were responding to events of a moral kind and events of a conventional kind. Some of the actions and reactions associated with moral transgressions pertained directly to the effects of acts on others. These included emotional reactions reflecting how acts made one feel, statements about harm or injury experienced, direct reactions of a retaliatory kind to others, and acts that involved helping others (such as sharing or attending to a child who is hurt). Moral transgressions also produced communications about matters of harm, injury, welfare, justice, and rights. Communications about social order generally did not occur around moral transgressions. Instead, it was with regard to conventional transgressions that there were communications about maintaining rules, sanctions, and the inappropriateness of the behavior.

These findings support the proposition that judgments are centrally involved in people's behaviors, and that those judgments vary by domain. If it is the case that morality is based on concepts of welfare, justice, and rights; that social convention is based on concepts of uniformity in social organization; and that those concepts are brought to bear on behavioral situations; then it would follow that reactions to the two types of events differ. This does not mean that each type of reaction is strictly associated with the domain of the event. Some reactions, such as requesting a person in authority to intervene, occurred for both domains. Nevertheless, at all ages, the preponderance of reactions and communications were divided in accord with the two groupings. Further indication of a relationship between domains of judgment and the ways people interact is that the different types of communications (harm and fairness vs. social order) occurred to moral and conventional components even in the context of the mixed events.

It appears, therefore, that discussions, disputes, argumentation, and instruction are framed by whether moral and conventional issues are involved in social interactions. This was the case for events in the

different settings and for people in different roles. For example, people in different roles did not approach the same event from different domain perspectives. For moral events, a transgressor and victim may disagree as to why an act occurred or as to who may have instigated it. Nevertheless, both would see it as a moral event. It rarely was the case, for example, that a victim saw the event as an issue of fairness while a transgressor saw it as a conventional matter. In one respect, however, adult authorities did respond differently from the children. Not surprisingly, adults reacted to conventional transgressions more often than did the children. The adults responded with commands and with reference to the social order and rules.

On the basis of the differences in actions and communications among the types observed, we can infer that interactions were framed by judgments about morality and social conventions. Of course, we could not peer into the children's reasoning as the events occurred. However, we were able to do the next best thing – which was to assess their thinking about the events shortly after they occurred. With regard to the moral and conventional events, the children were first asked to describe what occurred in order to determine how the situation was perceived and to provide a context for the questions bearing on criterion judgments and justifications. They were then asked to evaluate the acts, whether or not there was a rule in the school governing the act, and to evaluate the rules. Finally, they were posed with a set of questions as to whether the acts were contingent on rules and the dictates of an authority (the teacher).

Generally, the children accepted the validity of the conventional regulations, as well as the moral prescriptions. Most evaluated the moral and conventional transgressions as wrong. There were no age differences in evaluations of moral transgressions. However, more of the youngest children than the older ones evaluated the conventional transgressions as wrong. The role of the participants in the event had some bearing on evaluations of the conventional transgressions. Those who engaged in conventional transgressions were less likely to evaluate the acts negatively than observers of those acts were. This was not the case for moral transgressions, since transgressors, victims, and observers evaluated the moral transgressions in similar ways (in the

context of possible disagreements as to what precisely occurred). Furthermore, the majority of the children and adolescents believed that rules existed in the school governing both types of acts. A number of the oldest children, however, believed that the rules for moral acts were implicit rather than explicit.

Within the context of these positive evaluations of moral and conventional regulations, the criterion judgments about conventions differed from criterion judgments about morality. Most thought that the conventional acts would be acceptable if no rule existed. By contrast, most thought that the moral acts would be wrong even if no rule existed. A similar pattern of judgments was found in response to questions as to whether the acts would be wrong if acceptable to a teacher or if there were no rules pertaining to the acts in a school in another city. Conventional transgressions were judged as all right if they were acceptable to a teacher or in the context of a school in another city that had no rules pertaining to the acts. Moral transgressions were judged as wrong even if acceptable to a teacher or if no rules existed. Thus, conventions were judged to be contingent on existing rules and authority expectations, while the moral prescriptions were not.

An example of judgments about a moral event comes from a fifth-grade girl who was asked about the verbal confrontation between two girls. She stated that there was a rule in the school about fighting "because some people will really beat you up. They would hit you and kick you a lot, and that really hurts." She also thought that it was "one of the important rules in the school because if they didn't have that rule, there would be like millions of fights a day." This girl also thought that it would be wrong for another school not to have a rule about fighting: "I think all schools should have a rule that there is no fighting. Because say you are going to move and you are going to go to that school, you don't want to go to a school that has no rule against fighting because people just beat you up for no reason." Similarly, a seventh-grade boy, discussing the bullying by bigger boys on the basketball court, said: "Because if you're older and they're smaller kids, you shouldn't bully them. Because they're smaller and you could hurt them really easy and they can't really do much about it, right? And it's wrong because you hurt their feelings and you hurt them and everything." When asked if

it would be all right to bully if it were acceptable to a teacher, he said: "I'd say the teacher is a weird person." The teacher should not accept it "because she is letting the person hurt other people's feelings, and it's wrong to do that."

The justifications or reasons given for evaluations and for the criterion judgments, as expected, also differed by the domain of the event in ways consistent with the types of communications that had been observed during the events. Justifications for evaluations of moral acts were based on welfare and justice. It was thought that moral transgressions were wrong because the acts involved harming another or unfair treatment. As a fifth-grade boy said regarding the principal's collective punishment: "It is not really fair for all the other fifth graders to be suspended for something they didn't do. Since they didn't do it, they shouldn't be suspended." Justifications having to do with rules and authority, social organization, and personal choice were infrequently used in evaluating moral transgressions but often used in evaluations of conventional events. A seventh-grade girl stated that people should stay at their assigned seats so that a teacher can control the class and follow the seating chart in tracking students' work and behavior. She also thought that her teacher and other teachers could change the rule regarding assigned seats "because it is her classroom."

The mixed events were more complex since they embedded a combination of moral and conventional components. As a consequence, children were interviewed about those events primarily to determine how they construed the different components and if they were able to apply more than one kind of judgment to situations with multiple domain features. Indeed, most did understand that moral and conventional components were involved and that in some cases they were in conflict with each other. The large majority evaluated the moral transgressions as wrong on the grounds that harm and injustice should be prevented. Evaluations of the conventional aspects of the mixed situations were about equally divided as to whether they were right or wrong, with reasons based on rules, authority, and social organization. In the event that involved exclusion of a boy by the owner of the ball, children recognized the moral aspects of exclusion while accepting the rule that the owner gets to choose players. That is, they

accepted the legitimacy of the conventional rule and, at the same time, recognized the unfairness of exclusion. Therefore, there are parallels in individuals' thinking about events within each domain and events that combine the two.

The findings on how children and adolescents make judgments about events they experienced are in line with findings from the many other studies that have been conducted on moral and conventional judgments about situations that were not tied to their experiences. In this research, we were also able to compare judgments about the actual events with the same children's judgments about hypothetical situations. It will be recalled that the children and adolescents were interviewed about the hypothetical situations approximately a month after they had been interviewed about the actual events. The patterns of evaluations, judgments, and justifications for the moral (hitting, taking another's food) and conventional (violation of classroom rule about lining up, sitting with friend at lunch rather than at assigned place) hypothetical situations did correspond with findings on the real events – but with differences in emphasis that are informative. The main difference is that the judgments about hypothetical situations were more uniform and clear-cut than judgments about actual events. The majority evaluated both moral and conventional transgressions as wrong, with more giving negative evaluations of the moral than the conventional transgressions. However, even greater majorities gave negative evaluations of the hypothetical situations than actual events. There was also a correspondence in patterns related to age. At each age, the hypothetical moral transgressions were evaluated as wrong by almost all. With regard to the hypothetical conventional transgressions, fewer of the seventh graders gave negative evaluations than children in the lower grades (as found for actual conventional transgressions). As was the case for the actual events, the majority thought that rules were in place governing the moral and conventional acts, and that these were good rules. We see another interesting parallel here. Greater percentages in both interviews (hypothetical and actual) thought that more rules were in place for the conventional than the moral acts, but greater percentages gave positive evaluations to the moral rules than to the conventional rules.

The criterion judgments and justifications on the hypothetical situations also differed by domain, though the differences were more pronounced for hypothetical events than for the actual ones. Again, moral transgressions were judged as noncontingent on rules or authority dictates, while conventional transgressions were judged as contingent. Justifications for evaluations and criterion judgments on the hypothetical situations differed by domain in the same ways as for the actual situations (i.e., welfare and justice for morality and reasons of rules, authority, and social order for convention).

The mixed hypothetical situations depicted acts that could be perceived as moral transgressions on the part of a peer or adult with the authority to make decisions. One of the events depicted a team captain who hurts the feelings of a child by not letting him or her play, and in that child's presence allows another to play; the team captain's reason is that the first child is not a good player. The other event depicted a teacher who allows one child, but not another, to sit in a place different from the assigned one. The children were asked to evaluate the action and the legitimacy of the role and jurisdiction of the peer or adult in authority. The large majority of the children evaluated the conventional arrangements as legitimate. They thought that a team captain can choose players, and that a teacher can assign seats. However, they did not simply accept that authorities, be it peer or adult, could do whatever they wanted. The children critically judged the unequal or arbitrary treatment of children in these situations. Moreover, distinctions were made between the moral and the conventional components in the mixed situations in ways that parallel judgments and justifications about the nonmixed situations.

The differences in emphasis in judgments about actual and hypothetical events make sense since they do constitute somewhat different contexts. In presenting people with hypothetical situations, it is possible to uniformly specify the conditions of the actions in ways that most would understand. Actual events are likely to include features of various kinds that could not be specified in the hypothetical situations. In other words, there was more complexity and greater nuance in the actual events than presented in the hypothetical situations. Therefore, knowledge about judgments outside of a behavioral context, such as

with regard to situations put in hypothetical terms, does not allow for exact predictions as to how people will relate to any given behavioral situation. Still, even though social interactional contexts are more complex, with more features unspecified, than situations of a hypothetical nature, the same fundamental aspects of moral and social judgments appear in both. As we have seen, children and adolescents make discriminations between events that are based on domains of judgment, and they coordinate domain components in events that are multifaceted. I believe that the results of this research on thought and action document that knowing about people's judgments does tell us much about what counts. Judgments simply must be taken into account to understand the social interactions of children and adolescents. Knowing a good deal about people's thinking is necessary for an understanding of how they approach social interactions in their daily lives.

The research on thought and action has yielded findings that are consistent with themes I have discussed thus far. The research showed that the social judgments and actions of individuals are not of one kind dictated by a general societal or cultural ethos. Within one social institutional setting – the school – we saw that children and adolescents interacted with each other in ways that involve conflicts and cooperative activities. We have also seen that social contexts make a difference in actions. Not surprisingly, in their play, games, and other nonclassroom activity, children's social interactions may differ from what occurs in classrooms. We have also seen that there are heterogeneity and commonalities in thought and in actions. In the context of heterogeneity of thought within individuals, there are commonalities among people with regard to the classification of acts as moral or conventional and in judgments and justifications about each domain.

OTHER SOURCES OF COMPLEXITY: PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTRIBUTIONS AND INFORMATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS

All this suggests not only that judgments are central in people's actions and interactions, but also that children are thinking in complex

ways about a multidimensional social world. Therefore, we need to look beyond the questions of whether people's moral judgments are consistent with their actions. People's actions reflect many facets of their reasoning about others, social interactions, and how to best accomplish a combination of moral, social, and personal goals. Furthermore, in considering the ways domains of judgments are connected to actions, we have not exhausted the features of people's thinking that go into the mix. Two other features, in particular, are important. One has to do with construal of the psychological states of others, and the second, with assumptions about reality.

The study on thought and action did not reveal much about these features, though some of the findings do bear on children's psychological attributions. In describing the events, children were specifically asked to explain the reasons for people's actions. Some of these explanations involved inferences about the actors' positive and negative goals in the situation. These inferences did vary by domain of actions in that the children and adolescents attributed the goals of inflicting harm (or sometimes preventing it) and promoting inequality or unfairness to actions in the moral and mixed domain events, but not to actions in the conventional domain. By contrast, goals related to rules and disrupting or promoting social order were attributed mainly to actions in the conventional events.

There is evidence from other research indicating that psychological attributions may play a role in people's actions. I have already discussed research (Astor, 1994) showing that children who are more likely to engage in aggressive acts believe that acts of provocation are deserving of retaliation. As other research shows, children differ in the extent to which they attribute hostile intents to others. Children who interpret ambiguous acts as having a hostile or malevolent intent are more likely to retaliate with acts of aggression (Coie & Dodge, 1998).

People's assumptions about reality, which come from various sources, also must be taken into account in understanding how they come to decisions. When applied to moral and social decisions, such assumptions function as an informational kind – what I will refer to as informational assumptions. There is some research with adolescents and adults showing how informational assumptions factor into

judgments about controversial issues like abortion, as well as actions in that realm. Before considering that research, I will explain how informational assumptions are involved in the decision-making processes of children and adolescents.

Informational assumptions are not solely particular facts derived directly from some kind of data-gathering process. Such assumptions can be derived from conceptual systems and theories. However, knowledge derived from conceptual systems – scientific or otherwise – is used in an informational–factual sense (often with ambiguities) in situations involving moral judgments. Knowledge from social sciences, as one salient example, is frequently used in making decisions that have an influence on how moral judgments are applied. This is certainly true in how parents act toward their children. Assumptions that may be derived from observations; from accepted views in the culture or society; and from theories of teaching, learning, and development can have an influence on parental behaviors and practices. Even though some of these assumptions are part of psychological research and theory, they are used as facts or information about reality. Methods used to discipline children constitute a good example. Parents are usually concerned with the effectiveness of their discipline techniques in achieving behavioral and developmental goals for their children and will base their discipline methods on assumptions about how well they work.

Consider, for example, what has become, at least in Western cultures, the contentious matter of spanking. It happens that among developmental psychologists and other social scientists, the effectiveness of spanking is open to debate and that the evidence is inconclusive (Baumrind, 1996). It appears that among the general population, there is a fair amount of disagreement about the issue, and sometimes it is debated in public ways. As an example, in the city of Oakland, California, an initiative was placed on the ballot that proposed to declare the city a "no-spanking zone." The initiative was defeated because, no doubt, the majority of voters believed that spanking could be an effective and necessary method of disciplining children. Although it is unclear as to how people derive their assumptions about the effectiveness of methods of discipline, it does appear that such assumptions contribute to

people's evaluations of actions. A study by Wainryb (1991) compared judgments about spanking with judgments about inflicting physical pain in another context. Children, adolescents, and young adults were presented with two situations describing a father who "spanks" his son. In one situation, the spanking was described as occurring as a consequence of the father's fatigue and frustration; the other situation described a father who spanks his son for misbehaving. All participants in the study negatively evaluated spanking in the former situation on the grounds that it is unfair and wrong to inflict pain on a child. However, they were divided in their evaluations of spanking for misbehavior – which was described as entailing the same degree of physical pain as in the first situation. Those who positively evaluated spanking for misbehavior held the belief or assumption that children do learn from experiencing pain, and that spanking is sometimes necessary for effective parenting. Most who negatively evaluated spanking held the assumption that it is not an effective method of teaching (some were also uncertain about it).

Therefore, informational assumptions serve to, using Asch's (1952) concept, contribute to the objects of judgment. In the case of hitting or spanking, as described in the study, the source of the act (e.g., the actor's frustration or child's misbehavior), the act itself, and informational assumptions combine to form the object of judgment. The features of a parent hitting his child out of frustration and the pain experienced constituted one object of judgment. All of the participants in the study negatively evaluated this object of judgment. A second object of judgment was constituted by hitting on the part of a parent due to the child's misbehavior, the pain experienced, and the assumption that it could be effective in teaching children to behave properly. Some of the participants construed the situation this way and evaluated the act positively. Hitting due to the child's misbehavior, the pain experienced, and the assumption that it would be ineffective in teaching children constituted the third object of judgment. Some construed the situation in this way and evaluated the act negatively.

Wainryb's research has also demonstrated that changes in the objects of judgment due to changes in informational assumptions do serve to modify evaluations and moral judgments. In another part of

the study, participants were asked, hypothetically, to consider the situations described, but taking into account informational assumptions different from their own. Those who believed that spanking was not effective in teaching children were asked how they would evaluate the situation if there were proof that it is effective. Conversely, those who believed spanking was effective were asked to evaluate the situation if there were proof that it was not. Most stated that their evaluations of the act of spanking would change under those circumstances.

In the situations studied by Wainryb, it was the informational assumptions held of those making the judgments that were examined. That is, people's informational assumptions about the effects of punishment were seen to contribute to decisions about inflicting harm. Another way informational assumptions are relevant is that people take into account others' informational assumptions in evaluating that person and his or her actions. In particular, people appear to be more accepting and tolerant of actions of which they disapprove, if another person's actions are attributed to a different informational belief than if it is attributed to a different moral belief. Thus, the perceived source of another's actions contributes to the object of judgment.

Let me be more concrete about this with reference to other studies conducted by Wainryb and her colleagues (Wainryb, 1993; Wainryb & Ford, 1998; Wainryb, Shaw, & Maianu, 1998). In those studies, judgments were made about the actions of people in another culture, which were described as based on informational beliefs or moral beliefs. Some examples from the research pertain to inflicting harm and corporal punishment. In one type of situation, an act of hitting was described as due to a belief within a culture that it is all right for parents to hit their children if they wish to. In another type of situation, the act of hitting was described as due to the belief within a culture that children who misbehave are possessed by evil spirits that can be removed only by beating the child. The latter situations, connected to informational assumptions about spirits and how they can be exorcised, were judged acceptable to a greater extent than the situations in which a cultural practice condones hitting because of the belief that it is simply acceptable to inflict pain.

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The attribution of an informational assumption to an actor renders the object of judgment in acts involving inflicting physical pain to be different from those in which no such informational assumptions hold. The intentions of actors are seen to differ in the two situations. In some cases, the actors are seen as behaving out of ignorance, misinformation, or an alternative view of the world. Using several different actions and practices (including ones pertaining to unfair or unequal treatment), the research has shown that children from about 5 years of age are more accepting of actions they otherwise evaluate negatively, when the actions are connected to informational beliefs. This is the case even when people disagree with the accuracy of the informational assumptions. The body of research has also shown that the cultural context of a practice has a bearing on people's evaluations in ways that account for informational assumptions.

AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT IN SOCIAL JUDGMENT

Informational assumptions contribute to the process of making decisions and taking actions. People who believe that spanking is an effective way of teaching children would have voted against the proposed no-spanking zone in the city of Oakland. Moreover, parents who hold that belief are more likely to use spanking as a means of disciplining their children (Baumrind, 1996). As I have indicated, there is research showing that informational assumptions are involved in people's decisions about abortion. Of course, abortion is not an issue relevant to the concerns of most children. The research was conducted with adolescents and adults. The research also has a bearing on the topic of the next chapter – which has to do with agreements and disagreements within cultures. In the next chapter, I propose that cultures cannot be defined as entailing shared features and social harmony. Disagreements and conflicts must also be taken into account. Abortion is an example of a highly contentious issue that, at least in many Western cultures, has generated a great deal of controversy and conflict. In this chapter, I consider some of the sources of disagreements

about abortion that are related to informational assumptions in people's judgments and, in turn, in their actions.

It is not difficult to substantiate that people disagree about abortion. Conflicts are evident in public discourse, political debate, political protest, civil disturbances, and judicial rulings (Dworkin, 1993; Tribe, 1990). The disagreements among Americans are also evident in many national opinion surveys. Typically, it has been found that abortion is acceptable to a little over 50 percent of people sampled. In a public opinion survey in 1988 by the Gallup organization, 57 percent thought that abortion should be legal under certain circumstances (24% thought it should be legal in any circumstances, and 17% thought it should be illegal in all circumstances). These levels of approval are quite similar to surveys taken from 1975 to 1988 (the lowest level was 52% in 1981). In turn, a poll in 1989 showed that the majority (58%) opposed overturning the Supreme Court decision of 1973 (Roe v. Wade) affirming women's right to obtain abortions. Other surveys have shown that somewhat over 50 percent of respondents also believe that abortion should not be prohibited by law: 59 percent stated that abortion should be a matter of individual discretion; 17%, that it should be regulated by law; and 21%, that it should be completely forbidden by law (Harris & Westin, 1979).

Studies of judgments of abortion help clarify some of the reasons for the differences in evaluations of abortion. One set of studies (Turiel, Hilderbrandt, & Wainryb, 1991) examined the judgments of adolescents and young adults who believed abortion is wrong and those who believed it is acceptable. They were posed with a set of questions regarding the legality of abortion, its contingency on law or common practice, and its generalizability to laws and practices in other countries. They were asked the same questions, for purposes of comparison, about killing (an innocent person) and rape. Those who thought that abortion is acceptable also thought that laws should not exist prohibiting abortion in the United States or other countries. They also thought that abortion is acceptable even if it were illegal and not common practice in the United States or other countries. This group of people primarily judged abortion to be a matter of personal choice that does not involve harm or taking of a life. The judgments of those

who thought that abortion is wrong were more varied. The majority thought that abortion should be legal in the United States and other countries. Among those who thought that abortion should be illegal, the majority also thought that it would still be wrong if it were legal or common practice. In the context of differences between (and within) people in evaluations and judgments about abortion, there were no differences in evaluations or judgments about the issues of killing and rape. Virtually all evaluated killing and rape as wrong, thought that the acts should be illegal, and thought that the acts would still be wrong even if legal or common practice.

It is clear that the differences between those who judged abortion wrong and those who judged it acceptable do not lie in general differences in moral reasoning. Both groups reasoned about taking a life and sexual assault in identical ways. The variability and ambiguities in thinking about abortion may be due to several reasons (including perceived conflicts in some circumstances between the life of the fetus and the welfare of the mother), but a central reason is due to assumptions about the start of life. In public debates and in court opinions, it appears that assumptions about the start of life are closely linked to positions on abortion. Many believe that life begins at conception, and therefore evaluate abortion as wrong on the ground that it is the taking of a life. Many others believe that life begins sometime after conception, such as during the last trimester of pregnancy, or at birth, and, thereby, evaluate abortion as acceptable prior to that point (see Dworkin, 1993; and Tribe, 1990). Biologists have not agreed on this matter, and varying assumptions about the start of life have been the basis for legal arguments and opinions. For instance, a Missouri statute, which was appealed in the U.S. Supreme Court (*Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, 1989), stated that "the life of each human being begins at conception." By contrast, in another Supreme Court case (*Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists*, 1986), Justice John Paul Stevens asserted that "there is a fundamental and well recognized difference between a human being and a fetus." In the Webster case, Justice Harry Blackmun reasserted the standard of viability of the fetus (set as the third trimester of pregnancy in Roe v. Wade) as a time states can outlaw abortions. Justice Blackmun's

comments are informative regarding issues of assumptions about the start of life: "The viability line reflects the biological facts and truths of fetal development; it marks that threshold moment prior to which a fetus cannot survive separate from the woman and cannot reasonably and objectively be regarded as a subject of rights or interests distinct from, or paramount to, those of the pregnant woman."

Whether life begins at conception or at a later point involves assumptions of an informational kind that need to be distinguished from moral judgments about harm and the value of life. The research has shown that regardless of their positions on abortion, people maintained the moral judgment that taking a life is wrong and applied that judgment in the same ways when the same assumptions were made about the status of life. A strong correlation was found between evaluations of abortion and assumptions about the start of life. However, there is a fair amount of ambiguity and uncertainty regarding the particular assumption that a fetus is or is not a life. The ambiguities and uncertainties about the start of life appear in the way evaluations of abortion are applied to particular circumstances. For example, many of those who evaluated abortion as acceptable and as a woman's personal choice thought that it would be wrong to exercise that choice if it were used to choose the sex of a child. Ambivalence about the assumptions of the start of life emerged in justifications as to why abortion would be wrong if used as means of choosing the sex of the child. On the other side, many of those who evaluated abortion as wrong on the ground that it is taking a life thought that it would be acceptable if the pregnancy were due to rape. The judgment that abortion is acceptable in the case of rape also reflects ambivalence about the fetus as a life since it would not be acceptable to those people to take a life after birth even if that pregnancy were due to rape (see Turiel et al., 1991).

Although there is ambiguity among biologists and laypersons about when life begins, people do, in many circumstances, hold to one or the other assumption. In many situations, people's assumptions about the start of life are strongly correlated with evaluations of abortion as right or wrong. It has also been shown in research by Smetana (1982) that assumptions about the start of life, coupled with evaluations of abortion as right or wrong, are related to decisions women make as

to whether or not to have an abortion. In her research, Smetana included pregnant women who had been referred to family planning agencies. She, too, found that evaluations of abortion were correlated with assumptions about the life of the fetus. She also found that the women's actions were related to these judgments. Evaluations of abortion and assumptions about the start of life were highly predictive of the women's subsequent decisions to terminate or continue their pregnancies. Through this body of research, therefore, we can see that there are strong disagreements and controversies within society regarding abortion. These disagreements show up in people's actions as well. Women's decisions as to whether to actually obtain an abortion are certainly not uniform. People also differ in actions that involve public protests or support for organizations that are or are not in favor of choice in the abortion decision.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Social Harmony and Social Conflict

Do people generally cooperate with each other in harmonious relationships or are they most often in conflicts and disagreements with each other? Throughout this book, I have tried to show that social life encompasses many things, with areas of cooperation and harmony, as well as areas of conflict, disagreement, and struggle. I have also considered the variations that exist in individuals' social thinking and in their actions. Those variations are of a systematic kind, involving the application of different domains of judgment to different types of social situations. The evidence and theoretical approach I have presented are not in accord with the presumption, discussed in previous chapters, that we can speak of attitudes or orientations toward society in general. Social judgments and actions are sufficiently varied and flexible, so individuals cannot be portrayed as possessing general character traits or as reflecting a general type of national character.

In previous chapters, I also touched upon these issues with regard to culture. It is in cultural analyses that we see the most comprehensive efforts at explaining social life as entailing cohesiveness, consistency, and social harmony. Indeed, the societal and cultural perspectives of early twentieth-century scholars like Durkheim and Benedict are good examples of the view that social life involves accommodation to collective or cultural patterns that hang together in cohesive ways, and that, as a consequence, social life is usually not a struggle for individuals. Since participation in the ways of one's society is willingly accepted by individuals, there is no conflict for them in accommodating to its norms

and practices. Insofar as individuals are attached to a well-functioning group, there are no struggles within society. According to Durkheim, for example, conflicts and pathology occur when individuals are disembodied from societal life since an individual cannot exist without society or "deny it without denying himself" (Durkheim, 1906/1974, p. 37). However, societies must be cohesive for individuals to become well integrated into collective life.

Not all have agreed with this perspective on the relations of individuals to society. Most notably, Freud saw the relation in ways diametrically opposed to Durkheim's views. In Freud's view, involvement in society inevitably brings conflict, struggle, and even an element of psychopathology for individuals (see Chapter 5). Given their biological makeup, the restrictions placed by society on individuals' gratification of needs and instincts produce conflict, ambivalence, and a measure of unhappiness. However, society is necessary for survival. Freud viewed life's great compromise as the exchange of the happiness society exacts for the security it provides.

The Freudian world view, while maintaining a fair amount of popularity for a fair amount of time, eventually came to be regarded as too pessimistic. It also came to be regarded as overemphasizing the force of biology on the psyche and antisocial natural propensities. To a large measure, contemporary perspectives on the relation of individuals and culture are in keeping with Durkheim's and Benedict's views of cohesiveness and harmony. Social relationships and social behaviors are regarded as cohesive and harmonious because culture is considered to provide a framework by which individual members act with shared beliefs, values, and a general orientation. Within these perspectives, it is agreement and shared understandings that are considered a central defining feature of culture. It has been asserted (Triandis, 1996) that, in spite of different conceptions of what is central to culture, in defining the concept of culture there is an emphasis on what is shared, be it behaviors, cognitive systems, symbolic systems, or competencies. In the context of these differences, according to Triandis (1996, p. 408), "there is wide agreement that culture consists of *shared* elements . . . that provide the standards for perceiving,

believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those who share a language, a historic period, and a geographic location." Taking this further, Triandis proposes that the psychological construct of "cultural syndromes" can be used to obtain an understanding of cultural differences. According to Triandis (1996, p. 408):

> A cultural syndrome is a pattern of shared attitudes, beliefs, categorizations, self-definitions, norms, role definitions and values that is organized around a theme that can be identified among those who speak a particular language, during a specific historic period, and in a definable geographic region.

Triandis is among those who use the concept of culture and cultural syndromes to distinguish shared orientations, attitudes, and beliefs organized around the themes of individualism or collectivism (a topic I take up in more detail below).

Defining life in cultures through agreement and corresponding harmony leaves out a great deal that goes on in social interactions – as suggested by much I have already considered. It leaves out the tensions, conflicts, and disagreements that are as prevalent in many social interactions. It also leaves out the ambivalences and internal conflicts that individuals experience with regard to cultural practices and social norms. For now, I only note that conflicts, struggles, and ambivalence occur for a variety of reasons and not only, or mainly, as a consequence of societal restrictions on needs or instincts.

Even though, shared elements and social harmony are emphasized in a number of cultural analyses, there is no dearth of research actually showing that many conflicts and oppositions to social norms occur in social relationships during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Of course, conflicts can be seen as part of the acculturation process leading young people to share the cultural orientation or part of the process of leading them to conform to societal standards. However, the research indicates that at all phases of development, conflicts and oppositions continue to occur. Conflicts occur at the same times that children, adolescents, and adults are forming and displaying moral judgments and behaviors and cooperative relationships. Moreover, conflicts and oppositions occur among those who presumably have

already come to acquire the cultural orientation or societal standards – including those who socialize the young (Shantz & Hartup, 1992).

In much of the research, conflict has been defined as social events that involve opposition and disagreement (Shantz, 1987). The findings of conflict in social relationships come from research conducted in various settings and with people of different ages. Some studies have involved observations of young children placed into experimental settings, as well as in home settings with parents and siblings. For instance, children between the ages of 2 and 5 years engage in disputes with their siblings, as well as parents, mainly over issues of the ownership and possession of objects (such as toys). These conflicts and disputes are not merely due to the assertion of desires. Young children, of course, get into disputes because they are asserting their needs and wishes. However, children also make claims to entitlements regarding what they own or possess (Ross, 1996). It appears that young children have rudimentary concepts of rights about ownership and do assert those perceived entitlements in conflicts or disputes with others (Ross & Conant, 1992). It has also been found that preschoolers engage in more conflicts with friends than with other children (Ross & Conant, 1992), and that preschool girls engage in more conflicts with boys than with other girls (Killen, 1991). Conflicts, disagreements, and disputes continue among friends throughout the school years, throughout childhood and adolescence, and in adulthood (Collins & Laursen, 1992; Hartup, 1992; Vandell & Bailey, 1992). Another source of frequent conflict is relationships between siblings. During adolescence, conflicts occur in many relationships, including with parents, siblings, friends, romantic relationships, and peers (Collins & Laursen, 1992). Research has also documented what most people know – that conflicts and disagreements occur with some frequency between spouses. The divorce rates in Western cultures attest to the prevalence of marital conflicts. However, disagreements are sharp between spouses who do not divorce. Conflicts occur over issues pertaining to child rearing, household chores, work for women, and much more (Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Hochschild, 1989).

With the body of research on conflict in mind, Shantz and Hartup (1992, p. 1) came to conclusions that, clearly, are discrepant with the

idea that social interactions are framed by shared beliefs and attitudes:

> Conflicts occur everywhere in social and mental life. Whenever people interact – and especially when they interact often – disagreements and oppositions are inevitable. People differ in what they believe, what they know, and what they think should be done and how, as well as what they do, and these differences make conflict with others bound to occur . . . Conflict – between people and within people – are part and parcel of everyday living, and to such an extent that they must be regarded as intrinsic to the human condition.

In asserting that conflict is intrinsic to the human condition, Shantz and Hartup did not mean it in the Freudian sense of an inevitable clash of individual and society due to restrictions placed on instinctual gratification. Rather, they meant that conflict is a consequence of differences in people's beliefs, knowledge, and prescriptions for how people should act. Most of the findings on conflict that Shantz and Hartup drew upon were obtained by researchers who also did not adhere to Freudian theory.

BOTH OPPOSITION AND SOCIABILITY

At this time, we do not know if oppositions and conflicts are more or less prevalent at certain ages. It is likely, however, that amount of conflict does not vary by age. It may be that the extent of conflict varies by circumstances, and that types of conflict vary by age. The nature of people's relationships and social, cultural, and political contexts have a bearing on the extent and types of oppositions and conflicts that occur. From the point of view of children's development, it is striking that oppositions and conflicts actually exist alongside sociability. Starting not too long ago, psychologists have been emphasizing that children are not simply egotistic, self-interested beings who need to be socialized to control their needs and comply with societal standards (Batson, 1990). These ideas have both stemmed from and led to research on young children's positive emotions and actions. There is now a fair amount of evidence that young children affiliate with others, are attached to others, and engage in actions aimed at promoting the welfare of others and preventing harm to persons.

Research on the positive side of children's social interactions is extensive and has included a number of different types of actions. Although there is controversy over how to interpret the findings, and different theories have been offered, there is substantial evidence that young children are not solely or mainly oriented to their needs, interests, or gratification of desires. Moreover, the evidence comes from experimental situations and observations of naturally occurring social interactions in the home and, sometimes, schools and playgrounds (for reviews see Damon, 1988; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998; Radke-Yarrow, Zahn-Waxler, & Chapman, 1983). It has been documented that a variety of positive actions occur with frequency in early and late childhood. Children display emotions of sympathy and empathy, for example, in their reactions to the distress of others. In their own way, they try to comfort a sibling who is crying or a mother who is upset. It has also been shown that children engage in what is referred to as prosocial actions – actions intended to benefit others. Children commonly help their mothers take care of a sibling or with household chores. Cooperation and sharing are frequently observed in home settings and in play. Children contribute to the achievement of a common goal. They willingly share toys or other possessions. The expression of emotions like sympathy, which is related to prosocial actions, continues to occur into late childhood and adolescence. The body of research indicates that as children become older, prosocial actions occur with more frequency (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998).

The findings of early positive emotions and actions directed toward benefiting others are impressive and have led some to conclude that human beings are primarily sociable and mainly oriented to cooperation and promoting the well-being of others. Explanations of the sources of these actions vary. Early display of positive emotions and actions is taken by some as evidence of biological underpinnings (Wilson, 1993; Wright, 1994), and by others of effective teaching of societal standards (Kochanska, 1993). To be sure, it is recognized that some people do not act in positive ways – either because of biological factors or inadequate socialization. Often lost in these interpretations, however, is another equally pervasive side of children's behaviors – which is that they are not always positively oriented in their

relationships with others. They oppose others in many instances and are involved in many conflicts. The research actually shows that social development heads in more than one direction – in paths that may appear contradictory.

The different directions of social development should not be seen to reflect different theoretical positions. In some cases, the same researchers have obtained findings of these multiple orientations. For instance, Dunn and her colleagues (Dunn, 1987, 1988; Dunn, Brown, & Maguire, 1995; Dunn & Munn, 1985, 1986, 1987; Dunn & Slomkowski, 1992) have documented that in childhood, there is the development of prosocial actions as well as oppositions and increased aggressiveness. Furthermore, a coexistence of prosocial actions and opposition and resistance has been observed among Japanese children (Holloway, 2000). Children's opposition and resistance are directed toward mothers, siblings, and peers, as well as with regard to rules and prohibitions. On the basis of studies that followed family social interactions when children were from $1^1/_2$ to 3 years of age, Dunn (1988, p. 15) concluded that "the evidence for the growth of assertive and resistant behavior shown by children toward their mothers was striking." Children often argued with their mothers, refused to comply with their requests, acted aggressively toward them, and destroyed objects. Children also attempted to mislead their mothers so as to get their way, teased and attempted to upset mothers, questioned rules, and repeatedly violated rules and prohibitions. These types of actions were also evident in children's relations with siblings and peers. In these relationships, there is an increase, with age, in disputes, arguments, teasing, aggression, taking of objects, and competition. Some research has also shown that young children who seem to be highly empathic with others are also the ones who show intense aggression towards others (Blasi, 1997). We need to keep in mind, however, that all these attitudes and actions coexist with sociability. As put by Dunn (1988, p. 109): "Very young children do not only fight, argue, and laugh at the misfortune and misdeeds of others; they also cooperate with others in play at an astonishingly early age, and with an appreciation of the others' goals and moods that is impressive and delightful to observe."

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I have noted that it is not only very young children who show a coexistence of conflict, opposition, and resistance with "impressive and delightful" cooperation. If it applied only to young children, then it would be possible to say that the coexistence reflected the transitional process of becoming socialized to accept societal standards, share in the cultural ways, and comply with the directives of those who are guiding their development. The expectation then would be that with age, people will cooperate, share, and comply much more and engage in conflicts and oppositions much less. The evidence is not in accord with that expectation, since the co-occurrence of the two orientations continues into later childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Although the types of oppositions and conflicts may change with age, there is no evidence that they lessen.

The presence of seemingly contrary social orientations across a wide age range is not haphazard, nor does it represent a contradictory state of affairs. These seemingly opposite ways of relating to others are connected to the judgments children begin to develop at a young age. Children's moral judgments, which are linked to emotions of sympathy and empathy, contribute to prosocial actions, sharing, and cooperation. At the same time, moral judgments can also entail oppositions to the demands of others insofar as they are perceived as unfair or to violate rights. Children's conceptions about actions and areas they consider to be under personal jurisdiction also make for tensions, conflicts, and negotiations with others – especially with parents.

There are at least three ways that conceptions of the realm of the personal can be sources of conflict, opposition, and resistance. One is when people judge restrictions on their activities from a moral perspective either because the restrictions are seen to be unfair or unequally placed on one group by another (especially if the restrictions are perceived to benefit a more powerful group at the expense of a less powerful group). It is easier to find examples of these sources of conflict among adults than children. The examples from the Moroccan harem and Iran are of this type, as are issues around racial discrimination. However, it is likely that even young children sometimes will object to unequal treatment based on race or gender, or the perceived preferential treatment of a sibling by parents.

Although little research has been done on this type of conflict or opposition, recent research bears indirectly on the issue. Studies (Theimer, Killen, & Stagnor, 2001) of preschool children's judgments have shown that they consider it wrong for a group of children to exclude another from playing with them because of a gender-based stereotypical activity (e.g., exclusion of a boy from a group playing with dolls). Similarly, school age children and adolescents judge it wrong, for reasons of fairness and rights, to exclude someone from a playgroup for reasons of gender or race stereotypes (Killen & Stagnor, 2001). As in the research on rights, context did make a difference in judgments about excluding children from a group. In some contexts, it was judged that for the goal of a better functioning group, it would be justified to exclude a child whose abilities do not fit. In those contexts, children balanced moral considerations against the most efficient ways for a group to attain its goals.

A second way that conceptions of the personal realm can be a source of conflict is when people differ as to whether actions should be regulated by convention. Sometimes people from different cultural backgrounds (or groups within the culture) who have come to interact with each other may disagree on social conventions – though such differences are not necessarily sources of conflict, since people do accommodate each other's customs and conventions (Turiel, 1983). However, disagreements about the conventional requirements of actions are fairly common between members of different generations. Sometimes, younger people are in conflict with their parents, and more generally with the existing system, as to the necessity that certain actions be regulated by convention (e.g., with regard to dress, sexual practices). These types of disagreements are not restricted to childhood or adolescence as they also occur between younger and older adults.

The third source, which is more likely to occur with parents and their children or adolescents, is conflict due to the timing as to when young people are judged able to act upon their personal choices. Parents attempt to place restrictions on actions of their children or adolescents at certain points in time even though they would regard those actions to be under personal jurisdiction at later times in development. This

occurs, for example, with when to date or drink alcohol or decide upon school work. Their offspring sometimes see the issues differently.

There is research showing that disagreements and conflicts over personal and conventional matters occur between parents and young children, as well as adolescents. The research conducted by Nucci and Weber (1995), which included observations of social interactions within families and interviews with children and mothers, showed that mothers do grant some arenas of personal choice to young children (3 and 4 years of age), and that sometimes the personal realm is a source of dissonance between children and parents. The context with regard to the dissonance is, first, young children's judgments about the personal realm. Unlike moral and conventional issues, the children judged that for the personal issues, a child did not have to comply with an adult's request, that an adult's authority was not necessarily legitimate, and that the decision could be left to a child. In addition, these young children judged that the moral acts would be wrong even if there were no rules, but that actions in the personal realm were permissible in the absence of a rule. Another part of the context is that the mothers thought that their children should be able to make choices with regard to aspects of dress, food, play, and friendships. It is important to note that these were not simply mothers who permitted their children to do whatever they wanted, since the mothers did think that restrictions should be placed on acts involving harm to others, acts that might result in harm to the child, and the violation of religious norms. The observations in the home of interactions between mothers and children revealed that conflicts and negotiations occurred over events involving personal issues, not ones involving moral and conventional issues. Although the mothers thought that children should have the leeway to make their own decisions about certain personal activities, there were times when for various reasons they did try to direct those types of activities. Some of the time the children resisted those directives and attempted to assert their own choices. Sometimes negotiations ensued between mother and child.

Other studies eliciting American and Japanese mothers' judgments about these types of issues and their reports of what occurred in the

home yielded results consistent with the observations in the Nucci and Weber study (Nucci & Smetana, 1996; Yamada, 2000). In the study conducted in the United States, the mothers (from middle- and working-class backgrounds) had children of preschool ages (4–5 years) and school ages (6–7 years). In Japan, the mothers were of preschoolers only. In both countries, the mothers thought that there were activities pertaining to choices of clothing, food, play, and friendships that were within the child's jurisdiction, and that such choices help foster autonomy and competence. The mothers also said that they did set limits on actions that are potentially harmful to the child or others. They recognized that sometimes they do set limits on personal matters, which could result in conflicts with their children. In this regard, reports from mothers coincided with observations of social interactions in the Nucci and Weber study.

The study with American mothers included children of somewhat different ages. As might be expected, older children were given more leeway to make their own choices. Matters become more complicated during adolescence. In many families, concerns about personal decision making become of great importance. Adolescence is a period in which parents have multiple goals for their children. This is not to say that parents do not have many goals for younger children, but in adolescence the implementation of goals becomes of more immediate concern and the nature of the adolescent's goals and activities changes.

Over the years, of course, there has been a great deal of discussion, theorizing, and research on adolescence by developmental psychologists. Some controversies exist as to whether conflict with parents is an inevitable part of the adolescent years (for biological or psychological reasons) and over the extent to which conflicts occur. That conflicts do occur is generally accepted (Collins & Laursen, 1992; Smetana, 1995a). The ways parents and adolescents think about the moral, social conventional, and personal aspects of family conflicts have been illuminated in a systematic program of research by Smetana and her colleagues (see Smetana, 1995a, for a review). The variety of studies included Caucasian and African-American working-class and middle-class families in the United States and working-class Chinese families

in Hong Kong. The studies have also included divorced and two-parent families. Different means for studying perspectives on conflicts have been used: Parents and adolescents were presented with hypothetical situations depicting transgressions within the family of moral, conventional, personal, and mixed (conventional and personal) kinds; parents and adolescents described conflicts that actually occur in their families; and parents and adolescents were observed discussing actual family conflicts.

A consistent result of these various studies has been that there is little disagreement or conflict over issues in the moral domain – whether it be in judgments about the hypothetical situations or in descriptions of actual family conflicts. With regard to the hypothetically stated situations, adolescents thought that the moral issues were legitimately regulated by parents, and that parents do have a duty or obligation to regulate the behavior of their adolescents in the moral domain, insofar as parents are upholding and not violating moral precepts. The judgments of the adolescents corresponded with those of parents. In addition, adolescents and parents rarely included moral issues when generating actual conflicts that occurred in their families. Insofar as such conflicts were mentioned, they involved perceptions on the part of adolescents that parents had been unfair in adjudicating conflicts with a sibling or a friend. For the most part, however, there was agreement between adolescents and their parents, and parents were granted legitimacy with regard to moral issues. Parents were also granted the legitimacy to guide and regulate the behavior of adolescents in the conventional realm (though less clearly than with moral issues). The adolescents generally accepted that parents have discretion regarding activities like doing chores in the home, addressing adults in appropriate ways, and exhibiting certain social manners.

There were divisions of three types between parents and adolescents, revolving around social conventions and areas of personal choice. One type of division was that certain activities were judged as conventional by parents and personal by adolescents. In judging the personal and mixed issues of a hypothetical nature, parents more often than adolescents saw the issues (e.g., talking on the phone, watching television, seeing disapproved friends) in terms of the need to

adhere to conventions and judged that the activities should be under the guidance of parents. Adolescents, more often than parents, saw the situations as entailing personal choices. However, with increasing age of the adolescents in the family, both parents and adolescents accorded increased personal choices to the activities of the adolescents depicted in the hypothetical situations.

There was a similar pattern of thinking about the conflicts actually experienced in families. A large number of conflicts were generated, including those around chores, appearance, homework, relationships with others, curfew, and financial matters (Smetana, 1989a). In justifying their side of the dispute, parents often had reasons of a conventional kind. They thought, for example, that family rules needed to be followed, parental authority needed to be maintained, and nonconformity on the part of adolescents would lead to negative social consequences (disapproval from others, embarrassing a parent). Adolescents were aware of the parents' perspectives on these conflicts. Nevertheless, they often disagreed with the parental perspective that the activities in question required adherence for conventional reasons. In a few instances when adolescents approached conflicts from a conventional perspective, it was to assert that peer-group conventions should have priority over the conventions espoused by parents. For the most part, the adolescents viewed the actions as ones that should be left up to their own decisions. In identifying activities as part of their personal jurisdiction, the adolescents argued that they were beyond the boundaries of legitimate control by parents.

In some situations, therefore, adolescents disagree with their parents as to whether activities should be restricted by convention. It also appears, as a second source of disagreement, that parents judge a set of activities to be part of the personal realm, but believe that their child is too young to make choices about those activities. In other words, the parents do not have a blanket injunction against people making personal choices about those acts. For instance, parents may treat these acts as personal for themselves or other adults. Evidence that this type of discrepancy exists and is a source of conflict comes from the finding that parents of preadolescents and young adolescents believe that they have the authority to regulate those actions,

whereas the parents of older adolescents no longer think so. In many instances, the younger adolescents come into conflicts about such issues because they judge the activities as personal, think that they should be able to act upon those choices, and judge that, therefore, their parents do not have legitimate authority to regulate those acts. Perhaps some of the most intense conflicts occur over behaviors that might place adolescents at some risk. These include smoking, drinking, drug use, sexuality, and riding a motorcycle. Adults do regard some of those activities as under an adult's personal jurisdiction, but are concerned with the prudential aspects when it comes to young people, especially their own children. Conflicts occur when adolescents believe that they are free to engage in acts that may result in harm to themselves (or when they are confident that no harm will result).

A variant on these conflicts, representing a third source, are events that involve a mixture of convention and personal choice. This particular source of conflict is the most frequent, according to both parents and adolescents (Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Most probably, the mixed issues frequently result in disputes because they provide a context in which parents will focus on one side – the conventional – and adolescents will focus on the other side – the personal. Indeed, it was found that parents emphasize the need to adhere to the conventions, which they regard as legitimizing the parents' authority, whereas adolescents emphasize the personal nature of the acts. It is the possibility of emphasizing different components, about which parents and adolescents reason, that renders mixed events the most frequent source of conflict between parents and adolescents. In a sense, events with components from different domains allow each party to do his/her job. Parents attempt to guide their children into continued or increased concern with and participation in the social system of the family, as well as the more general social organization. Adolescents attempt to assert their personhood and the increased autonomy that comes with approaching adulthood. Thereby, adolescents also attempt to guide their parents into releasing some control and regulation of their children as they mature into the threshold of adulthood, and to a recognition of their rights and prerogatives.

We can conclude, therefore, that there is not always correspondence between the ways parents and their adolescents interpret and evaluate social events. Although parents and adolescents alike identify the same domains of judgment, they differ regarding the legitimacy of parental authority over some issues in the personal domain. They also differ in their interpretations of events with mixtures of personal and conventional considerations – which produce conflicts. Adolescents do agree with parents in the ways they judge moral events and do attribute legitimacy to parental authority. However, children and adolescents do not accept the legitimacy of parental authority with regard to parental directives to engage in acts considered morally wrong.

WHAT IS IT THAT IS SHARED (SUPPOSEDLY) ?

It will be recalled that Shantz and Hartup (1992) asserted that disagreements and oppositions are inevitable when people interact, that conflict is part and parcel of everyday living and intrinsic to the human condition. In many ways, the research does show us that disagreements, oppositions, and conflicts are, indeed, very much part of childhood and adolescence. A few of the studies I considered were done in non-Western cultures. But since the bulk of the research was done in the United States, it could be argued that we do not know that conflict is inevitable. Furthermore, it could be argued by those who define culture as entailing shared elements that in actuality conflict in a nation like the United States stems from what is shared – in two respects. One would be that there is a shared orientation in the culture to individualism and all that brings with it. One thing individualism brings is a focus on the individual, the self as separate from others, with everyone attempting to further their personal goals. The consequence of this shared feature is a fair degree of conflict insofar as the attempts at attaining different people's personal goals clash. The second respect that the shared can result in conflict stems from the clash of cultures. It could be argued that in a nation like the United States, there is diversity of cultures, such that the shared values and practices of one may sometimes clash with those of another.

I do not know that anyone has made this particular combination of arguments to explain conflict in the nation (the clash-of-cultures argument is not uncommon, but the research shows that conflicts exist within families). The argument can be made, nevertheless, for those who maintain that cultures are defined by shared elements and that what is shared in many cultures is an orientation to individualism or collectivism. In earlier chapters, I introduced the propositions of individualism and collectivism as ways of characterizing cultures. Several of the commentators on the moral decline of America have worked with the idea that it is a highly individualistic society. In Chapter 2, I noted that the idea that cultures form cohesive and integrated patterns was given substance through the specification of the orientations to individualism or collectivism. There I mentioned the philosophical underpinnings given to the ideas by MacIntyre (1981) in his analyses of emotion and tradition in the shift from premodern to modern societies. MacIntyre characterized individuals in premodern societies as identifying themselves through roles and duties in the group, and in modern societies as free of the bonds of hierarchy. As I also noted in that chapter, an anthropological version of the same ideas was put forth by Geertz (1974/1984), who distinguished between unbounded and bounded conceptions of self.

Some who label their work as cultural psychology have attempted to fill in the psychological details of individualism and collectivism (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Markus, Mullally, & Kitayama, 1997; Sampson, 1977; Shweder & Bourne, 1982; Shweder et al., 1997; Triandis, 1989, 1990, 1996). The concepts of individualism and collectivism are meant to capture differences between cultures, with their distinctive psychologies, bearing on, especially, how persons are defined, how they interact with each other, and the type of morality held. The distinction between individualism and collectivism has been regarded by some – particularly in the 1980s and early 1990s – as a sharp one. As an example, Geertz (1974/1984, p. 126) stated that "the actual conceptions involved vary from group to group, and often quite sharply." Similarly, Shweder and Bourne (1982, p. 194) drew a clear distinction in claiming that for members of "sociocentric organic cultures"

(collectivist), the independent or individualistic concept of self "must feel alien, a bizarre idea."

Shweder and Bourne also asserted that different peoples "adopt distinct world views." Differences in world views regarding self and persons were put as follows by Markus and Kitayama (1991): "In many Western cultures, there is a faith in the coherent separateness of distinct persons. The normative imperative of this culture is to become independent from others and to discover and express one's unique attributes. Achieving the cultural goal of independence requires construing oneself as an individual whose behavior is organized and made meaningful primarily by reference to one's own internal repertoire of thoughts, feelings, and action, rather than by reference to the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others" (p. 226). In the contrasting construal of interdependence of persons, according to Markus and Kitayama, "many non-Western cultures insist on the fundamental *connectedness* of human beings to each other. A normative imperative of these cultures is to maintain this interdependence among individuals" (p. 227).

In later writings a less sharp distinction has been drawn between cultures, in that more room is left for some mixture of the two variations (Markus et al., 1997; Shweder et al., 1997). Nevertheless, Western and non-Western cultures are still seen to have a primary emphasis of one type of orientation or the other that does serve to frame social relationships. The continued emphasis on a coherent orientation at the cultural level is evident in the propositions articulated by Kitayama (2000). In North America, he asserted, the autonomous, independent self attempts to cause changes in the social environment with an "inside-out perspective," whereas the interdependent self of non-Westerners, especially in Japan, is responsive to others by taking an "outside-in perspective." For North Americans "the belief that the self is the epicenter of causation on the surrounding encompasses a relatively enhanced sense of self as being in control, efficacious, competent, and esteemed" (Kitayama, 2000, p. 1144). In contrast, "the belief that encompassing social relationships serve as an overarching frame into which the self is to be adjusted and fitted is likely to promote a highly relational, embedded sense of the self" (p. 1145).

In these formulations, the United States is often identified as the quintessential individualistic society, but individualism is also prevalent in other countries, such as Australia, Canada, England, and New Zealand (Triandis, 1990). Collectivistic cultures are found in Japan, India, China, and the Middle East, as well as in Africa, Latin America, and southern Europe (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The person conceived as an autonomous agent is central in the individualistic framework, whereas the group as an interconnected and interdependent network of relationships is central in the collectivistic framework. In the former, personal goals are primary; in the latter, shared goals are primary. A core feature of individualistic cultures is that the highest value is accorded to the person as *detached* from others and as independent of the social order. People are, therefore, oriented to self-reliance, independence, and resistance to social pressure for conformity or obedience to authority. Collectivistic cultures, by contrast, are oriented to tradition, duty, obedience to authority, interdependence, and social harmony. Hierarchy, status, and role distinctions predominate.

A part of the packages of individualism and collectivism is morality. In each type, a different kind of morality is communicated to children and reproduced by them as they grow into adulthood. Individualism includes a "rights-based" morality, while collectivism brings with it a "duty-based" morality. The cultural concept of autonomous individuals organizes the morality of Western cultures by virtue of a separation of the social order from the natural order, which entails defining the moral as "free contracts, promises, or consent among autonomous individuals" (Shweder et al., 1987, p. 3). In this conception, moral authority resides in individuals who can voluntatily enter into contracts and promises. In a duty-based morality, the social order, which is conceived as part of nature, is the organizing feature of morality. It is the moral code dictating duties that is important, "while the individual per se and his various interior states, preferences, appetites, intentions, or motives are of little interest or concern" (Shweder et al., 1987, pp. 20–21). Moreover, duties and role obligations take precedence over individual rights or freedoms.

This way of distinguishing types of morality gives some coherence to the lists of different moral standards sometimes provided to

demonstrate cultural variations. In Chapter 2, I discussed some of the practices in lists generated by Benedict (1934) and Shweder (1994) that included practices like parricide, infanticide, suicide, polygamy, arranged marriages, and inequalities in family relationships. It is proposed that cultures with a morality based on duties would be more likely to have standards or codes that are fixed with regard to roles in the social system (which would include fulfilling specified roles in the social hierarchy) or with regard to maintaining the natural order of things. In an effort at documenting this viewpoint, a study was conducted by Shweder et al. (1987) comparing the judgments of people in India and the United States. The people studied in India were "untouchables" and Brahmans living in an old temple town. The Brahmans were orthodox Hindus whose activities included temple duty, and whose status was defined by their role in the ritual activities of the temple.

In the study, participants were presented with a number of short descriptions of acts that might be judged as moral or social transgressions. It was found that there were discrepancies between the judgments of Indians and Americans with regard to practices that for Indians involved religious and metaphysical considerations. Some examples of these types of practices are the following: a widow does not eat fish, a widow does not wear jewelry and bright clothing, a son does not get a haircut or eat chicken immediately after his father's death. Indians judged violations of these practices to be wrong, but, not surprisingly, Americans did not. Since Indians judged as wrong actions that pertained to matters like what food to eat or what clothing to wear (actions that seemingly did not pertain to harm or fairness), it was concluded by Shweder et al. (1987) that social convention is not part of the thinking of Indians, that is, of people in a duty-based collectivistic culture.

Interpreting judgments about these types of practices solely in terms of a moral commitment to cultural practices omits the role of assumptions about reality in the judgments people make. We have already seen that informational assumptions are implicated in the conclusions people come to regarding abortion, as well as other matters, such as corporal punishment (as discussed in Chapter 6). Especially in

comparing moral judgments between cultures, it is necessary to consider possible different informational assumptions connected to social practices, including assumptions about the psychological, the natural, and an afterlife. Differences in such assumptions can give the false appearance of differences in moral judgments (Asch, 1952; Duncker, 1939; Hatch, 1983, Wertheimer, 1935). To illustrate, Asch argued that in the cultural practice of putting one's elderly parents to death, "there prevails the belief that people continue into the next world the same existence as in the present and that they maintain the same condition of health and vigor at the time of death" (Asch, 1952, p. 377). In that case, the practice would be guided by the same concerns with the welfare of one's parents that exist in cultures without that practice. Elaborating on the same example, Hatch (1983) has clearly laid out the issues at work in his volume on *Culture and Morality*:

> [T]he evidence is open to dispute: anthropologists simply have not established that a pattern of radical variability exists within the sphere of moral beliefs. The differences in values that are cited – for example, the differences in views regarding parricide, whereby some societies feel it right for children to put their parents to death, while others feel that such a practice is deplorable – may reflect differences in existential belief rather than morals. . . . Judgments of value are always made against a background of existential or factual beliefs and assumptions, consequently what appears to be a radical difference in values between societies may actually reflect different judgments of reality . . . let us say that a society which has the custom of putting parents to death at an early age reasons in doing so that people are better off in the after life if they enter it while still physically vigorous. Both they and we presumably agree on the moral principle of looking out for our parents' interests, and our disagreement is really over the nature of the afterlife, and hence about what their interests are. This is a matter of factual beliefs, not values. (pp. 66–67)

Similarly, the research (Shweder et al., 1987) comparing the judgments of Indians and Americans regarding some practices related to food and dress (e.g., a widow wearing jewelry and bright clothing) has not established that they differ in moral or conventional judgments. A closer examination of factual beliefs or informational assumptions (Turiel, et al., 1987) has shown that several of these practices are linked

to assumptions about an afterlife and actions on earth that can affect unobservable entities such as souls and deceased ancestors. For example, it is believed that if a widow eats fish regularly it will cause offense to her husband's spirit. As another example, it is believed that if a son were to eat chicken the day after his father's death, it would result in the failure of the father's soul to receive salvation. Adherence to these practices among Indians is connected to harm and its prevention – in these cases to nonearthly and nonobserved entities (for more details, see Turiel et al., 1987). Since these types of practices are said to affect nonobservable entities (spirits, souls), it is not easy for earthly beings to verify whether harm occurs.

Therefore, assumptions made by people from India about an afterlife can serve to provide a context of objects of judgment that includes the possibility of inflicting harm by eating certain foods at certain times or by certain people wearing certain clothes. This parallels differences in decisions about abortion or corporal punishment associated with informational assumptions. That Indians and Americans make similar moral judgments about harm and fairness was documented in the Shweder et al. (1987) study, as well as in other research (Bersoff & Miller, 1993; Madden, 1992; Miller and Bersoff, 1992; Miller, Bersoff, & Hardwood, 1990; Miller & Luthar, 1989). In the Shweder et al. study, for example, it was found that Indians and Americans judged a number of moral transgressions in the same ways. These included a father's violation of a promise to his son, hospital workers refusing to treat an accident victim, a child destroying another child's property, and discriminating against invalids. Other studies showed not only that additional issues are judged in moral terms by Indians, but that they do make judgments in conventional terms.

According to Shweder et al. (1987), however, not all actions resulting in harm or unfairness are judged in the same ways by Indians and Americans. Two of the examples yielding such differences, which pertained to gender and social hierarchy, also illustrate why it is that the supposedly shared features in a collectivistic culture are said to result in harmony and not conflict. One of the examples depicted a son who claims most of his deceased father's property, and does not allow his sister to obtain much of the inheritance. Indians judged this

acceptable, while Americans did not. That was also the case for an item describing a husband who beats his wife "black and blue" after she disobeys him by going to a movie alone without his permission. The nature of supposed interdependence in duties dictated by social hierarchy was described by Shweder et al. (1987, p. 71) as follows:

> Oriya Brahmans do not view beating an errant wife as an instance of arbitrary assault, and they do not believe it is unfair to choose the son over the daughter in matters of life and inheritance . . . [They] believe that beating a wife who goes to the movies without permission is roughly equivalent to corporal punishment for a private in the army who leaves the military base without permission. For Oriyas there are rationally appealing analogical mappings between the family unit and military units (differentiated roles and status obligations in the service of the whole, hierarchical control, drafting and induction, etc.). One thing the family is not, for Oriyas, is a voluntary association among equal individuals.

Whether people in India think about the family unit analogously to a military unit is a topic I take up in the following chapters. However, the analogy does point to the existence of hierarchy in some social relationships and to how the idea of collectivism as a cultural orientation is taken to mean that disagreements or conflicts do not exist between people in dominant and subordinate positions. Other aspects of social hierarchy within the family, based on gender, are illustrated by some of the other findings. Indians judged that it is wrong for a woman to eat with her husband's elder brother, that it is wrong for a husband to massage the legs of his wife, and that it is wrong for a husband to cook dinner for his wife. Intimacy should not exist among certain family members, such as between a woman and her husband's elder brother. A husband must not give his wife a massage or cook for her because he "is like a god and his wife is his devotee and the god can never be the servant of the devotee" (Shweder et al., 1987, p. 137).

Another area where hierarchical relationships exist in a traditional culture like India is among people of different castes. Shweder et al. (1987) also propose that the morality of Indians includes the idea of "purity," communicating to children that they should avoid sources of impurity and uncleanliness. One of the items pertained to what

women can do and whom they can come in contact with during their menstrual periods; contact should be avoided because a menstruating woman is polluted. Another source of pollution is contact with people of a lower caste: "Oriya children learn that 'touching' can be dangerous. They learn that 'purity,' 'cleanliness,' and status go together. Just as the pure must be protected from the impure, the higher status and the lower status must be kept at a distance. These ideas are effectively conveyed in several ways . . . the culture is providing the child with a practical moral commentary in which one of the many messages is ultimately that menstrual blood, feces, and lower status go together" (Shweder et al., 1987, pp. 74–75).

Should it not be expected that the relationships of dominance and subordination, as well as the restrictions placed on females and those of lower castes would produce a good deal of disagreement, discontent, and conflict? This is not expected by those who presume that culture consists of shared elements – especially when what is shared is an orientation to duties and interdependence. Consider additional propositions regarding the culture in India, complementing the idea that the family unit is analogous to a military unit, which were put forth subsequent to the research I described. Perhaps recognizing that moral judgments about harm, justice, and even rights are held by people in India, Shweder and his colleagues (Shweder et al., 1997) appear to have somewhat tempered their proposition regarding the separation of rights-based and duty-based moralities, and elaborated on it. They propose that there are three major types of ethics found throughout the world: the ethics of autonomy, community, and divinity. Although the idea that the three types of ethics can be found in most cultures broadens the scope of the analyses beyond the dichotomy of rights and duties, it is still presumed that each culture has a predominant orientation. In India, community and divinity are dominant, whereas autonomy prevails in the United States. In Indian culture, the ethics of autonomy, based on concepts of justice, harm, and rights is subordinated to and in the service of the ethics of community and divinity.

In an ethic of community, a person's identity is associated with status and relationships to others to a much greater extent than

individuality. Relationships are part of hierarchical orderings, in which people in subordinate and dominant positions are obligated to protect and look after each other's interests. Social hierarchy, based on *asymmetrical* reciprocity, entails shared understandings and mutual obligations: "The person in the hierarchical position is obligated to protect and satisfy the wants of the subordinate person in specified ways. The subordinate person is also obligated to look after the interests and well-being of the superordinate person . . . The understood moral obligations of the interdependent 'other' in such a relationship is sensitive responsiveness to the perceived or expressed needs of one's interdependent self" (Shweder et al., 1997, p. 145). They also provide a concrete example: "[W]ives should be obedient to their husbands, and husbands should be sensitive and responsive to the needs, desires and inclinations of their wives. That is why the theme of 'selves' or 'souls' clusters with the themes of duty, hierarchy, and interdependence." Shweder et al. use the metaphor of feudal ethics as "central to Oriya ethical argumentation in the context of communitarian concerns."

The metaphor of feudal ethics is said to be difficult for Americans to understand because it does not fit well with their "free-market mentality." This is because feudal ethics entail an interdependence of people whereby those in superordinate positions take care of and are responsible for those in subordinate positions, while those in subordinate positions maintain allegiance to and make sacrifices for those in superordinate positions. In this view, therefore, some cultures lead people toward interdependence whether they are in dominant or subordinate positions. They develop a "duty-based" morality where they "take care of one's own," which contrasts with the orientation of Americans to independence and "survival of the fittest" in a "rights-based" morality. As put by Shweder et al. (1997, pp. 146–147): "The particular wisdom of the South Asian discourse of community is that the well-being of persons who live or work together or share other life projects is interdependent. If your actions weaken those you depend upon (whether in the upward or downward direction), they weaken you. This is true whether you are the 'lord' or the 'servant'." There is little disagreement or conflict between lord and servant,

between man and woman. In this view, conflicts between spouses, so evident in Western cultures, are largely avoided through the wisdom of interdependence.

Another way of framing a similar idea that conflicts do not occur in hierarchies has been applied to social relationships in Japan (Rothbaum et al., 2000). Rothbaum et al. proposed that in Japan relationships are framed through a lens of accommodation, in which "symbiotic harmony" is most valued. This contrasts with the lens of individuation in American society that often produces "generative tension." The consequence is that unlike in the United States, relationships in Japan involve unconditional loyalty between partners, which stems from clearly established roles and a valuing of commitment. In this formulation, too, something akin to interdependence produces situations free of disagreements and conflicts within hierarchically organized relationships.

In these types of communitarian–cultural analyses of non-Western cultures, it is presumed, first of all, that for all people interdependence and caring for each other are primary. In these analyses, there is no discussion of whether people use their positions of dominance to assert their own prerogatives, interests, and entitlements. Furthermore, insofar as burdens are borne by those in subordinate positions, it is said that they are accepted because of the influence on individuals of collective representations and because of the benefits of interdependence.

GENDER: ANOTHER SOURCE OF COHESIVENESS AND CONSISTENCY?

It is often the case that in traditional cultures men are in dominant positions, and women in subordinate positions in the social hierarchy. Interdependence among people in different positions of power supposedly makes for social harmony. Another way that common or shared perspectives have been attributed to groups is in the proposition that females have an orientation to morality and social relationship that differs from that of males (Gilligan, 1982). However, this view, on the one hand, embodies the distinction between individualism

and collectivism, and, on the other hand, is not in line with the proposition that cultures in different parts of the world divide on this dimension. In that case, within a nation like the United States, something akin to culture has been attributed to the world views of females as a group and to males as a group (see also Tannen, 1990).

In drawing gender distinctions in morality, the orientation of females has been described in ways that closely resemble the characterizations of collectivism, and the orientation of males is characterized in individualistic ways. The shorthand labels for the two types are a morality of care, associated with females, and a morality of justice, associated with males. The morality of care is linked to concepts of self or persons as attached to social networks, whereas the morality of justice is linked to concepts of self as autonomous and detached from social networks. The female definition of self is closely linked to attachment and interdependence, but the male definition of self is based on a separation from others (Gilligan, 1986). Not unlike the cultural distinctions of duty-based and rights-based moralities, a morality of care is concerned with relationships, care for others, and responsibility, while a morality of justice is concerned with rights and maintaining individual autonomy.

Introducing gender differences of this sort complicates matters greatly, since interdependence is attributed to one group in the culture, and independence and autonomy are attributed to another group. In that case, there would be disagreements and conflicts between the two groups within the culture. The extent of shared elements and harmony would break down considerably.

However, the breakdown of the shared and the consistency implied in the propositions of care and justice orientations turns out to be more extensive – as shown by research conducted to examine the proposition of gender differences in moral judgments. In the first place, variability has been found from study to study in the extent of judgments of one type by either males or females, and several studies have found that most people use both types (Gilligan & Attanuci, 1988). A number of studies also demonstrate that there are variations by contexts in the ways each type of judgment is applied by females and males (see Turiel, 1998a). Those findings of contextual variations are in keeping

with the findings of contextual variations in concepts of rights, and acts of conformity or obedience to authority. It appears, therefore, that just as individualism is not a general orientation of Americans, care, interdependence, or autonomy and rights are not general orientations that apply to females or males.

These findings lend support to the argument, voiced especially by women scholars, that depicting females as primarily oriented to care and interdependence reflects a long-standing stereotype (Abu-Lughod, 1991; Okin, 1989; Pollitt, 1992). For instance, Pollitt has argued that women are stereotyped as nurturing and caring persons who are not concerned with independence and justice. Pollit did not propose that women are not nurturing and caring. Rather, she maintained that they also assert independence and are committed to rights and justice. She argues, moreover, that the stereotyping of women serves to reinforce their subordination to men. As persons in positions of power in society, it is to the benefit of men to encourage the idea that women are concerned with care, because men, in addition to children, are the main beneficiaries of women's nurturance. More generally, the economic and societal structures of power, in which men are in positions of influence and economic independence (at least middle- and upper-class men), impose the roles of caretaker and nurturer on women. In Pollitt's view, women can and do act independently and do assert rights, along with caring for others. However, in family and workplace contexts, they are forced into seeming dependence because of the power and influence accorded to men.

Two related issues have been raised by Okin (1989, 1996), which also have a bearing on the proposed cultural orientations of individualism and collectivism. One is that justice and rights, which she too argues are spheres relevant to the thinking of women, are not readily separated from care (Okin, 1989, p. 15):

> The best theorizing about justice, I argue, has integral to it the notions of care and empathy, of thinking of the interests and well-being of others who may be very different from ourselves. It is, therefore, misleading to draw a dichotomy as though they were two contrasting ethics. The best theorizing about justice is not some abstract "view

from nowhere," but results from the carefully attentive consideration of *everyone's* point of view. This means, of course, that the best theorizing about justice is not good enough if it does not, or cannot readily be adapted to, include women and their points of view as fully as men and their points of view.

In Okin's formulation justice is inclusive, whether it be with regard to females and males or different cultures. The evidence is consistent with Okin's position since concepts of justice are held by females and males in different cultures. The second issue discussed by Okin is central to how cultures are to be characterized. On the question of shared understandings, she has stated that (1989, p. 67) "oppressors and oppressed – when the voice of the latter can be heard at all – often disagree fundamentally. . . . Contemporary views about gender are a clear example of such disagreement; it is clear that there are no shared understandings on this subject in our society, even among women."

These issues are far-reaching and bear directly on conceptualizations of culture and morality. If justice entails consideration of everyone's point of view, it would include, as Okin asserted, the viewpoints of women and men, as well as the viewpoints of people of different social castes or classes. This view of justice also implies that it is misleading to draw a dichotomy between the ethics of cultures as rights-based and duty-based. Morality, in this view, includes justice, rights, care, welfare, and duties emanating from these moral concepts. Furthermore, insofar as cultures are arranged (as most are) so that the points of view of one group (e.g., people of lower castes, women) are not included as fully as those of another group (e.g., people of higher castes, men), tensions are very likely to exist over morality and other social matters. Such tensions reflect disagreements between groups within a culture – especially when, as is the case in most cultures, there are hierarchical arrangements according greater status and power to some groups over others.

Cultures, then, would not be adequately defined through shared understandings, which implies that there is not a common, consistent, or cohesive orientation within a culture. Social development in such a case would not represent an accommodation to particular social

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orientations like individualism and collectivism. Moral and personal judgments include reflections upon cultural practices and arrangements. Conflicts, tensions, and contested meanings are as much part of social life as social harmony, social acceptance, and shared understandings. As Okin suggested, cohesiveness and agreement may be more apparent because the voices of those lower in the social hierarchy are not given sufficient attention. Nevertheless, in everyday life, disagreements and conflicts occur between people in positions of dominance and subordination, as dictated by social systems with hierarchical arrangements. In subsequent chapters, I consider further, with an emphasis on observations and research in non-Western cultures, the types of judgments, conflicts, and contextual variations that we have already seen are central in Western cultures.

Justice, Heterogeneity, and Cultural Practices

> The recognition of diversity within different cultures is extremely important in the contemporary world, since we are constantly bombarded by oversimple generalizations about "Western civilization," "Asian values," "African cultures," and so on.
>
> —Amartya Sen, *Human Rights and Asian Values*, 1997

On March 6, 1999, the *New York Times* ran an article with the title "Testing the Limits of Tolerance as Cultures Mix: Does Freedom Mean Accepting Rituals that Repel the West?" The writer, Barbara Crosette, began by relating two events. One occurred in the state of Maine, where it seems a refugee from Afghanistan was seen kissing the penis of his baby boy – which is a traditional expression of love by a father. The police became involved and the baby was taken away from his father by Social Services, who was accused of child abuse. The second event pertained to female circumcision. Crosette reported that a hospital in Seattle had tried to invent a procedure for female circumcision that would be harmless and yet satisfy parents from Somali who wanted to maintain the practice in their community. According to Crosette, the idea went nowhere because of criticism from an outraged public. A third type of event was presented through photographs, accompanying the article, of a young boy and girl in local dress, each of them 7 years old, from Madhya Pradesh State in India. The caption read that "in their villages marriage is arranged early." Several other practices were cited in the article, including dress codes, polygamy, and

the segregation of gender roles. The article also included discussion of the practice of female circumcision (not only the efforts in Seattle to produce a harmless procedure), which some pointedly refer to as genital mutilation because of the long-term harm of the procedure (Nussbaum, 1999; Walker & Parnar, 1993).

The thrust of the article, as reflected in the title and subtitle, was on how Westerners do react and should react to the exercise of rituals and customs by people in their midst who have come from another culture. As stated in the article (p. A15): "How do democratic, pluralistic societies, like the United States, based on religious and cultural tolerance respond to customs and rituals that may be repellent to the majority?" These are issues, as also reported in the article, that are subject to scrutiny by legal and cultural experts investigating how American law affects ethnic customs among African, Asian, Caribbean, and Latin American immigrants. Some of the experts have formed a group, under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council, which put out a statement of purpose that includes the following (p. A15): "Despite our pluralistic ideals, something like a cultural un-American activities list seems to have been circulating among powerful representatives and enforcers of mainstream culture. Among the ethnic minority activities at risk of being dubbed 'un-American' are the use of disciplinary techniques such as shaming and physical punishment, parent/child co-sleeping arrangements, rituals of group identity and ceremonies of initiation involving scarification, piercing and genital alteration, arranged marriage, polygamy, the segregation of gender roles, bilingualism and foreign language use and many more."

The variety of practices identified in the statement of purpose, and in the newspaper article, were generally classified as customs and rituals. A father kissing the penis of the boy, as a ritual, was grouped with female circumcision (or genital mutilation), arranged marriages, and polygamy. Furthermore, it was presumed that the practices of the other cultures are not at all repellent to people in those cultures. That is, it was presumed that the practices (rituals, customs) are accepted in a shared way in the culture.

The questions raised in the *New York Times* article and by the Social Science Research Council group are extremely important socially and morally. Fundamentally, it is a moral issue of tolerance that they raise. Indeed, the terminology of an "un-American activities list" is meant to evoke images of the great intolerance that caused much disruption in people's lives during the anti-Communist crusade of Senator Joseph McCarthy during the 1950s. As was the case with the concerns of the cultural anthropologists of the 1930s (see Chapter 2) for tolerance for non-Western cultures, the concerns here are with the need for a nonrelativistic moral imperative of tolerance applied by a majority to the practices of a minority culture.

However, there are several issues that must be sorted out before addressing the question of whether the practices of a minority culture should be accepted and in which ways. In the first place, it is necessary to ask if the questions were put properly. Are all practices of a culture, including all the practices listed, to be regarded as rituals or customs? Second, is the term *repellent* the way to characterize Westerners reactions to the practices? It is not accurate, I would argue, to place all the practices under the rubric of rituals and customs. Some involve moral considerations that go beyond particular cultural customs. If that is correct, then at the very least it is necessary to consider whether the moral imperative of tolerance overrides the moral violations that may be embedded in the cultural practices. For instance, there is a difference between the traditional expression of love in the act of kissing the penis of a baby (incidentally, the baby was returned to the father through a ruling in his favor by the State Supreme Court) and female circumcision, which involves great physical pain and, many believe, long-term negative consequences for the lives of women. Whereas the group from the Social Science Research Council equated the procedure to male circumcision and even used the seemingly benign term "genital alterations," these issues are more involved and have been intensely debated. Nussbaum (1999) has maintained that "female genital mutilation" is the standard terminology used in the medical literature. According to Nussbaum (1999, p. 119):

> The term "female circumcision" has been rejected by international medical practitioners because it suggests the fallacious analogy to male circumcision, which is generally believed to have either no effect or a positive effect on physical health and sexual functioning. Anatomically, the degree of cutting in the female operations described here is far more extensive.

It is Nussbaum's view, as well as that of many others, that female genital mutilation is connected to male domination.

More generally, it is necessary to consider whether certain cultural practices are directed at control and domination of particular groups in the society with lesser power and status (racial, social class, and gender groups). Many of the practices on the list (e.g., female circumcision, arranged marriages, polygamy) do bear on relations between men, who are in positions of dominance, and women, who are in subordinate positions. In the statement of purpose put out by the Social Science Research Council group, it was asserted, in a form of criticism, that the cultural un-American activities list is being circulated by "powerful representatives and enforcers of mainstream culture." The same criticism can be directed at those who, within any culture, are powerful representatives who enforce mainstream cultural practices. In most cultures, males are powerful enforcers of cultural practices that favor them at the expense of females who are in positions of lesser power and greater vulnerability (Nussbaum, 1999, 2000; Okin, 1989, 1999).

It would be useful to consider the Afghan practice, as an expression of love, of a father kissing the penis of his baby boy, in comparison with recent practices in Afghanistan pertaining to females, which appear to be an expression of control. The Taliban, who took over governmental control in 1996, have imposed severe restrictions on women in the name of culture and religion. Females are not allowed to go to school or work, or go out in public without a male relative. Females must adhere to a dress code, having to wear a burga, an all-encompassing garment with a small mesh opening that allows the person to see and breath. In homes with women, the windows must be painted so that they cannot be seen by outsiders. Further, very little medical care is available because male doctors are not allowed to examine the female

body. These restrictions on females are sometimes defended against outsiders' criticisms as cultural and religious practices that should be respected. As an example, an Afghan man who complained about the economic ban placed on Afghanistan by other countries stated, "Americans may not like how we treat our women, but we are a conservative Muslim country. Doesn't President Clinton believe in freedom of religion?" (B. Bearak, "In Shattered Afghanistan, a Torturing Drought," *New York Times*, June 8, 2000, p. A12).

The restrictions imposed on women by the Taliban are, without doubt, extreme. Nevertheless, it is a useful example, because it allows us to contrast, in the same culture, practices pertaining to relationships between males and females with a ritual or custom like a father kissing a penis of a baby. The former raises issues of justice, rights, and the control of one group over another. The latter does not appear to. The term *repellent*, as used in the article in the *New York Times* (March 6, 1999) does not apply to the two types of practices in the same ways. The article, by referring to rituals that repel the West, implied that there is an intense dislike of them. However, an intense dislike of a ritual or custom of another culture is not necessarily the same as strong disapproval on moral grounds of the oppression of people in a culture.

The restriction on activities of women in Afghanistan is also a useful example because it highlights, by its extremism, some important issues regarding relationships of inequality within a culture and the perspectives of people in different positions of power in the social hierarchy. Many of the so-called customs and rituals that concern people "as cultures mix" do pertain to the treatment of groups, such as females, in lower positions on the social hierarchy (Okin, 1999). These include different gender roles, severe restrictions on dress, a lack of educational and occupational choices, genital mutilation, arranged marriages, polygamy, divorce laws that favor husbands, punishment of wives, and economic deprivation.

If practices revolving around relationships between males and females or between members of different social classes and castes do, indeed, involve issues of welfare, justice, and rights, then we would expect that people within a culture would themselves be aware of

the moral implications of some of those practices, and that people in different positions on the social hierarchy might take different perspectives. The Afghan man quoted in the *New York Times* (June 8, 2000) article implied that it is not important that Americans may not like how their women are treated. By many accounts, however, the women of Afghanistan do not like how they are treated. When they can, women complain and act in hidden, subversive ways to counteract the restrictions placed on them. For example, efforts, hidden from the authorities, are made to provide women with medical care, and groups of women have been conducting underground classes for girls ("The Courage to Learn," by Bob Herbert, *New York Times*, November 25, 1999, p. 37).

Along with moral considerations, a central question, then, is whether certain practices are, in fact, generally accepted within the culture. In particular, are the cultural practices and arrangements accepted by those in lower positions in the social hierarchy? In keeping with Okin's views, it may well be that people in different positions (oppressor and oppressed) disagree and are in conflict over these matters. Therefore, before we can seriously consider the issues raised about practices when cultures mix, it is necessary to consider their moral implications and whether or not the practices are generally accepted in a culture. In turn, it is essential to take into account the perspectives of those in subordinate positions in the social hierarchy, along with the perspectives of powerful representatives and enforcers of cultural arrangements.

MORALITY, POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS, AND CULTURE

There is a connection between philosophic approaches to morality and ideas regarding agreements or disagreements, harmony, or conflict within cultures, as well as propositions on the perspectives of those in subordinate positions. From the perspective of approaches that presume morality is formed through the acquisition of society's traditions and/or shared orientations to social relationships, there are few issues of much importance regarding disagreements and conflicts

(with the exception of when cultures mix). Wherever they sit in the social hierarchy, people are like-minded. From the perspective of a number of philosophical approaches that presume morality entails judgments about welfare, justice, and rights (Dworkin, 1977; Gewirth, 1978; Habermas, 1990a, 1990b; Nussbaum, 1995, 1999, 2000; Okin, 1989, 1995, 1996; Rawls, 1971, 1993), it is expected that there very well might be disagreements and conflicts over norms and practices within cultures. Although there are some differences among these viewpoints, they converge on the propositions, as put by Nussbaum (1999, p. 71), that "human beings are above all reasoning beings, and that the dignity of reason is the primary source of human equality." Nussbaum traces these views, which she refers to as the liberal tradition, to the Greek and Roman Stoics, "whose conception of the dignity of reason as a source of equal human worth profoundly influenced Kant, Adam Smith and others." Those thinkers, in turn, have influenced contemporary philosophers. In his analyses of contemporary economic development and human freedom, Amartya Sen, winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize in economics, made a similar point by claiming that a sense of justice involves judgment, thought, and inference: "It is the power of reason that allows us to consider our obligations and ideals as well as our interests and advantages. To deny this freedom of thought would amount to a severe constraint on the reach of our rationality" (Sen, 1999, p. 272). The research on the psychology of development that I have considered has supported the proposition that human beings across cultures reason about welfare, justice, and rights. From a psychological perspective, it would also be expected that members of most cultures apply concepts of justice, rights, tolerance, and freedom to existing conditions of inequality, oppression, and the denial of rights.

From the philosophical perspectives, it does matter where one sits in the social hierarchy (Nussbaum, 1999, p. 57):

> At the heart of this tradition is a twofold intuition about human beings: namely, that all, just by being human, are of equal dignity and worth, no matter where they are situated in society, and that the primary source of this worth is a power of moral choice within them, a power that consists in the ability to plan a life in accordance with one's own

evaluation of ends. To these two intuitions – which link liberalism at its core to the thought of the Greek and Roman Stoics – the liberal tradition adds one more, which the Stoics did not emphasize: that the moral equality of persons gives them a fair claim to certain types of treatment at the hands of society and politics. What this treatment is will be a subject of debate within the tradition, but the shared starting point is that this treatment must do two closely related things. It must respect and promote the liberty of choice, and it must respect and promote the equal worth of persons as choosers.

From this perspective, especially as articulated by philosophers and political theorists like Nussbaum and Okin, there is no special wisdom to a system of interdependence based on inequalities, or asymmetrical reciprocity found in "feudal ethics," whereby "lord" (superordinate person) and "servant" (subordinate person) have their respective roles. The types of division of labor reflected in asymmetrical reciprocity, according to Nussbaum (1995, p. 101), "usually serve the ends of a dominant group and perpetuate the oppression of the powerless." Moreover, Nussbaum (1999, p. 32) believes that "Customs and political arrangements are important causes of women's misery and death." The adverse consequences of such arrangements occur in both non-Western and Western cultures that do have traditions of unequal treatment of women (see also, Okin, 1995).

The philosophical idea that humans have a power of moral choice is consistent with a basic proposition regarding development that was central to Piaget's theory: namely, that children are autonomous in the sense that they participate in the elaboration of moral norms. Furthermore, the approaches of some philosophers to the plight of groups in subordinate positions, such as women, are not solely philosophical. Nussbaum, for instance, has developed an empirical basis for her position, as well, through involvement in the World Institute for Development Economics Research (see Nussbaum, 2000). In referring to the causes of misery and death, Nussbaum had in mind the customs and political arrangements that prevent women from working even when it is necessary for survival (Chen, 1995), and that result in malnutrition, poor health, physical violence, and sexual abuse (see also Angelis, 1993). According to Nussbaum (2000, p. 1) "women in much

of the world lack support for fundamental functions of a human life." (This is an attribution that Martin Luther King, Jr., would have made to blacks in the United States, as well.) It is not, however, only the extreme effects of misery and death that are of concern. Cultural practices also result, for women, in greater illiteracy, severe restrictions on opportunities for education and work, unfair division of labor, and economic vulnerability when divorced or widowed. Many of these concerns were presented in the Declaration and Platform for Action produced by the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The document calls for universal access to family planning, sex education, equal inheritance rights, and prevention of rape and domestic violence. The document is also critical of job discrimination, forced marriages, female infanticide, female genital mutilation, unsafe abortion, and violence stemming from dowries (see Pollitt, 2000). Furthermore, on the basis of a measure that included life expectancies, wealth, and education, it was concluded in the *Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Programme that no country treats women as well as men (see Nussbaum, 2000).

Given the hardships experienced by women and others in subordinate positions and given the presumption that people reason about moral choices and reflect upon their conditions, it follows that there would be disagreements and conflicts between people situated in different positions on the social hierarchy. Along with Okin (1989), who asserted that oppressor and oppressed disagree fundamentally, Nussbaum maintains that there are variations in groups, cultures, and traditions (1999, p. 8): "[T]raditions are not monoliths. Any living culture contains plurality and argument; it contains relatively powerful voices, relatively silent voices, and voices that cannot speak at all in the public space." Cultural traditions pose obstacles in the pursuit of health and well-being, but people in vulnerable positions do not simply accommodate to the conventional expectations. They find ways to subvert traditions and practices that pose such obstacles. In this view, traditions and cultural practices can be evaluated. Furthermore, they are evaluated especially by those negatively impacted. As opposed to the perspective that traditions are to be valued by virtue of being traditions, in this view they are not necessarily positive – although they

may be. It is also the case that certain traditions and cultural practices serve the needs and goals of some groups at the expense of others.

If indeed there are variations and conflicts within cultures, then we cannot readily divide moral points of view by cultural contexts. Moral judgments would then be applicable to different groups within cultures in ways that might well apply to similarly situated groups in other cultures. For instance, moral issues that apply to groups in subordinate positions in one culture would be relevant for similarly situated groups in another culture. Treating women's rights as human rights, as done in the Declaration and Platform of the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women, requires the articulation of moral concepts that apply to women across cultural contexts. Furthermore, the very same moral precepts of tolerance, freedom, and equality called for with regard to people's relations to those of another culture, including when cultures mix, are applicable to groups with lesser power within a culture.

Moral concepts stemming from the tradition that Nussbaum linked to the Greek and Roman Stoics have been applied in a variety of ways to issues of gender, social class, and cultural arrangements. As an example, Okin has extended the theory of justice of Rawls (1971) to gender relationships in the family in Western (Okin, 1989, 1996) and non-Western (Okin, 1995) settings. The formulation put forth by Rawls is generally considered to be the most powerful contemporary theory of justice. It is a theory that embodies the assumptions noted earlier of reasoning, autonomy, and moral choice, and that entails the inclusion of the perspectives of everyone in society. Central in the formulation are principles of justice, rights, equal liberty, and fair equality of opportunity. These principles were designed to apply to the structure of societies: "Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. . . . [L]aws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust. Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. . . . Therefore, in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests" (Rawls, 1971, pp. 3–4). This is not

the place for an exposition of this complex theory. For my purposes, it is sufficient to refer to the theory as a reference point for philosophical analyses of justice and rights that can be applied to societies and social institutions. Moreover, the formulations apply to social arrangements bearing on the distribution of goods, rights, and economic advantages and burdens, and "forces one to question and consider traditions, customs, and institutions from all points of view" (Okin, 1989, p. 101).

Moreover, Nussbaum has combined Rawls' conception of justice and liberties with a conception of what is necessary for the good life, as partially derived from Aristotle. According to Nussbaum, contemporary formulations, such as those of Rawls, share with an Aristotelian conception the idea that citizens are free and dignified human beings who are capable of making choices. According to Nussbaum, this view is at its core antifeudal and in opposition to the political ascendancy of hierarchies of rank and caste. In Nussbaum's view, it is necessary to complement conceptions of justice with a conception of human functioning and capabilities, derived from Aristotle and others, that provides an account of human needs. A working list of ten human capabilities (provided by Nussbaum, 1999, 2000) is meant to identify activities that are central to a life that is fully human. The aim of generating such a list is not to provide capabilities that people must carry out, but a set of capabilities that must be accessible to all in just political and cultural arrangements. Insofar as a society provides unequally the resources for attaining the capabilities, there is a problem of justice.

The list of what is termed central human functional capabilities does include some that are basic, such as the ability to live a normal length of human life (*Life*); to have good health, nourishment and adequate shelter (*Bodily Health*); to move freely, to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault, marital rape, and domestic violence, and to have opportunities for sexual satisfaction and choice in matters of reproduction (all grouped under *Bodily Integrity*). Grouped under the capability of *Senses, Imagination, and Thought* are the abilities to imagine, think, and reason, including opportunities for adequate education, and freedom to produce works of self-expression. The fifth on the list

pertains to experiences of *Emotions*, such as love, grief, gratitude, and justified anger, without undue interference. Another is *Practical Reason*, which is characterized as being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. The next entails living with others, engaging in a variety of types of social interactions, equal treatment with others, and having the social basis of self-respect and nonhumiliation (*Affiliation*). Others involve the ability to live with concern for animals, plants and the world of nature (*Other Species*), and being able to play and enjoy recreational activities (*Play*). The final capability (*Control over One's Environment*) has political and material features. The political ones bear on effective participation in political choices that govern one's life and the rights of political participation, free speech, and association. The material features pertain to the ability to hold property, maintain equal property rights, the rights to seek employment on an equal basis, and the freedom from unwarranted search and seizures. As can be seen from the some of the latter capabilities, the approach is meant to encompass human rights (see Nussbaum, 2000, pp. 96–101).

Individuals as autonomous moral agents with the potential for developing the capabilities are central in the type of approach articulated by Nussbaum (as in the approach taken by Rawls). The approach, however, is not simply one that can be characterized as individualistic because of the concern with the needs, capabilities, and rights of persons. The approach does assert the integrity of individuals, but does so in the context of the need for the centrality of moral concepts that apply to the interactions among people. The ideas of preserving welfare, justice, and rights encompass care for others and interdependence. What this approach does not accept is the idea that a group, a society, or a culture constitutes an entity with an identifiable perspective that is beyond individuals (à la Durkheim, 1925/1961 or Markus & Kitayama, 1991); as put by Nussbaum (1999, p. 109), a group is not "a fused organism" (though often the viewpoint of the most powerful in a group comes across as the group's perspective).

The combination of autonomy and social cooperation, which is part of Piaget's psychological and developmental theory, has been articulated from a philosophical perspective by Habermas (1990a, 1990b,

1993). From a neo-Kantian framework, Habermas places individuals' concepts of justice, rights, and welfare into a network of communication among actors also seeking social solidarity. He maintained that autonomy and social solidarity are both essential features of people engaged in reciprocal interaction. Autonomous morality serves two purposes at once. One is the equal treatment and equal respect of each person, and the other is to maintain a mutuality among members of the community. A sense of independence goes hand in hand with interdependence in that moral norms protect equal rights and freedoms, as well as the welfare of others and of the community. Therefore, individualism, or personal agency, cannot be offset from collectivism, or concerns with community. According to Habermas, everyone whose social and personal development stems from social interactions will have acquired moral intuitions entailing "the reciprocal dependence of socialization and individuation, the interrelation between personal autonomy and social solidarity" (1993, p. 14). The development of a combination of personhood and social solidarity (or community) is not restricted to any particular society or culture or political orientation. The coexistence of personal agency and collectivism extends beyond those who are "heirs to the political thought of a Thomas Paine and a Thomas Jefferson" (Habermas, 1993, p. 114). The combination of these orientations is part of social interaction, part of how individuals who maintain universalizable moral ideas function in the social world. Individuals participate in social groups, in the view of Habermas, by submitting their moral ideas to verification through dialogue and argumentation that can involve disagreement.

SOCIAL ORDER AND AMBIGUITIES

Although they couch the issues in somewhat different terms, Okin, Nussbaum, and Habermas each maintain that cultures contain variations, disagreements, and conflicts. Okin and Nussbaum, at least among philosophers, explicitly articulated the propositions that those in subordinate positions are likely to have perspectives on cultural practices that may differ from those in dominant positions and that are often suppressed. In these regards, the philosophical positions are

discrepant with the propositions of anthropologists like Ruth Benedict, as well as those proposing that cultures are defined through shared elements, such as shared orientations to individualism and collectivism in cultural contexts. It could be argued, then, that we should give greater credence to the positions of anthropologists since they are the ones whose business it is to study cultures in an empirical way. Moreover, the anthropological propositions of sharedness and coherence can be linked to some philosophical analyses, such as those of MacIntyre (1981). However, the picture is more complicated because anthropologists, themselves, do not share the view that culture can be defined by shared elements. A number of anthropologists have been critical of the idea that cultures are homogeneous or cohesive (Abu-Lughod, 1991, 1993; Appadurai, 1988; Spiro, 1993; Strauss, 1992; Wikan, 1991). Their criticisms also have methodological implications in that they maintain that anthropologists too often look mainly to public ideology and to the points of views of those in powerful positions.

In an article entitled "Writing against Culture," Abu-Lughod (1991, p. 154) put the issues in the following way:

> By focusing solely on particular individuals and their changing relationships, one would necessarily subvert the most problematic connotations of culture: homogeneity, coherence, and timelessness. Individuals are confronted with choices, struggle with others, make conflicting statements, argue about points of view on the same events, undergo ups and downs in various relationships and changes in their circumstances, and fail to predict what will happen to them or those around them.

Thus, Abu-Lughod proposed that social life anywhere hardly consists of scripted interactions that are consistent with a coherent orientation shared by all. People do not perceive themselves as programmed with or by cultural rules, nor as acting out social roles. Rather, they see themselves as struggling and agonizing over decisions in their daily lives, making mistakes, engaging in conflicts with others, and vacillating.

The title of Abu-Lughod's essay, "Writing against Culture," can have different connotations. In stating that the notion of culture "may

now have become something anthropologists would want to work against in their theories" (1991, p. 138), it is not entirely clear how far Abu-Lughod wants to go. In my view, the concept of culture is useful, and it should not be done away with. The importance of Abu-Lughod's argument lies in the assertion that it is necessary to avoid the types of broad generalizations often used to characterize particular cultures and to reformulate the concept to include heterogeneity, conflict, and change. She has made the important observation that generalizing across contexts and people within a culture flattens out differences and homogenizes them. This is another way of saying that generalizations about people in a culture serve to stereotype them. Such generalizations give the appearance of an absence of internal differentiations and distinctions in viewpoints and serve to smooth over existing contradictions, conflicts of interest, ambiguities, arguments, and shifts in views from one context to another. Generalizations that impose a coherence upon cultural groups also serve to exaggerate boundaries and separations between groups.

It is now sometimes thought that otherwise integrated and bounded cultures are no longer so because of influences from outside. Some maintain, however, that cultures are not and never were bounded, homogenous, or cohesive. As an example, Appadurai (1988) has criticized the idea that cultures are "wholes," questioning whether cultures ever functioned in ways that produced moral or intellectual boundedness. Even if bounded in the geographical sense, people are not restricted by a common way of thinking. According to Appadurai, the idea of hierarchy, especially as used in some anthropological analyses of India, is one of those concepts that has been inaccurately applied to characterize a culture as a whole. Hierarchy could only serve to characterize a culture if there is a general orientation that is accepted by those in different social positions (which brings us back to the idea of asymmetrical reciprocity). In keeping with the views of Okin and Nussbaum, several anthropologists have maintained that perspectives on norms and practices differ between those in lower and higher positions in the social hierarchy (see also Strauss, 1992 and Wikan, 1991). In such a case, differences in perspectives can lead to argumentation,

conflict and tensions that can, in turn, produce changes from within. Outside influences are not the only – or the main – sources of cultural change (this is a topic I consider in subsequent chapters).

Also in keeping with the propositions put forth by Okin and Nussbaum, it has been maintained that anthropological and psychological research has focused on those in positions of power or dominance and on public ideologies. Such a focus produces characterizations of greater agreement and cohesiveness than actually exists. Wikan (1991) traces views of cohesiveness and harmony, which she refers to as the idea of a seamless whole, to the failure to sufficiently include in research people who are not the vocal, eloquent, and expert. Looking mainly to culture's "spokesmen," at the exclusion of the "poor, the infirm, women and youths" has resulted in "the concept of culture as a seamless whole and of society as a bounded group manifesting inherently valued order and normatively regulated response, [that] effectively masked human misery and quenched dissenting voices" (Wikan, 1991, p. 290).

According to Wikan, order and harmony do not reflect how people think and interact, since there are "uncertainties, ambiguities and contesting visions." Accepting that conflicts, ambiguities, and contested meanings are central, Strauss (1992) also points out that social development does not simply involve transmitting values and beliefs, and the process of transmission, itself, is not an easy matter: "But, as every parent will recognize, transmission of values and beliefs is no straightforward matter. This is not a simple problem of 'noise' in the fax line from the public social order to individuals' psyches causing imperfect copies. Transmission is more complicated than this because the social order is more complicated than this. . . . [C]onflicting messages, ambiguity, and change are found in all societies, even 'traditional' ones" (Strauss, 1992, p. 8). Social order and social transmission are complicated, with ambiguities and conflicting messages, because people do not simply accommodate. They reason about their social experiences and reflect upon the morality of cultural and societal arrangements. Children reason, too. Development, therefore, is a process of changing understandings about the social world and its different components.

I do not mean to imply that cooperation and social harmony are not part of social life. However, cooperation and harmony are subject to considerations of justice and rights and expectations of personal claims judged legitimate. Jerome Bruner (1996), a psychologist who has placed much emphasis on collective representations in culture, also has stressed the importance of accounting for individual thought and reciprocity in social relationships. In the process of education especially, and thereby in children's development, there are central conflicts and contradictions. Bruner identified three types of contradictions, which he referred to as antinomies, in the aims of education. One revolves around the function of education to enable individuals to attain their fullest potential and to reproduce the culture in order to further its economic, political, and other ends. These two goals can be in conflict because fostering individual realization can result in social unpredictability and disruption of social order, while a reproduction of culture can result in stagnation and hegemony. The second antinomy revolves around learning that is in people's minds and learning that is situated in and enhanced by the culture. In a sense, this is a conflict between learning from reflection and learning from collaboration with others. The third pertains to the conflict between judgments based on local knowledge or standards and those based on universalistic standards. In some situations, standards pertaining to a particular situation can be in contradiction with those that apply across situations.

Bruner regards these as antinomies that defy easy resolution. They are part of multiple interpretations of reality and the possible divergence between institutional interests and the construals of individuals, as well as between community and individual goals. As others have stressed (Spiro, 1993; Strauss, 1992), there is also a distinction to be made between public ideologies of various sorts, such as those expressed in a nation's constitution or in religious doctrine, and the judgments or actions of individuals. Spiro (1993) has maintained that conceptions at the cultural or public level, insofar as they exist, do not coincide with the types of experiences people have or with the conceptions they form. Spiro provides a comprehensive review of evidence in support of this proposition – which I discuss in Chapter 10. From this

evidence, he also concludes that the distinction between independent and interdependent selves is not supported by the evidence. Instead, the evidence shows that the two types of conceptions coexist in most cultures and individuals: "[T]here is much more differentiation, individuation, and autonomy in the putative non-Western self, and much more dependence and interdependence in the putative Western self, than these binary opposite types allow" (Spiro, 1993, p. 117).

Social Hierarchy, Subordination, and Human Capabilities

The philosophical and anthropological themes I considered in the previous chapter lead to four propositions pertaining to individual thought and culture. The first is that there are variations in judgments and social orientations within cultures. For instance, a mixture of individualism and collectivism is typical in most social relationships. Second, the mixture of orientations is not solely a matter of estimating how much of one or the other. Both orientations are central in social relationships, and they are systematically connected to social arrangements of power and dominance and subordination. In particular, independence and autonomy is accorded to those in positions of power and dominance, which is buttressed by attributions of interdependence and role obligations to those in subordinate positions. Many cultural practices serve to regulate relationships of power, such as those granting males control over the activities of females. Cultural practices can also serve to distance, isolate, or exclude groups of people from decision making and classes of activities. The third is that the inequalities and asymmetrical reciprocity implicit in the differential distribution of power and resources reflected in different attributions of autonomy and dependence are not shared across a culture. These result in conflicts and disagreements between people in different positions, as well as discontents among people in lower positions in the social hierarchy. People in subordinate positions make moral judgments about existing social arrangements and assert their prerogatives to personal entitlements and autonomy. Fourth, the disagreements with and discontents about norms, social practices, and social arrangements can, and frequently do, result in efforts at change. Sometimes, efforts

to change cultural practices take the form of social and political movements. Efforts at changing cultural practices also occur in everyday life through overt and covert activities aimed at subverting aspects of cultural arrangements.

In this chapter, I discuss a series of journalistic reports from newspapers, magazines, and books that serve to illustrate these four propositions. Although these are not research materials, they are useful illustrations that converge with evidence from research discussed earlier and in subsequent chapters. The events also bear on the moral philosophical propositions regarding justice, equality, and rights, as well as on the capabilities of human functioning formulated by Nussbaum. For the most part, the journalistic accounts pertain to events in non-Western cultures, which have been characterized as collectivistic, and which are hierarchially organized with many restrictions placed on the activities of women and people of lower social classes and castes. I do discuss in the next chapter how the propositions also apply to relationships between males and females in Western cultures.

The events from Morocco and Iran, it will be recalled, provided examples illustrating how people in traditional cultures do make judgments about fairness and rights, along with judgments about freedoms, independence, and personal autonomy. These variations in judgments were associated with different perspectives on cultural practices by those in different positions on the social hierarchy. These events also involved conflicts and disagreements among people in the culture, as well as efforts at change through covert activities aimed at avoiding restrictions placed on people in subordinate positions. These themes, and others, are evident in many examples from journalistic accounts.

ABUSES OF HIERARCHY

I begin with an example of rather dramatic events that took place in India. The events, reported in the *Los Angeles Times* (M. Fineman, "Untouchables: Murder Sparks Outcry for Outcasts' Rights," May 14, 1990), have implications for questions of justice, rights, personal

entitlements, and social hierarchy in relation to both gender and social caste, relationships of power, protests, and several of Nussbaum's capabilities. According to the report, a newly married couple of the untouchable caste (harijan) worked in the fields of a powerful landowner (a feudal lord), and lived in a tiny mud hut in a small village. The landowner, it was reported, had built up "a sort of modern day harem" and wanted the man's wife to be part of it. When the landowner demanded that she go with him, she and her husband refused. The following interchange then occurred. The landowner laughed and said, "Don't you worry. I am a rich man. I will purchase two bullocks; and they will do your work in the field. You give me your wife and I will keep her like a rani (princess). Now do as I say" (p. A9). The landowner's feudal framework of asymmetrical reciprocity to keep the woman like a princess in return for sexual ownership was not acceptable to the wife or husband. He responded, "She is my wife. Not yours. I will not stay here any longer. I will never work for you again" (p. A9). As the husband and wife ran to their hut, the landowner shouted to them, "I will get what I want. I will take you by force, and after that no one will help you" (p. A9).

On that same day, the landowner obtained the help of two of his nephews to pour gasoline on the husband and set him afire. The man managed to jump into a well to douse the fire, but was very badly burned. After he was taken home in terrible condition, hundreds of angry harijans gathered. They carried him to the local police station, but the police refused to take his "dying declaration." Only after several hours had passed did the police drive him a long distance to the place he could receive medical treatment. He died the next morning.

Subsequently, the local police did nothing because they were willing to accept a story told to them by the landowner – which was that the husband had stolen a small amount of money, got drunk, and burned himself. However, the family did take some action. They carried the body fifty miles so that an autopsy could be performed. It showed that there was no alcohol in his blood. With about one hundred others from their caste, the family then engaged in civil disobedience, holding a sit-in at the office of the district collector, who eventually arranged for the landowner to pay the family $500 in compensation.

This incident dramatically illustrates how a hierarchial structure can include the assertion of personal entitlements. Personal agency is part of the thinking of those in higher positions on the social hierarchy, as shown by the persistent assertion of entitlements on the part of the landowner. The incident also illustrates that people in subordinate positions are aware of their personal jurisdiction and rights, and that they do assert claims to justice.

This particular incident is an extreme one. The landowner blatantly claimed another man's wife and was willing to take the most drastic measures to get what he wanted. However, it goes beyond one individual because the local police were complicit. Beyond the local police, the landowner was not held accountable except for the $500 settlement. Perhaps most important, atrocities against untouchables occur with great frequency. According to the report in the *Los Angeles Times*, 10,000 atrocities are recorded every year against untouchables and "the raping and killing of harijans is a daily event." The reason this particular incident received enough publicity to reach a major newspaper in the United States is that a short report of the financial settlement, which appeared in a local newspaper, came to the attention of two local political activists for the rights of women and untouchables. They made it a political issue, convincing the wife to go public. Another important aspect of hierarchically organized social relationships is revealed by the reluctance of the wife and others to discuss the matter in a public way. They feared the negative repercussions from those in power. In fact, after the settlement was completed, the wife was told by the district collector to then live in her family's village because she could be killed if she went back to the village of the landowner.

Social hierarchy, with its relationships of dominance and subordination, is connected in several other ways to personal entitlements and issues of life, bodily integrity, bodily health, emotions, affiliations, and control. From conception to birth to marriage to widowhood, life, bodily health, and bodily integrity are not realized as fully for females as males (Sen, 1995). This is the case at conception now that the technologies of ultrasound and amniocentesis are available to identify the sex of the fetus. In India, numerous clinics provide services to

determine the sex of the fetus. It is estimated that by 1995 there were 2000 such clinics in New Delhi. The consequence, according to several surveys, is that many more female than male fetuses are aborted (P. Murphy, "Tradition is a Death Sentence for Many Female Babies in India," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 7, 1995). One survey, conducted in Bombay in 1990 by the UN, showed that of 8000 legal abortions following sex determination all but one were of female fetuses. Such abortions have contributed to a decline in the sex ratio in India – which in the 2001 census was 927 women per 1000 men (the second lowest in the world). Infanticide has occurred, of course, for a much longer time than abortion stemming from ultrasound or amniocentesis. Female infanticide continues to occur with much frequency. Surveys also show that in some Indian villages over 40 percent of households believe in the practice. The decision to engage in infanticide is not taken easily and constitutes an emotional struggle in most families. Usually it occurs after the family has had one or two girls. Moreover, girls often receive inferior medical care and poorer nutrition than boys.

The abortion of female fetuses and the killing of infant girls is, without doubt, connected to the greater value placed on males than females in the society (for a discussion of how male children are given special value, see Dube, 1985). However, it is also connected, in the view of government officials, academics, and others in India, to material and financial considerations. Whereas males remain productive for the family after marriage and care for their parents in old age, females live with the husband's family. Of particular relevance here is the dowry system – which constitutes a significant expense for the families of females. Although dowries have been banned by law in India since 1961, the dowry system is still widely practiced. In the dowry system, the family of the bride must pay a substantial amount of money or goods to the groom and his family. A dowry is often regarded as an entitlement by the groom and his family. Often enough, the desire for financial and material gain leads to physical assault and even the death of brides (known as bride burning, because setting the woman afire is the most frequently used method). In 1989, it was reported that 72,000 brides between the ages of 15 and 20 years had been burned in India

over the previous 41 years (L. Heise, "A World of Abuse," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 2, 1989). The National Crimes Bureau of India reported 5,817 dowry deaths in 1993 and 5,199 such deaths in 1994 (K. Koman, "India's Burning Brides," *Harvard Magazine*, January – February 1996). Clearly, by the official numbers, dowry death is not a minor or isolated matter. It is also estimated that the actual numbers are even higher. The beatings and killings usually occur when the groom and his family are dissatisfied with the amount of the dowry. The beatings and killings occur sometimes shortly after the marriage and sometimes years later when the husband and his family want more from the wife's family.

The preferential treatment of males in the society and the ensuing distancing of women in many contexts that result in dowry beatings and deaths occur, as well, when husbands die – that is, in widowhood. In India, for example, widows do not have rights to inheritance, are often disinherited by in-laws, and lead isolated and austere lives (I. Badhwar, "Widows: Wrecks of Humanity," *India Today*, November 15, 1987). Widows almost never remarry because there is a strong taboo against it. Furthermore, many restrictions are placed on their activities: "She can wear no makeup, jewelry, or colorful saris. She must eat bland food, and keep away from joyous functions" (*India Today*, November 15, 1987, p. 143).

Sexual activity is another way that, in the context of traditional cultural arrangements, the assertion of personal entitlements can play a role in issues of life and death. One example is men's assertion of their personal privileges within the context of the AIDS epidemic. In Uganda, for instance, where AIDS is widespread and spreading ever more rapidly, the structure of unequal gender relationships that accords greater privileges to men has serious consequences for women: "While AIDS is affecting men and women in Africa about equally, social workers say that the disease in many ways has a disproportionate effect on African women. They are already overburdened as the main agricultural producers, the ones who bear and care for children, and the lowest paid members of society who often have little say over their destiny" (J. Perlez, "Toll of AIDS on Uganda's Women Puts their Roles and Rights in Question," *New York Times*, October 28, 1990, p. 11).

Women in Uganda (and other places) are especially vulnerable to AIDS because, by custom, men have a right to more than one wife (and many sexual partners) and expect women to acquiesce to their desires for sexual relations. A report compiled by the Ugandan Ministry of Health has stressed that women are vulnerable to AIDS because they are sexually exploited, given the dominance exerted by men. It is in this sense that women have little say over their destiny. As put by a Ugandan woman whose husband had promised not to take any more wives: "But you never know what he thinks. I can't interfere in his affairs. If I did, he would say: 'Why is she poking into my affairs?' . . . He can say it's all right, we need not worry. But you never know what he does in town. He fears AIDS, too. But he messes around too much."

The choice of refusing to have sexual relations is not an easy one for the women. In addition to their husbands' claims to their "rights," refusal opens women to economic deprivations. In some cases, the husband simply refuses to support his wife any longer. Sometimes, economic deprivations even extend beyond the husband's life. Consider the story of a woman who did refuse to take care of a husband who was dying of AIDS or to have sex with him (*New York Times*, October 28, 1990). The husband wanted her to leave their city to help take care of him in his ancestral village. The wife refused to do so on two grounds. One was that since they married he had already acquired three other wives in the village. The second reason was that her husband expected to continue to have sex with her, but she did not want to be further exposed to the HIV virus.

Even though the wife did help care for her husband during the two weeks he spent in the hospital prior to his death, his family was angry at her refusal to move to the ancestral village. Even before his death, they took all of the couple's possessions, including their house and a shop she ran with her husband. She and her children were left with nothing. The husband's family was able to do so because of the tradition that the man's relatives can take a couple's possessions after his death. This tradition has commonalties with traditions in other places, such as India, that result in conditions of destitute for widows, as well as beatings and deaths of brides when dowries are considered insufficient. Also, AIDS has sometimes led people to confront the potentially

negative sides of cultural arrangements around gender and sexuality. One couple in Zambia (where a study has shown that 80 percent of men have multiple sexual partners) worked on community-based HIV/AIDS education after they learned that they both were HIV positive. According to the husband, he had previously ruled his wife and children as lord and master. According to the wife, "Women are collaborators in their servitude. Pregnant women are emotionally weakened in the relationship, so I was Kabanda's slave for a long time. This experience has given me a chance to be liberated from men, to become an equal partner" (K. Shillinger, "A Couple's Response to HIV Infection Points toward Africa's Solution," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 21, 1999, p. A14).

One additional example bearing on cultural practices associated with maiming and death is somewhat different from the previous ones because it, though involving inequalities, stems from violations of strongly held sexual taboos. I am referring to what are known as honor killings. These are killings by relatives (fathers, brothers, husbands) of girls and women who are regarded to have brought dishonor to their families by engaging in sexual activities. The killings are seen to restore the family's honor and allow the family to maintain its place in the social fabric because families are often ostracized when one of its members crosses the line. Honor killings occur in reaction to premarital sex or adultery on the part of the woman. However, they also occur in reaction to other acts, including when a woman seeks a divorce, elopes with a boyfriend, or refuses to marry a man chosen by her family (P. Constable, "Honor Killings Under Attack," *Contra Costa Times*, May 27, 2000).

Apparently, the motivations for such killings are complex and multifaceted. Surely, one aspect is the outrage over taboos violated and the dishonor brought to a family that is felt to require expiation. However, there are other aspects. First, honor killings are connected to relationships of dominance and subordination, since it is almost always women and not men who are targeted. In Pakistan, for instance, harsh punishment is prescribed for the crime of adultery or premarital sex on the part of men or women. Nevertheless, charges for such violations almost always are brought only against women. Furthermore,

except for those instances in which a husband kills his wife's lover, it is women who are killed. In the view of some, honor killings also stem from a male sense of entitlement and often have economic motives. The role of personal entitlement was expressed in a ruling by the Brazilian Supreme Court in 1991. Over the years, many Brazilian men had been acquitted of charges of killing their wives or lovers of the wives with the claim that they were defending their honor. In one case brought to the Supreme Court, on appeal after a man had been acquitted by a jury, the Court ruled that honor was not a legitimate reason for the killings. The Court wrote that embedded in the idea of honor in these situations is self-interest and personal concerns: "Homicide cannot be seen as a normal and legitimate way of reacting to adultery. Because in this kind of crime what is defended is not honor, but vanity, exaggerated self-importance and the pride of the lord who sees a woman as his personal property" (J. Brooke, "Honor Killings of Wives is Outlawed in Brazil," *New York Times*, March 29, 1991).

In another part of the world, the chief executive of a group based in Karachi (Raasta Development Consultants) that has done extensive sociological surveys of Pakistani women, maintains that many of the killings have economic motives. In his view, many of the killings occur in rural areas of Pakistan where feudal landowners have control over the police and the courts. An example of how economic motives are involved is when a wealthy farmer has arranged a daughter's marriage so as to increase the family's land holdings. If the daughter refuses, she might be killed as an example to her sisters. Correspondingly, a woman's divorce can lead to financial ruin for parents if the marriage had produced a land deal. Some women have been killed to prevent the divorce. The chief executive in Karachi stated the issue bluntly: "[N]obody kills a daughter for marrying without consent if her boyfriend is rich" (R. Erlich, "New Push to End 'Honor Killings' in Pakistan," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 11, 2000, p. A11).

Conflicts also occur in traditional societies between people of different social classes and castes. Such conflict was evident in the story of the landowner who claimed the lower caste woman and killed her husband. More generally, political conflicts stemming from class

differences can result in violent confrontations. As one example of many, in Shanker Bigha, a hamlet in the northeastern part of India, untouchables have begun to organize for higher wages, a share of the land, and the end of sexual exploitation of women. The response of middle- and upper-class landowners has been violent. As reported in the *New York Times* (C. W. Dagger, "Massacres of Low-Born Touch Off Crisis in India," March 15, 1999), one night in January of 1999 a group of upper-caste men came into the village and killed 22 workers and their families. Upper-caste people have also been killed in retaliation.

RESISTANCE AND COUNTERRESISTANCE

The various incidents and events I have described are not consistent with the idea that so-called collectivistic cultures embody social harmony. The events also reflect distance placed on women or lower-class groups – a distancing that is not consistent with the idea that such cultures are organized around interconnections among people who are unbounded from each other. Moreover, criticisms of one's culture have been involved in these incidents since many individuals and groups, from within, have been active in attempts to change practices like genital mutilation, the abortion of female fetuses, dowry killings, and honor killings. The articles I have cited describe many groups of these types in several nations, including Brazil, Pakistan, India, Jordan, Zambia, Uganda, Senegal, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Zimbabwe. The statement of the Brazilian Supreme Court is another example of internal criticism of cultural practices, as are comments by Rajiv Gandhi when he was prime minister of India. In announcing the introduction of a government-sponsored educational program aimed at helping women to become more involved in activities outside the home, he said that "women are the most disadvantaged and discriminated in society," which he referred to as a "shame and a sign of backwardness in our thinking and mentality."

There are two possible ways of thinking about the examples I have considered thus far. It may be thought that these are abuses of the system by self-interested and violent people that need to be eliminated

but that do not have a significant relation to the general cultural arrangements and practices. In that view, it is with regard to serious abuses involving issues of life and death that we would expect people in any culture to organize in efforts aimed at change.

Without denying an element of truth in that view, given the extreme nature of the activities, an alternative view is that the structure of social hierarchy, which gives support to acts of violence toward women, is also connected to cultural practices that guide everyday activities in relationships between females and males (for a discussion of this position regarding gender relationships in Western cultures, see Okin, 1996). The same dynamics of social hierarchy and relationships of dominance and subordination that contribute to the abuses are also involved in cultural practices that entail greater burdens and fewer privileges in the lives of people in subordinate positions. Indeed, in the Shweder et al. (1987) study that I discussed in Chapter 7, matters like preferential inheritances for sons and a husband beating a disobedient wife "black and blue" were presented as part of the normative behaviors in India.

Although for the majority of people the power and authority of one group over another does not result in maimings or killings, it can result in greater burdens and work. In rural Africa, for example, it is women who engage in much of the difficult physical labor, which men consider beneath them: "[W]omen in rural Africa are the subsistence farmers. They produce, without tractors, oxen, or even plows, more than 70 percent of the continent's food, according to the world bank. Back-breaking hand cultivation is a job that African men consider to be demeaning 'women's work' " (J. Perlez, "Uganda's Women: Children, Drudgery, and Pain," *New York Times*, February 24, 1991, p. 13).

A related inequality is that women generally do not own or inherit land in most African countries. Indeed, in many countries, the issue of inheritance laws favoring men is highly contested. In 1995, there were efforts on the part of female legislators in Hong Kong to override laws derived from the Qing dynasty that still applied in villages outside the city. The laws disallowed inheritance rights to women. The efforts were met with a great deal of resistance from defenders of tradition.

As put by one of the legislators: "Male villagers said I was destroying the culture. They said they were going to rape me, beat me" (A. A. Gargan, Old Sexism Survives in Hong Kong," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 17, 1995, p. A12).

Another type of proposed change provoking resistance is family planning and population control. In Rwanda, too, women do most of the hard agricultural work. Population control is judged by some as necessary because otherwise the land would not be able to support the projected growth in population. Workers in rural healthcare clinics have faced opposition in their efforts to encourage family planning. Women resist it because they expect their children to help with work on the land. As the population increases and crop yields decrease, the work burdens on women also increase. Women believe that they need to have more children to help them with the increased work. In the view of women healthcare workers and activists in Rwanda, population control is difficult to accomplish because the culture is "male-dominated." Because a woman cannot inherit property, children provide women with help in work and a measure of protection. As put by a founder of a women's group: "The children become your strength against your husband – they will fight for you if he tries to hurt you." Men oppose population control, according to a nurse in one of the healthcare clinics, for their own reasons: "They want eight children. And it's a cult of egoism. They believe if their wives take pills, they will become weak and won't be able to work in the fields. And then the men would have to work" (J. Perlez, "In Rwanda, Births Increase and the Problems Do Too," *New York Times*, May 31, 1992, pp. 1 and 10).

In perhaps a lighter vein, male dominance influences the use of birth control pills and other sex-related medications in an industrialized nation. In Japan, it often takes many years for medications to be approved by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. As of 1999, ten years after an application had been filed, the use of birth control pills still had not received approval. In only six months, however, Viagra, medication to treat male impotence, was approved by the Ministry (S. Wu Dunn, "Japan's Tale of Two Pills: Viagra and Birth Control," *New York Times*, April 27, 1999). In a more serious vein, downturns in

Japan's economic circumstances have had specific effects on women's work. In rural African countries, such as in Rwanda, economic downturns resulted in greater unwanted hardships for women – who had to take on even more physical labor. In Japan, the situation is different – and similar. It is different in that with an economic downturn women have been forced out of their jobs. When business is not going well, companies let go of their female employees. For instance, during the recession of the mid-1990s, women were becoming unemployed at a faster rate than men. They were also forced, in many cases, to leave the work force entirely and return to full-time housework. In addition, during recessions, women have more difficulty than men finding new jobs (e.g., *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 18, 1994; *New York Times*, August 27, 1995).

The commonality with the situation of women in rural Africa is that they are more likely to be denied their desires than men. In Japan, recent years have seen a desired increase in job opportunities for women. However, in addition to experiencing discrimination in the workplace, women have been the first to lose wanted jobs during economic downturns. Even when women maintain their employment, the time they spend at jobs and working in the home exceeds the time their husbands work. Japanese working women are still primarily responsible for cleaning, cooking, and child care, according to a UN Development Program report (Y. Kageyama, "Japan Says Dad Should Help Out More," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 24, 1999). With regard to employment, individual women and groups of women have been filing discrimination suits against companies. With regard to the inequalities in amount of time spent by working men and women at jobs and in the home, the government has mounted an advertising and educational campaign to help correct the situation. The campaign has met with protest and resistance from men.

The UN Development Program report came to a far-reaching conclusion regarding women in poor and rich nations: that they are still undervalued economically, denied access to political power, and subject to crippling inequalities. The report was based on the study of a range of activities in 174 countries and led the administrator of the UN Program to assert, "We hear and say that life is unfair, but

what this report shows is that life is dramatically unfair to women" (B. Crossette, "Study: Women Undervalued Economically," *Orange County Register*, August 18, 1995, p. 27). This administrator happens to be a male, but many of the contributors to the report were females (including Martha Nussbaum). Most relevant, however, is that women themselves, including ones in traditional cultures, do consider many cultural practices unfair. The dynamics of social hierarchy are also involved in practices less threatening than the burdens of economic undervaluation and discrimination, such as the wearing of the veil, arranged marriages, polygamy, and many restrictions in everyday activities. A sense of personal entitlement on the part of males is connected to many of these types of practices. Moreover, the practices produce conflicts, resistance, and oppositions of the type recounted by Mernissi that occurred in the Moroccan harem.

Resistance occurred in 1990 in Saudi Arabia, where one of the restrictions on the activities of women is that they are not permitted to drive. In an act of open defiance, about 40 or 50 women drove in a convoy of cars through the city of Riyadh. The religious police stopped the drivers and took them to police stations. All the women had their passports withdrawn, and those who were professors at an all female college were banned from teaching. Approximately one year later, passports were returned to the women. However, women and some men engaged in a form of protest at that time that would not risk arrest – which was a one-day boycott of shopping centers (M. Rosenblum, "Crisis-affected Saudi Women Go to New Freedom," *Jerusalem Post*, October 15, 1991). Also, less open defiance of the type I described among Iranians (Chapter 4) does occur in Saudi Arabia. Although women are expected to be completely covered in all public places, including the seaside, some wear swimsuits while jet-skiing: "Anything is possible as long as it is done discreetly. The religious police don't go out on the water" (a Saudi Arabian woman quoted in the *Jerusalem Post*, December 21, 1990, p. 10).

Women have openly spoken for changes in cultural practices so as to further their rights. As an example, Nawaal El Saadawi, who has served as Egypt's director of public health (before she was jailed for a short time), has helped form the Arab Women's Solidarity

Organization. One of the organization's general goals is the "liberation of women." Speaking in seemingly feminist words, she has said, "You have to fight for your liberation and the liberation of your sisters, and if you are a writer like me, you have to write and fight with your pen and try to change the system – the patriarchal system" ("Fighting Against the Veil," *The Monthly*, Berkeley, California, February 1991, p. 14). The organization had specific goals, such as transforming family law in the country especially with regard to polygamy and divorce. To accomplish these goals, the group published books on issues affecting women, sponsored international conferences, held local seminars on topics like divorce, and tried to teach skills to women in villages in order to facilitate their economic independence. In the view of Nawaal El Saadawi, practices like the wearing of the veil are connected to power, designed to oppress women, and are linked to restrictions with more serious consequences, such as "female circumcision, and using women as slaves." Muslim women from other countries share the goals of the Egyptian organization. A number of women from several countries have organized to stimulate discussions about the rights of women, and have produced a manual entitled, "Claiming Our Rights: A Manual for Women's Human Rights Education in Muslim Societies" (*New York Times*, December 29, 1996).

In Japan, too, groups of women have expressed serious discontents with cultural practices, especially as related to marriage and work arrangements. They have viewed those arrangements as unfair, as reflecting the self-interest of males, and as perpetuating detachment between men and women. According to an article in the *New York Times* (S. Wu Dunn, "Japanese Women Fight Servility," July 9, 1995, p. 6), women are rebelling, organizing groups and rallies, and resisting the servility expected of them by men. A new generation of women apparently are dissatisfied with the ways men act. As put by one 23-year-old female: "My father almost never steps inside the kitchen. If Mom is around, he wouldn't even serve tea. He'd just yell, 'tea!' But of course if my mother isn't around, he has to do it by himself. Would I marry someone like my dad? No way!" Women also complain that men want them to be compliant and obedient, and do all the housework without complaint. Many women expect that change will be slow because

"men are raised to be spoiled." With regard to the pace of change, women's groups paid close attention to a court case in which a husband brought a suit against his wife in divorce proceedings. The woman had sought a divorce after her husband demanded that she tend to all the housework every day even though she worked full-time. He sued on the grounds that she did not live up to her end of the marriage arrangements. The court's ruling against him was seen by women's groups as support for a rising resistance among Japanese women (M. Jordan, "A Triumph Over Drudgery," *International Herald Tribune*, August 2–3, 1997).

It is revealing that in a culture that supposedly revolves around interdependence, an absence of boundaries between people, and symbiotic harmony (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Rothbaum et al., 2000), women often complain that men do not maintain a relationship with them because they are too absorbed in their work. Men who work long hours have been termed 7–11 – to signify that they are at work at seven in the morning and stay there till 11 at night (during the 1980s, Japanese men led the world in most hours worked and in least time in household-chore participation). The consequences are that women are left alone most of the time to housework and child care, feeling distant from their husbands. The following comments from three women to Japanese newspapers are telling (as reported in A. Bianchi, "Lonely-Hearts, Japanese Version," *Harvard Magazine*, January/February 1996, p. 22):

> If my life is going to end up with my always having supper alone, waiting for my husband or my children to come home to this quiet residential section, I could just scream out in sadness and regret.
>
> He comes home around 9:00 or 10:00 every night. This is because he works 40 hours overtime every month. . . . Our conversation consists mainly of my own monologue. His only response has been an occasional brief "Hmhm."
>
> I asked myself, "What am I living for?" Everyday is a carbon copy of the day before. . . . I am left by myself in a concrete box all day long.

The sense of loneliness, separateness, and detachment created by men's work habits and attitudes affect the lives of couples during retirement, as well. Some divorce after retirement. A 53-year-old woman

poignantly brought this perspective on the situation: "I understand the feelings of people who divorce after retirement. You are treated like a maid all your life, doing the cooking and cleaning everyday, being told it is for the sake of the company. Now you face a lower income and have to make three meals a day for the person with whom you've hardly communicated for years" (*New York Times*, July 9, 1995, p. 6).

THE MOTHER OF A HUNDRED SONS **AND** *LIFTING THE VEIL OF SILENCE*

Thus far, I have drawn from a variety of newspaper and magazine articles to provide examples pertaining to the four propositions listed at the end of Chapter 8 regarding life in cultures. Before considering evidence from research, I conclude this discussion with reference to two extensive journalistic accounts of the lives and perspectives of women in India and several Islamic countries that replicate and support the themes emerging from the newspaper and magazine reports. In her book, *May You be the Mother of a Hundred Sons*, Elisabeth Bumiller (1990) reports on the four years she lived in India. The title of this book comes from a Sanskrit saying, known to most women in India, that was a blessing given to Hindu women at the time of their wedding. Bumiller observed and interviewed hundreds of women on the belief that women were her "window into the interior world, and into the issues of family, culture, history, religion, poverty, overpopulation, national unity" (p. 8). Jan Goodwin, also a journalist, has written, *The Price of Honor: Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Silence on the Islamic World* (1994). Her book is based on interviews with hundreds of Muslim women (and a number of men) of different social classes in ten countries (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, West Bank and Gaza, and Egypt). Through these interviews, Goodwin believes that she was able to lift veils of silence.

Bumiller's account includes discussion of most of the events I have already considered, such as abortions of female fetuses, female infanticide, bride burnings, the problems of widowhood, and the travails of women's movements. She spoke with families who had had abortions

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because of the sex of the fetus and families who had engaged in female infanticide. She also spent a fair amount of time, over the course of a year, living in Khajuron, a village in a rural area in Northern India. There, she lived with an upper-caste farming family, and interviewed twenty-five women from all castes. From these experiences she came to "two unqualified conclusions" (Bumiller, 1990, p. 79):

> First, both men and women struggled in the village, but the women, because of their gender, struggled and suffered twice as much as the men. Second, the women of Khajuron had one of two lots in life, defined entirely by caste. If a woman belonged to one of the upper or middle castes, she was virtually a hostage, confined within the walls of her home to isolation and demanding housework, which her husband did not consider work. Many men said their wives did "nothing" all day, even though most women never stopped working at physically exhausting household chores. If a woman belonged to the lower castes, she was free to leave her house, usually to work at seasonal labor in the fields for less than fifty cents a day. She was of course expected to handle all the housework and child care as well.

The women of the upper and middle castes, including the woman Bumiller lived with in the village, were spared from grueling field work and had some luxuries – but they had to live in purdah, in seclusion, unable to venture beyond the confines of their homes. Women of the lower castes left their houses to engage in hard labor. In between, were some middle-class families who were striving for status within the village hierarchy and, therefore, secluded women in a rigid way. They did not have some of the luxuries of upper-caste women and were forced to work hard in the home. In certain respects, Bumiller concludes, the people in the village of Khajuron "were like people anywhere else – they resented rich landlords, fought with their neighbors, channeled their ambitions into their children, looked down on those they considered beneath them and had emotional problems they were unable to solve on their own. . . . The more serious conflicts in the village centered on the violent feuding that had split the landlords and the Harijans over several generations" (pp. 94–95).

According to Bumiller, families of higher castes (especially in the cities) were able to avail themselves of the new technology and abort

female fetuses, whereas lower-caste families could not and used the method of infanticide. For poor women, infanticide was not desirable but necessary because of the huge expense of marrying daughters – especially a second, third, or fourth daughter. As put by one of the mothers interviewed by Bumiller (p. 108), "We felt very bad. But at the same time, suppose she had lived? It was better to save her from a lifetime of suffering." Families explained how marrying daughters would pose severe hardships for the entire family, and that remaining unmarried was not an option given the social pressures.

Social pressures also contributed to the incidence of abortions of females by the rich. It appears that one of the main motives is to avoid the social embarrassment of having daughters and no sons. Women explained that others would make one feel bad if they had no sons. A woman awaiting the results of her tests told Bumiller, "Our society makes you feel so bad if you don't have a son. Especially when I go out for parties, people say, 'How many children?' and I say, 'Two girls,' and they say, 'Oh, too bad, no boy.' And I feel very bad" (p. 116).

The dowry system is treated as a means for the groom's family to elevate its economic status. The large majority of families do not engage in bride burnings, but, according to Bumiller, poor Indian women are often "raised to be no more than chattel in her in-laws' home" (p. 52). As an example of how brides can be considered "a commodity that can be quickly exchanged for a better deal" (p. 53), Bumiller recounts the story of a man who, when he visited a family in order invite them to his wedding, which was to take place the very next day, saw an attractive woman in that family and decided she would be a better wife than the one already arranged for. He backed out of the marriage and spoke to the second woman's father about marrying her. These particular events, too, are not how it usually occurs: "In the end I came to see that Indians have important insights into marriage and love. And yet, I saw too many husbands and wives in India who seemed unconnected to each other. . . . Most of the marriages I knew were not disasters, but many of the couples didn't seem to be friends" (Bumiller, 1990, p. 43).

Perhaps one of the manifestations of this distance, as well as of economic vulnerability, is that women from a trade union, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) formed a bank with 19,000

depositors – all women. The bank served many purposes, including providing loans to women for business transactions and for home repairs. Apparently, the bank also served the purpose of protecting women's money. According to one of its founders: "We also wanted to open savings accounts, because though we sometimes manage to save some of our earnings, we have nowhere to hide it in the house. Our husbands or sons find it and use it up" (Bumiller, 1990, p. 136). Women do regard the actions of husbands as unfair. The sense of unfairness, though, goes well beyond holding on to savings. Bumiller came to believe that women in India are aware that life is at some level unfair. As a woman from Khajuran told her with some anger, "Men are not smarter. But they have been educated and go outside. Women stay in the house."

Like Elisabeth Bumiller, Jan Goodwin saw the lives of women as windows into cultures – as does Dr. Zaki Badawi, an Islamic scholar and head of the Muslim College in London. Dr. Badawi expressed concern with changes in the Islamic world in the treatment of women, stating, "To understand the Islamic world, one needs to decode the way that society perceives women" (Goodwin, 1994, p. 28). In order to obtain perspectives of women, Goodwin visited the ten countries and lived in Pakistan for four years. Most of the themes and events I have already discussed, including the ones reported by Bumiller, emerged from Goodwin's travels and interviews. In line with Bumiller's observations in India, Goodwin stressed the undervaluing of females, injustices perceived by women, and the idea that many practices serve the interests of men. In several Islamic countries, Goodwin recounts, the birth of a boy is celebrated while the birth of a girl is mourned. Shame, guilt, and social disapproval are associated with the failure to give birth to a son. Moreover, there is a good chance that a man will eventually take a second wife if the first one does not bear a son. Another commonality with the situation in India is that financial considerations are relevant to the treatment of women because it is the husband's family that benefits from the marriage. In turn, girls have a much higher rate of malnutrition than boys, and more generally, boys are accorded better treatment than their sisters. It is not uncommon for boys, including younger ones, to give orders to their sisters. Purdah

results in negative health consequences to women, given their lack of exercise and insufficient sunlight (Goodwin, 1994, p. 56). A suppressed report, originally commissioned by the president of Pakistan in 1985, came to the conclusion that "the average woman is born into near slavery, leads a life of drudgery, and dies invariably in oblivion. This grim condition is the stark reality of half our population simply because they happen to be female" (quoted in Goodwin, 1994, p. 44).

Goodwin observed many examples of inequalities and injustices. Even before the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, the Islamic State of Afghanistan declared in 1992 imposed severe restrictions on the activities of women (e.g., dress, work). Marriage entailed restrictions, as well, because "for the majority of Afghan women, a woman's wedding denotes the day she becomes the property of her husband's family" (p. 92). A wife is at the service of her husband and his family, and except for wealthy families, she is treated like a servant for many years. However, social hierarchy also affects relationships among women. The wife does gain status in the family hierarchy with the birth of sons, and gains a place of control over daughters-in-law when sons marry. (In India, mother-in-laws have participated in dowry killings.)

In Iran, too, restrictions were placed on the activities of women after the revolution of 1979. Many were prevented from working, and it was decreed by the Islamic Council of Guardians that "a woman does not have the right to leave her home without her husband's permission, not even to attend her father's funeral procession. A woman is completely at the service of her husband, and her social activities are conditional upon her husband's permission" (quoted in Goodwin, 1994, p. 113).

Divorce and polygamy are other sources of inequality in several nations. Men can divorce women readily and do so sometimes without telling the wife until after the fact. Goodwin related stories of men who for a long time kept secret from one wife his marriage to others. One woman from the United States who had converted to Islam and married a Muslim man (she had been divorced and was then the polygamous second wife of a Kuwaiti man) told Goodwin that "there are a lot of secret second wives here. The men are afraid to tell their first wives and her family. But they do it anyway and just keep it quiet"

(p. 191). This woman expressed ambivalence about polygamy. Although it made her very unhappy, especially when her husband is away for long periods of time, she saw some benefits: "I do feel, however, that Arab men do not know what empathy is. They can't put themselves in somebody else's shoes. Their entire lives are handed to them on a plate. Arab men are raised as princes. He lives in a society where women never question his movements. It's quite acceptable for him to go home only to sleep. There are very few interactions with a wife. He doesn't play with the kids. There are times when I feel I am better off having only a part-time husband. Arab husbands can be very demanding, they want twenty-four hour service. The man's needs must always be met" (p. 195).

Another woman in Kuwait, who was a religious teacher, expressed both acceptance of, and dismay with, polygamy. After more than ten years of marriage, her husband began to take new wives. The first time he had married a woman in Syria, but left her there. In response to his wife's upset and anger, he maintained that it was a sexual need and a religious requirement. He soon divorced the second wife. Subsequently, his pattern was to marry other women and then divorce them. The wife expressed ambivalence: "It is his right in Islam to take other wives, but it is hard for the children and for me, I don't love him anymore. . . . Through the years, because of this, he has trained me to hate him. But in front of him I try to pretend I am happy, and I try to laugh and sit with him. We still live together as man and woman, we still share a bed" (p. 198).

Resistances and oppositions to cultural practices are part of Goodwin's account. She documented two types. One is of the kind I have discussed that occurred in Iran at the time of Khatami's election in 1997. These types of resistance were occurring in Iran prior to that time. As examples, women wore stylish and revealing clothing in their homes. As put by an Iranian woman, "We still do a lot of things, we still travel. We dress how we like underneath these manteaus; my mother dresses like a duchess at home" (p. 117). One time Goodwin went to the cemetery of the Ayatollah Khomeini for the observance of the third anniversary of his death. There, she met a young woman who told her that she came only because her school required it. She also made a

point of telling Goodwin that she dressed differently at home and that "I hate it, hate all this. I am sixteen, this is my time, my youth, I should be having fun. Instead, I am here, dressed like a peasant grandmother, to mourn a dead old man who hated beauty, hated happiness. If God meant us to dress in black, if he meant us to have no color in our lives, why did he give us flowers? That's what I would have liked to have asked that dead Imam" (p. 127).

People also smuggled forbidden music and movie videos. Goodwin tells of the time she witnessed a young man sent by his family to rent a video. He, too, was being taught that lying is necessary. He came back with a cake box containing an American film – which he referred to as Iranian heroin.

Based on her observations, Goodwin believes that organizations active in fighting for the rights and welfare of women are growing in numbers. Furthermore, she relates many instances of women in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt who had gotten into conflicts with religious and governmental authorities over their activities and writings. These events are too numerous to go into here. Two illustrative cases came from Goodwin's visit to Egypt. There, she interviewed Nawaal El Saadawi, who it will be recalled had been the director of public health and contributed to the formation of the Arab Women's Solidarity Organization. Saadawi also founded a feminist magazine, *Noon*, which supported the women in Saudi Arabia who had demonstrated by driving cars. She wrote an article that was critical of the view that women should be completely covered, arguing that a woman could be a good Muslim and still keep her face uncovered. Part of the problem, according to Saadawi, is that men interpret the Koran to benefit their own interests and apply a double standard: "They have one for women and one for men: They are very strict with women, and very lax, lenient with men. They encourage corruption and promiscuity among the men, and then they say they are good Muslims. Polygamy, encouraging men to have four wives, is promiscuity. This damages the family, but they allow that. This kind of double standard morality is corruption" (p. 333). She also believes that some focus on women to divert attention from serious problems like poverty, and that the system needs to be changed.

Goodwin visited another journalist, whose magazine is very different from Saadawi's, but who has some similar goals. Halla Sarhan is the editor of an Egyptian women's magazine who attempts to inform women and men about serious societal problems. For example, she has published articles about sexuality by including verses from the Koran. In this way, she has published articles about intercourse on the wedding night, frigidity, and explanations by gynecologists. Sarhan deliberately uses such techniques to convey information she considers important in a society that censors public discussion of such issues. As she put it (Goodwin, 1994, p. 337): "Women are really crushed and maltreated in this society. Men realize that religion gives them a license; even my six-year-old son knows that because he is male he is automatically powerful. The man is the one who can desert or divorce the wife at whim; the man is the one who can do as he pleases, not the woman. It is men who can take secret wives without informing their first wife. It is so common here to be at a funeral when a woman and a child walks in whom nobody knows, and she turns out to be the dead man's secret second wife. Even with my husband I fear polygamy; it puts all women in jeopardy. . . . The women I talk to or who write to us tell me that married men care only about their needs. The wife must never express her needs."

Perspectives on Cultural Practices: More Than One

Even when a baby is born, people are glad if it's a boy, and less glad if it's a girl. We live in a conservative culture. Maybe in the future I might want to treat my daughter in the same way as I would treat my son, but the culture wouldn't let me do it.

> —18-year-old Druze female

Naawal El Saadawi and Hallah Sarhan, like many other women with whom Jan Goodwin spoke, made it clear that they think that self-interest, the pursuit of personal needs and desires, a sense of entitlement, and the assertion of power – all characteristics attributed to individualism – are at the forefront of many cultural practices that entail restrictions on the activities of females. Many of those women were unwilling to accept such practices and social arrangements, expressing equally clear moral judgments about their unfairness and the negative consequences for women's welfare. For some of the women, as we have seen, there is ambivalence as well. Ambivalence was expressed, for instance, by women who disliked and were upset by polygamy and yet saw it as having benefits. Some strive for women's rights and still seem to accept polygamy. An example is the wife of a powerful Sheik of Kuwait who is a human rights and women's rights activist and whose writings were banned on two occasions. At the same time, she accepted that her husband had many wives and concubine slaves. As another example of ambivalence, some Saudi Arabian women appear to have a desire for change and commitments to existing cultural arrangements. One university woman has written that it is necessary to make

changes in the role of women in society, but that the changes should be of a limited kind because their way of life is different from that of other cultures and most Saudi Arabian women believe that restrictions on their activities reflect a desire on the part of men to protect them rather than keep them in an inferior role (*Jerusalem Post*, December 21, 1990). Ambivalence was also conveyed by women with whom Nussbaum (2000) spoke. One woman described a traditional upbringing, in which her mother told her never to question adult male authority, and that females should be submissive, silent, and innocent. At the same time, her mother continually complained about the unhappiness that was caused by those traditions. Nussbaum regards the combination of acceptance and protest of traditions as common among Indian women.

Moreover, research has shown that in many nations people hold both positive and negative attitudes toward the inequality of women. Drawing a distinction between what they refer to as hostile and benevolent sexism, Glick and Fiske (2001) found that there is critique and acceptance of inequalities. In nineteen different Western and non-Western nations, it was found that more men than women endorsed characterizations that portray women negatively and that serve to place them in unequal positions with less power than men. By contrast, women endorsed, as much as men, positive characterizations of women that serve to place them in unequal and less powerful positions than men.

The ambivalence and the coexistence of acceptance and critique reflect a diversity of social judgments and orientations within individuals and cultures. In addition, the perceived injustice of cultural practices that are seen to serve the interests of males, results in a great deal of conflict – at least, by Goodwin's account. Constant themes running through Goodwin's reports of lives in the countries she visited are conflicts, disagreements, differing perspectives on the same events, the issuance of threats, and the carrying out of threats with violence. Conflicts and disagreements are not only between males and females. Many conflicts occur within nations over political aims and interpretations of religion. An example of political disagreements that included different views of the role of women is the contrast between the founder of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who in 1947 called

for a secular state, and President Zia-al-Hag, who took power in 1977. Jinnah's conception of the secular state included freedoms for women: "We are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of their homes like prisoners" (quoted in Goodwin, 1994, p. 55). Zia, by contrast, called for an Islamic state and issued a set of directives restricting women's dress, work opportunities, and much more. These types of conflicts and disagreements were not infrequent in the other countries visited by Goodwin.

The many issues that emerged in the journalistic accounts I have discussed suggest a perspective on cultural norms and practices that differs from assumptions made by some researchers. The practices that have been listed (Benedict, 1934; Shweder, 1994) to demonstrate cultural variation, such as infanticide, polygamy, arranged marriages, inheritance rights, and divorce arrangements, appear to be much more than examples reflecting norms accepted in some cultures but not others. In descriptions by journalists, the practices emerge as issues that entail complex societal arrangements and social interactions that include ambiguities and disagreements that can be sources of intense negative emotions and sometimes misery, and are sources of great conflict and argument.

In a similar fashion, the journalistic accounts bear on issues studied by Shweder et al. (1987) among Indians. Along with other matters, they asserted that, unlike Westerners, Indians accept the morality of inheritance rights for males and not females, a husband beating a wife "black and blue" for disobeying him (since the family unit is analogous to a military unit), and that people of lower status must be kept at a distance (to avoid pollution). The journalistic accounts have made it abundantly clear that issues of this sort (unequal distribution, violence against women, and the shunting of lower caste people) are quite relevant to social relationships in India and other places. However, the journalistic accounts also make it clear that these practices, insofar as they exist, are not simply accepted, given the disagreements, conflicts, and efforts at change. It is also the case that it does matter where one sits on the social hierarchy. It is much more likely that these practices are accepted by those who sit in dominant positions than those in subordinate positions. People in subordinate positions often recognize that asymmetrical

reciprocity serves the interests and ends of dominant groups and perpetuates the oppression of those with less power. Accordingly, they judge that some people strive, through the application of social norms, for their own needs and interests in ways that are unjust.

The analogy that was drawn between conceptions of a family unit and a military unit is actually in contradiction with the characterization of the culture as collectivistic and interdependent. In a military unit, there are formal distinctions between people of different ranks that make for separation and allow for strict adherence to duties and the ability to exert detached forms of discipline. The formalities and separateness of relationships in military units simply are not in accord with the ideas of an unbounded sense of selves or the fundamental connectedness of human beings. Arguably, it could be maintained that the sense of separation between people of different castes is in the context of interdependence of people of the same caste (i.e., that interdependence for the in-group brings with it a detachment from the out-group). Such an argument, however, could not apply, for obvious reasons, to relationships within families or between spouses. Alternatively, it could be argued that relationships between spouses are interdependent just by virtue of a fluidity of boundaries between people that allows them to tell each other what to do. The problem with that argument, were it made, would be that the fluidity is only in one direction. Men can tell women what to do, but women cannot tell men what to do. Thus, men might act in ways that imply a lack of boundaries when they tell women what to do. However, men also act in ways that imply the boundaries are rigid since they do not allow women to tell them what to do. Moreover, the journalistic accounts indicate that people do not see the family as analogous to a military unit. The assertion of power, maintenance of distance, and use of corporal punishment, at times, are major sources of the conflicts, disagreements, and contested understandings.

IT IS NOT ONLY IN TRADITIONAL CULTURES

The conflicts that occur in non-Western cultures between groups of different social classes have similarities with conflicts familiar in

Western cultures. This was part of Bumiller's message when she stated that villagers in India were like people anywhere else in resenting rich landlords, looking down on those they considered beneath them, and having a history of violent feuding between people of upper and lower castes. In many respects, the situation in India appears similar to the situation in the United States that confronted Martin Luther King, Jr., and many others. The situation regarding relationships between males and females in the non-Western cultures I have discussed is not entirely like and not entirely different from the situation in Western cultures. Although hierarchical distinctions between males and females may be more pronounced in some non-Western cultures, inequalities are part of the structure of gender relations in Western cultures as well. A degree of asymmetrical reciprocity also serves the interests of males to the detriment of females.

As I noted in Chapter 7, Okin has argued that justice often is not applied to those in subordinate positions in the social hierarchy. According to Okin, the failure to apply justice in an encompassing way is, and traditionally has been, part of practices in family life in Western cultures. Okin and others (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Hochschild, 1989; MacKinnon, 1993) have argued that substantial inequalities in the family have had serious consequences on the well-being and rights of females. Inequalities are reflected in domestic violence, abuse, and rape. Unequal treatment of women is also reflected in their underrepresentation in the political system, in positions of power or influence in business and the professions, and in fewer opportunities for paid work. According to Okin, inequalities are salient within families, where justice is applied inadequately since the interests of men are given priority over those of women. Speaking to both the structure of the family and its broader consequences, Okin (1989, pp. 135–136) has asserted that "marriage and the family, as currently practiced in our society, are unjust institutions. They constitute the pivot of a societal system of gender that renders women vulnerable to dependency, exploitation, and abuse. When we look seriously at the distribution between husbands and wives of such critical social goods as work (paid and unpaid), power, prestige, self-esteem, opportunities for self-development, and both physical and economic security, we find socially constructed

inequalities between them, right down the list." By Okin's argument, therefore, women in this society are not fully granted the potential for achieving many of the human capabilities delineated by Nussbaum (2000).

By tradition, men have been in positions of dominance, with greater decision-making power, access to paid work, control over finances, and less economic vulnerability in cases of divorce (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). Traditionally, women have done the work at home, which is generally regarded to have lower status and esteem (Nussbaum, 1995). Traditional forms of inequality and control are exemplified by what a man (a plastic surgeon) had to say about his wife and family (reported by Blumstein and Schwartz 1983, p. 119):

> I don't mind her having a part-time job, but she doesn't have time for a full-time job . . . I am the breadwinner, she is the homemaker, and that is what we signed up for twenty years ago. . . . We do not make decisions around her work. My work supports us and we put that first. It is her responsibility to do her work well just as it is my responsibility to do my work well. . . . She takes care of our sons and I take care of everyone. It is part of her responsibility not to let her work interfere with her job at home. I don't mind her working as long as dinner is ready on time and the house is neat and clean. I think we deserve that and so far it has worked out well.

If this man's statements accurately reflect what occurs in their home, there is little question as to who is in charge. He seems to have directed the roles and responsibilities for his wife and himself. In addition to the different roles and responsibilities he doles out, it is evident that he believes that his entitlements, desires, and expectations must be met – though he does make some "concessions" (I don't mind her having a part-time job; I don't mind her working as long as dinner is on time). Perhaps not too many husbands are as "up front" or as blatant about their perceived control over their wives' activities. However, the research by Blumstein and Schwartz indicates that his general position is not uncommon in practice. In examining control and influence in marital relationships, they found both that the spouse who earns more money also exerts more power, and that the balance of power

is affected by the traditional role of males as providers. Given that husbands usually earn more than their wives, the balance of power is clearly tilted toward males.

The plastic surgeon quoted above "allowed" his wife to work as long as it did not interfere with her domestic duties. Those traditional arrangements have changed in recent years (and had changed at the time of Blumstein and Schwartz's work). Hochschild (1989) provided some interesting statistics regarding changes in work patterns from 1950 to the late 1980s: In 1950, 30 percent of American women worked, and, in 1986, 55 percent did so; in 1950, 28 percent of married women with children between 6 and 17 years of age worked, while in 1986, it was 54 percent. In addition, 58 percent of all married couples had both spouses working in 1989. Although these changes are important, it is still the case that inequalities exist within family life. One of the major ways the inequalities play out is that working women do much more of the unpaid work in the home and engage in much more child care than their husbands (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Hochschild, 1989; Okin, 1996). Several survey studies (reviewed by Hochschild, 1989) of dual career families have documented the pattern. When both work full-time, wives do twice as much of the work at home than their husbands, who in turn have more leisure time than their wives. Even children and adolescents are affected since in families with both parents working full-time, girls do substantially more of the household work than boys. In research by Blumstein and Schwartz, it was found that among working couples who stated beliefs in gender equality, the men did more work in the home than those who accepted role differences and the traditional division of labor. Nevertheless, women in the nontraditional couples did much more of the work in the home than their husbands. Furthermore, conflict was greater among couples in which husbands do take on a substantial amount of work in the home than when husbands do little work.

Through extensive interviews of fifty couples and observations of interactions in several homes, Hochschild found that husbands and wives frequently were in conflict over the distribution of work in the home, as well as over the extent to which women should work outside

the home. To be sure, some couples accepted the traditional roles of men with greater power and women with greater responsibility in the home, even if the woman held an outside job. However, most women believed they should have equality with their husbands. Hochschild's interviews revealed the variety of judgments about relations between husbands and wives seen in non-Western cultures. Concerns were raised about fairness, pragmatics (e.g., worries about divorce), personal desires (e.g., men not liking household or child care tasks), and the attribution of role obligations by husbands for wives.

It was the unequal distribution of work in the home that led Hochschild to the metaphor of the "second shift" (the title of her book). It was suggested by one of the women interviewed who did not wish to see her activities in the house as a work shift. Because of the time and effort required, however, she did view it in those terms: "You're on duty at work. You come home and you're on duty. Then you go back to work and you're on duty" (as quoted in Hochschild, 1989, p. 7). Hochschild interpreted the situation in the following way: "After eight hours of adjusting to insurance claims, she came home to put on the rice for dinner, care for her children, and wash laundry. Despite herself her home life *felt* like a second shift" (1989, p. 7). The idea of a second shift was conveyed, as well, by Bumiller (1990) in her discussion of the work of women of lower castes in India.

Areas of gender inequality outside the family have also been discussed extensively. One is the favoritism that is accorded to adolescent boys over girls in middle school and high school classrooms (Orenstein, 1994; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Relative success in school, of course, has importance for later economic and occupational achievements. Another important aspect of gender relations has been a topic of much controversy and debate, especially among legal scholars. It revolves around issues of pornography, freedom of speech, and relationship of dominance and subordination between males and females (Dworkin, 1991, 1993; MacKinnon, 1993). MacKinnon and others have argued in favor of legal restrictions on pornography on the grounds that it causes violence against women (i.e., viewing pornography leads men to rape and physically assault women) and directly contributes to the subordination of women and diminished political

power. The argument has been couched in terms of a conflict between freedom of speech in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and protections of equality in the Fourteenth Amendment. MacKinnon maintained that free speech serves to support social dominance and inequality by allowing depictions of the physical and sexual subordination of women by men. Through these propositions, MacKinnon helped bring forth the adoption of an ordinance in Indianapolis, Indiana, that outlawed all pornography (this ordinance was eventually ruled unconstitutional by a Court of Appeals), as well as a statute in Canada that was upheld by its Supreme Court.

Other legal scholars have challenged these propositions and the legal restrictions of pornography on at least two grounds (Dworkin, 1991, 1993). One is the lack of evidence that rape and physical assaults against women are caused by pornography. The second is that pornography cannot be singled out in the causes of the subordination of women since many other forms of speech do so to at least as great an extent and impact many more people than pornography. Dworkin (1993, p. 36) has put the issue in the following way: "No doubt mass culture is in various ways an obstacle to equality, but the most popular forms of that culture – the view of women presented in soap operas and commercials, for example – are much greater obstacles to that equality than the dirty films watched by a small minority." There is a common position, however, in these conflicting views of the validity of placing restrictions on pornography. It is that gender inequality does exist, and that there are many instances of the depiction of the subordination of women in public forums.

VARIATIONS IN SOCIAL JUDGMENTS

There is, therefore, good reason to conclude that in and out of the family in Western and non-Western cultures "conflicts are everywhere" and "are part and parcel of everyday living" – as was asserted by Shantz and Hartup (1992, p. 1). In spite of its ubiquity, some of the research on cultural practices in non-Western cultures has failed to document these types of conflicts. I believe this is because conflicts and disagreements have not been addressed adequately. One reason for the

failure to address the issues is the presumption that social harmony is characteristic of collectivistic cultures. In turn, one consequence of the idea that cultures are characterized by shared elements and harmony is that variations in judgments and orientations are not sufficiently addressed. Much of that research has examined cultural practices mainly from the perspective of people in dominant positions on the social hierarchy and with an eye to public ideology. Different interpretations of public ideologies and public documents constitute another type of disagreement. Goodwin (1994, p. 338) was told by Halla Sarhan that she had "attended sessions where they claim to teach the women the Koran, but many of the things they teach they invent." Goodwin heard many giving varying interpretations of the Koran and the Prophet's teaching with regard to the role and status of women. Polygamy again serves as an example. Debates occur as to the purposes of polygamy, as put forth in the Koran. Some argue that it was permitted in the Koran only in exceptional cases. The main exceptional case was to protect war widows by allowing a means for remarriage. Others argue that it is a right of a male to have more that one wife. More generally, there are disputes over how to interpret the rights and obligations of women in the teachings and in the Koran. Many told Goodwin that some people reinterpret the Koran and invent teachings so as to invoke its authority for personal and political purposes. An overarching issue is possible differences between public ideologies and individuals' interpretations.

There is research that has approached the study of judgments and orientations toward societal arrangements and cultural practices from the viewpoints of people in different positions and individuals' interpretations and reinterpretations of public ideologies and doctrines. That body of research needs to be considered in the context of other findings that have consistently shown that concepts of welfare and justice are central in people's moral thinking. Some of those findings have even served to produce changes in propositions in which a minor status had been attributed to justice among certain groups. One example is the proposition that females judge with an orientation to care rather than justice. Research findings have led to the view that the two orientations coexist, and that there is a substantive concern with justice on the part of females (Gilligan & Attanuci, 1988). The second

example is the proposed distinction between rights-based and duty-based moralities. A fair amount of research has shown that people in supposedly duty-based cultures do make substantive judgments of justice (for research in India, see Bersoff & Miller, 1993; Miller & Bersoff, 1992; and for research with the Druze in Israel, see Wainryb, 1995). In those types of cultures, too, morality is distinguished from convention (see Chapter 5). Furthermore, a few studies have shown that people in non-Western cultures make judgments about the personal domain. It has been found that Colombian children judge that decisions about activities in the personal domain, and not in the moral and social conventional domains, are up to individual discretion (Ardila-Rey & Killen, 2001). In studies conducted in various regions of Brazil, it was shown that children and adolescents judge that certain activities should be up to individual discretion (Nucci, Camino, & Sapiro, 1996). Brazilian mothers, as well, accord decision-making discretion to their children and adolescents, with the range of activities expanding as children become older (Nucci & Milnitsky-Sapiro, 1995). Similar results were obtained in a study of Japanese mothers' judgments about preschool children's choices of activities (Yamada, 2000). The Japanese mothers thought that several types of activities should be largely decided by the children, including recreational activities, choices of clothing, and choices of playmates.

All this research suggests that there is a coexistence of judgments typically placed into either the individualistic category or the collectivistic category. A number of researchers, working from various theoretical frameworks, have found implausible the idea that people's concepts of self or persons are of one kind – independent or interdependent – and are in agreement with Spiro's (1993) contention that the binary opposites do not hold. Those researchers have also provided substantial evidence, consistent with the picture that has emerged from the journalistic accounts, indicating that independence and personal agency do coexist with interdependence in non-Western cultures. Spiro reviewed several lines of evidence in this regard, including research among Balinese, South Asians (Indians, Pakistanis, and Napalese), Japanese, and Burmese. As an example, research has shown that, in their work, northern Japanese villagers are motivated less by

group goals and more by individual goals of power, self-esteem, and pride. It has also been found that village women, while sometimes acting to further the interests of others and in accord with family roles, also often act to promote self-serving personal desires. In the process, they experience conflicts between individual desires and interpersonal obligations. Furthermore, the Japanese villagers gave importance to cooperation and consideration of others, but, nevertheless, believed that people are fundamentally centered on themselves.

The discrepancy between public ideologies or religious doctrines and the judgments of individuals that Goodwin observed in discussions of the Koran was also found in Spiro's research in Burma, which is a Theravada Buddhist society. A central doctrine of Theravada Buddhism is *Anatta*, the doctrine that there is no soul (ego) or transcendental self. Spiro conducted field work in Burma, in part to investigate their conceptions of self. He found that, in contrast with *Anatta*, the villagers "strongly believe in the very ego or soul that this doctrine denies" (1993, p. 119). According to Spiro, one of the reasons for the discrepancy is that the villagers themselves experience a subjective sense of self. A second reason has to do with their ideas about salvation. Within Buddhism, the form and quality of one's future existence (reincarnation) are a function of the merit of acts performed in present and previous existences. Spiro found that the Burmese villagers maintained that if there were no ego or self with a continuing identity, then they would not have to be concerned with any existence except the present one (see Spiro, 1993, p. 120). In other words, the Burmese do not totally incorporate as their own the cultural conception, but, instead, to put it simply, try to figure things out. They take into account their own subjective experiences of self and evaluate different aspects of cultural or religious doctrine in relation to personal interests and goals.

Similar analyses are provided by Hollan (1992), who put it in terms of a discrepancy between cultural models (akin to public ideology and doctrine) and subjective experiences. Through open-ended interviews with the Troja from South Sulawese in Indonesia, Hollan showed that people's direct social experiences produced judgments different from those embedded in cultural ideology. Hollan, too, found cooperation

and compliance alongside the use of social relationships to further personal needs and desires.

Additional evidence for the mixture of features of collectivism and individualism comes from several studies. Mines (1988) maintained that individuation and personal autonomy among Indians is overlooked because of an overemphasis on hierarchy and the subordination of the individual to caste and family. On the basis of interviews with people ranging in age from 23 to 83 years, he asserted that Indians depict themselves as active agents pursuing personal goals – especially with increasing age. He found that particularly in their late 20s and early 30s, after having become established in marriage and work, they begin to question dependency and reject compliance. Many also reported that they had engaged in acts defying norms of caste, family, or hierarchy. The urge for autonomy was especially evident among people over 40 years of age, who felt that they could pursue personal interests and make decisions independently. Of course, it is not very surprising that as people become older they might assert greater independence. However, the findings reported by Mines indicate that a sense of independence is not alien to Indians, and that as people attain positions of power within the family hierarchy, they are more likely to assert their autonomy. However, in a study (Misra & Giri, 1995) of how younger Indians (undergraduates from 20 to 25 years of age) think about themselves, it was found that among both males and females there is a sense of independence and of interdependence that can vary by the roles held in different situations.

Findings of this sort are not limited to Indians. Other studies have found a corresponding combination of independence and interdependence among Chinese people in mainland China and Hong Kong (Helwig et al., 2001; Lau, 1992; Li, 2000), as well as among the Japanese (Crystal, 2000; Crystal et al., 1998; Crystal, Watanabe, & Chen, 2000). In research by Helwig et al. (2001), it was found that Chinese adolescents (from 12 to 18 years of age) apply concepts of individual freedom and autonomy, along with concepts of the role of authority, in their judgments about decision making in peer group, school, and family contexts. In some contexts, they judged that decisions should be left to the jurisdiction of individuals, including children. In turn,

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Gjerde and Onishi (2000) have argued that there are variations and heterogeneity in Japanese concepts of self and persons, quoting Linger (Gjerde & Onishi, 2000, p. 16), who has claimed that Japanese homogeneity is a "state-sponsored myth that masks diversity, muffles dissent, and wounds lives." Furthermore, Gjerde and Onishi maintained that the focus on Japanese interdependence serves to neglect issues of power and sources of change. On another dimension, Holloway (2000) has examined the educational and philosophical underpinnings of preschools in Japan. She determined that there are variations among preschools in the extent to which independence, interdependence, and tradition are stressed. Holloway also found that there is a fair amount of conflict among school personnel, and between school personnel and parents.

CONTEXTS WITHIN CONTEXTS

In reporting on research they conducted in India, Sinha and Tripathi (1994) portray what they refer to as the "Indian psyche" in ways that are far from a type of general orientation. In particular, they maintain that both the thoughts and behaviors of Indians involve a juxtaposition of opposites, a coexistence of contradictions, and efforts to incorporate individualism and collectivism. They argued that Indian philosophy and ethics center on contradictory elements "where *dharma* (duty) and *moksha* (salvation) coexist with the pursuit of wealth (*artha*) and sexual satisfaction (*kama*) as constituents of cardinal virtues" (p. 127). They maintain that analyses of Indian behavior, consciousness, and features like child rearing have been contradictory, and attribute this not to errors on the part of analysts but to the "paradoxical nature of the reality" they were observing. In prior studies of family life (Sinha, 1979) and work organizations (Tripathi, 1990) in India, they had found a mixture of individualistic and collectivistic orientations.

To further explore such mixtures, Sinha and Tripathi (1994) conducted a study, with undergraduates from Northern India, that entailed presenting them with statements that blended features of individualism and collectivism in contradictory or conflicting ways. Such statements were presented along with the usual types of

statements reflecting either individualism or collectivism. It was found that the large majority (87%) endorsed the mixed statements as a first choice, and that their second choices were mostly (65%) individualistic. These findings, in concert with findings of other studies, show that the culture cannot be characterized as of one type or the other. Sinha and Tripathi also imply that the findings reflect particular aspects of Indian culture and thought – namely, that there is an acceptance of contradiction that includes shifts with situational contexts.

The attribution of contradiction, conflict, and contextual shifts to the culture and its people is, I believe, correct. It is also a more accurate portrayal of the thought of Indians than the proposition that they are collectivistic and duty-based in their morality. However, many of the findings I have considered throughout this book indicate that conflicts, contradictions, and contextual variations are not particular to a nation or culture. There are several sides to cultural practices stemming from the different perspectives of people in different positions in the social hierarchy. The material I covered in the previous chapter strongly suggests that one not unimportant side of social hierarchy is the selective assertion of personal interests, entitlements, and autonomy for and by those in dominant positions – in addition to fulfilling duties and roles.

A selective application of individual interests, personal freedoms, and even rights is not uncommon and goes back to the writings of Aristotle. As Sen (1997, 1999) has pointed out, Aristotle extensively discussed the value of personal freedom but failed to apply it to slaves and women. Sen draws a distinction between the value of freedom and the equality of freedom ("that everyone matters, and personal freedom should be guaranteed, on a shared basis for all," p. 35). Sen also points out that even in societies stratified by class and caste, freedom can be and has been valued for the privileged, such as the Mandarins and Brahmins.

Cultural practices and norms, therefore, need to be analyzed for their multiple features. In many instances, contradictions, conflicts, a juxtaposition of opposites, and shifts by contexts are evident in ways people approach cultural practices. One source of multiple approaches to cultural practices is the application of the domains of conventional,

moral, and personal judgments. Furthermore, insofar as cultural practices and arrangements are linked to relationships of dominance and subordination, it is likely that somewhat different perspectives will be taken by those in positions of greater and lesser power. Evidence for these propositions comes from studies with the Druze living in Northern Israel (Turiel & Wainryb, 1998; Wainryb, 1995; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994). The studies provide additional support for the first of the four propositions regarding thought and culture I put forth in Chapter 9. Along with the studies on the mixture of features of individualism and collectivism in India, China, and Japan, the studies among the Druze showed variations in social orientations. The research with the Druze went further in analyzing, in line with the second proposition, how the variations are connected systematically to arrangements of power and dominance and subordination.

The Druze constitute the type of culture that would be characterized as collectivistic, with a duty-based morality, in the formulations of general cultural orientations. This is the case even though they live in Israel because they inhabit relatively isolated villages and because they maintain cultural arrangements that differ from other parts of the country (this is also true of some Jewish groups in Israel, such as the ultraorthodox Hasidim). Of special relevance to the research questions is that the community has a patrilineal and patriarchical family structure which shapes interactions among men, women, and children. Roles are clearly demarcated, with males in dominant positions (Abu-Izzedin, 1984; Ben-Dor, 1979). Restrictions are placed on many of the activities of women, including dress, bodily ornaments, sexuality, work, education, and leisure activities. Most Israeli Druze women do not wear the veil, but they do not wear pants, short skirts, short-sleeved shirts, makeup or jewelry. Women are restricted from activities like dancing in mixed company in public places or swimming at beaches. As in the cultures discussed in the previous chapter, marriages are arranged, and there are very strong sanctions against premarital sex . The Druze religion (based on Islam) allows easy divorce by husbands but not wives. In sum, many of the features of other Islamic cultures, as discussed by Goodwin, are part of the Druze community.

Some of the research (Wainryb & Turiel, 1994) examined personal, social, and moral judgments around decision making in the family with regard to various activities of relevance in the community. The activities included occupational and educational choices, household tasks, friendships, and leisure time. Participants in the studies were presented with situations that depicted disagreements between family members in dominant (i.e., husband, father) and subordinate (i.e., wife, daughter, son) positions. Two types of situations were used. In one, a person in a dominant position objects to the choices of a person in a subordinate position. An example is a situation in which a woman wants to attend a class but her husband does not want her to, because he thinks it is a waste of time. In the second type of situation, this is reversed so that a person in a subordinate position objects to the choices of a person in a dominant position. Using the corresponding example, a wife does not want her husband to attend a class. Parallel situations were used for other activities and for disagreements between father and son and father and daughter.

We examined adolescents' and adults' judgments about who should make the decision in each type of situation, their reasons for those judgments, and how they conceptualized the relationships. One result was straightforward. The majority of males and females judged that males should make the decisions: Wives or daughters should not engage in activities to which a husband or father objects, and a husband or father should do what he wants and disregard the objections of a wife or daughter. Individual decision-making discretion was accorded to sons even in the face of objections from a father. It was also judged that fathers could make their own choices when their sons objected.

These findings are not surprising since they verify the characterizations of the culture as patriarchical and one in which the activities of females are restricted by social norms and by male authority in the family. However, the findings are not inconsistent with the idea that personal agency and autonomy are accorded to persons in positions of dominance. Additional findings demonstrated that this is, indeed, the case. In explaining why males (husbands, fathers) should make their own choices even if the other person objects, the most frequently used reasons had to do with personal choices. Both males and females

attributed autonomy and the freedom to choose to males. Reasons having to do with roles and positions in the hierarchy were also used in those explanations, but to a lesser extent than independence and personal choices. It was even judged that sons need to have independence in their choices of activities in relationships with fathers. By contrast, in judging that wives and daughters should acquiesce to the objections of a husband or father, males and females reasoned in terms of role responsibilities, hierarchy, and interdependence.

The study demonstrates that in a traditional culture judgments are held as to the independence of those in dominant positions and the role obligations of those in subordinate positions in making decisions about larger (e.g., work, education) and smaller (e.g., leisure, friendship) life issues. This is not to suggest that people in dominant positions have complete freedom or that they are judged to be solely or mainly autonomous. They, too, have duties, role obligations, and responsibilities. However, the findings show that individualism is systematically connected to social hierarchy. Furthermore, people's judgments encompass more than concerns with independence and role obligations in the social hierarchy. In this research, it was also found that females were concerned with pragmatics and justice. The females in the study explained why a woman should acquiesce to her husband's wishes as much by pragmatics as by role obligations. They judged that a wife needs to go along with her husband's preferences and directives because of his power to impose serious negative consequences – including abandonment and divorce. Although the females were aware of the power of males and their own vulnerabilities, they did not simply accept the cultural practices uncritically. Females judged as unfair the practices that allow men to dictate the activities of females and place them in vulnerable positions.

The mixtures in judgments, therefore, go beyond features of individualism and collectivism, to include pragmatics and justice. The coexistence of all these judgments means that it is necessary to understand how they are applied in different contexts. And identifying contexts is, in itself, no straightforward matter. One way of thinking about contexts is the context of different relationships. Among the

Druze, relationships between fathers and sons were judged differently from relationships between fathers and daughters, or husbands and wives. The findings of the study also demonstrated a further complication in the notion of context in that a particular relationship – such as between husband and wife – does not constitute a unitary context. Within a relationship, the context of a person in a dominant position attempting to direct the actions of a person in a subordinate position constitutes a different object of judgment from the context of a person in a subordinate position attempting to direct the actions of a person in a dominant position. The types of discourse used in discussing these aspects of the relationship were different. Relationships between husband and wife or father and daughter were couched in terms of status, roles, and interdependence in the context of the man objecting to the activity of wife or daughter, whereas the relationships were couched in terms of independence, individual choice, and autonomy in the context of a wife or daughter objecting to the activity of a man.

If, as these results suggest, we can speak of contexts embedded within contexts, then it would not make sense to define contexts at broad levels like the society or culture. However, the research with the Druze, as well as the journalistic accounts I have discussed, suggest that there may be differences between cultures on some of the features we have investigated since not all societies have norms or practices restricting choices of women in the same ways. Some of the differences were documented in the same set of studies that, in addition to the Druze participants, included adolescent and adult secular Jews also living in Israel (Wainryb & Turiel, 1994). Unlike the Druze, almost all the Jewish participants judged that a wife should make her own decisions even when her husband disagrees. The majority of the Jews (though a smaller percentage than for wives) judged that daughters should make independent decisions. With regard to the choices of a husband or father, when a wife, daughter, or son object, there were no differences between the two groups. Explanations of the judgments that individuals (wives, husbands, daughters, sons) should make their own decisions were based, to a fair extent, on independence and personal choice (as had been the case for the Druze regarding the choices

of males). However, the Jewish participants also thought that individual rights were a basis for independent decisions to a greater extent than had the Druze.

The findings of the study should not be taken to mean that the Druze do not hold concepts of rights. Another of our studies (Turiel & Wainryb, 1998) showed that with regard to other activities – speech, religion, and reproduction – they do endorse rights. As already noted (see Chapter 4), Druze adolescents and adults endorsed rights, and judged that it was acceptable to exercise rights even if the actions were prohibited by laws. As also noted, in some situations, the Druze upheld the freedom when in conflict with other considerations, and, in some situations, they judged that the rights should not be exercised (similar findings were obtained in the United States and Canada). As an example of the latter findings, when rights were in conflict with harm (e.g., speech resulting in potential physical harm) they frequently judged that the freedom should not be exercised. Judgments were also made about situations that depicted the government prohibiting the freedoms to protect the interests of the community. Again, the freedoms were upheld by the majority in some of these situations and not in others. Adults generally upheld the freedoms more than the adolescents.

In this study, conflicts were also presented between the freedoms and directives of a husband or father. This was accomplished by describing situations in which the husband or father directs his wife, daughter, or son to restrict their actions; a husband's or father's reasons for the restrictions were also presented, with depictions of weaker and stronger reasons. As an example, the situations involving speech depicted the man telling the other not to speak at a public meeting in one case because it would shame the family ("weaker" reason) and in the other case because it would result in retribution against the family by the mayor of the town ("stronger" reason). Judgments were made as to whether it is acceptable to exercise the freedom and whether it is all right for the husband or father to direct the others to restrict their activities. As has been typically the case in research on concepts of rights, judgments differed by the situation. For freedom of religion, the majority judged that a wife should exercise her freedom, and that

it was not all right for the husband to impose restrictions. With regard to speech, the majority judged that it was not all right for the wife to engage in the act when the husband opposed it, but in one of the two situations (weaker reasons given by the husband), it was judged that the husband should not restrict his wife's activities. Situational variations were also evident in judgments about the rights of sons and daughters. In general, there was greater acceptance of freedoms for sons than daughters. However, in most cases, there was acceptance of the right of sons and daughters to exercise religious and reproductive freedoms (the issue of reproduction was not presented for wives). Particularly with regard to speech, sons were accorded greater freedom than daughters. In all these situations, greater proportions of adults than adolescents endorsed the rights.

Four aspects of the research on concepts of rights in this traditional culture are, I believe, noteworthy. One is that they maintain concepts of rights as freedoms that cut across cultures and that, in the abstract, should not be legally restricted. The second is that they do judge that in some situations rights should be subordinated to competing social or moral considerations. The third is that rights are more consistently upheld with age. And the fourth is that restrictions by males on the freedoms of religion, reproduction, and, to some extent, speech are less acceptable than restrictions on activities in the areas of work, education, leisure, and friendships (that is, the ones examined in the other studies; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994).

The pattern of findings with the Druze regarding personal entitlements and independence for those in dominant positions has its parallels in research conducted in India (Neff, 2001). In her research, Neff presented children, adolescents, and young adults (from 10 to 20 years of age) with a series of situations depicting disagreements between spouses regarding the distribution of work in the home, household chores, and keeping each other company. In these situations, a personal choice was in conflict with a request for help or companionship; the husband requested it from his wife, and the wife requested it from her husband.

It should be of little surprise to the reader by now that judgments as to whether the individual should do what he or she wants or what

is requested by the spouse varied by the situation. The large majority thought that a spouse, when both are working, should help the other with household tasks. Insofar as it was thought that one of the spouses should do what they desire, it was some of the youngest males (10-year-olds) who asserted that the husband, but not the wife, should be able to do so. In other situations, however, majorities and near majorities did think that a spouse should do what he or she desires. In one situation, more males and females gave credence to the husband's desires to visit friends when the spouse did not want it than to the wife's desire to do the same thing. In still another situation, about the same numbers (majorities) of males and females thought that the husband should be able to do what he wants (take music lessons rather than help his wife with household chores). About the same number of females made the judgment that a wife should be able to do what she wants in similar circumstances. Fewer males, however, thought that a wife should be able to do so. In some situations, therefore, males are more likely to be accorded independence by males than by females. Overall, the findings of this study are consistent with other studies conducted in India. There are variations in judgments about independence and interdependence. Independence and personal choices are part of their judgments, though there is a tendency to grant greater independence to males than to females. Furthermore, judgments about the independence of persons increase with age.

THE INTERWEAVING OF INDEPENDENCE AND INTERDEPENDENCE: CULTURAL AWARENESS, RESISTANCE, AND CHANGE

It is important to reiterate that the variations in judgments about independence and interdependence are systematically related to societal arrangements, cultural practices, and domains of judgment. Judgments about independence, in part, stem from the domain of personal jurisdiction. Judgments about interdependence are of at least two sorts. One is conventional in nature, entailing interdependence around the conventions of systems of social organization. The second is moral,

entailing interdependence stemming from considerations of the welfare of others and cooperation to attain fairness or justice in interpersonal relationships. However, morality can entail independence in at least two respects. One is that judgments about rights involve granting people freedoms to act in certain ways without interference. The second is that in the face of situations or practices that are judged morally wrong, people might act independently to correct the perceived wrongs. Often, however, such acts of independence are in the service of goals of interdependence, such as to promote welfare or fairness. That is, judgments about the morality of societal arrangements or cultural practices sometimes involve the independence needed to attempt to change such arrangements or practices. Insofar as efforts at change occur in groups, the independence is in the context of interdependence among members of the groups toward ends of moral interdependence.

All of the interweaving of judgments and orientations to independence and interdependence, particularly when there are criticisms of cultural practices and efforts toward change, suggests that people are not unaware of aspects of the arrangements of their own culture. Wikan (1991), who argued that cultures are not seamless wholes, also maintained that the Balinese she studied do question cultural norms and practices. Additional research conducted with the Druze showed, again, that autonomy and independence are important to them and that they are aware of the ways cultural norms and practices embody those attributes for males.

In that research, adolescent and adult males and females were presented with questions about either an adult male or an adult female engaging in one of two activities: taking a job in a town different from their own or renting an apartment in order to live alone. Obviously, the point of this research was not simply to ascertain whether such activities were acceptable. It seemed evident that these acts would be judged unacceptable for females and acceptable, or at least tolerated, for males. The findings verified this expectation since most gave negative evaluations of females engaging in these acts and positive evaluations of males engaging in the acts. Other aspects of judgments

about the activities, however, were less obvious. One type of judgment suggesting that there is awareness of cultural norms came in responses to the question of whether the activities would be acceptable if allowed in their culture. The majority thought that the acts would be all right under those circumstances. In addition, most thought that the activities were all right in another country where they were commonly practiced.

The reasons given as to why it is unacceptable for females to engage in these activities and acceptable for males were tied to two aspects of cultural understandings. With regard to females, the most frequent reason was that engaging in the acts would not be consistent with traditions or common practices. The adults primarily justified their evaluations in this way. Among the younger people, explanations based on traditions were mixed with explanations based on prudential considerations (e.g., people will gossip about her, she will be ostracized in the community, her honor will be questioned). By contrast, the reasons as to why the acts are acceptable for males were, most frequently, that they would be expressions of freedom and personal choices. It was also thought that acting independently fosters traits in men that are consistent with cultural traditions. Males, therefore, were seen as legitimately asserting their autonomy, or personal choices, and it was believed that cultural practices supported those characteristics. The cultural traditions, in turn, were articulated as granting freedom to males but not females through the existence of different sanctions (especially that women, but not men, are closely supervised and the object of gossip).

Evaluations that involved explicitly comparing the differences in restrictions placed on the activities of males and females yielded somewhat different outcomes from the separate evaluations of male and female activities. When comparing the two, only a minority of males and females said that it was all right to have different restrictions on men and women. The largest number who thought that it was not all right to have different restrictions were the adults. Some of the adults also expressed ambivalence in their evaluations of the difference in restrictions on the activities of males and females. In turn, the majority of adults thought that the difference was unfair. Among the younger

ones there was a mixture of judgments that the difference was unfair and that it was adaptive for the society. Adults, therefore, often did judge that it was not all right for females to engage in the activities because of the traditions of the culture and, at the same time, most often it was thought that it was unfair that greater restrictions were placed on females than on males.

The study revealed a complex constellation of judgments about differences in the psychologies of males and females stemming from traditional cultural arrangements. A useful way to convey a sense of the judgments is to present some examples of responses to the interview questions. These examples serve to illustrate the recognition that males are expected to be independent in the culture, as well as how people reflect upon related practices. The first example represents a straightforward perception of the independence granted to males. In this case, a 14-year-old female explained why it would be all right for a man to live alone:

> Because in our culture a man is given complete freedom . . . no one would oppose a man being free. We like men to be like that. That's the way it is among the Druze. [A male] has the right to choose his own way . . . It would also be good for him to be free and to have privacy. (Why?) Because in our village freedom is the most important thing – but freedom for a man is best. He should have the willpower, he should have a strong personality.

This 14-year-old seemed unambiguous about what is expected of males in her village, in her culture. As we would expect, she had a different view of females: "She can't establish herself on her own, she can't rely on herself. She needs someone to tell her what to do."

A second example comes from the responses of a 16-year-old male who attributed freedom to males, which he linked to designated roles:

> A man needs to be free, he is supposed to be free. (Why?) Because he is the educator, as the saying goes. He plans things for his family, he fights for his family.

The role of the male, which in this boy's view requires autonomy, has implications for the subordinate role of females. In his view, a

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female would jeopardize the course of her life if she were to live on her own:

> As long as she lives in her parents' home her groom will come and take her wherever he wants to, to paradise or hell. She is under his control. Either her parents dominate her or her husband does. (Does she need someone to dominate her?) Of course. That's a religious matter. She couldn't be free with her hair loose, as the saying goes . . . she has to be led. She has to be given freedom, but she should be supervised. (Why?) Because if she deviated it would be more severe than if a boy deviated. . . . For a girl, her first and last deviation would be connected with her honor.

Some of the Druze explicitly connected the differences between males and females to perceived expectations in their culture. One 14-year-old female said that "a man is always set higher than a woman. There is hierarchy. A man is allowed to do many more things than a woman is allowed because that is what the culture has decided." However, she and others did not consider it fair that there were such differences between males and females. A 14-year-old articulate male put the issues in interesting ways:

> Look, it would be better for me if everything stayed this way. I can see from the viewpoint of a girl, she would like change, like equality with boys. She would like to have the same rights. But of course everyone wants what is best for themselves. And this situation, the way things are now, this is better for me, this is better for men. I can see, though, that for girls it would be much better if they had more freedom and more rights.

This boy recognizes that there may be conflicts over cultural arrangements that benefit one group over another. Nevertheless, he seems to accept the benefits for his group that ensue from cultural practices. An 18-year-old female, who thought that it would be good if a woman were able to take a job in another city, recognized the difficulties since "it would be forbidden according to our customs." A woman making such decisions on her own would be perilous, "because she wouldn't last. She would get tired of the gossip and the chaos that

would happen. Our culture is very harsh." When discussing a male's freedom to make these types of decisions, this 18-year-old appeared to take a critical perspective:

> He is free. Even when a baby is born, people are glad if it's a boy, and less glad if it's a girl. We live in a conservative culture. Maybe in the future I might want to treat my daughter in the same way as I would treat my son, but the culture wouldn't let me do it. . . . A boy is better than a girl; not better, but his status is higher. That's understood and you can't argue with it. . . . I believe in equality, but the culture would grant more to a male.

An adult woman went further in complaining about the burdens of the roles and responsibilities of women in the culture:

> A man's life is simple. He works, he comes back home; he has no other responsibilities. I work too and I have kids and a home. He knows that when he comes back, everything will be ready for him. That's such a pleasure. When I come back home I have more work to do at home. So, who do you think deserves to get out a little and enjoy life?

The various examples of responses I have related illustrate that the Druze are self-aware of patriarchy, societal arrangements, and cultural practices. The examples also illustrate that there is a fair amount of discontent with cultural practices, as well as a desire for change. The examples are in accord with the finding that the majority of adults (and about 40% of the adolescents) judged that having different restrictions on males and females was unfair. Other research using different methods and populations shows a similar pattern of discontent with cultural practices. Abu-Lughod (1993) has conducted studies of Bedouin women from Egypt. In certain respects, it could be said that the Bedouin people studied by Abu-Lughod were less in contact with Westerners than the Druze. Although the Druze live in relatively isolated villages and maintain a strict patriachical structure, they reside in a country (Israel) with western-oriented populations. The Bedouins studied by Abu-Lughod reside in a small hamlet on the northwest coast of Egypt. Moreover, Abu-Lughod's methods differed from the interview procedures used with the Druze. She lived with

Bedouin families for long periods of time. In the late 1970s, she spent nearly two years living in the community (that work is reported in Abu-Lughod, 1986). Between 1986 and 1989, she returned several times in order to record events and stories of everyday life among the Bedouin (the work reported in Abu-Lughod, 1993). There is a sense in which Abu-Lughod's reports of life among the Bedouin are like Mernissi's reports of life in the Moroccan harem. Both recount events, thoughts, and stories gained from living among women whose activities are restricted by men, and cultural practices that allow men to be in positions of dominance. However, Mernissi's accounts represent remembrances from her childhood. Abu-Lughod's accounts are based on the use of ethnographic methods of observation and recording.

Abu-Lughod discussed several aspects of women's lives, based on these stories and conversations. These included patriarchy, polygamy, reproduction, and arranged marriages. Abu-Lughod (1993, p. 19) conveyed ideas about the Bedouin that, I believe, apply to the Druze as well. As she put it: "In all cases, it seems to me, the moral of the stories is that things are not what they seem. The Awlad Ali are patrilineal, but reckoning descent, tribal affiliation, and inheritance through the male line does not foreclose women's opportunities or desires to shape their own lives or those of their sons and daughters, or to oppose the decisions of their fathers." Some of her assertions regarding cultural practices like polygamy are consistent with the journalistic reports (as I discussed in Chapter 9). Abu-Lughod asserted that "polygamy is an institution oppressive to women in that it causes them pain," and that some use the Koran to justify polygamy, while others use it to condemn the practice. It is the effects on women and the inequalities in its practice that has led women in places it is practiced and commentators like Abu-Lughod and Nussbaum to criticize polygamy. Nussbaum (2000, p. 229), for instance, maintained that polygamy in the abstract is not oppressive to women: "What is objectionable about polygamy is that it is often available only to males, and that it is typically connected with a legal and traditional regime under which women have unequal property rights and rights of mobility, association, and self-determination."

In support of the proposition that Bedouin women do not simply accept the situation as it exists, Abu-Lughod provided a series of examples showing that they did not always obey their fathers or husbands; that they did not always adhere to cultural practices; that there were disagreements, conflicts, and struggles between husbands and wives or fathers and daughters; and that people made efforts to alter existing practices. Some of the events documented by Abu-Lughod revolved around arranged marriages and polygamy. One illustrative example is the story of an elderly Bedouin woman who, when she was younger, on three separate occasions resisted marriages her father had attempted to arrange for her. She was successful in fending off the impending marriages by screaming, crying, refusing to eat (one time for as long as twelve days), and running away to her uncle's house, where she was given refuge by the uncle's wife. In short, the woman used several means on several occasions to wear down her father's resolve. This particular woman fended off her father's arrangements because she did not approve of the men. Eventually, she did go along with an arranged marriage with a man acceptable to her. Abu-Lughod also tells of women who were forced into arranged marriages but who were in love with someone else. Some of them provoked their husbands to divorce them.

Conflicts occurred also between mothers and sons over marriages and polygamy. The same elderly woman who resisted the marriages arranged by her father also objected to marriages her sons had arranged for their sister. Insofar as she thought that her sons treated their wives unfairly, she sided with her daughters-in-law and came into conflicts with her sons. Furthermore, she disapproved of polygamy for several reasons, including reasons of fairness. When she could not convince a son, she tried other means. One was to discourage the woman who would have been a second or third wife by, for instance, telling her that he "was tough, his wives were difficult, and he had lots of children" (p. 96). Another strategy was to try to frighten off the parents of prospective brides. Dissatisfaction on the part of first wives and conflict among wives were also expressed to Abu-Lughod.

A young Bedouin woman expressed her view about polygamy as follows (p. 238):

> And the business of marrying more than one wife – I wish they'd change their views on this. It is the biggest sin. The Prophet – it is not forbidden, but the Prophet said only if you can treat them fairly. But a man can't, it can't be done. Even if he has money, he can't. As a person, in his thoughts and his actions, he can't be fair. He'll like one more than another.

This same woman had other concerns about the treatment of women in her culture. She thought that females should have more opportunities for education, and that they should be regarded with greater worth: "They should see that a girl is a person, a noble person created just as God created man. She has feelings, sensitivities, and desires" (p. 237). In turn, she complained about Bedouin men because they "make women work hard and don't pay attention to them. Even if the woman is ill, the man won't lift a finger to help, not even to pick up a crying baby" (p. 239).

The strategies women used to obtain their goals were directed toward many aspects of daily life, including leisure activities and alleviating the burdens imposed upon them. Cultural practices among this group of Bedouins are not accepted by individuals in a straightforward way. However, the Bedouin women are not simply in opposition to the culture. Abu-Lughod portrayed the women with a mixture of discontent and acceptance. She portrayed them with a combination that entailed desires to fulfill their role expectations and duties as well as efforts to assert their will and subvert social expectations.

Some of the same themes emerged from studies by Wikan (1996) in another part of Egypt. Over many years, she studied families of poverty living in the city of Cairo. The additional burdens of urban poverty, according to Wikan (1996, pp. 6–7), have a corrosive effect on social relations:

> But the story is impressive for what people manage and endure while striving to protect self-respect through close attempts at defiance . . . these lives I depict can be read as exercises in resistance against the state, against the family, against one's marriage, against

the forces of tradition or change, against neighbors and society – even against oneself. But it is resistance that seems to follow a hidden agenda and to manage and endure in ways that respect the humanity of others.

Like the Druze and Bedouin, the families of the poor areas of Cairo live in a patriarchical system. A wife's loyalty and respect for her husband are highly valued, and a man is entitled to a good deal of freedom. Nevertheless, family life, especially in conditions of poverty, produces more complex relationships. Whereas women do think that a man should have freedom, they also think, as put by one woman, that it should not be "at the woman's expense" (p. 31). Whereas women believe that husbands should be granted loyalty and respect, they also criticize their husbands and act independently to further the welfare of their children and to protect their own slighted needs and interests. Often, men do act on their freedoms at the expense of women. As a consequence, family relations include a great deal of turmoil, intense conflicts, and much envy and jealousy among siblings. As put by Wikan (1996, p. 84): "The Egyptian women I know are children of a culture that does not demand happy marriages. Rather, conflicts, and problems are so much an acknowledged part of life that no one would wish to deny them, in marriages as in any other relationships." Relationships other than marriages also include significant areas of envy, distrust, and competition. Like Abu-Lughod and others, Wikan observed examples of women who protested greatly, sometimes to the point of leaving the house with the children and seeking divorce, when a husband took a co-wife. Wikan relates stories of men who used subterfuge to avoid telling a first wife about their intention to take a second wife until the marriage was actually done. In one case, the man first pretended to buy furniture for his wife, then sent her on a vacation. Upon her return, she found that her husband had married a woman who moved into a room in their apartment that contained the new furniture.

The presence of a combination of acceptance and subversion has been discussed for life in some parts of India, as well (Chowdry, 1994). Chowdry observed that women speak in what she refers to as two voices. One is supportive of the patriarchical order, while the other is

subversive of the patriarchical order. Chowdry observed both covert forms of defiance, as well as open defiance and attempts to change norms considered repressive. Examples are of couples who run away to get married, and active resistance to the customary demand that a widow remarry her brother-in-law. Also working in India, Mencher (1989) found that women wanted changes in the way they were treated but did not always express it openly. There are "longings to be treated better or for more autonomy in their own home and village," as well as desires "for very basic changes in the ideology of the household" (Mencher, 1989, p. 139). Women's fears of open defiance were exemplified in an incident at a meeting for men and women to discuss agricultural problems in the village. The women in attendance were all quiet during the meeting. After all the men had left at the end of the meeting, Mencher and her colleagues were surrounded by about fifteen or twenty women who were eager to talk to them not about agricultural problems but about a long list of grievances with the men.

It is difficult to assess the balance between acceptance of and disagreement with cultural practices in particular individuals or cultures. However, circumstances, especially economic conditions, have a good deal to do with the extent to which people will go to subvert and change cultural practices. Nussbaum's human capabilities, especially life and bodily health, are impeded by cultural traditions that restrict work opportunities. In both India and Bangladesh, Chen (1995, p. 37) has examined, as she put it, "the predicament of poor women in poor economies . . . who must break with tradition and act independently because they lack the security tradition is supposed to offer. In communities where women are secluded, perhaps the most conspicuous and yet necessary way for women to break with tradition is to leave their courtyards or homesteads in search of work." The traditions that impede work, even when necessary for survival, include norms of seclusion that confine women to their homes and deny them the right to employment. In some cases, there is a designation of types of work women can and cannot do, which are in accord with social caste.

One example provided by Chen is what occurred in the aftermath of a famine in Bangladesh in 1974. In spite of a strict "occupational purdah" that severely restricted their fields of labor, large numbers of

women defied the tradition by seeking employment in government work programs. Some of the women needed work because their husbands did not earn enough to meet the needs of the family. Others were unmarried or widowed. Many of the women were refused work by public officials, and those able to obtain work were paid less than men. Women nevertheless persisted in their efforts to find work, and some began to organize groups for training and other types of programs. The ultimate result, which was instigated in no small measure by the women who defied tradition by entering the workforce, was a shift in practices. The female work force in Bangladesh increased from 0.9 million in 1961 to 2.7 million in 1985 (Chen, 1995).

In her explorations of caste and work in rural north India, Chen found that social restrictions of women are more rigid the higher the social class and caste. Upper-class women are more restricted in that they are prohibited from working outside the home. Middle-class women have fewer restrictions, but in striving to emulate the upper classes, they too impose rigid restrictions. Conflicts and struggles occur when women are thrust into poverty because of the loss of a husband to death or divorce. Those women face a dilemma. By entering the workforce they risk scorn, censure, and possible disinheritance by in-laws. If they do not enter the workforce, they endanger the welfare of their families. An example is a woman widowed at the age of 26. Although she continued to live next to her in-laws, they did not help support her. She was allowed to cultivate her share of the land, but was not allowed to take work for wages outside her home. The woman herself said: "I may die, but I still cannot go out. If there is something in the house, we eat. Otherwise, we go to sleep" (Chen, 1995, p. 48).

The conflicts faced by women of impoverished families, as well as dramatic events like the famine in Bangladesh, have produced conditions for changes initiated "from below." Chen maintained that norms and practices regarding women's work are not static and that "[t]he demand that women be allowed to abandon seclusion and seek gainful employment outside the home should not be seen as an *outside challenge* to local culture and tradition but as a *local response* to changes in local culture and tradition" (Chen, 1995, p. 55, emphasis in original). Such changes, however, are not achieved easily given the resistance

"from above" in the hierarchy. In addition to the force of tradition, the interests of those in higher positions are served by norms and practices that restrict lower caste women from seeking work outside the village. For example, it was believed by women in Bangladesh who attended one organization's workshop that the rich benefit from such restrictions because poor women work long hours in their homes for very low compensation, and because the rich can lend them money at exorbitant rates of interest. The women asserted both that the rich, the village elders, and religious leaders make norms and policies to suppress the poor, and that norms are applied by those in higher positions in ways that benefit themselves (see Chen, 1995, p. 51).

The dilemmas for women and the conflicts between groups in positions of greater and lesser power around issues of traditions, work, and survival are significant sources of change from within. I wish to reiterate in this context that while economic and survival concerns are powerful sources of change, they are by no means the only ones. The many other sources of conflict in cultural norms and practices that I have discussed throughout also can be sources of transformations in cultural practices. As discussed in the next chapter, in everyday life, people engage in subversive and often hidden or covert activities that are connected to cultural practices and expectations. The conflicts, disagreements, acts of defiance, and subversion of practices linked to power and dominance all can be sources of change.

WHEN CULTURES MIX AND WHEN THEY DO NOT

Another source of conflict and disagreement that I considered earlier can stem from the practices of one culture when carried out while people are living in a different society. In Chapter 8, I considered the questions of tolerance, acceptance, and rejection of practices of a minority culture that may be perceived negatively by those of the majority culture. It will be recalled that these issues were discussed in an article in the *New York Times* (March 6, 1999) that reported on reactions by Americans to practices like a father kissing the penis of his baby, parent/child co-sleeping arrangements, female circumcision, and arranged marriages. As pointed out in Chapter 8, distinctions need to

be drawn among different types of practices because some may have moral implications and others may not. The examples of the practice of kissing a baby's penis or co-sleeping arrangements may be different in significant ways from the examples of female genital mutilation.

It may well be that people in a majority culture should, from moral and culture identity perspectives, accept some of the practices of other groups in their society. However, what has been brought out in this and the previous chapters shows that the issues are much more complex than how they were couched by the group of legal and cultural experts convened by the Social Science Research Council (see Chapter 8). They viewed the issues primarily as one of tolerance or intolerance by those of a dominant culture of the practices of people from another culture who happened to live in their midst. In line with that position, they connected intolerance to the power of those in mainstream culture over those from other cultures. The issues are more complex because there can be, and are, deep disagreements within a culture due to the different perspectives of people in dominant and subordinate positions. As I have stressed, variations in judgments do not lie solely in differences between cultures. Fundamental differences exist between people of different power and status within the context of sharing some common ground. Indeed, by simply accepting certain practices of another culture, people in the dominant culture may actually reinforce the power of one group to impose its perspectives and privileges upon another group in cases where the less powerful group judges the practices as unfair or as contrary to human welfare. The following type of question needs to be confronted: What is the morally appropriate stance if the situation is such that people from one culture (majority or minority) act on practices that privilege a dominant group in ways judged unjust and detrimental to an unwilling subordinate group by people in the other culture (majority or minority)?

Our understandings of these issues clearly would benefit from how people in different positions think about different types of practices when "cultures mix" (for philosophical and legal discussion see Cohen, Howard, & Nussbaum, 1999). Such research is likely to show that judgments about practices when cultures mix are not entirely different from judgments about practices when cultures do not mix. I do

not mean to imply that there are no differences between the two types of contexts. There are differences – along with commonalities. For instance, when cultures mix, there are the added factors of the possibility that one cultural group may impose its views on another or that it may side with those in positions of power in the other culture.

Two stories, one told by Goodwin (1994) and the other by Wikan (1997), serve to illustrate conflicts and tensions that can stem from within a culture and from outside. The events recounted by Goodwin were about a child named Maria, who at the age of 6 immigrated, with her father and grandmother, to Pakistan from Afghanistan during its war with Russia (the rest of the family, including Maria's mother and siblings had been killed). Maria was put to work, taking care of the children of her father's employer. Goodwin met and befriended Maria three years later, when in 1988 she and her family moved into the same house that Goodwin lived in. In this respect, there was some influence from another culture – namely, as represented by Jan Goodwin. With the father's permission, Goodwin helped enroll Maria in the first grade of an Afghan-run school for girls. She did well in school, advancing a year later to the third grade and forming aspirations for further education. However, during a time Goodwin was out of town, Maria did not attend school. Goodwin learned that friends of Maria's father had advised him that the education of girls was not a good thing because it made them argumentative and unmarriageable. In addition, Maria was sometimes beaten by her father in a fairly severe way.

The beatings continued and, eventually Maria was confined to the family quarters. It turned out that Maria's father had found someone he wanted to marry. There were two impediments to his plan. One was that it was unlikely that the new wife would want to raise the children of her husband. The other was that he could not afford the bride price. Both problems would be resolved by giving Maria, as a bride, to the father of the woman he was to marry (that man already had two wives). Maria did not want to, asserting that she would kill herself. Soon thereafter Maria, her father, and grandmother moved out of the house, and Goodwin did not see her again. At the age of 11, Maria was forcibly married to that man, and by the age of 12 she was pregnant.

The other event took place in Norway, where Wikan works as an anthropologist. It is about a 15-year-old girl named Aisha, who was born and raised in Norway and is a Norwegian citizen. Twenty years earlier, her father had lost his job in his homeland in the Middle East (otherwise unnamed by Wikan) because of his excessive drinking. He moved to Norway where he managed financially mainly as a recipient of social welfare. He left his first wife and son to marry a woman thirty years younger than himself. Aisha was one of five children from the second marriage. Although her brothers were in trouble continually and she was beaten by her father, Aisha managed to do well in school and maintain her friendships.

When Aisha was 15, her father decided that she should marry someone in his homeland. Aisha was against it. She ran away to a foster family with whom she had been placed previously. She begged to be allowed to stay with them; and Aisha's teachers supported her decision. However, the Norwegian Child Authorities brought her back to her family by force on the grounds that children should remain in their culture – in spite of Norwegian laws that prohibit marriage below the age of 18 and forced marriages. Aisha was taken to her father's homeland where she was forced to marry.

The two stories show that whether events occur within a culture that accepts the practices, as in Afghanistan or Pakistan, or in a situation of cultural mix, as in Norway, there are issues of personal interests, rights, relationships of dominance and subordination, and elements of exploitation of females to further the needs and interests of males. Wikan points out correctly, I believe, that it is not sufficient to say that cultural practices must be respected: "It does not work to respect 'their culture' without asking 'what does this that I am respecting do with the welfare of especially the needy members of the group?'" (Wikan, 1997, pp 11–12).

Whether it be in a situation like that of Maria or like that of Aisha, questions arise around cultural traditions. Martha Nussbaum (2000, p. 302) provides another example that illustrates how such cultural traditions can be confronted from within. The example comes from a women's collective in a desert area of Andhra Pradesh in India. Such collectives were formed with the help of an Indian government project

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aimed at helping women to mobilize in order to demand their rights from local governments and from employers. The collective had a written list of plans for its members. Alongside the list is a drawing of a child in a wedding dress, perhaps similar to the photographs of a young boy and girl in wedding dress in the *New York Times* article I discussed in Chapter 8. In this case, the drawing had a large red X across it and an accompanying story: It is of a 12-year-old girl who attended a summer camp connected to the collective. While the girl was there, her parents tried to get her married. The girl sought the help of the collective, and together they were able to convince the parents to allow her to pursue her studies rather than be married.

These stories show that there can be similarities in the deep and serious moral, social, and personal issues that arise when cultures mix and when they do not mix.

Subversion in Everyday Life

Slavery makes its victims lying and mean; for which
vices it afterwards reproaches them, and uses them as
arguments to prove that they deserve no better fate.

 —William Wells Brown, famous runaway slave,
 quotation reproduced in Benjamin Schwarz,
 The New York Times Book Review, August 15, 1999

Social struggles and efforts at change on the part of groups of people who consider themselves exploited, oppressed, or simply treated unfairly occur not only when there are social movements led by forceful leaders. The civil rights movement of the 1960s in the United States is an example of organized social and political protest for change. We have also seen that there are social struggles, for example, in Bangladesh and India, connected to the particular issues of work and survival (Chen, 1995). In those cases, individuals' need for changes in traditions restricting women's work opportunities turned into group efforts with the support of organizations formed to further the cause and institute procedures to transform cultural practices. In the previous chapter, I discussed other examples of individuals and groups attempting to change particular cultural practices considered unfair and detrimental to human welfare.

In addition to overt acts of defiance and protest, in daily life people engage in covert acts of subterfuge and subversion aimed at circumventing norms and practices judged unfair, oppressive, or too restrictive of personal choices. Some acts of subversion are actually embedded or institutionalized in cultural practices and, in a sense,

constitute practices that are covert and yet accepted. An example, discussed by Ewing (1990), is what Pakistanis call the politics of everyday life. It is presumed that people often maneuver and negotiate so as "to maximize his or her advantage (or that of his or her family) vis-à-vis others in order to realize personal or familial wishes and goals" (p. 260). These types of maneuvers can include bribery and the use of one's influence based on hierarchical status. An illustrative example used by Ewing is of a virtuous, respectable person who in some contexts will try to rig exam results for a son.

There are other examples of institutionalized, or at least implicit, practices that are in contradiction with other practices and public ideology. One is the practice that exists in many places (including many Middle East and Asian countries) of bargaining over the price of goods. Where bargaining is the mode, it is accepted that such interchanges are aimed at maximizing one's profit and self-interest through the use of guile. Honesty and full disclosure are not expected. Typically, people say what they think will be effective about the cost of the goods or the price one can afford. Another example is the religiously acceptable and legal practice in Iran of temporary marriages among the Shiite sect of Islam. The lengths of these marriages vary from very short to long times. Their purposes are to provide a vehicle for sexual relations outside of a permanent marriage and to allow couples to spend time together before deciding whether or not to marry. Therefore, temporary marriages circumvent the strong taboos on premarital sex and even the restrictions on unmarried couples going out in public. Consistent with male dominance, however, men, and not women, can have as many temporary wives as they want and can break the contract at any time (E. Sciolino, "Love Finds a Way in Iran: 'Temporary Marriage'," *New York Times*, October 4, 2000; see also Sciolino, 2000). In contemporary times, the practice of temporary marriage is criticized by a faction of the population, but it continues to be sanctioned by religious leaders, and it is not illegal.

As another example, deception occurs regularly in the medical clinics in India that provide ultrasound and amniocentesis to pregnant women who want to identify the sex of the fetus. Even though sex

determination tests were outlawed in 1994, the practice still occurs with at least as much frequency as before. Physicians and families of various social classes violate the law and act to maintain secrecy. As one physician put it: "Frankly, everybody knows it is illegal, even the doctors and radiologists performing these types of scans. But under the cover of the diagnostic processes, they perform it. They tell the patient verbally about the sex. They don't give it in writing. They do it for monetary purposes, to sustain their practice" (C. W. Dugger, "Abortions in India Spurred by Sex Test Skew the Ratio Against Girls," *New York Times*, April 22, 2001, p. 10).

A different kind of example of deception, that has some properties of a practice because it is done so regularly, is tax evasion. The extent to which tax evasion takes on this quality in different nations is hard to assess. However, a report in the *New York Times* (D. Frantz, "A Tax Bite in Turkey," July 31, 2000) documents that in Turkey there is a "vast scale of tax evasion among business owners and self-employed people" (p. A7). One type of evasion is of the sales tax. According to the *New York Times*, almost all goods for sale have a sticker price for when they are sold with an invoice or a receipt, and a lower price when sold for cash. In this way, buyers do not pay the substantial sales tax and sellers can hide their profits from income taxes. Apparently, evasion of income taxes is widespread – as evidenced in two ways. One is that while the population of Turkey increased by 30 percent over 15 years, the number of taxpayers increased only by 1 percent. The second lies in the income reported by people of different professions. For example, the income reported by notaries and artists is higher than that of lawyers, doctors, and dentists; in 1999, the average income reported by notaries was $53,192, while for lawyers it was $4,636, and for doctors it was $4,473. Government officials in Turkey do not believe that notaries or artists earn more than lawyers, doctors, dentists, and many manufacturers and retailers. The explanation is that since notaries stamp official documents they must provide a receipt for all their transactions. Artists, too, often must provide paperwork for the value of their products. In other professions, cash is accepted for services and it goes unreported as income. I should stress that these practices are

widespread among people who generally are responsible members of the community.

Subversion of cultural practices also occurs in situations that involve subterfuge and deception when honesty is expected – at least by tradition, by norms, and by those in positions of dominance. A clear example of covert acts entailing subterfuge and deception is the story told by Fatima Mernissi (1994) of the women of the Moroccan harem who were able to obtain a key to a forbidden radio so as to listen to music (see Chapter 4). It will be recalled that, in the first place, the women listened to the radio without telling the men even though it was a forbidden activity. Second, when the activity was revealed to the men by the children, the women persisted in denying knowledge about the source of the key and attempted to ensure that their hidden activities would not be revealed by the children in the future.

Another example of deception aimed at subverting laws and practices that oppressed people occurred in the United States during the 1950s (reported on the Morning Edition of National Public Radio, February 23, 2001). In the southern states at the time laws dictated the segregation of blacks in most public places, including sporting events. Sputnik Monroe was a successful white wrestler in the city of Memphis in Tennessee who befriended black people and worked to alleviate their oppression. In the arena where he wrestled, blacks were permitted to sit only in an upstairs balcony, while whites sat downstairs. Once all the seats in the balcony were filled, black people were turned away even if seats were available downstairs. At some point, Sputnik Monroe decided to offer bribes to the ticket vendors so that they would allow black people into the arena even after all the balcony seats were filled. The vendors accepted the bribes, and black people simply took seats downstairs along with white people. Before too long, this particular arena became integrated as a consequence of Mr. Monroe's subversive activity of bribing the ticket vendors to violate the laws and practices in southern states.

In previous chapters, I discussed several examples of deceptive activities in Iran on the part of women and men with regard to prohibited activities like listening to music, dancing, watching videos, drinking

alcohol, women's dress and use of makeup, and mixing of unmarried males and females. These activities involve deception and outright lying. It will be recalled (also discussed in Chapter 4) that these are examples of people who lament that they are forced to lie, live a double life, and involve their children in the deceptions. It appears that in contemporary Iran, there is a complex and widespread system of subversive activities that are hidden from governmental and religious authorities, including what amounts to an organized business by groups of people who provide films and music cassettes to regular customers (N. Strauss, "Shadowy Tape Man of Iran, Spreading What's Forbidden," *New York Times*, October 5, 2000). The distributors of cassettes include family men who keep their identities secret from the customers on their delivery list, and, of course, try to avoid detection by the religious police.

These examples show that deception occurs in non-Western and Western cultures among adults. It is not infrequently argued that young people, especially adolescents, are prone to deceive and cheat in climates that are morally deleterious (see Chapter 3). Consider examples of adolescents living in the United States whose families come from other cultures. One area of deception is in females' relationships with males. Some adolescent girls and young women date secretly, keeping it from their parents. For instance, one young woman from Pakistan began to secretly date a Muslim man, eventually engaging in sex since she intended to marry him. In words that are familiar to us, she said, "It's a common thing, this double life. It is hard to tell your parents when they have such expectations" (T. Bahrampour, "Between Two Worlds," *New York Times*, December 12, 1999, p. 17). Another kind of deception is also familiar. It involves listening to music. One girl described how she used her Walkman to listen to music in a Koran class. She set up the Walkman such that she could quickly switch from one side, which had the Koran on it, to the other side, which had rap music. One time, while she was listening to rap music, the principal of the school came into the classroom and wanted to know what she was listening to. She told him that she was listening to "the Koran to practice it." The principal asked to hear, "and it was the Koran. Then

he left, and I switched back to rap" (*New York Times*, December 12, 1999, p. 17).

MANY WHO LIE ARE HONEST PEOPLE

The actions of these girls and young women easily could be blamed on the influences of Western culture. It would be said that they were subjected to highly individualistic messages that led them to defy their parents, teachers, and principals in dishonest ways, all to further their own pleasures and interests. The problem with that explanation (without denying that there are particular dynamics in the mix of cultures or vulnerabilities during adolescence) is that similar acts of deception and subversion in resistance to cultural practices occur with frequency in the cultures that the young people or their parents came from. Moreover, adults act in subversive and deceptive ways with perhaps as much or more frequency than adolescents. The reasons for such acts, therefore, cannot be located only in the ways non-Westerners might be affected by living in a Western culture.

In my view, it would also be inaccurate to attribute these types of acts of deception to failures of character or morality. Many who engage in these acts are people who generally consider themselves, and are considered by others, as responsible, trustworthy, upstanding members of the culture. For the most part, they are people who would be considered honest. However, labels for people like "honest" or "dishonest," fail to account for the circumstances that lead people to engage in acts of deception for moral reasons and other reasons judged legitimately overriding. The judgment that honesty can be in conflict with other serious moral goals has been confronted by Russian mothers of young men during Russia's war in Chechnya. Many believe that going to fight and risk death in Chechnya is not worthwhile. A distinction is made between such a war and fighting for defense of Russia (C. Bohlon, "Mothers Help Sons Outwit Draft Board in Wartime Russia," *New York Times*, January 30, 2000). According to officials in the military services, the number of young men avoiding the draft increased by almost 50 percent in the fall of 1999. A group called the Soldiers' Mothers Committee was formed to counsel mothers on how

to help their sons avoid the draft. Several means are communicated to mothers and used by them. For those who can afford it, bribes offered to the local draft board accomplish the goal. Those who cannot afford bribes must resort to other tactics that involve deception. Mothers will deceive the authorities as to the whereabouts of their sons. If necessary, parents will go so far as to become legally divorced (though they continue to live together) so that a son can then claim to provide sole support of his father or mother. These and other ways of obtaining a deferment from the draft entail concerted efforts at deceptions necessary to avoid unjustified risks to their sons' lives.

The mothers who lie and act with complex forms of deception are adults (often middle-aged) who most probably value honesty and trust. This is not unlike physicians who must also make decisions bearing on life and death issues that involve deception. Physicians, who in most circumstances are truthful and value honesty, judge that it may be necessary to deceive insurance companies in order to provide care for seriously ill patients. In Chapter 6, I discussed a study (Freeman et al., 1999) showing that in cases of serious illness, but not in a situation that is not serious (plastic surgery), large percentages justified deceiving insurance companies in order to obtain treatments or diagnostic procedures otherwise unobtainable. These types of conflicts over insurance company policies and the needs of patients became salient in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s. Prior to 1980, insurance companies usually paid for medical care when requested by physicians (Bloche, 2000). As a means of cutting down on medical costs, health plans have instituted review procedures for requests made by physicians. During this time, there has been an increase in health maintenance organizations (HMOs), as payers of insurance, who attempt to control tightly authorization over spending for diagnostic tests, medical procedures, and hospitalization. Physicians are required to request preauthorization in order for patients to receive insurance payments. A physician's judgment regarding health care can be in conflict with a strict interpretation of regulations by the insurance carriers, and in many cases the interpretations are made by people who have no medical expertise. Physicians will, therefore, sometimes be faced with conflicts over following insurance company procedures in a truthful

way and promoting the health of their patients. The study by Freeman et al. (1999) indicated that physicians with greater contact with HMOs (which use the most stringent cost-cutting measures) were even more likely than other physicians to judge deception legitimate. Physicians who practiced in areas with a high market penetration by HMOs were more likely to accept deceptions than those in low markets. As put by one of the researchers, "What it says is that in an environment where there is intense managed care pressure, we find physicians more willing to condone deception in order for patients to get medically indicated care" (V. G. Freeman as quoted in D. S. Hilzenrath, "Healing vs. Honesty? For Doctors, Managed Care's Cost Controls Pose Moral Dilemma," *Washington Post*, March 15, 1998). For many physicians, deception in these situations is toward subversive ends, given their views that insurance companies use the rules and their financial power for their own profits at the expense of the welfare of patients (Morreim, 1991).

As also noted in Chapter 6, it appears that the acceptance of deception by physicians is not solely with regard to hypothetical situations. In a study by Wynia et al. (2000), a large number of physicians responded to a questionnaire about their own practices. They were asked whether they had engaged in deception of three types: exaggerating the severity of a patient's condition, altering the diagnosis, or reporting symptoms not present. Thirty-nine percent of them stated that they had done so during the previous year. According to the interpretation of the data by Wynia et al., the use of deceptive tactics was not for the financial gain of the physicians, but to promote the health of their patients. Changes in procedures by insurers appear to have affected the practices of physicians, since in 1988 a majority indicated that they used deception to a greater extent than than they had five years earlier. Moreover, the research showed that a substantial number of patients had themselves requested physicians to engage in deception.

Wynia also conducted an informal study by distributing a questionnaire at a medical conference in 1997 (134 physicians responded). The survey showed that 60 percent had changed the diagnosis on billing records to help a patient get insurance coverage; 70 percent had

exaggerated the severity of a patient's condition to prevent having the person sent home from the hospital prematurely; and 80 percent reported using one of these or other methods to deceive a health plan.

Some events recounted by physicians in the article in the *Washington Post* (March 15, 1998) illustrate the nature of such deceptions and rationales for them. One doctor told of an elderly and impoverished patient with a heart condition who needed emergency treatment for fluid in her lungs. If she were not subsequently admitted to the hospital, her health insurance plan would require payment for the use of the emergency room – a payment she could not afford. If forced to pay, the patient said she would avoid treatment. Although it was not medically necessary, her doctor said: "I admitted her, and then, once she was admitted, as soon as she got to the floor, discharged her. It's a lie. What I would call a white lie. [The system] puts us in a horrible situation, and I don't know what the right answer is" (*Washington Post*, March 15, 1998, p. H1).

Another example comes from an emergency room doctor at the UCLA Medical Center, who said that he routinely has patients, such as frail elderly people with the flu, who are not in immediate medical danger but who might have serious problems if they were sent home alone in the middle of the night: "At this point I have to figure out a way to put her in the hospital . . . and typically I'll come up with a reason acceptable to the insurer." He added that he would order a blood test and chest x-ray, "the minimum required to paint a picture of a patient who requires admission." He went on to say that if any ambiguity shows up on the tests, they would call it pneumonia and admit her to the hospital. This doctor argues it is necessary to engage in these deceptive practices: "I feel like my primary obligation is with the patient, and as long as I feel I'm doing the best for them, I feel no guilt" (*Washington Post*, March 15, 1998, p. H7).

As shown in the Wynia et al. (2000) research, patients too judge deception necessary. One patient commenting on such deception was a minister whose doctor had falsely stated he had abdominal pain so that the insurance company would pay for surgery needed to repair a hernia. Referring to his doctor, the minister asserted that "He did the dirty work that was necessary to get good medical care for myself. . . . If

your intestines are spilling out of your gut, I think the insurance company should pay to sew it up" (*Washington Post*, March 15, 1998, p. H6).

Physicians' acceptance of the legitimacy of deception is not solely a consequence of changes in the system of insurance payments. In the past, it was fairly common for physicians to withhold a diagnosis of cancer from patients, usually with the collusion of families (Novack et al., 1979). As an example, in a survey conducted in 1953, nearly 70 percent of the respondents said that they usually or never told patients of a diagnosis of cancer. Similar results were obtained in surveys conducted in 1960. The situation seems to have changed somewhat by 1970, when the majority of physicians surveyed stated that they sometimes reveal the diagnosis to the patients. A number of years later, in 1979, it was reported that almost all physicians stated that their general policy is to tell the patients, and that the majority of them stated that they never or rarely make exceptions to that policy (Novack et al., 1979).

Several studies suggest that deception is judged legitimate by physicians for a variety of reasons. In one study (Novack et al., 1989), for example, physicians were presented with case descriptions that posed problems in the care of patients that could be potentially resolved through the use of deception. Each case included several options from which to choose (e.g., asking "how would you do it?"). One case was of the type that was resolvable by deceiving the insurance company (in order to obtain payment for a routine mammography). Nearly 70 percent of the respondents stated they would choose the deceptive option. Another case involved a man who had contracted a venereal disease that he wanted kept secret from his wife. The majority accepted a solution that would keep the information from the wife while taking steps to administer needed treatment for her as well. Only a small minority, however, would choose the option of telling the mother of a pregnant 15-year-old that she has some other ailment (as a way of being sure she could get an abortion). Similarly, the majority thought that a doctor who made a mistake administering medicine that led to the death of an 80-year-old ill man should not deceive the family as to what occurred. Moreover, in response to general questions

about deception, the large majority thought that it is acceptable on rare occasions for reasons like avoiding harm to the patient, in order to circumvent "ridiculous rules," and to protect confidentiality. For these physicians, the welfare of the patient was the most compelling reason for deception.

Tapping another aspect of health, a nationwide survey was conducted of the prevalence of deliberate misdiagnosis of major depression (Rost et al., 1994). It was found that 50 percent of the physicians had used an alternative diagnosis for major depression in the two prior weeks. One of the reasons for doing so was to obtain reimbursement from insurance companies that would not reimburse patients with a diagnosis of depression. In addition, physicians found it necessary to alter the diagnosis for other reasons. Those reasons included avoiding jeopardizing the patient's ability in the future to obtain health insurance, life insurance, and employment, as well as that the stigma associated with depression might delay the patients' recovery

THE QUESTION OF LYING

Clearly, people's judgments about lying or deception are not straightforward. It is most definitely not the case that people think that lying is always, or even most always, wrong. In the abstract, it is thought that speaking the truth and avoiding deception is morally right. In particular circumstances (and certainly not all), however, it is judged acceptable to engage in deception if it is the only way to accomplish important goals pertaining to the physical or psychological welfare of people and to matters of justice. For the most part, when physicians engage in deception it is done with reluctance and to further the welfare of their patients or to protect them from the harm that may ensue as a consequence of being told the truth (e.g., patients who might suffer greatly from knowing a diagnosis). Within the medical world, there are differences of opinion about the legitimacy of deception to further the welfare of particular patients. Some maintain that it erodes the trust of the patient for his or her doctor and the medical profession, places the patient in competition for medical resources with patients who have greater needs, and negatively affects the entire

health care system that is based on trust (Morreim, 1991). It has also been argued that desired changes in the health care system would be best brought about if the issues were openly challenged rather than covertly eroded (Rost et al., 1994).

Similar features are evident in certain acts of deception on the part of people in subordinate positions in the social hierarchy. When women, for instance, engaged in the deception in the harem of Morocco or women and men in modern day Iran, it was also with reluctance and to correct or get around unjust cultural practices. It will be recalled that they expressed the wish that they would not have to lie or convey that lying is necessary to their children. Yet, they found it necessary and attempted to explain the nature of their mixed messages. It will be recalled that the women of the Moroccan harem drew a distinction between keeping secrets and telling the truth, and attempted to convey the reasons for what they termed revolutionary acts for the cause of greater freedoms and equality. Within societies or local settings, there are also differences of opinion about the legitimacy of deception. Of course, those in positions of power and dominance would disagree with those who accept the necessity of certain acts of deception. It may also be that some in lesser positions of power would maintain that deception is wrong and that people should engage in open acts of defiance.

The question of lying is a particularly complex one for a variety of reasons and has been scrutinized and debated throughout history (Bok, 1978/1999). It is a difficult and vexing issue not only for laypersons, but also for philosophers and religious scholars. Some, including Kant, have argued that the prohibition against lying is absolute and that one should not lie regardless of the consequences. A common rationale for this position is that deception erodes the trust and cooperation necessary for life in social communities (Bok, 1978/1999; see also Lawson, 1997 for an application of this line of reasoning to the idea that deception in psychological research is never justified). Others have argued that deception may be necessary in some situations for the greater good. A number of examples have been offered to exemplify conditions under which deception might be necessary. A classic example is when an innocent life is at stake: "What if a murderer should ask you which way a man has gone?" (Bok, 1978/1999,

p. 40). Many argue that lying is justified in cases such as this one. Also, deception typically occurs in times of war. An example described by Bok is that in World War II the allies kept the planned invasion of Normandy secret and engaged in an elaborate hoax to lead the Germans to believe it would happen at a different place and time. It would be hard to argue that it was wrong to engage in such deception. Moreover, those who, during World War II, hid Jews from the Nazis in order to save their lives lied about it and are judged as heroes and considered to have acted in a courageous fashion (Wilson, 1993).

For laypersons, the question of lying is a complex one that is not always judged as wrong – even in situations that are not as extreme or exceptional as those involved in saving lives. Lying is a moral issue that has some characteristics in common with other moral issues, such as the issue of rights (as discussed in Chapter 4). Although children, adolescents, and adults generally judge that rights should be upheld, their judgments about the application of rights vary by circumstances or contexts. Here, too, people often judge that rights should sometimes be subordinated to other moral and social goals. As with truthtelling, people weigh and coordinate rights with other considerations in particular contexts. And as with lying, or deception, there are disagreements regarding the denial of rights. Some argue that the very concept of rights is not well (or at all) understood by those who subjugate rights to other social considerations.

Another feature that connects issues of rights and deception is that each has been implicated in claims that the fabric of American society is unraveling. We have seen that one of the main reasons given for a presumed moral decline and crisis in late twentieth century America is the promulgation and endorsement of too many rights and the claims to too many freedoms (Etzioni, 1993). It is also thought that during the same period, and into the twenty-first century, the moral decay of society, and especially of its youth, is evident in widespread lying and cheating. An example can be seen in conclusions drawn from a nationwide survey of over 8000 high school students conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics (press release on the World Wide Web, October 16, 2000 [www.josephsoninstitute.org]). The survey found that 71 percent of the high school students admitted to cheating

on an exam at least once in the past 12 months. In addition, it was found that 92 percent of the students said they had lied to their parents and 78 percent to their teachers during the past 12 months. These results were met with alarm regarding the current moral state of youth and society by Michael Josephson, the president of the Josephson Institute. He called on politicians to recognize the importance of dealing with "shocking levels of moral illiteracy" in educational reform, and more generally claimed: "Being sure children can read is certainly essential, but it is no less important that we deal with the alarming rate of cheating, lying and violence that threatens the very fabric of our society" (from the press release).

There are two reasons these conclusions about the decline in the moral fabric of society based on surveys of cheating and lying are, to put it mildly, suspect. One is historical. Research on the cheating behaviors of children has shown consistent patterns since the 1920s. An extensive set of studies on honesty, which until not too long ago were well known and widely cited in psychological circles, were conducted by Hartshorne and May (1928–1930). They assessed the behaviors of large numbers of children of various ages in many settings: tests in school, tests taken at home, athletic contests, and games. The research was set up in a way that children were given the impression that they would not be caught cheating, but the researchers had devised deceptive ways to detect deception. Hartshorne and May, back in the 1920s, reported that children engaged in widespread cheating. In some of the situations over 50 percent of the children cheated, and in other situations 70 percent of them did so. Similar results were obtained in a number of like studies conducted in the 1960s (Burton, Maccoby, & Allinsmith, 1961; Grinder, 1964, 1961), in which children had the opportunity to cheat in gamelike situations. The majority of children (from 4 to 12 years of age) engaged in deception in these situations as well. In turn, similar findings were obtained in research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s with children from 3 to 5 years of age (Lewis, Stanger, & Sullivan, 1989; Polak & Harris, 1999). A simple procedure was used that entailed requesting children that they not peek at a toy, or touch a toy, or look into a box, when the adult left the room. In these studies, the majority engaged in the acts and denied having done so.

Over a period of more than 70 years, the results have been consistent and not discrepant with the findings of the surveys by the Josephson Institute. In addition, studies of cheating among college students, conducted since 1960, have yielded similar results.

What if the type of survey used by the Josephson Institute had been administered to physicians, to the women of the Moroccan harem, or to many people living in Iran? It is likely that the results would be the same as found with high school students in the United States in the year 2000. The large majority of those adults from different places and times would have lied or cheated during the past 12 months. For that matter, the survey results would have been similar if it had been administered to researchers (such as Hartshorne and May) who studied children's cheating and lying. In all the studies I have mentioned, researchers deceived children in order to assess whether the children would engage in deceptive acts. The survey results would be the same if administered to many other researchers, who have engaged in deception (including Asch, Milgram, Latené, and Darley). As I have already noted, we can be confident that adults – the physicians, the people in Morocco and Iran, and the researchers – do not judge lying legitimate in all situations and that they do not engage in deception all or most of the time. The Hartshorne and May research demonstrated that this is the case for children, too. Since they assessed behaviors of the same children across a number of situations, they were able to show that most children cheated only some of the time. For most children, there were situations in which they engaged in deceptive acts and situations in which they did not.

The variations in children's actions is the second reason for doubting the conclusion, derived from the survey findings on cheating and lying, that there has been moral decay. The survey simply showed that deception is present, and that it is practiced at some times by the majority of high school students. The survey does not tell us the extent to which individuals do so, when they do it, or why. Much of what I have discussed regarding deception among physicians and people in subordinate positions on the social hierarchy pertains to the when and why of deception. Several studies of children's and adults' judgments about deception sheds further light on these questions.

In the first place, children do think that lying or deception of a straightforward kind is wrong. It has been found that children judge lying to a teacher for personal gain as wrong, using moral criteria. They judge that such lying is wrong whether or not there is a rule governing the action and that it is not up to personal discretion (Nucci, 1981). It has also been found that the large majority of children evaluate lying to a friend, also for personal gain, as wrong because it is unfair and violates obligations to others (Kahn & Turiel, 1988). Still other research has shown that children, adolescents, and adults distinguish deceptions for personal gain from other types. In one study (Peterson, Peterson, & Seeto, 1983), the participants, who ranged from children of 5 years of age to adults, were asked to rate a set of lies of different kinds: those motivated by a desire to escape punishment (e.g., a child accidentally spills ink on a bedspread and says to her mother that she did not do it); lies aimed at sparing the feelings of another, which the researchers referred to as white lies (e.g., child does not like another's haircut, but says she does like it); and lies to benefit another or to protect someone from harm (e.g., a bully looking for a child he wants to beat up asks where he is; another child who knows, says she does not know where he is). At all the ages, the lies motivated by the desire to avoid punishment were rated as worse than the other types. A study with college students obtained similar results in that they rated a number of lies for personal gain as wrong, whereas they rated a number of lies to prevent harm or embarrassment to others as acceptable (Lindskold & Walters, 1983). It has been documented that college students do engage in deception in evaluating another's works in order to spare their feelings (De Paulo, Epstein, & Wyer, 1993).

Furthermore, telling the truth is not always regarded as clearly preferable to lying in comparable situations. In a study by Bussey (1999), children from 4 to 11 years of age were asked to judge both lies and truths that had to do with misdeeds and hurting the feelings of others (the so-called white lies). One set of stories described children who lied about these acts and another set described children who told the truth. Not surprisingly, lies were generally judged as worse than truth telling. And consistent with other studies, the lies about misdeeds were judged as worse than the white lies. It also turned out that

the children judged that telling the truth when it would hurt another's feelings was worse than telling the truth about one's misdeeds. Apparently, children judged that lying is not good but sometimes necessary to spare the feelings of others, and that telling the truth is good but not necessarily so if it hurts the feelings of others.

JUDGMENTS ABOUT DECEPTION IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

The research certainly suggests that the psychology of deception is far from straightforward. This is not only because people may be motivated to get away with things by engaging in deception. A salient reason for deception in everyday life is to spare the feelings of others. This type of deception, as in deception over cultural practices considered unfair, does involve the communication of mixed messages from parents to children (Lewis, 1993). Parents often convey to their children that they should not reveal their true feelings when it may hurt another. A common example is when parents convey to children that they should not express dislike of a present given to them (see Lewis, 1993 for more examples). The effects on children of such mixed messages regarding deception have not been studied. It is not likely, however, that children simply learn deception is justified because of such messages. Adults, at the same time, convey strong messages that deception is wrong, and do attempt to distinguish between justifiable or morally necessary deceptions and those that are not justified. In addition, children come to understand, for themselves, situations that could result in harm to others if they were to simply tell the truth.

It is such multidimensional and multidetermined judgments that are involved in the types of deception that are of more central concern to the discussion here. I am referring, of course, to deceptions over norms and cultural practices that benefit some, in positions of power, at the expense of others, in subordinate positions. That type of deception is aimed at accomplishing something different from deception to avoid emotional hurt or to promote the health of others. Nevertheless, deceptions around cultural practices do share some features with the types of deceptions used by physicians with insurance companies. In

both cases, deception is done with a fair amount of reluctance (i.e., it is judged undesirable but necessary) in order to undermine a system judged unresponsive to legitimate claims of people.

In support of the idea that individuals engage in deceptive activities aimed at subverting certain cultural practices, I have referred to several examples from journalistic accounts and some research in non-Western cultures (in Asian countries by Chen, 1995, and among Bedouin women in Egypt by Abu-Lughod, 1993). Otherwise, there has been little systematic research on these topics. However, my colleagues and I have started to explore the topics, first through research on how American adults make judgments about deceptive activities within marital relationships. The significance of research on judgments about subversive practices rests on the presupposition that gender relations in Western cultures are, as I discussed in the previous chapter, hierarchically arranged and entail inequalities in power and status.

The research focused on women's judgments about deception in marital relationships. Many of the women we spoke to said that in one way or another they did deceive their husbands, which they considered necessary and legitimate. Our research, however, thus far has not examined women's judgments about their own actions. It examined judgments about situations, presented in hypothetical terms, that depicted husbands and wives in positions of inequality, with regard to control over finances in the family. Incidentally, previous research had shown that, in the abstract, lies told by persons of higher social status are regarded as more reprehensible than lies told by persons of lower social status (Lindskold & Walters, 1983). In our research, adult women made judgments about deceptions between spouses, when only one of them works outside the home and attempts to direct certain activities of the other. One situation, for instance, described a family in which the husband supports them financially while his wife has the main responsibility for child care and work in the home. In addition, the husband controls spending of money by his wife in that he gives her a fixed amount each month. The wife feels that her husband is overly restrictive in financial matters. Therefore, she puts any leftover money into a bank account that her husband does not know

about. In other words, she has a secret bank account so as to make her own purchases without asking her husband's permission. Two other situations described deceptions. In one, the husband requests his wife to stop seeing one of her female friends because he does not like her and thinks she is a bad influence; the wife continues to see the friend without telling him. In the other situation, a husband tells his wife that he does not want her to take a judo class because he thinks it is a waste of time and money; she continues attending the class without telling him. Each of the three situations were also presented with descriptions in which it is the wife who works, while the husband stays home and is the one who engages in the deceptive acts.

This research is being extended to examine the judgments of males and people of different ages and different backgrounds. Available findings, which are from a group of middle-class working and married women (mean age of 36 years), have shown that certain types of deception are seen as justified in the context of marital relationships of unequal power and control. For these women, the issue of relative power and control is not determined solely by who works. For each situation, the large majority thought that the deceptive acts of a nonworking wife were acceptable and should continue. They were divided, however, as to whether deceptive acts on the part of the nonworking husband were acceptable. With regard to attending a judo class, the majority did judge the deception legitimate (though fewer did so than judged the woman's deception legitimate). The majority thought that it was not legitimate for the husband to have a secret bank account and there was a 50–50 split with regard to the husband who secretly sees a friend.

The different reasons given for these evaluations are informative. For the most part, the reasons for judgments that the deceptions by a wife are legitimate were based on the idea that she needs to have more control over her life and attain a greater balance of power with her husband. These reasons did not cut across all the situations. In the situation that involved attending judo class, the main reason was that it was necessary to do so in order to maintain one's psychological well-being. This reason was also seen as applicable to a husband who engages in deception to attend a judo class – which probably accounts

for the finding that the majority of the women did judge it acceptable. Judgments that it was not acceptable for husbands to engage in deception were based on the idea that it would be harmful to the relationship.

Whereas there were variations in judgments about the different areas of deception, there was a broad difference in women's judgments of the legitimacy of deception by a wife or by a husband who does not work. As suggested by this difference and the reasons given to justify deception by wives, it appears that men are seen as in positions of greater power even in marriages where the wife works and the husband does not. Moreover, in response to other questions, the women said that a man who worked had greater power than a woman, whereas when the wife worked they shared power.

Some excerpts from interviews with women further convey the reasons for accepting deception. The role of power and control in the perceived legitimacy of deception was articulated by a woman who thought it was acceptable for a wife to have a bank account she keeps a secret because:

> her husband is so controlling. It is sort of like he is making the decision. If she could go to him and say how much she needed, then no. But it doesn't sound like that's an option. It is a control issue and it gives her a sense of control to have. Even if she doesn't spend it or if she tells him about it later, it will give her a sense of control.

The same woman thought it was legitimate for a wife to secretly see a friend for similar reasons:

> It's all right. Again, it's a power thing. She doesn't want to take on (the husband), she wants to keep the peace in the marriage, and it's not really affecting him one way or another. It's a power issue. He wants to tell her who she can go out with and that's not all right. . . . I would admire her a lot less if she stopped seeing her friend because her husband didn't want her to.

In the view of another woman, a lack of power and control can result in serious consequences. As she put it, "the thought of not having any money to have control over if I need it for any reason, that's frightening. And so you never know what might happen in your life

when you might need access to that money." Still other women raised issues of control sometimes using other language, as well. Here are two examples regarding the maintenance of a secret bank account:

> I think it's fine. It's fine because I think that she is an equal contributor to their life and she should be receiving a pay check commensurate of that and she should have independent discretion. He is not allowing her to do that and I think that's pretty oppressive.
>
> I think it is back to the control issue. He is trying to control her. So if they have already discussed it [and could not agree], then to give her a sense of identity – since they are involved in a relationship and this seems like a parent-child relationship – then to give her a sense of individuality, if that is what it does for her, then it is all right.

The women did not like the idea of deception and attempted to find ways it could be avoided. Some expressed conflict: "I am right in the middle. I guess I would do the account. I mean if it's not too much money. I guess I just don't want her to feel she doesn't have any power. I mean her feeling that way undermines the relationship too." Others shifted easily from asserting that deception is wrong to the assessment that in certain circumstances it is legitimate. As an example, one person shifted under the circumstance that the husband simply refused to change his position:

> I think it is not all right because she is not dealing with the issue. She is sneaking around instead of confronting him. She is probably upset because he wants the money back, because that is treating her like a child with an allowance. But she needs to sit down and talk to him, not sneak around and squirrel it away like it was an allowance.

And if she does sit down to talk with him, but he still maintains his position?:

> Then keep a secret account. Well it's not the best situation, but if she is so fearful of him that he really feels she is in a secondary position in this marriage, then a secret account at least gives her some freedom and some ability to rely on herself.

Freedom and self protection were seen as valid reasons for deceiving one's husband. Another woman who also thought they should talk about the situation and that she should maintain the secret account if

the husband nevertheless persisted in his views, put it as follows:

> The reason I choose it is because at least it gives her some sense of freedom over her life. I mean she stays home with kids most of the time and probably his attitude towards controlling everything reflects his attitude toward lots of things. So maybe that marriage won't last and maybe she does need a secret stash.

The quantitative results of the research and the words of the women speak to many of the issues that were raised in discussions of relationships of power and dominance in non-Western cultures. Issues of welfare, finances, personal jurisdiction, and resistance all emerged in women's judgments about deception within marital relationships. Clearly, conflicts, disagreements, contested understandings, and critiques of norms regulating hierarchical relationships are evident in many cultural settings.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Conclusion

He was not off the mark when, in 1967, Martin Luther King, Jr., chided the psychologists he was addressing at their annual convention for framing psychological health and well-being as adjustment to social conditions and social arrangements. More than thirty years later, King's admonition still applies to many approaches to social and moral development. It applies to those who provide one type or another explanation of morality as compliance or conformity through the incorporation of standards, norms, or values of their society or culture. It applies to those who posit that the acquisition of morality involves the formation of traits of character that reflect a set of core societal values. It applies to those who presume that shared elements define culture and that the young come to acquire, as their own, the common perspectives through accommodations to standards or to general orientations of individualism or collectivism. In a paradoxical way, it also applies to those who regard radical individualism in the late twentieth century America as maladaptive for society. Whereas radical individualism is seen as producing societal crisis and decay, it is thought that individuals incorporate the dominant orientation of their society and, thereby, adjust to existing arrangements.

The paradox in the idea that individuals' adaptation to the societal orientation brings with it societal maladaptation indicates that there is a recognition that maladjustment can be positive. That is, in the view of writers like Bellah, Etzioni, and Putnam, people who resist the presumed radical individualism of their society would, at the least, not contribute to society's moral decline. In actuality, most social scientists who espouse compliance, obedience, or conformity as the means of

acquisition are of two minds about it. I say that because the common reaction among psychologists and other social scientists (as well as those in the general public aware of them) to experiments like those of Asch (1952) and Milgram (1974) has been surprise and dismay that people conform and obey authority in those situations. There has been no dearth of commentary in psychology textbooks and other publications about the negative moral implications of people's failure to muster the strength to resist conforming to the group and defy the directives of authority. Negative evaluations of conformity and obedience are commonly made when they occur, with much more serious consequences, outside of experimental settings. Of course, the example that most readily comes to mind is the compliance of German people in the genocide of millions of Jews and others during the Second World War. Indeed, the events of the period led some to seriously question the type of position, put forth prior to the war by cultural anthropologists like Ruth Benedict (1934), regarding accommodation to customs and social standards (see Hatch, 1983). In a well-known analysis, the philosopher Hannah Arendt (1963) attributed many of the atrocities not to sadistic or aggressive impulses, but to obedience to the orders of those in positions of authority and to following rules. Her analyses were based on the trial of Adolf Eichmann, who was brought to Jerusalem in 1961 for prosecution for war crimes. Arendt (1963, p. 135) concluded that the problem was one of obedience: "He did his *duty*, as he told the police and the court over and over again; he not only obeyed orders, he also obeyed the law."

It is not that Arendt excused the actions of Eichmann and others because they thought they were obeying laws and following orders. Rather, she condemned following laws, obeying orders, and doing one's duty in those circumstances. Another example that at least implicitly entailed a condemnation of rule following and obedience comes from the classic research, conducted in the aftermath of World War II, on relations between personality and prejudiced attitudes (Adorno et al., 1950). Adorno et al. attributed prejudiced attitudes to people with authoritarian personalities, of a pathological nature, who were overly tied to following rules and obeying orders. By contrast, nonprejudiced attitudes were associated with people who

had nonauthoritarian personalities and could act flexibly toward rules and reject orders from those in authority. As already noted, praise has been explicitly accorded to German people who, in World War II, engaged in subterfuge and deception to save Jews, through one means or another, in defiance of laws and orders from those in authority.

Criticism of obedience to authority in nonexperimental situations is not, by any means, restricted to the extreme events of the Holocaust or to Germans. More than forty years after the end of World War II, Kelman and Hamilton (1989) considered a number of examples in their volume on *Crimes of Obedience*. Their examples come from events in the United States as well as other countries. A prominent example also occurred in war time, but this time among American soldiers during the war in Vietnam. As brought to light by investigative reporting in the *New York Times*, many U.S. soldiers obeyed orders from their commanders to shoot unarmed and defenseless civilians in My Lai, a village in South Vietnam. The report of the killings produced a good deal of additional media attention, critical of the killings of civilians. Although there was a good deal of criticism of those who obeyed the commands of those of superior rank, it was only those who gave the orders who were brought to trial.

It could be said, however, that compliance and obedience are positive characteristics except when they conflict with other valued standards or norms. Compliance and obedience are condemned when they result in harmful consequences to people. In those situations, the societal or cultural standards that prohibit harming others or taking lives are in conflict with the directives of those in positions of authority. Furthermore, in a situation like My Lai the orders may be in conflict with other military regulations.

In my view, couching the matter in these terms does not adequately address the issue. I have argued, instead, that conflicts of various kinds are common in social life, and that such conflicts stem from the different types of social judgments individuals make, as well as from different types of application of moral judgments to existing social arrangements. As I have said about the actions in Milgram's experimental situations, the people participating were confronted with two conflicting claims – the moral claim to avoid inflicting harm and the

conventional claim to the role of authority. Conflicting claims are also faced by people in nonexperimental situations when persons in authority direct that harm be inflicted on others. Similarly, conflicting claims are at work when a military commander gives a command that is discrepant with other military regulations.

I am not suggesting that conflicts and tensions are always involved in people's interactions with each other. Nor do I suggest that people are always at odds with authority, rules, norms, or cultural practices. It depends. In many situations, people do experience conflicts with others, are in disagreement with the perspectives of an authority, and try to get around existing practices imposed upon them. For these reasons, cultures are not characterized only by shared elements and harmony. Still, in many situations, people cooperate with each other and are not at odds with authority, rules, or practices. In the moral realm, people develop similar judgments about welfare, justice, and rights, and often agree on courses of actions. Such agreements and lack of conflict are not attributable to a psychology or compliance, conformity, or obedience. Rather, correspondences in judgments produce common ground. People's moral judgments can also result in disagreements and conflicts about existing arrangements and cultural practices. Just as compliance does not explain agreements and harmony, disagreement and defiance are not explained by a psychology of rebellion.

We must look to features other than compliance and rebellion to explain harmony and conflict. I believe the evidence supports the idea that what looks like compliance and rebellion coexist within cultures and within individuals. Most people do both, as demonstrated by the experiments on conformity, obedience to authority, and bystander intervention (see Chapter 4). In these experiments, variations in situations were connected with variations in people's actions. We have also seen that the application of rights and other moral concepts varies by situational contexts. The coexistence of these different ways of acting (seeming compliance or obedience and rebellion or defiance) stems from people's judgments about social events. Often, people make judgments about situations that require weighing and balancing different considerations. As Nussbaum (1999) articulated it, humans are

reasoning beings, whose dignity of reasoning is the primary source of human equality. Reasoning about the moral, social, and personal realms includes evaluations of societal arrangements and cultural practices. Cultural practices, as I have illustrated, are far from straightforward. They are nebulous and many-sided, so that people in different positions on the social hierarchy benefit or are harmed by them in different ways.

Social opposition is not solely the province of people who are especially committed to a moral life or have the courage to engage in defiance. Social opposition is also not a consequence of possessing supposedly highly developed, principled types of moral judgments. Social opposition is part of most people's social lives and it occurs at various levels of development. It is evident among children when they oppose their parents or teachers and engage in disputes with them (Dunn & Munn, 1987). It is evident among adolescents, when they come into conflicts with parents over realms of personal jurisdiction (Smetana, 1995a). And, as we have seen, it is part of the lives of adults in many cultures, who oppose cultural practices and judge societal arrangements to be unfair. I have presented a good deal of anecdotal material, as well as evidence from research, demonstrating that people scrutinize, critique, and attempt to subvert practices embodied in social arrangements that entail inequalities, a denial of rights, and restrictions of freedoms perceived as legitimate, and that produce dire consequences for the fulfillment of basic capabilities of groups of people in positions of little power.

Much of the evidence I discussed pertains to gender relationships, cultural practices that restrict the activities of females, and judgments about such inequalities and differences in power and status. It is important, however, to stress that conflicts and associated critique and subversion apply to other types of inequalities and differences in power in Western and non-Western cultures. They apply to relations between racial groups, social classes, and social castes. We do not know enough about the similarities and differences in conflicts around these different types of social relationships. It may be that racial inequalities and oppression are condoned less than gender inequalities in contemporary times (at least by those in dominant positions). One reason for this

difference may be that females and males are in close relationships in the context of inequalities and differences in power. However, there were times in the past, as was pointed out by Martin Luther King, Jr., in which racial inequalities were more generally condoned by those in positions of power and in which protest and discontent by those oppressed was more covert than overt. More complete information regarding the types of issues I have raised in this book requires more work on people's reactions to cultural practices and societal arrangements pertaining to different racial and social class groups.

Nevertheless, the substantial evidence regarding the development of moral, social, and personal judgments, along with the evidence showing that people in positions of lesser power or in subordinate roles in the social hierarchy do not simply accept those arrangements as right or fair, have two interrelated and far-reaching implications. One is that we cannot characterize societies or cultures in broad strokes – as society as a whole or cultures as representing general orientations to individuals or relationships among individuals. At the broad level of culture, social relationships and social interactions do not allow for characterizations of unitary, or even the more loosely defined predominant ways of doing things. Even if the "system" or those in powerful positions try to impose a way of doing things, the people affected usually do not allow for this. Eventually, they covertly or overtly attempt to alter social arrangements.

Much of this is true for the judgments and social interactions of children, as well. The second implication, therefore, is that we cannot characterize development as the incorporation or internalization of habits, traits, standards, values, or cultural patterns. I have provided a set of propositions on social development that is consistent with Piaget's propositions that development is due not to a unilateral cause (family, the adult community, school) but is a process of construction through multiple social interactions, and sometimes with opposed effects. The opposed effects of the various social interactions experienced by children include, on the one hand, sociability, cooperation, sharing, and empathy, and, on the other hand, opposing others, violating rules, and asserting personal interests. These orientations correspond to the domains of judgment of the moral, social, and personal that people

coordinate living in a social world. The evidence strongly indicates that children begin to form these distinct judgments at young ages through their varied social experiences, and that children's judgments and actions are interconnected. Young children's moral judgments are not confused with or indistinct from their judgments about other matters. It is often thought that children fail to distinguish between morality and their needs, interests, and desires to avoid punishment or other negative consequences. To be sure, children are concerned with obtaining their wishes and desires, as well as avoiding negative consequences to themselves. Nevertheless, they do distinguish these considerations from moral judgments about welfare and fairness.

Concerns with individual wishes, desires, and avoidance of negative consequences to the self are not limited to childhood. Adults, too, have these concerns and distinguish them from moral considerations. In many situations, children and adults take both types of considerations – personal and moral – into account in making decisions. This is not at all to say that there are no substantive differences between children and adults in their moral judgments and processes of making decisions. Adults coordinate their different judgments, especially when they conflict, more clearly than do children. There are also developmental changes in the domains of the moral, social, and personal. The information on developmental changes in moral judgments is limited and additional research is needed. We do know, however, that children's moral judgments initially revolve around people's welfare. They judge that welfare should be promoted and harm avoided for everyone regardless of existing rules, practices, and authority dictates. Older children also make judgments about welfare. However, they also construct understandings of reciprocity and justice in social relationships, as well as of equality and equity in the distribution of goods. Reasoning about social convention also changes with age toward increased understandings of the role of uniformities in coordinating interactions within social systems. In turn, judgments in the personal domain change toward greater understandings of psychological dimensions of a stable sense of self and personal freedoms.

Changes within the domains are important to an understanding of children at different ages, as well as to educational efforts. To promote

moral development – a task deemed important by most and often seen as a central goal of education – it is necessary to keep in mind that children recognize what is moral and what is not. It is sometimes thought that young children's thinking is not truly or genuinely moral (Blasi, 1997) and that they are inconsistent across situations in their judgments. Although little research has been done on how consistent or inconsistent children may be, it would not be surprising if they were more inconsistent than adolescents or adults. Consistency, however, is a complicated issue and is not an adequate criterion for "true" or "genuine" morality. An understanding of concepts, such as those of welfare, justice, and rights, is distinguishable from the ways in which they are applied in particular situations. As we have seen, there are many reasons for the appearance of inconsistency in the judgments of adults, as well as children. I say an *appearance* of inconsistency because these are not inconsistencies, but variations in the application of different judgments to particular contexts. The research shows, for instance, that adults apply concepts of rights in different ways to varying circumstances. The endorsement of rights depends on whether or not competing moral or social considerations are given priority (see Chapter 4). Similarly, judgments as to whether lying or deception is justified vary by contexts. Adults, such as physicians, judge that deception is necessary, from a moral viewpoint, in some situations (see Chapter 11). If we look to consistency as the sign of genuine morality, we will have a very hard time finding it. Instead, we need to explain how people at different ages make moral judgments and the reasons for variations in the application of those judgments in different contexts. The evidence is very strong for the proposition that children make distinctively moral judgments and that age-related changes do occur within the moral domain.

Moral autonomy refers to the construction of moral judgments through interactions in various aspects of experience. Autonomy in this case does not mean that people function independently of others or in individualistic ways. As used by Piaget, Asch, and Nussbaum, the term means that people are involved in the understanding and application of judgments about justice in cooperative relationships entailing moral interdependence. People also understand the roles of personal

agency, entitlements, and individual goals in nonmoral contexts. The connection of individuals to interdependence was explained a number of years ago by Asch (1952) in his analyses of social interactions. He maintained that, "The paramount fact about social interaction is that the participants stand on common ground, that they turn *toward one another*, that their acts interpenetrate and therefore regulate each other" (1952, p. 161). He went on to explain that coordinating perspectives of self and others in social situations "involves transcending one's own viewpoint by bringing it into relation with that of another. This transcendence is, however, a process that occurs *in the individual*; it is the product of his activity. . . . The process is not one in which individuals combine like gases to lose their identity and produce something different from either of them. Rather it requires that each participant retain his perspective and assert his individuality" (Asch, 1952, pp. 162–163).

These conceptions of morality and social interactions are consistent with the moral perspectives of philosophers like Dworkin, Habermas, Okin, and Rawls, and are in line with Nussbaum's propositions regarding the primacy of reasoning in the realm of morality. The development of moral understandings has implications for conceptualizations of individuals and society. It means that people actively participate in the construction of moral judgments, and that they can stand apart and take critical perspectives that often lead to subversion and efforts at change.

IS THE NEXT GENERATION ALWAYS TO BLAME?

These propositions regarding the development of moral judgments and their role in social interactions suggest that it makes more sense to speak of the *culture of morality* than the morality of a culture. Moral judgments shape social interactions, cultural practices, and reactions to practices that entail a combination of acceptance and rejection. Throughout this book, I have called upon a large body of evidence in support of these propositions. On that basis, I believe that there are firm grounds for calling into question two major contentions of the communitarian (or near-communitarian) approaches of Bloom, Wilson, Bennett, Etzioni, Bellah, and Putnam.

The first contention called into question is that morality is largely determined by emotions and habits and that it has not much to do with reason, deliberation, and reflection. It will be recalled that Ryan (1993) faulted Wilson for insisting that morality is intuitive and reactive rather than rational (see Chapter 2). Ryan maintained it is necessary to explain how we can learn from others and yet go on to dissent from them. He asserted that it is an undeniable fact that human beings are not only influenced by culture, but are also creators of new and different ideas and standards.

Dissent and criticism involve reasoning, deliberation, and reflection, broadly conceived. Deliberation and reflection, however, should not be taken to mean only that we sit down, take time off, sip a cup of coffee, and ponder the universe. Deliberation and reflection take place in the context of thinking that entails rapid processing of events and generating conclusions. When, for instance, arithmetic and mathematical ideas have been formed, they can be put to use in a seemingly rapid and automatic way. Similarly, moral ideas are often put to use in these ways. Deliberative ideas about justice that were a product of thought and reflection are part of the way people readily come to conclusions about social events. At the same time, many events do lead people to step back and reflect in ways that might result in new approaches to the situation.

A second contention of communitarianism is, therefore, called into question. It is that there are broad habits (of behavior or of the heart), traits of character, or societal patterns that individuals incorporate. Embedded in this contention is the proposition that development involves an acquisition of habits, traits, or patterns from the social environment. A variety of influences are seen to bring this about – including parents, teachers, religious authorities, the media, ideology, and generally accepted practices. In the case of the communitarian perspectives, the sources of the individual's moral orientation usually are located at a group level of one kind or another. It is patterns of the society as a whole (patterns like radical individualism, overemphasis on rights, and social isolation) that constitute relative moral well-being. Group characteristics, reflected in the ways of individuals, are seen to account for the moral deterioration of society. And it is changes in

those group characteristics, to be transmitted to and incorporated by individuals, that are envisioned as the path to improvements in the moral state of society.

As we have seen, in most communitarian views, American society has experienced a precipitous moral decline that must be corrected by reverting to a previous state of moral well-being (with some corrections). It is also claimed that the morality of one generation is not up to the standards of the morality of the previous generation. We have seen that the generational issue is brought up over and over again in various guises. In generation after generation, there have been complaints about the moral failings of the next generation – whether it be those in the 1920s or 1990s complaining about how youth have produced societal decline and crisis by virtue of their individualism, failure to abide by traditions, lack of respect for authority, and desire to go it alone and forego community ties.

Looking beyond the surface, the generational argument is a curious one for communitarians and for those who define morality as consisting of traits of character acquired through the transmission of traditions. It is curious because it is said that a morally sound generation that was charged with transmitting morality to the next generation actually produced a generation that is to blame for societal decay and moral crisis. This incongruous situation holds for the various incarnations of the generational argument. Let me consider one example that is illustrative – Putnam's (2000) analyses of the decline of social capital.

Putnam's main argument was that participation in social or group activities declined greatly from the 1960s to the 1990s. Maintaining a high level of social capital is important to the moral health of society and to children's development. He asserted that child development is "powerfully shaped by social capital" (Putnam, 2000, p. 299) and, more specifically, that high social capital contributes to the development of "character traits that are good for the rest of society" (p. 288). Putnam attributed a good deal of the decline in social capital to "generational change – the slow, steady, and ineluctable replacement of the long civic generation by their less involved children and grandchildren" (Putnam, 2000, p. 283). It is not solely on the measure of social

capital that Putnam contrasted the generations. In comparison with the generation of their parents, the "baby boom" generation, born between 1946 and 1964, were less politically involved, less connected to a religious tradition, less loyal to a work firm, and more rejecting of traditional social roles. The baby boomers also were more individualistic and expressed more libertarian attitudes and less respect for authority, religion, and patriotism. In their adolescence, baby boomers were "less trusting, less participatory, more cynical about authorities, more self-centered, and more materialistic" (p. 258). As a group, they are highly individualistic and want to function as "free agents." Putnam also characterized the following generation, born between 1965 and 1980, as free agents who further emphasized individualism and materialism.

Putnam, therefore, characterizes entire generations, with traits or characteristics detrimental to societal life, who were brought up by a generation that he characterized in different terms (less individualistic, more respectful of authority, religion, and patriotism, etc.). Moreover, that previous generation displayed great social capital, trust, and social reciprocity. It is a generation that the newscaster Tom Brokaw deemed *The Greatest Generation* in the title of a book that was a national best-seller for well over 100 weeks. Putnam certainly concurs in this estimation, especially in that generation's contributions to social capital.

As I have said, these contrasts between generations are common. It is always the next generation that is to blame for moral decline. Yet, the next not-so-good generation was reared by a very good generation. The contradiction, of course, is that in these views morality supposedly is acquired through the incorporation of standards, values, or patterns that are transmitted by those who socialize the young, and yet the young fall very short of the morality of the previous generation. In fact, many of those who draw generational analyses argue that we need to revert to better ways of socializing the young. But in their own analyses, those better ways were not effective when experienced by the "next generation."

I should note that Putnam's explanation for the generational shift brings in influences other than people (parents, teachers, religious

figures) on the next generation. Television, work habits, and urban sprawl were offered by Putnam as reasons for the shifts across generations. It must be asked, however, why these features would so easily override the upbringing and modeling provided by a generation that was presumably so committed to civic engagement, the public good, trust, and cooperation. In addition, why is it that the character traits and trust so evident and so strong in people who are raising the next generation are not reproduced? At the least, these analyses undermine the propositions that parents, or cultural practices, or cultural patterns significantly determine children's social and moral development.

Putnam is not the only one among those seeing moral decline who undermines these propositions. As I discussed in previous chapters, several causes have been mentioned for a presumed decline in a new generation when the previous generation was functioning well. In the 1920s it was jazz and New York that helped bring about moral crisis. In the 1990s it was the media and Hollywood that helped bring about moral crisis. Even when the attributions are to psychological causes, such as indulgence of the young, unbridled pursuit of pleasure, and lack of respect for authority, the proposition that children acquire morality through accommodation or internalization is undermined. It must be asked why it is that these psychological features come about in a generation that was brought up in a time of concern with self-sacrifice, respect for traditions and authority, commitment to a set of core national values, and a high degree of social capital and trust.

Events have also served to undermine the contention of politicians and social scientists regarding a moral decline in American society due to the indulgence or neglect of children by parents or due to the individualism rampant in the culture. The proof sometimes offered for these propositions was the increase in crime rates during the latter part of the twentieth century. However, during the latter part of the last decade of the century crime rates declined significantly throughout the nation. The rapid decline in the rates of most crimes is not readily explained. There was not an increased commitment to traditional values, and the practices of parents and the configuration of families did not change during this period (if anything, there was an increase in nontraditional family configurations). Furthermore, the construct

of a general cultural orientation is not one that would lead to the expectation that it would change so rapidly. The decrease in crime rates is as difficult to explain as is the prior increase in crime rates. Many explanations were proposed for the increase, including the increase in the number of adolescents in the population, the effects of the media, permissive child rearing, the absence of fathers in many families, lax sentencing of criminals, and downshifts in the economy. Too often we leap to facile answers for very hard-to-explain phenomena like a rise or a fall in the crime rates. Our understandings of each are simply not very good.

Perhaps we should also stop leaping to facile conclusions about generational changes, the dire state of society, and the myriad causes of that dire state. In particular, there is a need to examine how children – and adults – are influenced by social events and experiences before presuming that those events have caused what they presumably caused. When people attributed the causes of social decline to jazz, the media, New York, Hollywood, or time spent watching television, no analyses had been conducted to explain how changes come about. Just as we cannot characterize general social orientations, we cannot portray children's development as caused by general negative features. In all these instances, there is need for analyses of heterogeneity and multiple influences. Negative characterizations of society at these broad levels also fail to capture the variations in society and the ways attempts to change certain societal arrangements are motivated by concerns with justice.

I have suggested that part of the reason that the next generation is always blamed is that changes do occur across generations. Some of those changes are in nonmoral social realms, but are judged negatively by some (not all) of the previous generation. Research has shown that conflicts occur between parents and adolescents on this dimension. However, some changes do challenge the ways a previous generation applied moral judgments to societal arrangements and are met with resistance. An area of this sort that I discussed at length has to do with the roles and opportunities for females. However, I do not mean to say that societal changes of a generational kind are all for the better or always in a positive direction. This would be tantamount to

characterizing the society in a general way, with the society evaluated as in a better state at a given period than in the previous period. Instead, there can be changes for the better or for the worse on specific issues. There are also continuities in social problems and issues of social justice that are confronted in different ways over time. As an example, issues of civil rights that were part of sustained discussion and protest during the 1960s were not new. Racial inequalities and discrimination were at least as great in prior decades. A good part of the change was from covert complaint, discontent, and critique to open forms of it in efforts at changing the situation. Similar changes occurred with regard to gender inequalities. Rather than attempting to characterize the level of morality, character, or trust in the society, we need an approach that examines how people make judgments about various moral and nonmoral issues, as well as how people might differ in their approaches to the issues. Part of such analyses of generational differences would distinguish between changes of a moral kind and those of a nonmoral kind. Another part would be to examine people's different perspectives on social practices and societal arrangements – which is a perennial source of conflict between people in different positions on social hierarchies.

I have approached these matters largely from the perspective of the psychology of the development of individuals' moral, social, and personal judgments. The positions I have put forth that contrast with those emphasizing community, societal cohesion, and cultural orientations should not be regarded as solely a difference between a psychological approach and sociological and anthropological approaches. I have drawn on anthropological, sociological, and philosophical analyses in presenting my perspective. As discussed in previous chapters, there are a number of anthropologists who are highly critical of the characterizations of general orientations of cultures. Anthropologists have argued for the need to examine the perspectives and judgments of those in nondominant positions and conflicts and tensions within cultures.

From a sociological perspective, individualism and claims of moral decline have been addressed by Hayes and Lipset (1993/1994), who took special notice that a decline in the morality of American society, in

their words, "has been heralded by no less of an authority than Pope John Paul II" (Hayes & Lipset, 1993/1994, p. 69). Hayes and Lipset refer to the words of the Pope during his visit to Denver, Colorado, when he warned of "a serious moral crisis already affecting the lives of many young people, leaving them adrift, often without hope, and conditioned to look only for instant gratification" (quoted in Hayes and Lipset, 1993/1994, p. 69). It seems that the Pope has been listening to politicians or communitarians – or both. In the view of Hayes and Lipset, the Pope, the politicians, and the communitarians have not adequately examined the history of the nation, the role of individualism in morality, and the contemporary state of the nation. While accepting the idea of American individualism, Hayes and Lipset claim that there are multiple facets to it. It fosters a high sense of personal responsibility, independent initiative, responsible judgment, voluntary communal and civic bonds, as well as self-serving behavior and a disregard for communal goods. In other words, it has the heterogeneity that we have seen exists in most societies. This view of American individualism is held by others, including Ladd (1999), who authored the *Ladd Report* critical of Putnam's analyses of social capital (Chapter 3). Ladd maintained that American individualism has a collectivistic bent in that it is dependent on shared and cooperative beliefs and actions.

Hayes and Lipset argue that the problems typically identified with the contemporary moral decline – crime, drug use, and the spread of relativism – are nothing new. They are nothing new in the sense that Americans have always exhibited a moralism persistently resulting in what Jean Shepherd referred to as "breast beating, baring its soul and proclaiming to the heavens how rotten it is" (see the epigraph for Chapter 2). Hayes and Lipset (p. 71) articulated the issue less dramatically: "If the Pope stresses American social development as evidence of an emerging crisis of ethics, he is not alone in American history." In a similar vein, Jackson Lears (1997, p. 9) has asserted that " 'community' is one of those words that could use a nice vacation but probably won't be getting one. For centuries, American moralists have fretted about the fragmenting of community – even as most of them tolerated or even celebrated the market feeding that fragmentation." If we take the comments of the comedian Steve Martin seriously (as reproduced

in the epigraph for Chapter 3), emerging crises have been proclaimed throughout the history of the world.

According to Hayes and Lipset, the problems identified with a contemporary moral decline also are not new. They are problems that existed throughout the history of the nation and have been exaggerated in their use as signs of moral decline. They say that for contemporary times they "examined the evidence employed to prove that America is experiencing a moral crisis and found it unconvincing" (Hayes & Lipset, 1993/1994, p. 75). The argument is not that all is fine morally or that no serious problems exist. On the contrary, moral problems and challenges exist that need to be confronted – as has always been the case in the past. Confronting moral problems and challenges requires flexibility of thought: "A morality grounded in communal obligations cannot be as vitally flexible as one that contains a recognition of individual autonomy" (Hayes & Lipset, 1993/1994, p. 76). This use of the term *autonomy* corresponds to the other uses I have discussed. Morality is grounded in thought, in rationality; it involves reflection and the balancing of obligations and personal considerations.

The way Ladd, Hayes, and Lipset attributed the heterogeneity of personal responsibility, initiative, civic bonds, and self-serving behavior specifically to American society is reminiscent of the way Sinha and Trapathi (1994) attributed specifically to Indian society a coexistence of contradiction, and acceptance of conflict, and a mixture of individualism and collectivism. All these features, however, are part of social lives almost everywhere. People form judgments about the variety of social interactions they experience, and evaluate existing norms, practices, and social arrangements. Levels of acceptance and trust follow moral evaluations of the justice of societal arrangements, the ways human rights are respected, and the level of freedom and autonomy accorded. Morality is not determined by levels of trust or participation in a society, but rather trust varies by the ways moral goals are attained.

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