longer and longer for young people in industrialized societies. He commented on the "prolonged adolescence" that was becoming increasingly common in such societies and how this was leading to a prolonged period of identity formation, "during which the young adult through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society" (1968, p. 156). Considering the changes that have taken place since he made this observation in the 1960s, including much higher ages of marriage and parenthood and longer education, Erikson's observation applies to far more young people today than it did then (Coté, 2000; 2006). Indeed, the conception of emerging adulthood as a distinct period of life is based to a considerable extent on the fact that, over recent decades, the late teens and early 20s have become a period of "free role experimentation" for an increasing proportion of young people (Arnett, 2000a, 2004a). The achievement of an adult identity has become postponed, compared with earlier generations, as many emerging adults use the years of their late teens and early 20s for identity explorations in love, work, and ideology.

In recent years, the identity status model has come under increasing criticism from scholars who view it as a narrow and outdated model of identity formation (Coté, 2000; Schacter, 2005a; 2005b; Schwartz, 2005; van Hoof, 1999; van Hoof & Raaijmakers, 2003). According to these scholars, identity is not nearly as stable and unitary as the identity status model portrays it, nor does identity development proceed through a predictable set of stages that culminate in identity achievement some time in late adolescence or emerging adulthood. On the contrary, in this view, the most common form of identity today is the **postmodern identity**, which is composed of diverse elements that do not always form a unified, consistent self.

The postmodern identity changes across contexts, so that people may show a different identity to friends, family, coworkers, and others. It also changes continuously, not just in adolescence and emerging adulthood but throughout the life course, as people add new elements to their identities and discard others. As noted in Chapter 1, a similar theme has been sounded by globalization theorists, who have argued that young people around the world increasingly develop a complex identity that combines elements from their culture and the global media culture and that changes as these cultures change (Arnett, 2002a; Giddens, 2000; Hermans & Kempen, 1998). The identity status model continues to dominate research on identity development in adolescence and emerging adulthood, but the postmodern critique may lead to new methods that will expand our understanding of identity issues.

Gender and Identity

Some scholars have argued that gender differences exist in identity formation (Gilligan, 1982; Waterman, 1992). The difference appears to exist especially in relation to occupational exploration. That is, some evidence suggests that females are more willing than males to constrain their occupational exploration to maintain their relationships (Archer, 1989; Cooper & Grotevant, 1987; Marcia, 1993; Patterson et al., 1992). For example, females might be less willing than males to take advantage of an educational or occupational opportunity that would require them to move a great distance, because that would mean leaving their parents, their friends, and perhaps their romantic partner.

This gender difference was especially strong in earlier studies of identity formation. More recent studies have found that gender differences in identity formation have diminished (Kroger, 2003; Lacombe & Gay, 1998). Nevertheless, some gender differences remain in the extent of young people's occupational explorations (Archer, 1989; Josselson, 1988; Marcia, 1994; Patterson et al., 1992). Young women tend to have more
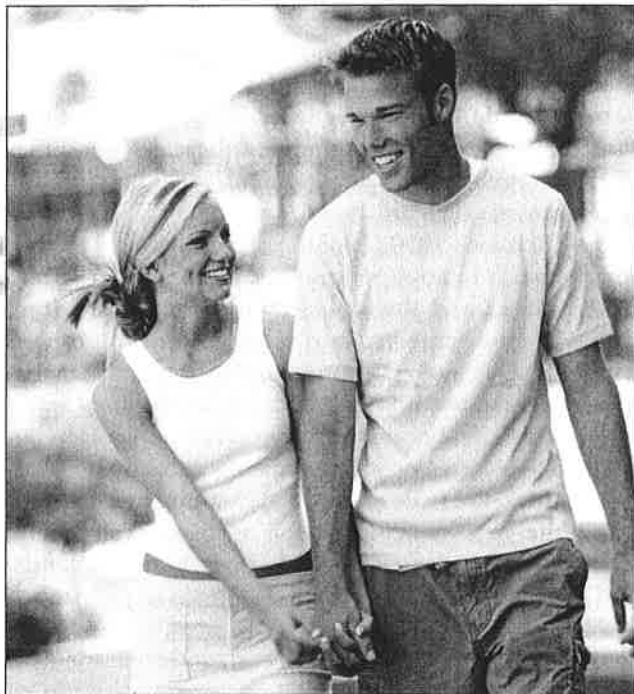
Intimacy issues may arise alongside identity issues for some young women.

difficulty than young men in successfully integrating their aspirations for love with their aspirations for work, in part because of gender double standards in most societies decreeing that in a romantic partnership, his occupational aspirations usually take priority over hers.

In Erikson's theory, this means that intimacy is often a higher priority than identity for females, whereas for males identity tends to come before intimacy (Gilligan, 1982; Lytle et al., 1997; Miller, 1991; Scheidel & Marcia, 1985; Surrey, 1991). According to Erikson, **intimacy versus isolation** is the central issue of young adulthood. Establishing intimacy means uniting your newly formed identity with another person in an intimate relationship. The alternative is isolation, characterized by an inability to form an enduring intimate relationship. Research on the relation between identity and intimacy has often focused on gender differences, with most studies indicating that intimacy issues arise earlier for females than for males, so that females often accomplish intimacy before identity (Scheidel & Marcia, 1985), or that developmental processes of identity formation and establishing intimacy are integrated for females (Lytle et al., 1997; Miller, 1991; Surrey, 1991), whereas males tend to achieve identity before intimacy. However, the findings are not entirely consistent, and one study found that high school girls tended to be higher in identity and lower in intimacy than high school boys (Lacombe & Gay, 1998), so more research is needed.

In addition to the research on gender differences in identity development, Erikson has been the subject of theoretical critiques for being biased toward male development (Miller, 1976; Gilligan, 1982; Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). Erikson believed that to some extent "anatomy is destiny," meaning that there are sex differences in psychological development, including identity development, that are based on biological sex differences (Erikson, 1950, 1968). Specifically, he believed that women's biology, represented by the "inner space" of the uterus and their capacity for bearing children, makes them oriented toward relationships with others, whereas men's biology, represented by the penis, makes them oriented toward independent, instrumental activity. Furthermore, because forming an identity means (in Erikson's theory) becoming separate and independent from others, the male model of development is presented as the healthy standard for normal development, from which females' simultaneous emphasis on identity and intimacy is a less desirable "deviation" (Archer, 1992; Sorell & Montgomery, 2001).

However, defenders of Erikson, and even many of his feminist critics, argue that in his descriptions of females as relational and males as active and instru-

mental he was simply reflecting the social conditions of the time he first developed his ideas, the mid-20th century (Archer, 2002; Kroger, 2002; Sorell & Montgomery, 2001, 2002). Also, scholars now agree that independence and connectedness are often balanced differently in males' and females' sense of identity—that is, more toward independence for males, more toward connectedness for females—not because of biological sex differences, as Erikson believed, but because of culturally based differences in gender role socialization, beginning at birth and continuing throughout life (Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1992; Sorell & Montgomery, 2001, 2002). Erikson's theory remains at the heart of theory and research on identity development, but it is being revised to reflect current scholarly views about the cultural and social (rather than biological) basis of gender differences in identity.

Culture and Identity

Erik Erikson's cultural background was diverse—he was the son of Danish parents, raised in Germany, and spent most of his adult life in the United States—and he was acutely aware of the relation between culture and identity formation. He spent time as an ethnographer among the Sioux and Yurok tribes of Native Americans, and he devoted a chapter in *Childhood and Society* (1950) to adolescent identity development in these tribes. Nevertheless, virtually all of the research inspired by Erikson's theory has taken place among White middle-class adolescents in the United States. What can we say about identity development among adolescents in other cultures?

One observation that can be made is that although Erikson sought to ground his theory in historical and

Identity explorations are often limited in traditional cultures, especially for girls. Here, girls in India help load a donkey.

cultural context (Erikson, 1950, 1968; Kroger, 2002), his discussion of identity development nevertheless assumes an independent self that is allowed to make free choices in love, work, and ideology. The focus of Erikson's identity theory is on how young people develop an understanding of themselves as unique individuals. However, as we have discussed, this conception of the self is distinctively Western and is historically recent (Baumeister, 1987; Markus & Kitiyama, 1991; Shweder et al., 1998; Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). In most cultures until recently, the self has been understood as interdependent, defined in relation to others, rather than as independent. Consequently, Erikson's assertions of the prominence of identity issues in adolescence may apply more to modern Western adolescents than to adolescents in other cultures. Certainly, more studies are needed on identity development among young people in non-Western cultures.

A related cultural observation is that the psychosocial moratorium, the period of exploration that Erikson viewed as a standard part of identity formation, is considerably more possible in some cultures than in others (Arnett, 2006a; Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). In today's industrialized societies, there are few pressures on young people to become economic contributors in childhood or adolescence. Young people in these societies are generally allowed a long psychological moratorium in adolescence and emerging adulthood to try out various possible life choices in love, work, and ideology. However, the experience of adolescence is often much different in traditional cultures. Explorations in love are clearly limited or even nonexistent in cultures where dating is not allowed and marriages are either arranged by parents or strongly influenced by them. Explorations in work are limited in cultures where the economy is simple and offers only a limited range of choices.

Limitations on exploration in both love and work are narrower for girls in traditional cultures than for boys. With regard to love, as noted in Chapter 4, some degree of sexual experimentation is encouraged for adolescent boys in most cultures, but for girls there is more variability, with some traditional cultures allowing girls sexual experimentation and some punishing it severely (Whiting et al., 1986). With regard to work, in most traditional cultures today and for most of human history in every culture, adolescent girls have been designated by their cultures for the roles of wife and mother, and these were essentially the only choices open to them (Mensch et al., 1998).

In terms of ideology, too, a psychosocial moratorium has been the exception in human cultures rather than the standard. In most cultures, young people have been expected to grow up to believe what adults teach them to believe, without questioning it. It is only in recent history, and mainly in industrialized Western countries, that these expectations have changed, and that it has come to be seen as desirable for adolescents and emerging adults to think for themselves, decide on their own beliefs, and make their life choices independently (Bellah et al., 1985; Arnett, 1998a). For modern young people in the West, then, identity development is a longer and more complex process than in the past and compared with traditional cultures. As we will see later in this chapter, this is increasingly true for the rest of the world as well, as industrialization increases worldwide and as Western values of individualism influence traditional cultures through globalization (Schlegel, 2000; Suárez-Orozco, 2004).

Ethnic Identity

In discussing identity, we have noted that in Erikson's theory the three key areas of identity formation are love, work, and ideology. For a large and growing proportion of adolescents in industrialized societies, one aspect of ideology is beliefs about what it means to be a member of an ethnic minority within a society dominated by the majority culture. Scholarly attention to this topic has increased in recent years as immigration from developing countries to industrialized societies has grown and as scholars have begun to devote greater attention to cultural issues in development (Phinney, 1990, 2000, 2006).

Like other identity issues, issues of ethnic identity come to the forefront in adolescence because of the cognitive capacities that adolescents develop (Portes, Dunham, & Castillo, 2000; Wong, 1997). One aspect of the growing capacity for self-reflection, for adolescents who are members of ethnic minorities, is likely to be a sharpened awareness of what it means for them to be a member of their minority group. Group terms such as *African American, Chinese Canadian,* and *Turkish Dutch* take on a new meaning, as adolescents can now think about what these terms mean and how the term for their ethnic group applies to themselves. Also, as a consequence of their growing capacity to think about what others think about them, adolescents become more acutely aware of the prejudices and stereotypes that others may hold about their ethnic group.

Because adolescents and emerging adults who are members of ethnic minorities have to confront such issues, their identity development is likely to be more complex than for those who are part of the majority culture (Phinney, 2000; 2006; Phinney & Alipuria, 1987). Consider, for example, identity development in the area of love. Love—along with dating and sex—is an area where

cultural conflicts are especially likely to come up for adolescents who are members of ethnic minorities. Part of identity development in the American majority culture means trying out different possibilities in love by dating different people, developing intimate relationships with them, and gaining sexual experience with them. However, this model is in sharp conflict with the values of certain American ethnic minority groups. In most Asian American groups, for example, recreational dating is disapproved and sexual experimentation before marriage is considered disgraceful—especially for females (Miller, 1995; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; Wong, 1997). Similarly, among Latinos, gaining sexual experience in adolescence is considered wrong for girls, and they are often highly restricted by their parents and their brothers to prevent any violation of this norm (Inclan & Herron, 1990). Young people in these ethnic groups face a challenge in reconciling the values of their ethnic group on such issues with the values of the majority culture, to which they are inevitably exposed through school, the media, and peers (Markstrom-Adams, 1992; Miller, 1995; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992).

How, then, does identity development take place for young people who are members of minority groups within Western societies? To what extent do they develop an identity that reflects the values of the majority culture, and to what extent do they retain the values of their minority group? One scholar who has done extensive work on these questions is Jean Phinney, (1990; 2000; 2006; Phinney & Alipuria, 1987; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992). On the basis of her research, Phinney has concluded that adolescents who are members of minority groups have four different ways of responding to their awareness of their ethnicity (see Table 6.3; Phinney, Devich-Navarro et al., 1994).

Assimilation is the option that involves leaving behind the ways of one's ethnic group and adopting the values and way of life of the majority culture. This is the path that is reflected in the idea that American society is a "melting pot" that blends people of diverse origins into one national culture. **Marginality** involves rejecting one's culture of origin but also feeling rejected by the majority culture. Some adolescents may feel little identification with the culture of their parents and grandparents, nor do they feel accepted and integrated into American society. **Separation** is the approach that involves associating only with members of one's own ethnic group and rejecting the ways of the majority culture. **Biculturalism** involves developing a dual identity, one based in the ethnic group of origin and one based in the majority culture. Being bicultural means moving back and forth between the ethnic cul-

Table 6.3 Four Possible Ethnic Identity Statuses

		Identification With Ethnic Group	
		High	Low
Identification With	**High**	Bicultural	Assimilated
Majority Culture	**Low**	Separated	Marginal

Examples:

Assimilation: "I don't really think of myself as Asian American, just as American."

Separation: "I am not part of two cultures. I am just Black."

Marginality: "When I'm with my Indian friends, I feel White, and when I'm with my White friends, I feel Indian. I don't really feel like I belong with either of them."

Biculturalism: "Being both Mexican and American means having the best of both worlds. You have different strengths you can draw from in different situations."

Source: Based on Phinney & Devich-Navarro (1997).

ture and the majority culture, and alternating identities as appropriate to the situation.

Which of these ethnic identity statuses is most common among minority adolescents? The bicultural status is the most common status among Mexican Americans and Asian Americans, as well as among some European minority groups such as Turkish adolescents in the Netherlands (Neto, 2002; Rotheram-Borus, 1990; Phinney, Dupont, et al., 1994; Verkuyten, 2002). However, separation is the most common ethnic identity status among African American adolescents, and marginality is pervasive among Native American adolescents (see the Cultural Focus box). Of course, each ethnic group is diverse and contains adolescents with a variety of different ethnic identity statuses.

Adolescents tend to be more aware of their ethnic identity when they are in a context where they are in the minority. For example, in one study, Latino adolescents attending a predominately non-Latino school reported significantly higher levels of ethnic identity than adolescents in a predominately Latino or a balanced Latino/non-Latino school (Umaña-Taylor, 2005). Recently, Phinney (2006) has proposed that emerging adulthood may be an especially important time for ethnic identity development, because emerging adults often enter new contexts (new schools, new jobs, perhaps new living partners) that may involve greater contact with people outside their ethnic group and thus sharpen their awareness of their ethnic identity.

Is a strong ethnic identity related to other aspects of development in adolescence and emerging adulthood? The answer to this question is complex. Ethnic identity

Adolescents with a bicultural ethnic identity are able to alternate their identities depending on the group they are with.

status has been found in some studies to be unrelated to characteristics such as self-esteem, grades in school, and social competence (Rotheram-Borus, 1990). However, some recent studies have found that adolescents who are bicultural or assimilated have higher self-esteem (e.g., Farver, Bhadha, & Narang, 2002). Furthermore, recent research using methods other than Phinney's ethnic identity status model has found that having a strong ethnic identity is related to a variety of other favorable aspects of development, such as overall well-being, academic achievement, and lower rates of risk behavior (McMahon & Watts, 2002; St. Louis & Liem, 2005; Yasui et al., 2005; Yip & Fuligni, 2002).

Some scholars have argued that, for Black adolescents in particular, cultivating pride in their ethnic identity is an important part of their identity formation, especially in a society where they are likely to experience discrimination for being Black (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990; Ward, 1990). However, other scholars have argued that promoting ethnic identity may lead adolescents to a separation identity that cuts them off from the majority culture in a way that inhibits their personal growth (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992). These scholars express concern that some minority adolescents may come to define themselves in opposition to the majority culture—developing a negative identity, in Erikson's (1968) terms—in a way that may interfere with developing a positive identity of their own.

The separation response is, at least in part, a result of the discrimination and prejudice that minorities often face in American society, and that young people become more fully aware of as they reach adolescence. Their awareness of discrimination may also increase with the length of time their family has

been in the United States. An interesting finding in this research is that foreign-born adolescents tend to believe in the American ideal of equal opportunity more than minority adolescents whose families have been in the United States for a generation or more (Phinney, DuPont et al., 1994; Suarez-Orosco & Suarez-Orozco, 1996). This suggests that recent immigrants may expect that they or their children will become assimilated into the great American melting pot, but after a generation or two many of them come up against the realities of ethnic prejudice in American society, leading to more of a separation identity. Black adolescents tend to be more in favor of separation than adolescents from other ethnic groups (Phinney, Devich-Navarro et al., 1994), perhaps because most of them are from families who have been in the United States for many generations and who have experienced a long history of slavery, racism, and discrimination (Hemmings, 1998).

Identity and Globalization

Globalization is having a substantial impact on identity issues, especially for adolescents and emerging adults. There are two aspects of identity that stand out as issues related to globalization (Arnett, 2002a). First, as noted in Chapter 1, because of globalization more young people around the world now develop a bicultural identity with one part of their identity rooted in their local culture while another part stems from an awareness of their relation to the global culture. For example, India has a growing, vigorous high-tech economic sector, led largely by young people. However, even the better-educated young people, who have become full-fledged members of the global economy, still mostly prefer to have an arranged marriage, in accordance with Indian tradition (Verma & Saraswathi, 2002). They also generally expect to care for their parents in old age, again in accord with Indian tradition. Thus they have one identity for participating in the global economy and succeeding in the fast-paced world of high technology, and another identity, rooted in Indian tradition, that they maintain with respect to their families and their personal lives.

Although developing a bicultural identity means that a local identity is retained alongside a global identity, there is no doubt that many cultures are being modified by globalization, specifically by the introduction of global media, free market economics, democratic institutions, increased length of formal schooling, and delayed entry into marriage and parenthood. These changes often alter traditional cultural practices and beliefs, and