

**Lecture Notes:**

① From a micro perspective, Eric **Erikson**'s psycho-social stage theory builds on Freud but makes **social** motivations more central than **sexual**: Erikson was a student of Freud who eventually broke with his mentor over a number of issues, most especially his contention that sexual motivations were just one of many equally important sources of instinct or drive; his theory also extends Freud's notions of identity development over the entire **life course**, from birth to death [Erikson 1980]. His view of the life course addresses the developmental issues we each address as we progress through life stages:

Stage	Psychological Crisis	Significant Relations	Related Social Order	Psychosocial Modalities	Psychosexual Stages
1	trust vs. mistrust	maternal person	cosmic order	to get and give in return	oral-respiratory, sensory-kinesthetic (incorporative)
2	autonomy vs. shame, doubt	paternal persons	"law and order"	to hold (on) and to let (go)	anal-urethral, muscular (retentive-elemenative)
3	initiative vs. guilt	basic family	ideal prototypes	to make (going after) and to "make like" (playing)	infantile-genital, locomotor (intrusive, inclusive)
4	industry vs. inferiority	neighborhood/school	technological elements	to make things (completing) and to make things together	latency
5	identity & repudiation vs. identity diffusion	peer groups & outgroups; leadership models	ideological perspectives	to be oneself (or, not to be) and to share with oneself	puberty
6	intimacy & solidarity vs. isolation	partners in friendship, sex, competition, & cooperation	patterns of cooperation and competition	to lose and find oneself in another	genitality
7	generativity vs. self-absorption	divided labor & shared household	currents of education and tradition	to make be and to care of	
8	integrity vs. despair	"mankind" and "my kind"	wisdom	to be, through having been and to face not being	

- transition from one stage to the next is often marked by a social ceremony, known as a **rite of passage** (i.e., graduation, wedding, retirement dinner)
- each stage is marked by **age norms**, which are usually informal rules that specify age-appropriate roles and behaviors; when someone violates these norms, we often assert that they should "act their age"
- as we progress through **stages** of the **life course**, we come to exhibit **age effects**, or differences in biology, perspective, behavior, or social categorization due to chronological age or life course stage
- **age cohort**: all people born in a particular time frame (akin to "generations") and thus share many similar cultural and historical formative experiences
- these cohorts exist within an **age structure** in a particular society (the distribution of people across various age cohorts), and each of these is subject to **cohort effects** (differential experiences, characteristics, or perspectives because of temporal location); in contrast, a **period effect** is the influence of a particular historical epoch on all of those that lived through it (though it may affect each age cohort differently)
- age structures also serve to **allocate roles** by assigning them to individuals and governing individual entry and exit into and out of institutional participation based on age

- Aging through the life course has undergone major changes as societies have modernized
  - 1 age and status: in traditional societies, age (sometimes) conferred increased status, but that trend is reversed in modern societies; **retirement** is a relatively new social role (Prussia, 1872) that dictates the aged begin disengaging from the workings of society to make way for younger generations in roles of power and control
  - 2 age and economic stability: those 65 and older typically command only 40% of the average income of households headed by younger people
  - 3 demographic trends indicate that the average population will become increasingly older
    - a. birth rates are declining in developed nations below the replacement rate
    - b. life expectancy is greatly increasing in develop nations with better nutrition and health care
  - 4 popular and political discourse has set older generations against those younger with concerns that Medicare and Social Security cannot handle the increasing demands of an aging Baby Boom generation
  - 5 younger generations rank significantly behind those older in terms of class, status, and power, and yet younger people set the cultural tone in our society and youth is seen as value much more important than age and wisdom
  - 6 youth (aged 10 – 24) are less well integrated into major social structures and so vote less often and are less likely to be steadily employed; conversely, while they comprise only a bit over 20% of the population, they commit somewhere between 39% and 69% of most crimes
  - 7 aging in our society confers greater discrimination in the workplace (though mandatory retirement in most jobs was outlawed by 1986); men over 55 remain unemployed twice as long after layoffs than those under 45
  - 8 generally, as we become adults, we also come to be more tightly integrated into social structures, and the process is reversed as we progress into old age — beginning with the active parenting role, then work roles, although elders often remain integrated into religious, kinship, and community networks, until adverse health comes to limit interactions
- ③ theories explaining age stratification in society:
  - structural-functional theory: age stratification fulfills several societal functions: restricted status of youth frees them from the responsibility for their own support and gives them time to develop necessary skills to eventually run society; older people voluntarily disengage themselves from active social participation in order to allow younger people (with new skills and ideas) to take over in an orderly transition from one generation to the next
  - conflict theory: those in their prime years exclude those younger and older from controlling the resources and decision making structures in society through their systematic rejection and discrimination, until such a time as the next generation wrests power from them
  - modernization theory: the power of the aged is based in resources (such as land) that are no longer as valued in contemporary societies, societies are now more productive and so can afford to exclude potential members of the labor force (the young and the aged), and rapid technological advancement rewards the most recent information and skills (which are disproportionately learned in youth); therefore, rapid change and development disadvantages older people

### Key Ideas:

**Aging, life course, rite of passage, age cohort, age structure, age effects, age norms, cohort effects, retirement.**