

Human Sexuality

in a **World** of **Diversity**

Rathus • Nevid
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Sixth Canadian Edition



Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity

SIXTH CANADIAN EDITION

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Dedicated to our children.

—Spencer A. Rathus, *The College of New Jersey*

—Jeffrey S. Nevid, *St. John's University*

—Lois Fichner-Rathus, *The College of New Jersey*

Dedicated to Michael Barrett.

—Alexander McKay, *Sex Information and Education*

Council of Canada and Chang School of Continuing Education,

Ryerson University

Dedicated to my graduate and undergraduate students—our collaborations are the best parts of my job—and to my mentors (Ed Herold, Bill Yarber, Cynthia Graham, Stephanie Sanders, and Rick Crosby) for their support, training, and treasured friendship. With tremendous gratitude to Steve, Leo, and Molly for their support and encouragement.

—Robin R. Milhausen, *University of Guelph*

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About This Course

Canada in the twenty-first century is rapidly evolving with respect to sexuality and relationships. *Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity* embraces and affirms sexual diversity. Indeed, it is this approach, adopted throughout every chapter, that makes this textbook unique.

Before writing this edition, we searched extensively for new Canadian materials from a number of sources, including Canadian researchers themselves. We've added many new Canadian references to each chapter. In addition to integrating up-to-date Canadian research and statistics, we've addressed key issues in human sexuality within the uniquely Canadian context. A number of new Innovative Canadian Research boxes featuring the work of leading Canadian researchers in the field of human sexuality have been added, and others have been updated.

New to This Edition

The sixth Canadian edition of *Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity* includes several important changes that add substantially to its depth and ease of use.

- Chapter 1 has been revised to place greater emphasis on the theme of diversity and the sociocultural aspects of human sexuality.
- Chapter 2 has been redesigned, organizing methodologies into qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, with a new section on critical theories, including an updated and enhanced presentation of feminist and queer theories, and a new section on intersectionality.
- Chapter 5 has been significantly revised to include new content and language regarding diverse gender identities; a new section on gender nonconforming children has been added, which includes current research on clinical approaches and research findings.
- Chapter 7 has been restructured with new content on the influence of technology on relationship formation and maintenance.
- Chapter 8, focused on sexual behaviours and fantasies, has been rewritten to present all sexual positions as inclusive of all gender identities, sexual orientations, and relationship configurations. New terminology appears such as “face-to-face position,” replacing dated and heteronormative language like the “missionary position.”
- A greater emphasis on the impact of new information technologies on human sexuality appears throughout the book.
- There is a greater focus on diversity and inclusive language throughout.

Content Highlights

Chapter-by-Chapter Changes

We've added hundreds of new references that reflect the newest research in the field of human sexuality. No part of the textbook has been untouched by change. Following are just a few of the topics we've added, substantially revised, or updated.

- Chapter 1, **Studying Human Sexuality: An Introduction**, incorporates a new World of Diversity box called “Sexual Morality in Seven Countries,” which examines global attitudes toward extramarital affairs, sexual orientation, sex between unmarried adults, and the use of contraceptives.
- Chapter 4, **Sexual Arousal and Response**, introduces new content about erogenous zones and the brain and the role of the brain and hormones in sexual response. This chapter also includes a new section on autism spectrum disorder and sexuality.
- In Chapter 5, **Gender Identity and Gender Roles**, we included new content and language related to diverse gender identities (e.g., gender fluid, agender) and non-binary gender identities, and reduced emphasis on surgical interventions. This chapter also introduces a new section on gender nonconforming children.
- In Chapter 6, **Attraction and Love**, we incorporated new research and theory on how differences and similarities between partners influence attraction and updated information about attraction among users of online dating apps and websites.
- Chapter 7, **Relationships, Intimacy, and Communication**, increases attention on the use of websites and apps to initiate and maintain dating and sexual relationships, including new research on use of emojis in dating and sexual relationships, and includes a new section discussing hookup relationships.
- Chapter 8, **Sexual Behaviours and Fantasies**, has been rewritten with results from new national studies on sexual fantasies, oral sex, masturbation, and genital touch. Sexual positions are described inclusively, so as to reflect any gender of participant. The Vaginal Sex section is now referred to as Vaginal Penetration and notes that penetration can occur by a penis (either biological or prosthetic) or a sex toy (such as a dildo or vibrator). It is noted that bodily considerations (e.g., height and

weight, experience of pain, and mobility), religious and cultural factors, genital diversity, and gender norms and sexual scripts have an impact on sexual activities and positions.

- Chapter 9, **Sexual Orientation**, contains a new World of Diversity box called “Moving Beyond the Concept of Sexual Orientation” and includes new discussions of homonegativity and building resilience among lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.
- Chapter 12, **Sexuality Across the Life Span**, includes a new A Closer Look box called “Sexting: Pleasure and Danger.”
- Chapter 13, **Sexual Problems and Dysfunctions**, adds new research on the prevalence and type of sexual problems among Canadian midlife adults and youth. Increased emphasis is placed on cognitive-behavioural and mindfulness treatments for sexual problems and dysfunctions. This chapter also incorporates a new A Closer Look box called “The ‘Little Pink Pill’ for Women,” which provides a critical analysis of the new female sexual dysfunction drug Addyi.
- Chapter 14, **Sexually Transmitted Infections**, includes new content about HIV antiretroviral therapy (ART), pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and a new discussion about the criminalization of HIV nondisclosure. A new section on the role of HSV-1 in the transmission of genital herpes and a new Innovative Canadian Research box called “Living With STI,” about resisting STI-associated stigma, have been added.
- Chapter 15, **Sexual Health Education**, incorporates a new section about the need to address the topics of sexual assault and consent in sexual health education and provides updated information about education and training opportunities for sexual health educators, the sources of sex information for young people, innovative curricula and resources to teach sexual health education, and research on the impact of sexual health education.
- Chapter 16, **Sexual Variations**, introduces new research on the prevalence of paraphilic interests and behaviours in the Quebec population and includes a new A Closer Look box called “Women From the ‘Kink’ Community.”
- Chapter 17, **Sexual Coercion**, incorporates the latest findings about the dismissals of sexual assault allegations by police departments across Canada, and new content has been added to provide practical information for individuals who have been sexually assaulted, who want to support a friend who has been assaulted, and who want to enact bystander interventions to prevent sexual violence.
- Chapter 18, **Sex Work and Sexually Explicit Material**, provides updated information on Bill C36, the law

regulating sex work in Canada, and incorporates a new Innovative Canadian Research box called “Reasons for Entry into Sex Work.” This chapter also updates statistics regarding viewing pornography online and includes a new Innovative Canadian Research box called “How Does Pornography Affect Romantic Relationships?”

Themes in This Edition

The sixth Canadian edition of *Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity* builds upon the strong themes for which previous editions have become known. Five themes are woven throughout the text, as follows:

- Human diversity
- An inclusive approach to sexuality
- Critical thinking
- Responsible sexual decision making
- Sexual health

THEME 1: HUMAN DIVERSITY Colleges and universities undertake the mission of broadening students’ perspectives, encouraging them to appreciate human diversity. Canada is a nation of hundreds of ethnic and religious groups, many of which endorse culturally distinct beliefs about appropriate gender roles for men and women, as well as distinctive sexual practices and customs. Diversity is even greater within the global village of the world’s nearly 200 nations and their subcultures.

Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity incorporates a multicultural, multi-ethnic perspective that reflects the diversity of sexual experience in Canadian society and around the world. Discussion of diversity encourages respect for people who hold diverse beliefs and attitudes.

THEME 2: AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO SEXUALITY Throughout most of Western history, sexuality has been conceptualized and discussed with narrow, often rigid boundaries that excluded many people who did not fit within particular categories of sexuality. For example, heteronormativity and strict gender binaries have governed our society’s approach to sexuality for centuries. But increasingly, Western society is evolving beyond these narrow conceptualizations and taking a more inclusive approach to sexuality.

The Canadian authors have made a concerted effort to incorporate a more inclusive approach to human sexuality in the sixth Canadian edition of this book. It is our hope that students across the spectrum of sexualities, sexual orientations, and gender identities will feel included, not excluded, when reading these chapters. It is also our hope that the more inclusive approach to sexuality that we have tried to integrate into this text will foster an environment characterized by a true recognition of the diversity of human sexuality.

THEME 3: CRITICAL THINKING Colleges and universities also encourage students to become critical thinkers. Today’s students are so inundated with information about gender and sexuality that it can be difficult to sort truth from fiction. Critical thinking requires thoughtful analysis and probing of others’ claims and arguments in light of evidence. Moreover, it requires a willingness to challenge conventional wisdom and the common knowledge many of us take for granted. Throughout this book we raise issues that call for critical thinking.

THEME 4: INFORMED SEXUAL DECISION MAKING We encourage students to make responsible sexual decisions on the basis of accurate information. Responsible decision making is based not only on acquiring accurate information but also on carefully evaluating this information in light of one’s own values.

THEME 5: SEXUAL HEALTH *Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity* emphasizes issues that affect sexual health, with extensive coverage of such topics as HIV and AIDS and other STIs, innovations in contraception and reproductive technologies, breast cancer, menstrual distress, sex and disabilities, and diseases that affect the reproductive tract. The textbook encourages students to take an active—in fact, a proactive—role in health promotion.

Feature Boxes and Additional Learning Aids

Like previous editions, the new edition of *Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity* contains features that stimulate student interest and enhance understanding.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES Featured at the beginning of each chapter, learning objectives help guide student reading by identifying main ideas and defining learning goals. These learning objectives appear again in the end-of-chapter summary to help reinforce key information. They are also used to organize the Test Bank and Instructor Manual.

REAL STUDENTS, REAL QUESTIONS What do students know about human sexuality? What are they too embarrassed to ask of professors, peers, or parents? This feature highlights questions, collected from college and university students from across the United States, on a variety of human sexuality topics concerning them—big or small.

A WORLD OF DIVERSITY These features highlight the rich variety of human sexual customs and practices in our own society and in those throughout the world. Viewing human sexuality in a multicultural context helps students better understand

how cultural beliefs, values, and attitudes can influence the expression of sexuality. Students may come to understand that their partners, who may not share the same ethnic or religious heritage as themselves, may feel different than they do about sexual intimacy. Students will learn about cultural differences related to gender roles, sexual orientation, sexual jealousy, and premarital and extramarital sexual patterns.

A CLOSER LOOK The A Closer Look features provide in-depth discussions of scientific techniques and skill-building exercises. For example, we have added a new A Closer Look box called “Loving (and/or Having Sexual Relationships With) More Than One” about consensually non-monogamous relationships in Chapter 7 and a box on tracking menstrual cycles using apps and websites in Chapter 11.

INNOVATIVE CANADIAN RESEARCH These boxes emphasize significant new research contributions by Canadian scholars. Many new Innovative Canadian Research boxes have been added to the sixth edition, and others have been updated.

APPLIED KNOWLEDGE The Applied Knowledge features assist students with personal decisions, providing information and advice. For example, we’ve added new boxes to Chapter 17 called “How to Support a Survivor” and “Bystander Intervention to Prevent Sexual Assault” and updated the one called “If You’re Sexually Assaulted.”

TRUTH-OR-FICTION? ITEMS These unique chapter-opening devices motivate students by challenging common sense, stereotypes, and folklore. Truth-or-Fiction Revisited sections are interspersed throughout each chapter and provide feedback to students regarding the accuracy of their assumptions in light of the evidence presented in the chapter.

POP-UP GLOSSARY Research shows that most students do not make use of glossaries at the end of books. Searching for the meanings of terms is a difficult task and distracts them from the subject matter. Therefore, *Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity* includes pop-up definitions, so that students can readily access meanings of key terms without breaking their concentration on the flow of the material. Key terms appear in bold type in the text and are defined in pop-up screens (and in the margins in the print edition).

TEST YOUR LEARNING A series of auto-graded multiple-choice questions appear at the end of each chapter to facilitate individual study and promote class discussion.

About the Canadian Authors



Alexander McKay, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN), an organization he has worked with for over 25 years. Together with Michael Barrett, Alex helped to launch the *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* in 1992 and currently serves as the journal's Managing Editor. Alex teaches the Social Context of Human Sexuality at the Chang School of Continuing Education, Ryerson University.



Dr. Robin Milhausen is a Full Professor at the University of Guelph in the Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition. She completed her PhD in Applied Health Science, with a minor in Human Sexuality, from the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University. She is an Associate Editor for the *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* and a research fellow at both the Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention and The Kinsey Institute. An award-winning teacher, a prominent sexuality educator in the media, and an engaged sexuality researcher nationally and internationally, Robin has served as the President of the Canadian Sex Research Forum, Chair and Co-Chair of the Annual Guelph Sexuality Conference, and member of the board for the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality.

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Alexander McKay, Ph.D.
Robin R. Milhausen, Ph.D.

Chapter 1

Studying Human Sexuality: An Introduction



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Learning Objectives

What Is Human Sexuality?

LO 1.1 Define human sexuality.

The Diversity of Human Sexuality

LO 1.2 Identify ways in which human sexuality is characterized by diversity.

Canadian Society and Sexuality

LO 1.3 Describe the interaction between ethnocultural diversity and attitudes toward sexuality in Canada.

Global Diversity in Attitudes Toward Sexuality

LO 1.4 Compare and contrast attitudes toward sexuality in different countries.

Sexuality and Values

LO 1.5 Define the value perspectives that people use to evaluate sexual behaviours.

Thinking Critically About Human Sexuality

LO 1.6 Identify and describe the key elements of critical thinking.

Perspectives on Human Sexuality

LO 1.7 Discuss the various ways of looking at human sexuality.

TRUTH OR FICTION?

Which of the following statements are the truth and which are fiction? Look for the Truth-or-Fiction items throughout this chapter to find the answers.

- 1 Scientific knowledge will enable you to make the right sexual decisions. **T / F?**
- 2 You can trust the sexual advice that is posted on the Internet. **T / F?**
- 3 In ancient Greece, a mature man would take a sexual interest in an adolescent boy, often with the blessing of the boy's parents. **T / F?**
- 4 The production of sex manuals originated in modern times. **T / F?**
- 5 The Graham cracker came into being as a means for helping young men control their sexual appetites. **T / F?**

This chapter introduces the reader to the study of human sexuality. We begin by defining human sexuality and discuss the many ways that sexuality is characterized by diversity. We examine ethnocultural diversity related to sexuality within Canada and compare Canada to other countries with respect to attitudes toward sexuality. We then look at values and sexuality and the importance of using critical thinking to examine sexuality. The chapter concludes with an overview of the many different ways of looking at human sexuality.

What Is Human Sexuality?

LO 1.1 Define human sexuality.

What is human sexuality? This is not a trick question. Consider the various meanings of the word “sex.” One use of the term refers to whether we’re anatomically male or female or somewhere in between. The words “sex” and “sexual” also refer to the anatomical structures, called sex organs or sexual organs, that play a role in reproduction and sexual pleasure. We may also speak of sex when referring to physical activities involving our sex organs for purposes of reproduction or pleasure, as in “having sex.” (See Innovative Canadian Research: What is this Thing Called Sex?) Sex also relates to **erotic** feelings, experiences, or desires, such as sexual fantasies and thoughts, sexual urges, and feelings of sexual attraction.

Many researchers reserve the word “sex” for anatomical or biological categories, preferring the word **gender** to refer to social or cultural categories. For example, one might say that “reproductive anatomy appears to depend on the sex [not the gender] of the individual, but in some societies, **gender roles** [not sex roles] are often seen as polar opposites and in others they appear more similar or fluid.”

The term **human sexuality** refers to the ways we experience and express ourselves as sexual beings. Our awareness of ourselves as females or males and our sexual orientation are parts of our sexuality, as is the capacity we have for erotic experiences and responses.

Researchers Meaney and Rye (2007), at St. Jerome’s University at the University of Waterloo, have conceptualized sex as a fun, healthy activity that can be considered leisure when it is voluntary, is not seen as work, and serves some personal need. According to their definition, sex is not a leisure activity when it is not voluntary, is viewed as work, or is seen as an obligation.

At its most basic level, sex provides physical pleasure. It’s a fun activity that can be enjoyed alone or with others. Sexuality can also be a key component of personality development, as we discover which sexual activities are enjoyable, and with whom. Sexuality is an important part of our identity whether we are gay, lesbian, bisexual,

erotic

Arousing sexual feelings or desires.

gender

The behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex.

gender roles

Complex clusters of the ways males and females are expected to behave within a given culture.

human sexuality

The ways we experience and express ourselves as sexual beings.

heterosexual, or pansexual or whether we identify as female, male, gender fluid, or transgender. Meaney and Rye (2007) argue that learning about one's sexual likes and dislikes through experimentation can lead to sexual self-actualization, a state in which a person is comfortable with his or her sexuality.

The Study of Human Sexuality

The study of human sexuality draws upon the scientific expertise of anthropologists, biologists, medical researchers, sociologists, and psychologists, to name but a few of the professionals involved in the field. These disciplines all make contributions because sexual behaviour reflects our biological capabilities, psychological characteristics, and social and cultural influences. Biologists inform us about the physiological mechanisms of sexual arousal and response. Medical science teaches us about sexually transmitted infections and the biological bases of sexual dysfunction. Psychologists examine how our sexual behaviours and attitudes are shaped by perception, learning, thought, motivation, emotion, and personality. Sociologists consider the sociocultural contexts of sexual behaviour. For example, they examine relationships between sexual behaviour and religion, race, and social class. Anthropologists focus on cross-cultural similarities and differences in sexual behaviour. Scientists from many disciplines explore parallels between the sexual behaviours of humans and those of other animals.

A number of organizations promote sex research and sexual health education. In Canada, leading organizations include the Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN), which publishes *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, and the Canadian Sex Research Forum (CSRF). Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, the

INNOVATIVE CANADIAN RESEARCH

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED SEX?

New Brunswick researchers Hilary Randall and Sandra Byers (2003) asked university students to indicate which behaviours they would define as “having sex” with someone if they were the ones engaging in those behaviours. The only behaviours most students defined as sex were penile–vaginal intercourse and penile–anal intercourse. Only about one fifth defined oral–genital contact as sex, and even fewer (10%) defined the touching of genitals leading to orgasm as sex. Interestingly, there was a slight increase in the percentage of students who defined each behaviour as sex if it resulted in orgasm.

When the researchers modified the question, however, far more students indicated that they would define someone as their “sexual partner” if that person were engaging in those behaviours with the respondent. For example, about two thirds considered anyone with whom they had oral–genital contact to be a sexual partner, and about one half considered touching of genitals as an indicator of partnership.

University of Calgary researchers Eileah Trotter and Kevin Alderson (2007) asked university students to define “loss of virginity.” The students’ definition of “loss of virginity” was more narrow than their definition of “having sex.” For example, only about half thought penile–anal intercourse qualified as loss of virginity. Almost all accepted penile–vaginal intercourse as the marker for

virginity loss. However, a small percentage indicated that orgasm had to be experienced with penile–vaginal intercourse for it to count as loss of virginity.

The researchers also presented students with a list of behaviours and asked them to define each behaviour as sexual if it was performed by a heterosexual couple and if it was performed by a same-gender couple. Students were more likely to define most of the behaviours as sexual for heterosexual couples than for same-gender couples. An exception was oral–genital sex: Slightly more of the students classified this behaviour as “having sex” if the couple was of the same gender than if they were heterosexual (Trotter & Alderson, 2007).

Krystelle Shaughnessy, Sandra Byers, and Sara Jane Thorton (2011) examined university students’ definitions of cybersex. While some have thought of cybersex as any online sexual activity that has the goal of sexual gratification, 80% of the students participating in the study indicated that, for them, cybersex is defined as interactive online sexual activity that involves one or more partners. In a subsequent study of people who had engaged in cybersex, Shaughnessy and Byers (2014) found that study participants were more likely to have experienced engaging in cybersex with a primary partner (82%) than with a stranger (37%).

Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) also disseminate sexual health information to professionals and the public in Canada. Two major international organizations are the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality (SSSS), which publishes *The Journal of Sex Research*, and the World Association for Sexual Health (WAS).

The Diversity of Human Sexuality

LO 1.2 Identify ways in which human sexuality is characterized by diversity.

Let's Google two islands; the first is Inis Beag in the North Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Ireland, and the second, called Mangaia, is in the South Pacific Ocean. If we search Google Maps for these islands, click on the satellite image, and swoop in, we find ourselves visiting two islands that are on opposite sides of the world. From the air, both appear green and fertile. Both islands contain very small populations of people, geographically separated from the outside world. Because of this they have been of particular interest to anthropologists looking to study the customs of unique societies that have developed and existed at least somewhat free of the cultural influences that have shaped personal and social life in the larger, more prominent cultures of the world.

What makes Inis Beag and Mangaia of interest to us is that they provide a vivid example of cultural diversity with respect to sexuality. Values and standards for sexuality are key components of the organization of all cultures, including contemporary Western society. So it is instructive to examine the accepted forms of sexuality and patterns of sexual behaviour in diverse geographical locations and historical time periods not so that we may judge them or marvel at what may seem to us to be their eccentricities. Rather, we learn about diverse cultures so that we can understand the ways in which each culture uniquely shapes and regulates sexuality. Ultimately, the study of sexuality in cultures that are distant from our own enables us to better understand ourselves and the ways in which our own culture shapes our sexuality. In Inis Beag and Mangaia, we see two distinctive cultures that are both different from mainstream North American culture but also quite opposite to each other in the culturally accepted ways that sexuality is expressed.

Inis Beag is a remote island off the coast of Connemara, Ireland. American anthropologist John Messenger visited the island from 1958 to 1966 (Messenger, 1993). The population at the time numbered about 350. The people of Inis Beag were Gaelic-speaking Irish Catholics who lived as farmers. At the time of Messenger's visit, there was no electricity, and the primary mode of transportation was horse-drawn carriages. In this isolated agrarian culture, the community of Inis Beag evolved beliefs and customs regarding sexuality that, in comparison to mainstream Canadian society, appear quite restrictive.

From his study of sexuality on the island, here are some of the sexual beliefs, norms, and practices that Messenger (1993) observed among the people of Inis Beag. The residents of this community did not believe that it was normal for women to experience orgasm. Messenger reported that women who found sex pleasurable—especially orgasm—were viewed as deviant.

Premarital sex was all but unknown on Inis Beag. Prior to marriage, men and women socialized apart. Marriage came relatively late compared to other cultures—usually in the middle 30s for men and the middle 20s for women. Mothers taught their daughters that they would have to submit to their husbands' animal cravings in order to obey God's injunction to "be fruitful and multiply."

But the women of Inis Beag did not need to be overly concerned about frequent sex, since the men of the island believed that sexual activity would drain their strength. Consequently, men avoided sexual activity on the eve of sporting events or strenuous

work. Because of taboos against nudity, married couples had sex with their undergarments on. Intercourse took place in the dark—literally as well as figuratively.

During intercourse, the man was always on top. He was always the initiator. Foreplay was brief or nonexistent. The honourable man ejaculated as fast as he could, in order to spare his wife as much as possible from the unpleasantness of sexual interaction. In sum, rooted in a religious but internally derived and idiosyncratic understanding of human sexuality, Inis Beag developed into a relatively sex-negative culture.

On to Mangaia, which is a lush tropical island in the South Pacific Ocean. Mangaia is the most southerly of the Cook Islands, located about 650 miles southwest of Tahiti. Known for its coconuts, coral reefs, and natural beauty, Mangaia is home to about 500 people, most of whom are of Polynesian descent. As in many other cultures, including the people of Inis Beag, family bonds are of central importance to the people of Mangaia. Like nearly every other place in the world, most of the island's people form romantic attachments, get married, and place a high priority on their families. With respect to beliefs about sexuality and norms for sexual behaviour, however, the Mangaia culture is a stark contrast to that of Inis Beag.

The American anthropologist Donald Marshall conducted field research in the Cook Islands during the 1950s and spent a year living on Mangaia. Marshall's (1971) report on the sexuality of the island's people indicated a relatively sex-positive culture. According to his account of sexual life on the island, from an early age, Mangaian boys and girls were encouraged to get in touch with their sexuality through sexual play and masturbation. At about the age of 13, Mangaian boys were given a two-week course of instruction on techniques of sexual behaviour, including how to perform oral sex, which was followed by a socially approved sexual experience with an older woman in the community. Girls also received instruction about sex from an older woman.

Marshall (1971) reported that premarital sex among Mangaia adolescents was culturally approved and frequent. Mangaian parents encouraged their daughters to have sexual relationships with several men so that they would be sure to choose a husband who was compatible. Both males and females emerged from adolescence sexually experienced and skilled. For men, it was important that they were adept in giving their female partners sexual pleasure, including the ability for him to delay ejaculation in order to enhance her experience. Bringing his partner to orgasm was not just expected, it was a principle source of a man's own sense of sexual pleasure. Perhaps not unexpectedly, Marshall reported that regularly experiencing orgasm was a nearly universal experience among women on the island.

So what conclusions can we draw from our brief comparison of sexuality on the islands of Inis Beag and Mangaia? First, although the people living on these two islands belong to the same species (*Homo sapiens*), they have very different, and in some ways opposite, sexual beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural practices. This tells us that while our biology defines us as human, our culture—the group-specific beliefs, values, social norms, and customs passed down from one generation to the next—plays a central role in shaping human sexuality.

Second, as the title of this book suggests, we can conclude from our brief journey to these two islands that to study human sexuality is to study diversity. As we will see time and time again as we examine and investigate the key dimensions of this fascinating topic, human beings experience and express sexuality in diverse ways. For example, as we will see in Chapter 5, while we may be accustomed to thinking about gender in terms of the binary categories of male and female, these simple categories do not accurately correspond to the range of ways people can and do identify their gender. As we'll see in Chapter 9, some people no longer identify themselves according to traditional categories of gay/lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual, preferring instead

to identify their sexual orientation using a broad range of alternative identities. And, as we discuss in Chapter 16, there is a wide range of preferred sexual activities that people wish to engage in. These are just a few of the many ways that human sexuality is characterized by diversity. Because our sexuality is a fundamental part of who we are as individuals and communities, this diversity contributes to the uniqueness within each of us.

Finally, we note that many aspects of human sexuality are viewed as moral issues, involving questions of right and wrong. Here again, we see diversity. Issues such as sexual behaviour of youth, extramarital sex, contraception, and abortion, for example, are often subject to diverse moral perspectives. No single value system defines us all. Each of us has a unique set of moral values—as a Canadian, as a member of one of Canada’s hundreds of cultural groups, as an individual. The world of diversity in which we live is a mosaic of different moral codes and cultural traditions and beliefs. Gathering information and weighing the scientific evidence will alert you to what is possible in the contemporary world, but only you can determine which of your options are compatible with your own moral values.

Choices, Information, and Decision Making

Although sex is a natural function, and our sexuality can be influenced by biological factors, how we voluntarily express our sexuality is a matter of personal choice. We choose how, where, and with whom to become sexually involved. We face a wide array of sexual decisions. What attributes do I look for in a partner? When should my partner and I become sexually intimate? Should I initiate sexual relations, or wait for my partner to approach me? Should my partner and I practise contraception? If so, which method? Is it okay for me to look at pornography while I am in a relationship? Should I talk to my partner about my desire to engage in different sexual activities than we usually engage in? Is monogamy important to me? Should I use a condom to protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or insist that my partner do this? Should I be tested for STIs? Should I insist that my partner be tested for STIs before we engage in sexual relations?

In addition to our biology and our capacity for individual decision making, the expression of our sexuality is also inevitably influenced by the social context in which we live. The contrasting social norms related to sexuality on the islands of Inis Beag and Mangaia described earlier are a stark example of the powerful influence of culture on human sexuality.

Gathering information helps us make informed decisions. This text provides you with a broad database concerning scientific developments and ways of relating to other people—including people who come from other cultures. We also encourage you to try to understand other people’s sexual beliefs and values in light of their cultural backgrounds just as we should reflect on our own beliefs, values, and culture. Understanding is an essential milestone on the pathway to respect, and respect is vital to resolving conflicts and establishing healthy relationships.

1 > T / F Truth or Fiction Revisited Fiction. Although science provides us with information, it cannot make sexual decisions for us. In making sexual decisions, we also turn to our values. Culture, religious traditions, and other ethical systems also play a prominent role in shaping our values, as we see in the following sections.



Melanie Gillis

Spelling It Out. In this artistic photo by Hamilton photographer Melanie Gillis, nude people are arranged so their bodies form the word “SEX.”

Canadian Society and Sexuality

LO 1.3 Describe the interaction between ethnocultural diversity and attitudes toward sexuality in Canada.

To understand the complexity of factors influencing sexual attitudes and behaviours in Canada, it's important to be aware of the diverse nature of Canadians. (See Innovative Canadian Research: Ethnocultural Communities and Sexuality). Particularly today, immigration patterns are changing the landscape of Canadian society. Currently, about one in five members of the Canadian population was born outside of Canada, with the majority of immigrants (61%) moving to the metropolitan areas of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. Immigrants constitute 22% of Canadian society and nearly 50% of Toronto's population (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Of course, before the arrival of Europeans in North America, Canada was inhabited by Indigenous peoples. Currently, 4.9% of Canada's population is made up of those who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, collectively known as Indigenous peoples (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

INNOVATIVE CANADIAN RESEARCH

ETHNOCULTURAL COMMUNITIES AND SEXUALITY

There has been relatively little research on the sexuality of Canadian ethnic minority groups. Fortunately, some Canadian researchers have begun to study these under-examined groups.

Researchers in Vancouver and Montreal, led by Lori A. Brotto of the University of British Columbia, compared the sexuality of Canadian university students from European-Canadian and Asian backgrounds. The Asian students had more conservative sexual attitudes and less sexual experience than the European-Canadian students. The European-Canadian women reported higher rates of sexual desire, arousal, receptivity, and pleasure. The Asian men reported higher rates of erectile dysfunction and less sexual satisfaction than the European-Canadian men.

Brotto, Chik, Ryder, Gorzalka, and Seal (2005) found that degree of acculturation to mainstream Canadian society was significantly related to sexual attitudes and experiences, but length of residence in Canada was not. In other words, Asian students who kept the strongest ties to their cultural heritage had the most conservative sexual attitudes and experiences. Similarly, a study by Woo and Brotto (2008) found that Asians in Vancouver who identified less with Canadian culture had higher rates of sexual problems and less communication with their partners about sexual issues. They were also more likely to avoid sexual contact, and when they did engage in sexual relations, their encounters were less sensual in nature.

Homma, Saewyc, Wong, and Zumbo (2013) examined the sexual health and risk behaviours of East Asian adolescents in Grades 7 to 12, using the British Columbia Adolescent Health Survey. Less than 10% of East Asian adolescents had ever had sexual intercourse. Compared to immigrant students whose primary language at home was not English, immigrant and Canadian-born students speaking English at home were more likely to have experienced sexual intercourse. Among students who had never had sexual intercourse, the two most common reasons were not feeling ready and waiting to meet the right

person. According to the authors, the findings of the study indicate a need for sexual-health interventions tailored to the socio-cultural contexts in which adolescents live.

Canadian researcher Yanqui Rachel Zhou (2012) interviewed both male and female Chinese immigrants about their sexual attitudes and experiences during the settlement process in Canada. Zhou noted that while Chinese society has gradually become more open to personal sexual freedom, there remains a taboo around public discourse related to sexuality. In China, silence around sexual issues is often encouraged. When immigrants come to Canada they may be separated from partners and family and experience feelings of loneliness and isolation. Zhou found that many of the men and women she interviewed became involved in sexual relationships in Canada out of a need for intimacy and companionship. The participants often revealed that these relationships were only possible because they were separated from family, friends, and spouses, which in turn meant that they experienced a certain amount of liberation from the social and cultural norms of their home country. However, while they tended to be more open to sexual experiences, many still maintained a reluctance to discuss sexual issues with their partners. The cultural tradition of privacy and silence surrounding sexuality persisted even though there was a more open attitude to sexual experiences. Zhou noted that this continued reluctance to talk about sexuality could lead to unsafe sexual behaviours such as unprotected sex and engaging in sex with multiple or risky partners.

Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale at the University of Windsor and two visiting researchers from Iran, Khosro Refaie Shirpak and Maryam Chinichian, conducted research with Iranian immigrants (2007). They found that maintaining virginity prior to marriage was considered essential for girls, to maintain good reputations and the honour of their families. The Iranian adults were fearful

of having their children exposed to sexuality from the broader Canadian society, especially by the media. Based on images they saw on Canadian television, the Iranian immigrants believed most Canadian adolescents began having sexual intercourse by age 13 or 14. They also perceived that Canadians didn't seem to care about marital loyalty and engaged in extramarital relationships. The women worried that their husbands would be tempted to engage in affairs, because of the sexual freedoms in Canada. The men worried that in Canada it would be too easy for their wives to walk out of their marriages. Respondents also believed that sex education in Canadian schools emphasized the use of condoms rather than abstinence before marriage.

Maticka-Tyndale, Kerr, and Mihan (2016) examined the sexual experiences of 510 African, Caribbean, and Black youth aged 16 to 25 years living in the Windsor/Essex County region

of Ontario. Participants were identified as African if they or their parents emigrated from an African country, Caribbean if they or their parents emigrated from a Caribbean country, and Black if they and their parents were born in North America. The authors examined differences among the three ethno-racial groups in combination with differences between Muslims and Christians. About three quarters of the Black and Caribbean youth reported sexual intercourse experience compared to less than half of the African youth. Overall, African youth were less experienced than Caribbean and Black youth, and, within the African group, Muslim youth had less sexual experience than Christian youth. This included age of initiating various sexual activities, number of partners, and use of condoms. The Black and Caribbean youth reported sexual experiences and had a sexual profile that was closest to that of the general population of Canadian youth.

The first European immigrants in the region were mainly French and British, and for many years those two have been the dominant ethnic groups in Canada. As a result, Canadians of French and British ancestry today make up about half of the population. In the latter half of the twentieth century, an increasing number of immigrants came from other European and non-European countries. According to Statistics Canada (2017b), 62% of immigrants who arrived in Canada between 2011 and 2016 were from Asia, and 12% were from Europe.

The most notable change in the Canadian mosaic has been the dramatic increase in the proportion of visible minorities. In 2016, 22% of Canadians (7,647,580) were members of visible minorities, with South Asians forming the largest group, followed by Chinese and those who identified as Black (Statistics Canada, 2017b).

The **values** of immigrants often differ from those of people born in Canada. In South Asian communities, for example, arranged marriages still occur. Some immigrants from Muslim countries maintain a belief in the practice of female circumcision, a procedure usually performed on young girls that involves surgical removal of the clitoris and in some cases parts of the labia. This practice, often referred to as “genital mutilation,” is contrary to Canadian values. (The Canadian and American governments have declared female circumcision illegal.) Parents in some groups use gender-selection techniques, such as abortion, to ensure that they have boys rather than girls. In many cultures, sex is a taboo subject, not discussed openly between parents and their children.

values

The beliefs and qualities in life that are deemed important or unimportant, right or wrong, desirable or undesirable.

Real Students, Real Questions

Q *I am 17 years old, and in my family the topic of sex is non-existent. How do I begin a conversation with my family?*

A Many people find it difficult to talk about sex. You'll find ideas for initiating conversations about sex with family members and other people throughout this text—conversations about contraception, STIs, and problems in relationships. In all cases, think about selecting a good time and place to talk. Consider asking permission to talk about a sensitive topic, as in “I could use some help. Can we talk about it?” People who care about you might just surprise you by accepting the challenge of trying to communicate about topics that have been off-limits. You can also check out your university or college counselling centre; it is usually a safe place to explore v.



For the most part, sexual attitudes and behaviours are more conservative among immigrants than among the rest of Canadian society. This is particularly pronounced in relation to adolescent sexual activity. For example, research has found that youth from immigrant families from East Asia and African Muslim countries are less likely than the general population of Canadian youth to have experienced sexual intercourse (Homma et al., 2013; Maticka-Tyndale et al., 2016).

Children of immigrant parents often get caught in a culture clash between the traditional values of their parents and the more permissive values of Canadian society. A Manitoba study of ethno-racial minority youth found that because sex was a taboo subject within the family setting, young people felt they could not communicate their real thoughts and questions to their parents (Migliardi, 2007). Research also indicates, however, that most bicultural young people successfully adapt to Canadian culture, while still maintaining ties to the cultural identities of their families. Negotiating conflicting cultural norms may prove to be a challenge, especially for issues pertaining to sexuality and relationships, but many young people find a workable balance between the expectations of each culture (Giguère, Lalonde, & Lou, 2010).



Monde Osé Burlesque Ball/Jo Gorsky

Sexual Appetites at the Burlesque Ball. The Burlesque Ball in Montreal, organized by a group called Monde Osé, is meant to encourage people to explore their sexuality. In general, people in Quebec tend to have more permissive sexual attitudes than people in other provinces.

Global Diversity in Attitudes Toward Sexuality

LO 1.4 Compare and contrast attitudes toward sexuality in different countries.

As previously mentioned, global diversity affects attitudes toward sexuality. In this section, we will explore attitudes toward sexuality among Canadians, how the attitudes among Canadians differ from those of Americans, and politics and sex in Canada and the United States.

Comparing Canada With Other Countries

Tremendous variation in sexual attitudes and behaviours is found among the different countries of the world. Many of these variations are presented throughout this text. For example, Laumann et al. (2006) surveyed 27 500 men and women over age 40 from 29 countries, asking about their levels of sexual satisfaction. In general, men reported higher levels of satisfaction than women. Western countries with higher gender equality, such as Canada, had the highest rates of sexual satisfaction. The lowest levels of satisfaction were in Indonesia and Japan. According to Laumann et al., in societies that have greater gender equality, sexual pleasure is considered as important for women as it is for men. However, in male-centred cultures where sex is more reproduction-focused, sexual pleasure for women is not considered important. Not surprisingly, many women in those cultures view sex as a marital duty.

There are also considerable variations in moral perspectives toward sexuality issues in different parts of the world. As shown in *A World of Diversity: Sexual Morality in Seven Countries*, a Pew Research (2014) survey on views on moral issues in 40 countries found that on some issues of sexual morality, attitudes are quite different. As the four charts show, in nearly all cases, lower percentages of people in France

indicated that they found the sexual behaviours in question (extramarital affairs, sex between unmarried adults, homosexuality, contraceptive use) morally unacceptable compared to the six other countries. In contrast, higher percentages of people in Pakistan said each of the behaviours was morally unacceptable compared to people in the other six countries. For each of the sexuality issues included in the survey, Canadians were less likely to say that the behaviour was “morally unacceptable” than people in most of the other countries.

There are also many cross-cultural differences in adolescent sexuality-related behaviours. Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale at the University of Windsor conducted a groundbreaking study of adolescent sexual practices in Kenya (see *A World of*

A WORLD OF DIVERSITY

SEXUAL MORALITY IN SEVEN COUNTRIES

The Pew Research Center’s 2013 Global Attitudes survey asked 40 117 respondents in 40 countries what they thought about topics that are often discussed as moral issues, including the sexuality-related issues of extramarital affairs, homosexuality, sex between unmarried adults, and the use of contraceptives. For each issue, respondents were asked whether the behaviour

was morally acceptable, morally unacceptable, or not a moral issue. In the following four charts (Figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4), the percentages of respondents from Canada, the United States, France, China, South Africa, Brazil, and Pakistan who said that the behaviour in question was morally unacceptable is given.

Figure 1.1 Percentage of Respondents Who Said Extramarital Affairs Are Morally Unacceptable

SOURCE: Based on Pew Research Center (2014). *Global Views on Morality*.
<http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/04/15/global-morality/>

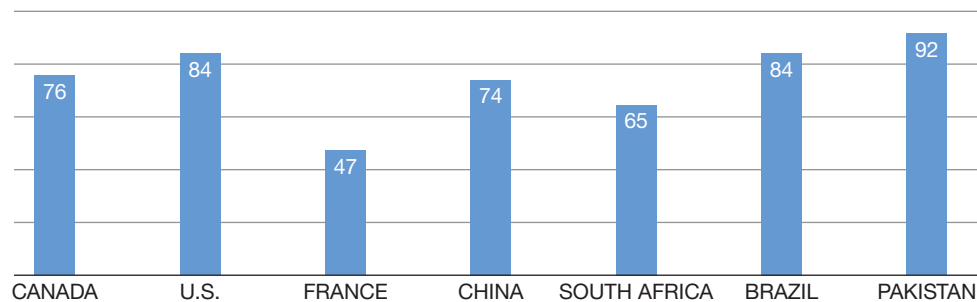


Figure 1.2 Percentage of Respondents Who Said Contraceptive Use Is Morally Unacceptable

SOURCE: Based on Pew Research Center (2014). *Global Views on Morality*.
<http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/04/15/global-morality/>

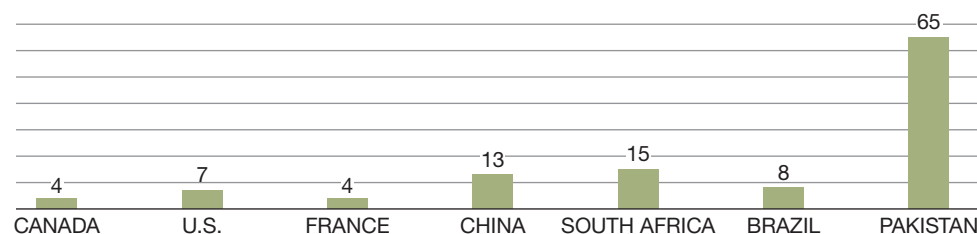


Figure 1.3 Percentage of Respondents Who Said Sex Between Unmarried Adults Is Morally Unacceptable

SOURCE: Based on Pew Research Center (2014). Global Views on Morality. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/04/15/global-morality/>

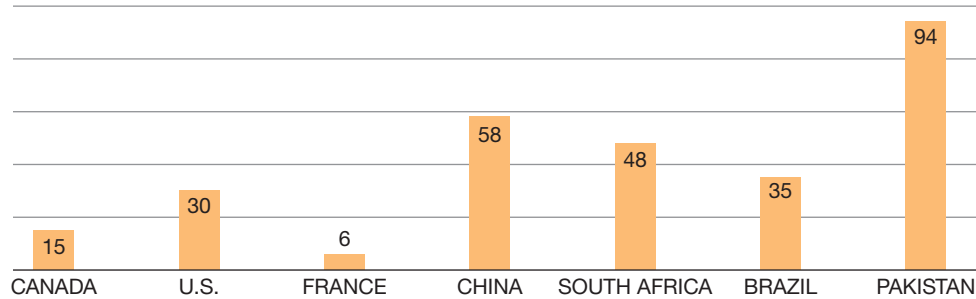
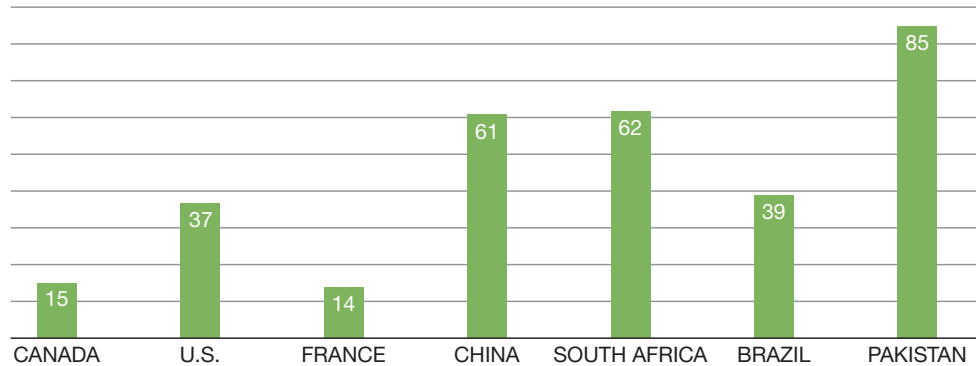


Figure 1.4 Percentage of Respondents Who Said Homosexuality Is Morally Unacceptable

SOURCE: Based on Pew Research Center (2014). Global Views on Morality. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/04/15/global-morality/>



Diversity: Sexual Scripts of Young People in Kenya). This study shows a sexual “script” for adolescent sexuality that diverges from the scripts with which most Canadians are familiar.

Comparing Canada and the United States

Although there are many similarities between Canadians and Americans, there are also many differences. For example, a much higher proportion of the American population than of the Canadian population comes from a Spanish or African background. Consequently, ethnic comparisons in the United States are often based on three categories: African Americans, Latin Americans, and European Americans. This typology is far too narrow to describe Canada. According to the 2016 Canadian census, the more than 7 million Canadians who are members of visible-minority groups include significant numbers of South Asians, Chinese, Black, Filipinos, Latin Americans, Arabs, Southeast Asians, West Asians, Koreans, and Japanese, as well as many who are members of more than one group. It’s important to be aware of social and demographic differences between Canada and the United States, because they account for some major differences in sexual attitudes and behaviours.

A WORLD OF DIVERSITY

SEXUAL SCRIPTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN KENYA

While most Canadian researchers study the attitudes and behaviours of Canadians, some are conducting important research in other countries. Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale at the University of Windsor has studied sexual practices in a number of countries around the world. Most recently, she conducted several studies in African countries. Her groundbreaking research on the sexual scripts of adolescents in Kenya (Maticka-Tyndale, Lewis, & Street, 2005) illustrates the powerful role of culture in influencing sexual behaviour.

A key cultural belief in Kenya is that once puberty is reached, the male sex drive requires release and the female is ready for sex. There is also the belief that delaying the age of engaging in sex has negative consequences. If the male waits to a later age to experience sex, it is believed he may lose the capacity to impregnate his wife and become unable to produce children. Females are concerned that if intercourse is delayed to a later age, their vaginas will become blocked, leaving them unable to engage in sex.

Both boys and girls feel pressure from peer groups to engage in sex at a young age. Having intercourse is referred to as “playing sex.” Boys assume girls are easily available for sex. A girl may indicate an interest in a particular boy by acting in a sexually suggestive manner, such as by opening her legs when he looks at her. The actual initiation of a sexual relationship, however, begins with the male.

The boy asks someone who knows the girl he’s interested in to tell her he’s attracted to her. He gives the go-between a

material gift and/or money to give to the chosen girl, to indicate the sincerity of his interest. Along with the gift, the boy may send word that he loves her. Expressions of love don’t have the emotional meaning they do in Canada, however; they refer to having sex. Both boys and girls are uncomfortable with talking openly about sex, so much of their communication is nonverbal.

If the girl accepts the gift, she signals that she is open to a dating relationship with the boy. Dating and sex are linked—when a boy and girl begin dating, they also engage in playing sex (having intercourse). There is no intermediate stage, as there is in Canada, where adolescents gradually proceed from kissing and petting to intercourse.

In Kenya, the sexual encounter generally consists of a brief episode of intercourse. Sexual pleasure for the girl is not expected. Rather, sex is seen as something to finish quickly. The objective is to satisfy a basic need for the male. This is an exchange process whereby girls provide sex to obtain material goods.

The girl may delay accepting the boy’s advances if she feels the initial material gift is not large enough. Indeed, girls discuss strategies for obtaining more money and more expensive gifts. Many girls prefer to obtain gifts from adult men, because adults can provide more material goods than can younger boys.

Typically, a girl initially refuses to engage in sex. This strategy helps preserve her reputation as a “good” girl and encourages the boy to provide more gifts. If the girl continues to say no to sex, however, it’s common practice for the boy to force her to have sex, especially if he feels the amount of his gift is sufficient.

The birth rate in Canada is lower than that in the United States, especially for women in their 20s. The teenage pregnancy rate is also almost twice as high in the United States compared to Canada (McKay, 2012). Population growth in Canada depends more on immigration from other countries than it does in the United States.

The American population (which is about 10 times as large as Canada’s) is widely spread throughout the various regions of the United States, whereas two out of three Canadians live near the United States border. And because most new immigrants to Canada choose to live in these populated areas, they also have the highest rates of population growth. Canada’s population is especially concentrated in southern Ontario, Montreal, the Vancouver region, and the Calgary–Edmonton corridor (Statistics Canada, 2011). Almost two thirds of Canada’s more than 34 million people live in the two largest provinces, Ontario and Quebec.

An Ipsos (2017) survey on views about religion in different countries around the world found that 49% of Americans reported that their religion defines them as a person, but only 28% of Canadian respondents did the same. It was also found that 45% of Americans agreed that “religious people make better citizens” compared to 25% of Canadians. These American–Canadian differences related to religion are important, because they may help us understand differences between the two countries in relation to sexuality.

Since 1971, Canada has maintained an official policy of multiculturalism. According to this policy, Canadian society is openly accepting of differing cultural attitudes and traditions as espoused by diverse immigrant groups. The United States, on the other hand, has adhered to the “melting pot” theory, which encourages immigrants to adapt to American ways of thinking and acting. Although Canada is often praised, both domestically and internationally, for embracing multiculturalism, the reality is that there are differences of opinion about the extent to which Canadian society should, for example, encourage ethnocultural minorities to fit in with “mainstream society.” An Angus Reid Institute and CBC (2016) survey on Canadians’ attitudes toward multiculturalism found that although 67% of the respondents surveyed reported being satisfied with how well immigrants in their communities were integrating, 57% responded that minorities should be encouraged to change to be “more like most Canadians” compared to 34% who responded that Canada should be accepting of minority groups, including their customs and languages.

As shown in *A World of Diversity: Sexual Morality in Seven Countries*, when it comes to sexuality, Canadians are somewhat more liberal than Americans. More Canadians (80%) than Americans (64%), for example, are accepting of premarital sex (Bibby, 2006).

Politics and Sex in Canada and the United States

Christian fundamentalists, known as the “religious right,” have a greater presence in the United States than in Canada. They therefore have a much stronger voice in persuading American governments to take a conservative stance on the regulation of sexual values. Since the 1990s, for example, conservative politicians in the United States Congress have voted to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on education programs that teach abstinence from sex but do not teach contraceptive methods to adolescents. During his presidency, Barack Obama reduced but did not eliminate federal government spending on abstinence-only programs, though he provided relatively more funding for teen pregnancy programs that included contraception. The Republican administration of Donald Trump has moved to increase funding for abstinence-only sex education in the schools while simultaneously restricting or eliminating publicly funded contraceptive services.

In general, Canadian governments have taken a more balanced approach to supporting sexual-health education for youth. The provincial and territorial ministries of education tend to follow the broadly based approach to providing sexual-health information recommended in the Public Health Agency of Canada’s (2008) *Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education*. We’ll discuss this in Chapter 15.

In general, Canadian politicians have maintained a separation between religion and the state. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has helped maintain this separation, giving individual rights precedence over religious values. This has been shown in judicial decisions regarding same-sex marriage. Despite protests from various religious groups, Canadian courts have consistently decided that disallowing same-sex marriage is a violation of the individual rights of gays and lesbians. Former Canadian prime minister Paul Martin adopted a similar position. Although he was a practising Roman Catholic and received intense pressure from Catholic Church officials to oppose same-sex marriage, Martin stated that his own religious values should not override personal freedoms. While former American president Barack Obama initially defended the rights of gay and lesbian couples to form civil unions, he stopped short of supporting gay marriage, and espoused the traditional definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. However, in 2012, saying that his position on the issue had “evolved,” President Obama declared his support for the right of gays and

lesbians to legally marry. As a result of a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2015, same-sex marriage became legal in all 50 states. However, it is still common for conservative politicians to publicly state that they hold the traditional view that marriage should be only for heterosexuals.

In 2005, Canada became the fourth country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage. The main political opposition to this legislation came from the Conservative Party of Canada and the Progressive Conservative Alliance of Alberta. Federal Conservative leader Stephen Harper indicated that if his party were to form a government, he would hold another vote in the House of Commons to overturn the law. Here Harper was going against public opinion. A survey conducted by the Strategic Counsel after the passage of same-sex legislation found that 55% of Canadians wanted the next government to leave the legislation in place, and only 39% wanted the law repealed. Shortly after the Conservative Party formed a minority government in 2006, it did introduce a motion to overturn the same-sex law. The motion was defeated by the other parties, which constituted the majority of Parliament. Since becoming prime minister, Justin Trudeau has fully supported the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Canadians. In June 2017, the Trudeau liberal government passed Bill C-16, an amendment to Canada's *Human Rights Act*, making it illegal to discriminate based on gender identity and gender expression. The legislation also extends protection against hate propaganda within the *Human Rights Act* to include the categories of gender identity and gender expression. In the United States, transgender rights vary from state to state, and it remains a highly contentious issue in some parts of the country.

Sexuality and Values

LO 1.5 Define the value perspectives that people use to evaluate sexual behaviours.

Our society is pluralistic with respect to sexuality. Collectively, we embrace a wide range of sexual attitudes and values. Some readers may be liberal in their sexual views and behaviours. Others may be conservative or traditional. Some are staunchly “pro-choice” on abortion, and others adamantly “pro-life.” Some approve of sex for couples who are dating casually, others hold the line at emotional commitment, and still others believe people should wait until marriage. While Canadian society has evolved considerably with regard to the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, there is still a plurality of views about these aspects of sexuality.

Perhaps one of the defining characteristics of Canadian society is our acceptance of diversity on many levels, including diversity of opinions and values related to sexuality. This acceptance gives us the freedom to adhere to our own distinct values and traditions, while also recognizing that we all have an obligation to respect the rights of others whose beliefs, perspectives, and behaviours are different from our own. The Canadian constitutional framework, particularly the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, creates an environment in which diverse communities can coexist and flourish, and this acceptance of diversity can and should apply to values and behaviours related to sexuality. The extent to which these ideals actually reflect the current reality in Canada is very much an open question.

People's sexual attitudes, experiences, and behaviours are to a large extent shaped by their cultural traditions and beliefs. Because the world consists of diverse peoples and cultures, the study of human sexuality is really the study of human sexualities. In this text we'll highlight the many ways people experience their sexuality.