

*Florence Crittenton Roundtable
San Francisco, CA, August, 2000*

European Approaches to Adolescent Sexual Health and Behavior

Norm Constantine
*School and Community Health Research Group
WestEd, Oakland, CA*

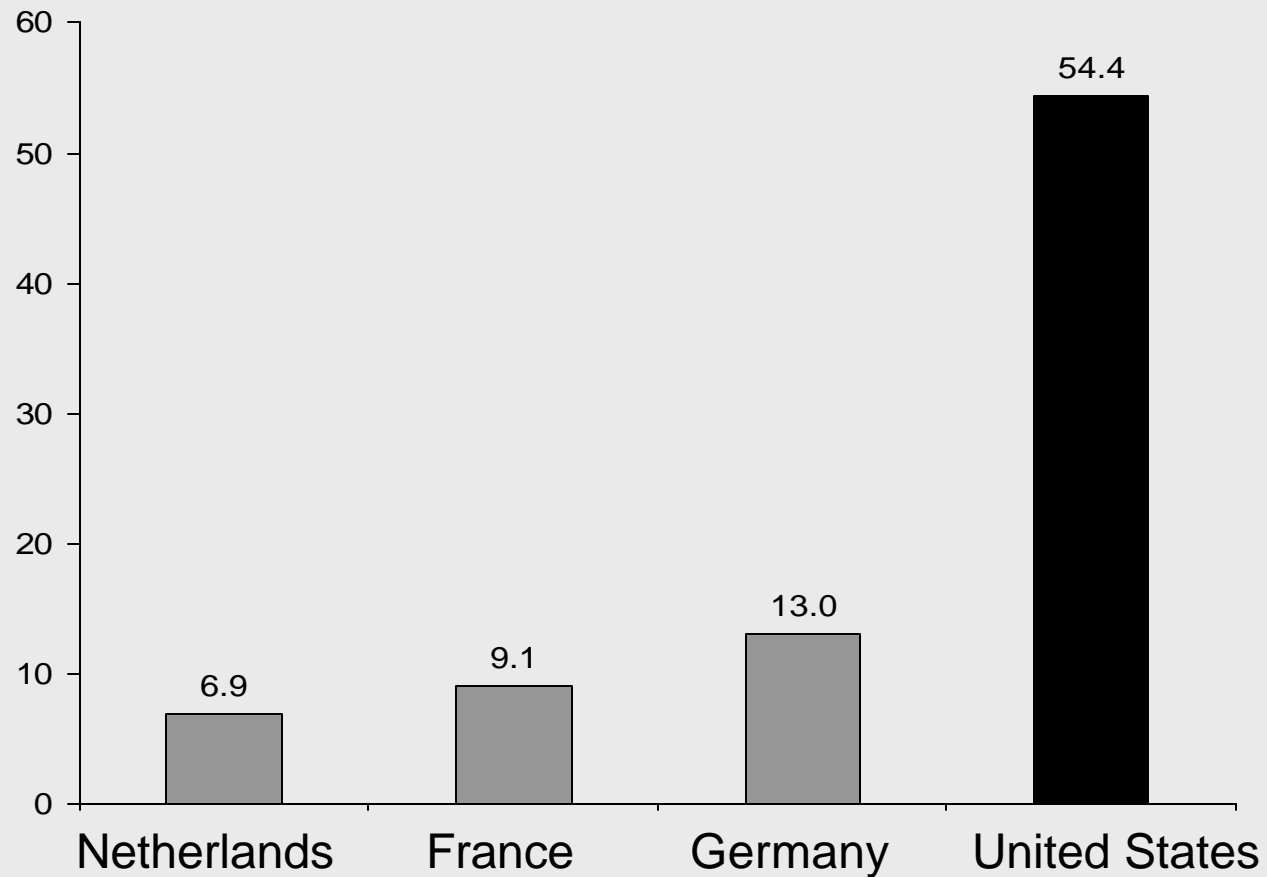
Barbara Huberman
Advocates for Youth, Washington, DC

Cross-Cultural Comparisons

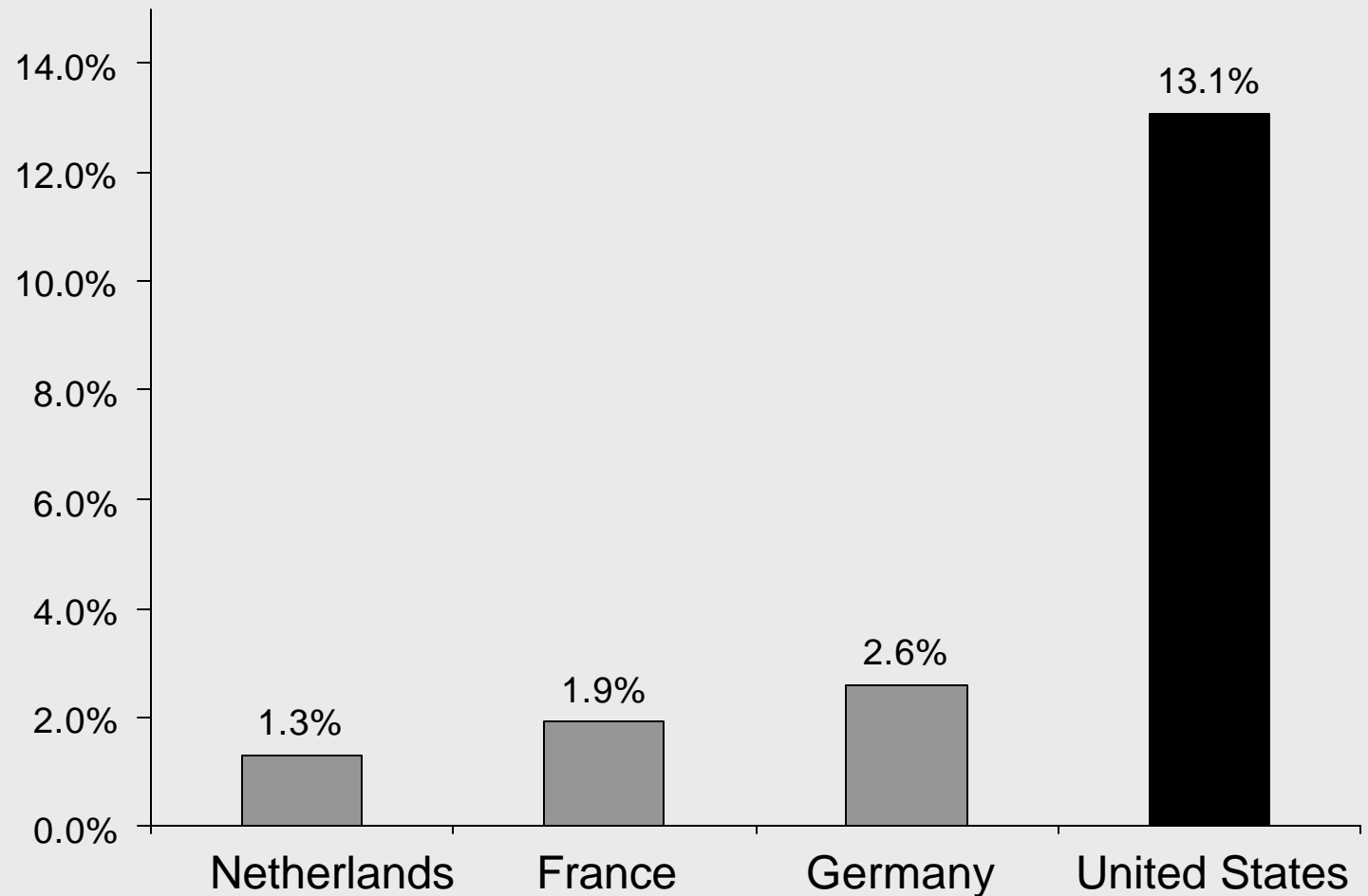
1. Outcomes

- Teenage birthrate
- Percent births to mothers under 20
- Teenage abortions
- Average age of first sexual intercourse
- AIDS cases
- Infant mortality
- Firearm related deaths
- Cigarette consumption
- Suicide rates

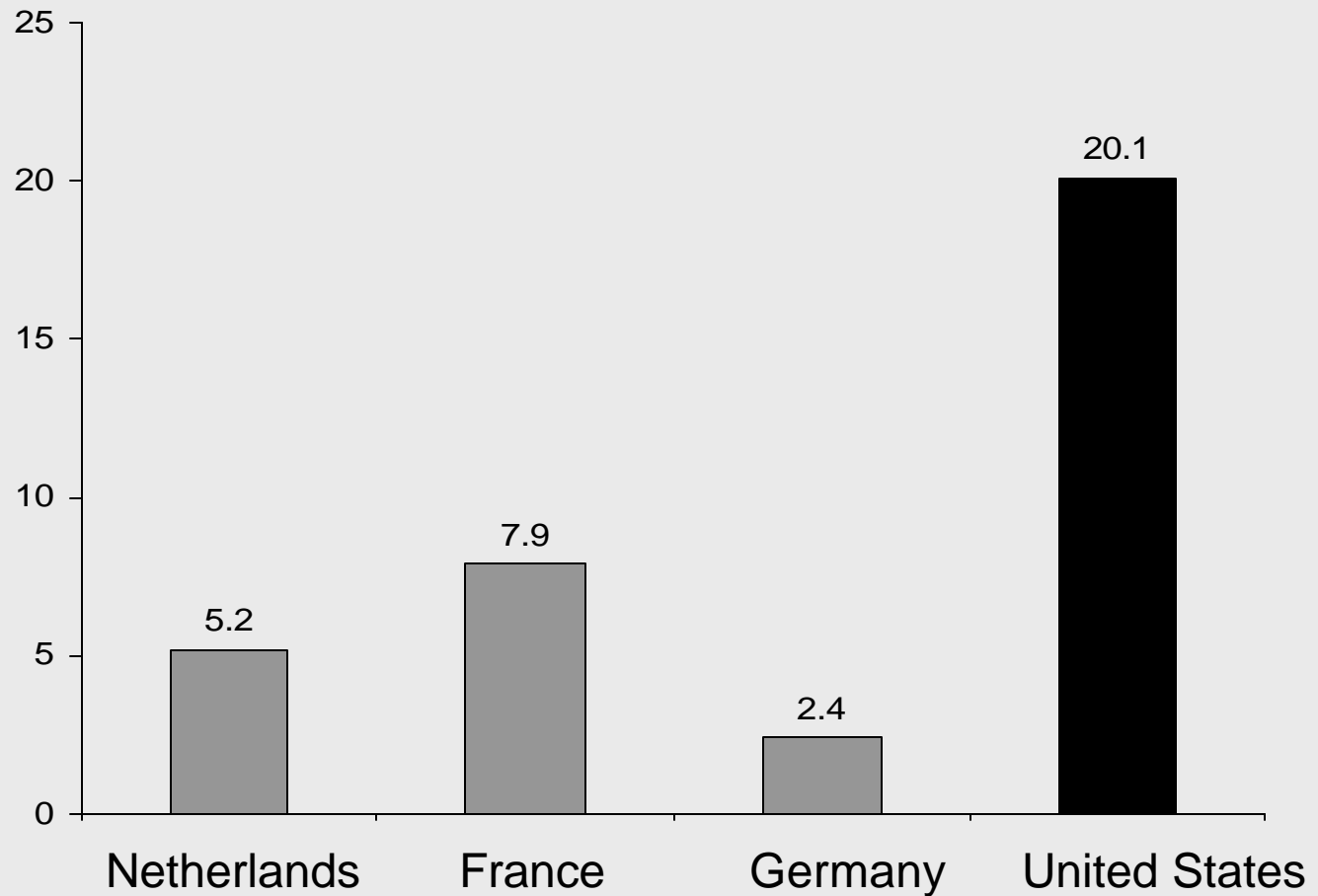
Live Birth Rate per 1,000 Women Ages 15-19



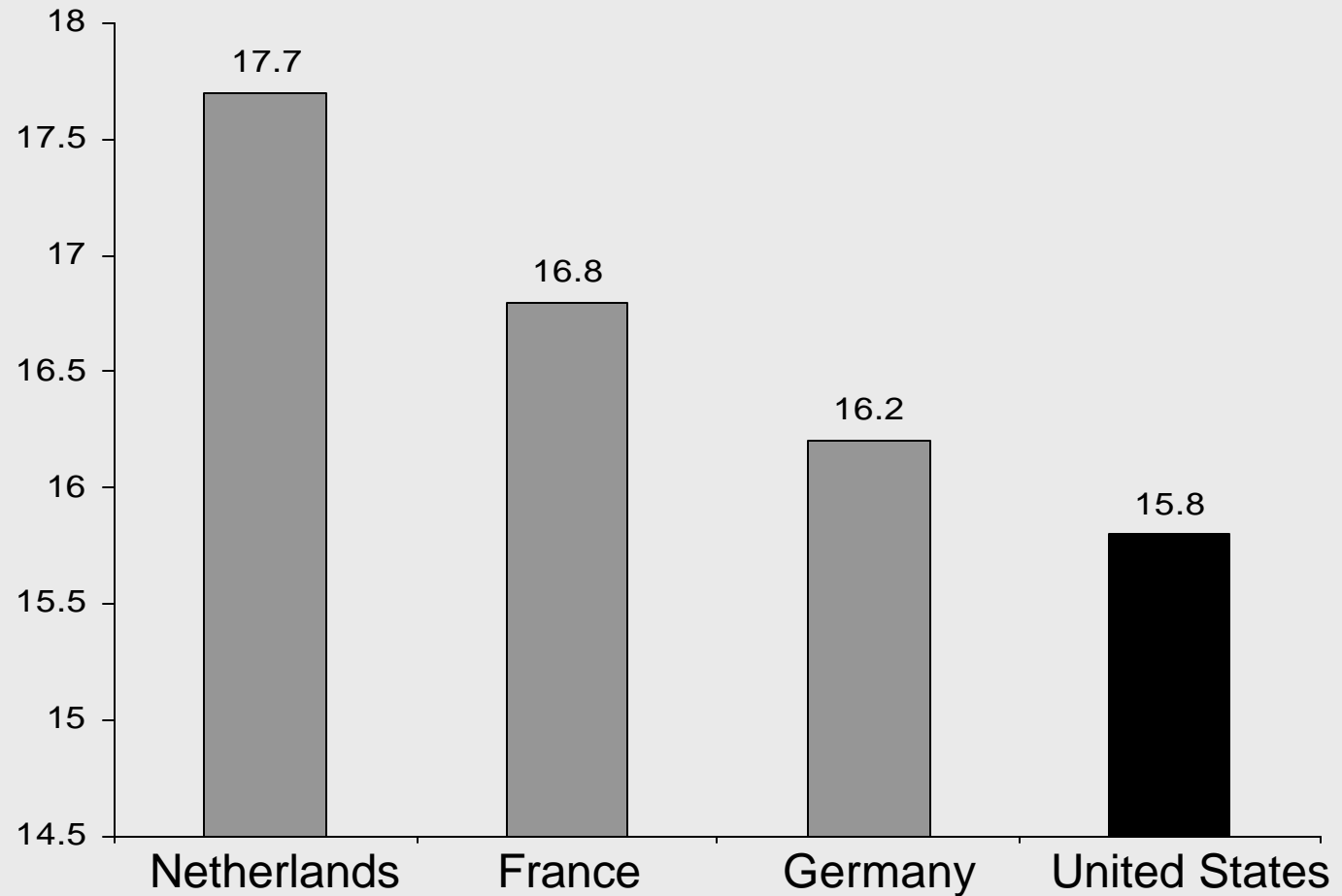
Percentage of Births to Mothers Under 20 years old



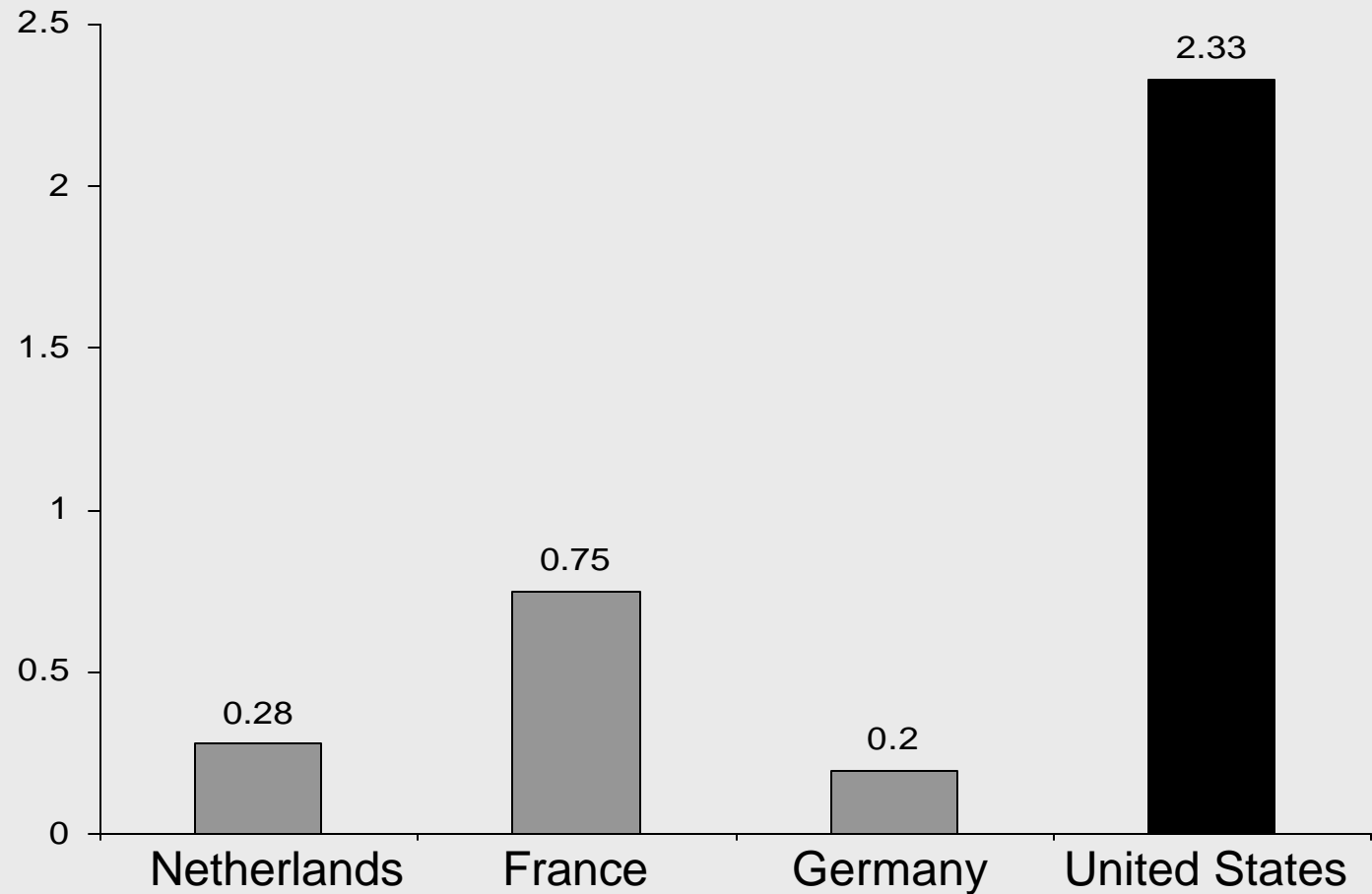
Abortions per 1,000 Women Ages 15-19



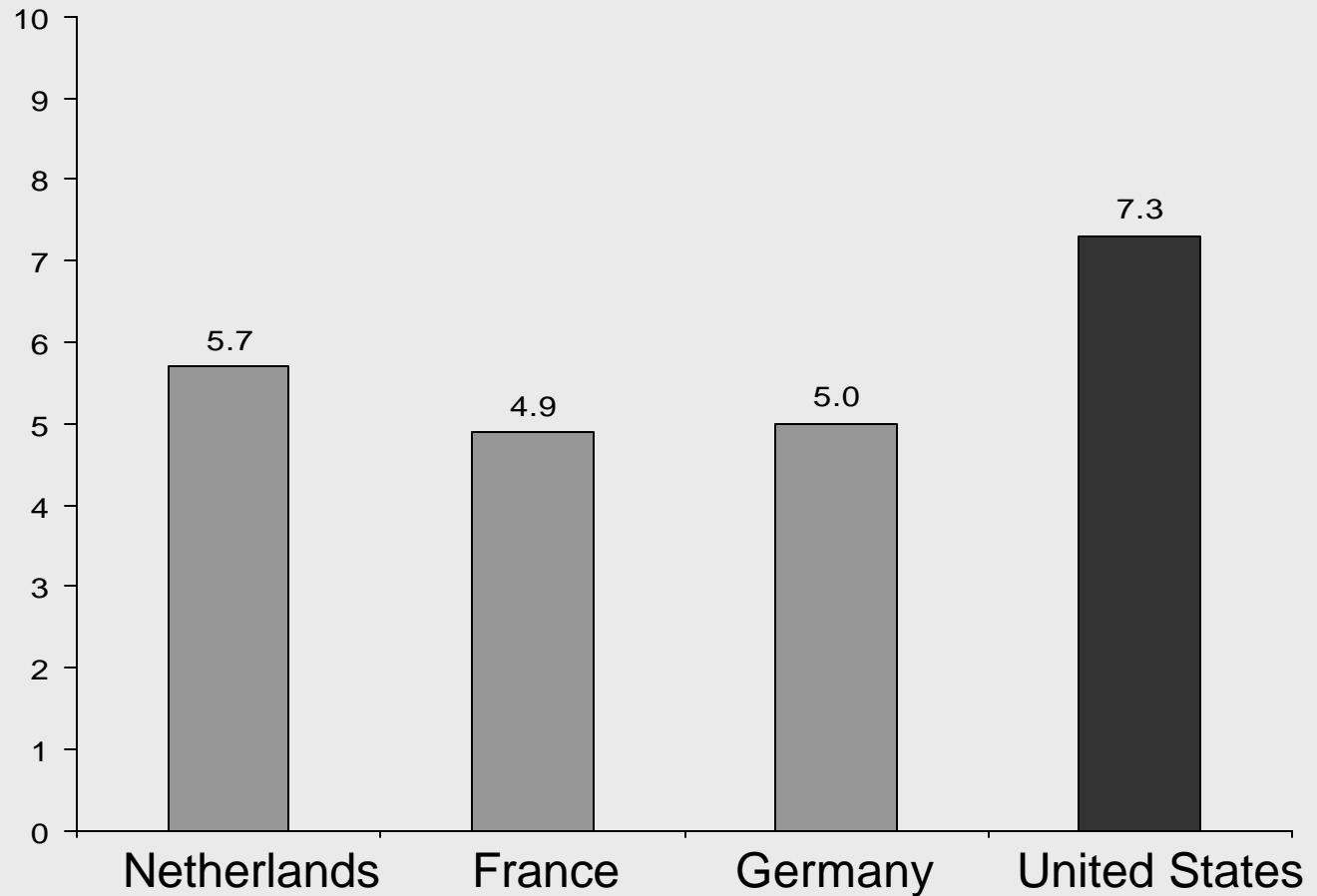
Average Age at First Intercourse



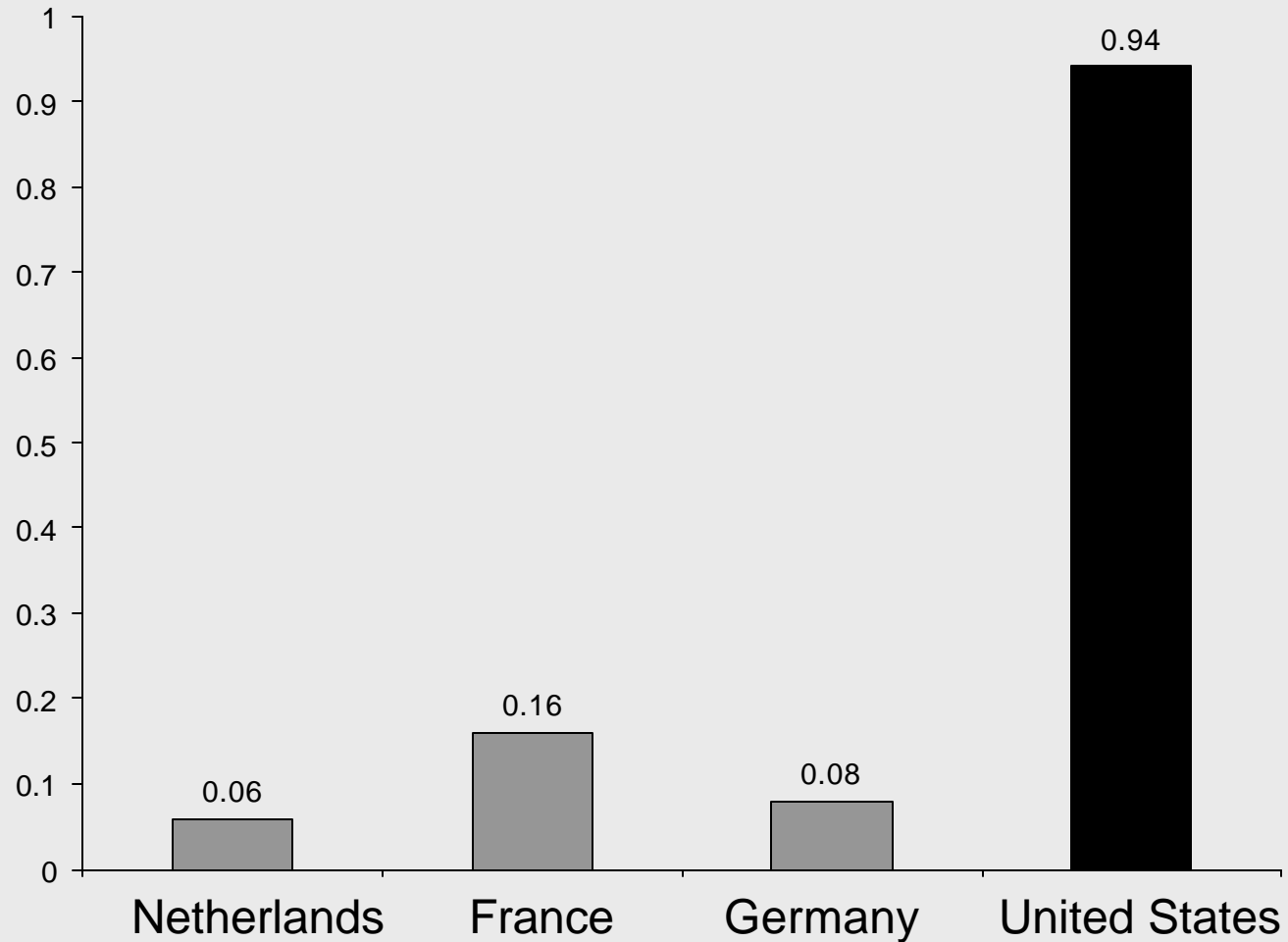
AIDS cases per 1,000



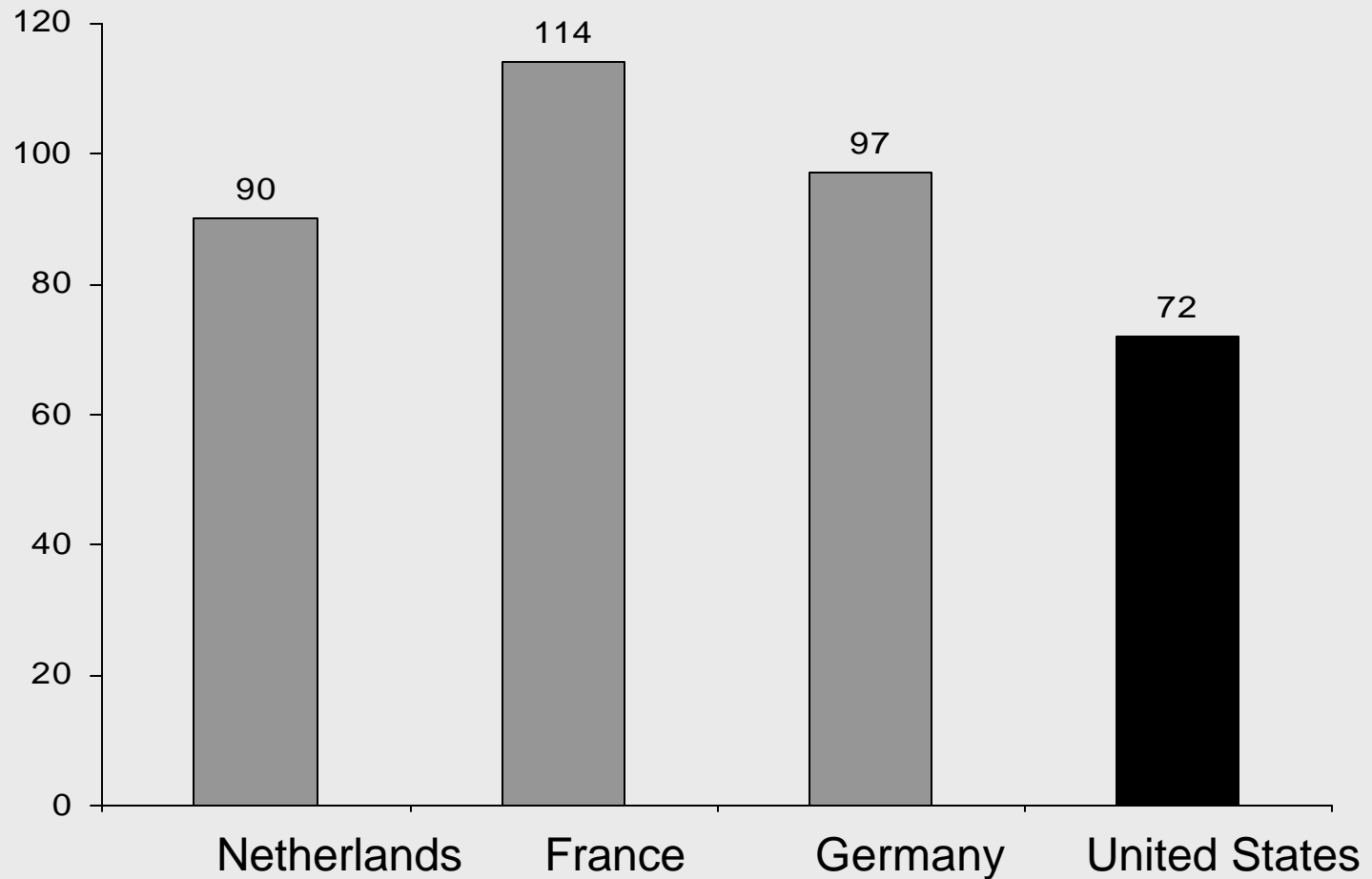
Infant Mortality Rates per 1,000 births



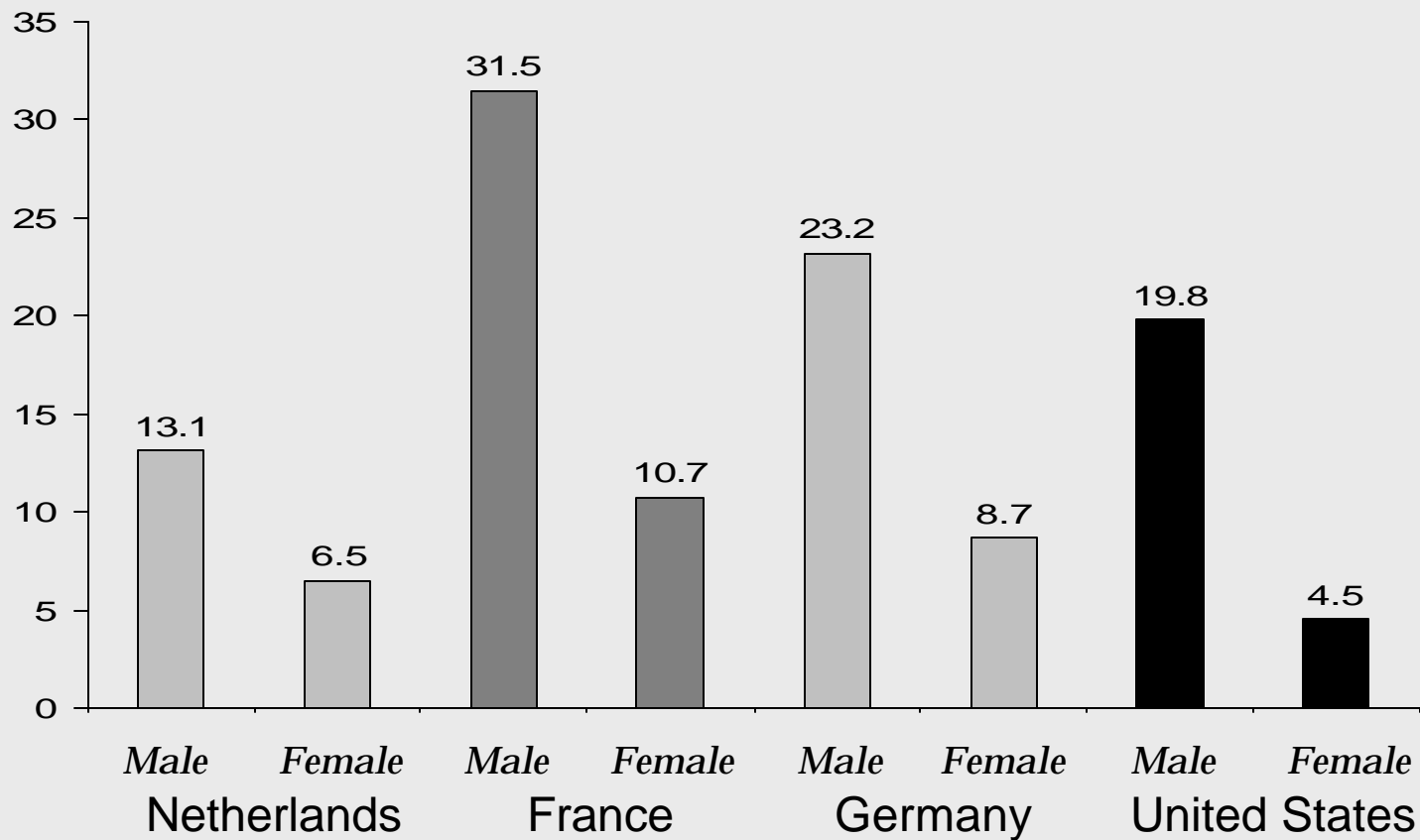
Annual Firearm-Related Deaths per 100,000 Juveniles Ages 9-14



Cigarette Consumption per Adult



Suicide Rates per 100,000



So Where's the Silver Bullet?

“Unfortunately, there is no single silver bullet solution. The mass media campaigns, the public health systems and policies, have their part in the Dutch, German, and French successes. Yet success doesn't rest on programs and services alone. It is the societal thinking - the norms - that make the Dutch, German, and French successes possible. It is the openness and acceptance that young people will have intimate sexual relationships without being married and that these relationships are natural and contribute to maturing into a sexually healthy adult. It is the refusal to brand the expression of sexuality as deviant behavior or to cast it solely in a negative light. It is the determination to present sexual expression as a balance - a normal part of growing up, *and* a responsibility to protect oneself and others. **It is the respect these societies have for adolescents, valuing them as much for who they are as for the adults they will become.**”

- James Wagoner, President, Advocates for Youth

Beyond the Silver Bullet

A framework is needed that will accommodate the adolescent's interactions with the many aspects and components of his or her environment.

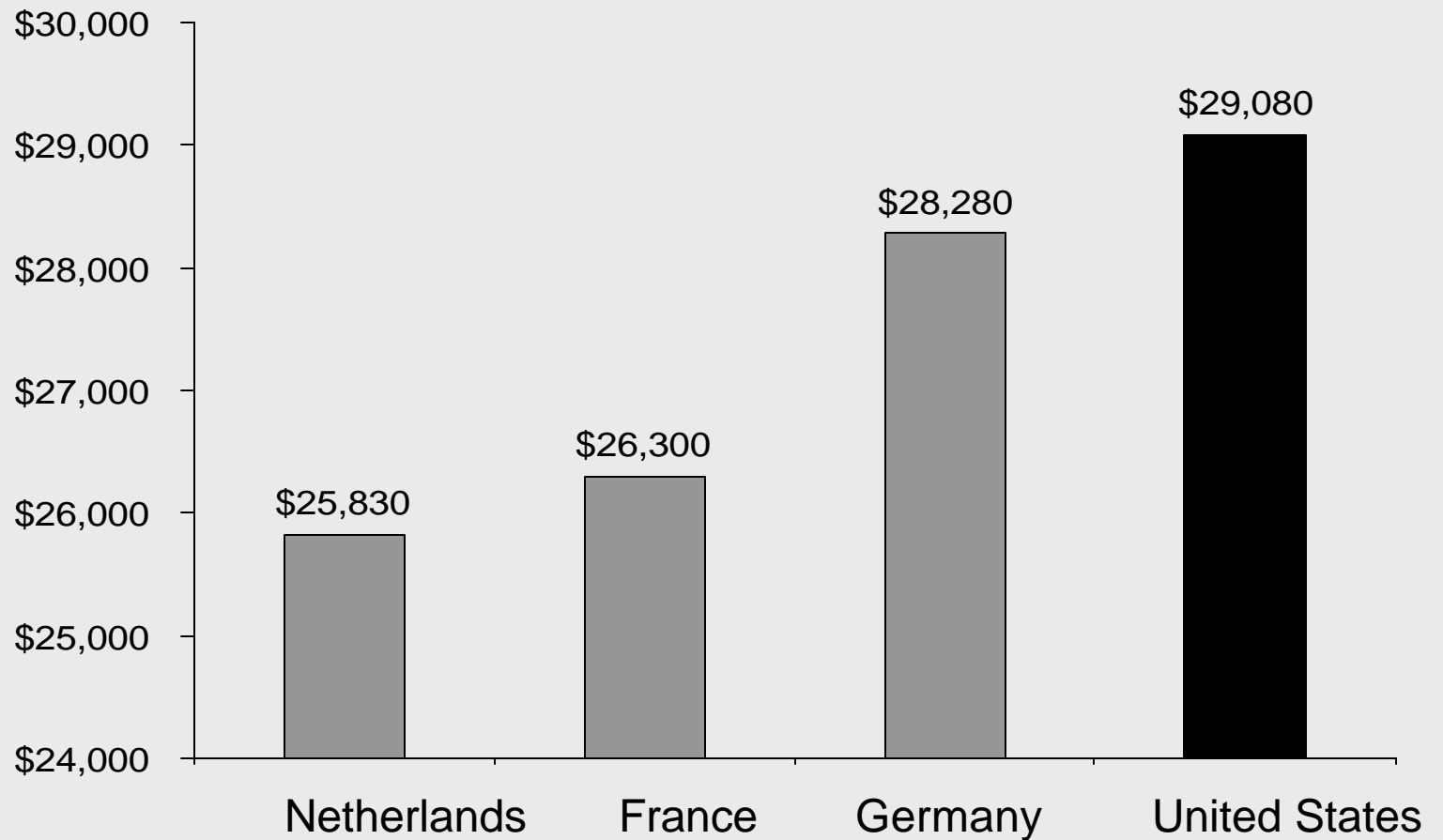
1. Developmental Supports and Resilience (Werner, Benard)
2. Developmental Ecology (Bronfenbrenner)
3. Developmental Contextualism (Lerner)

Cross-Cultural Comparisons

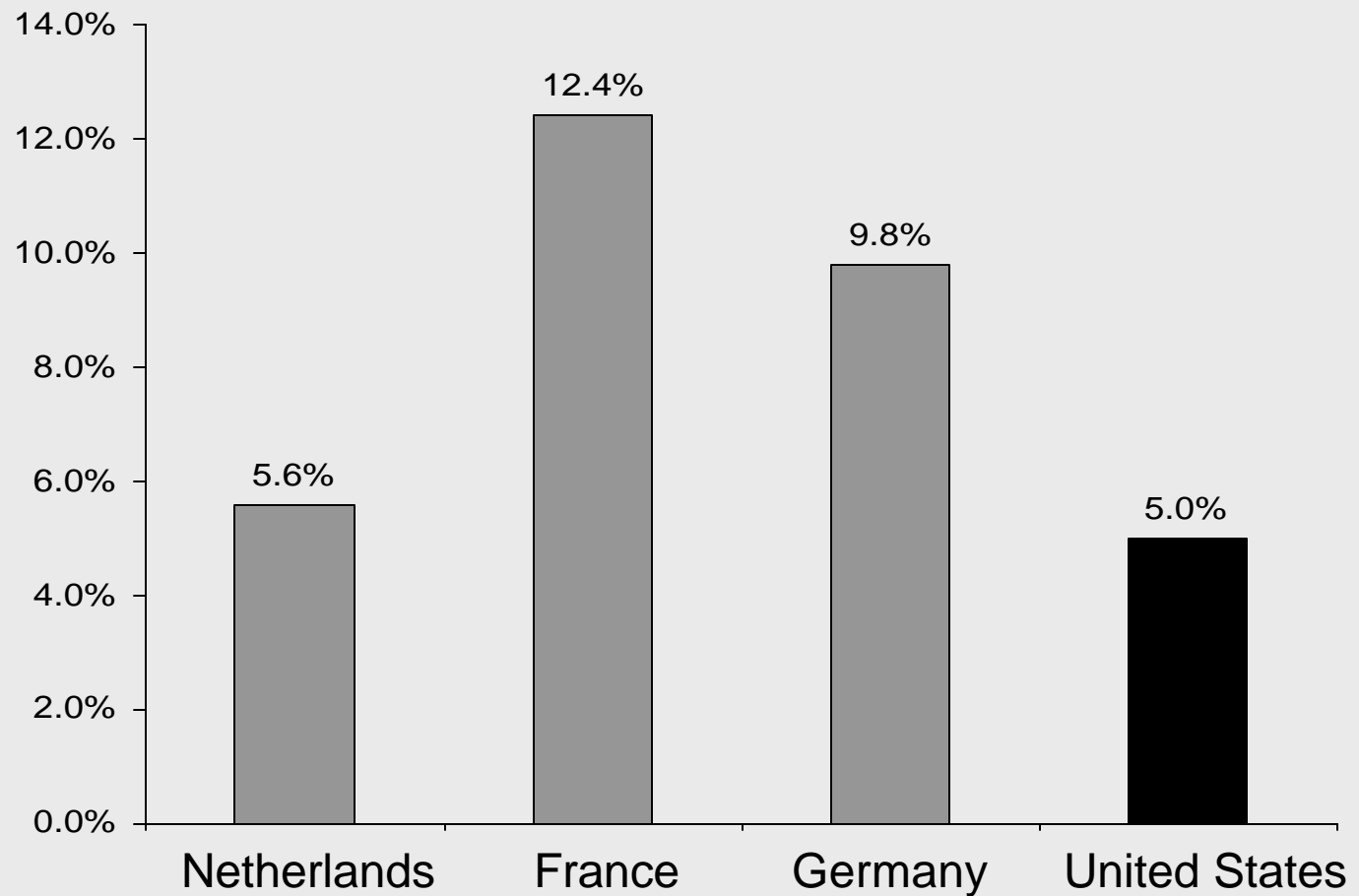
2. Macrosystems: national economy

- Per capita GNP
- Unemployment rates
- Percent of children in poverty
- Gap between rich and poor

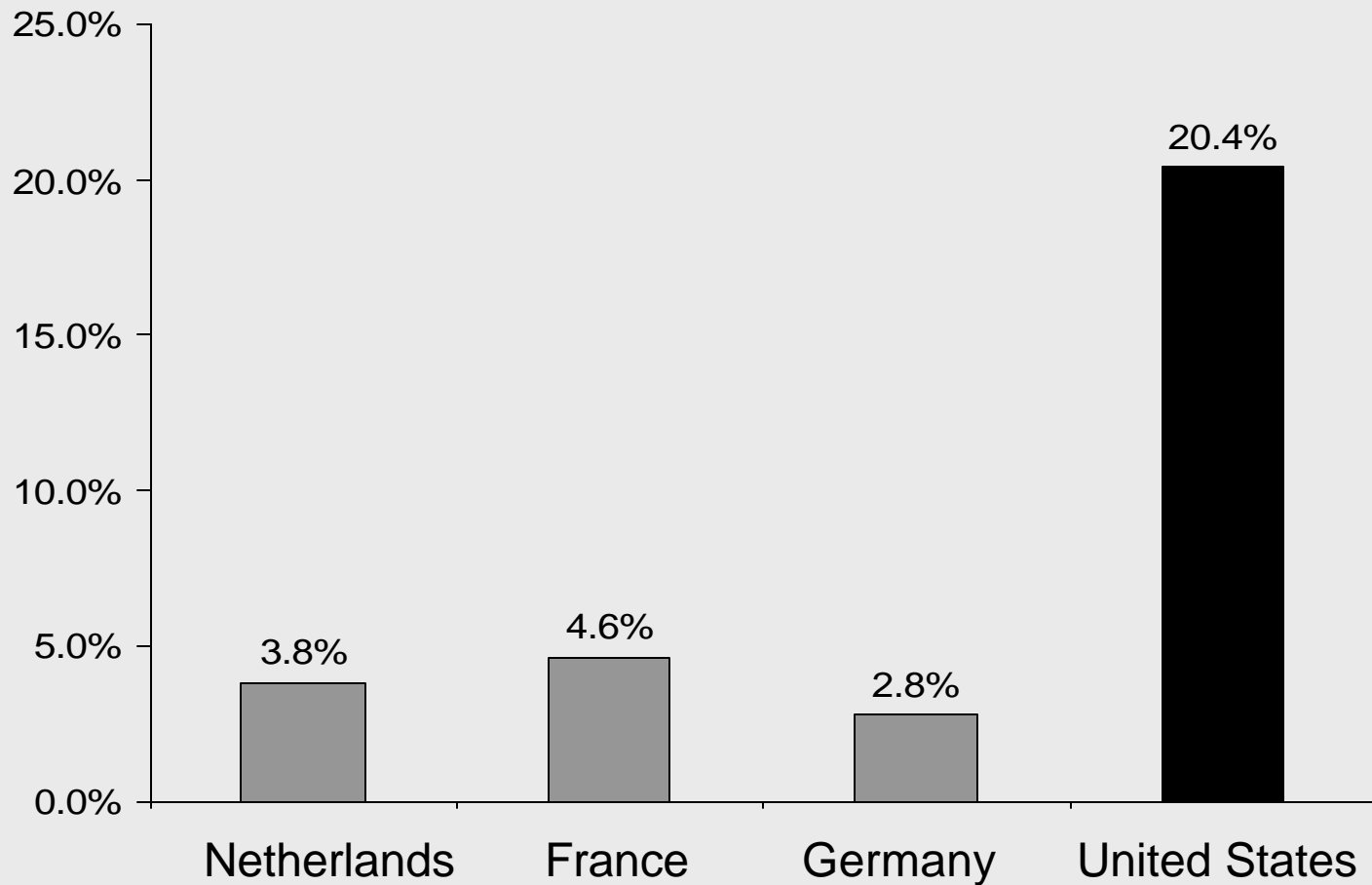
Per Capita GNP (1997) in U.S. \$



Unemployment

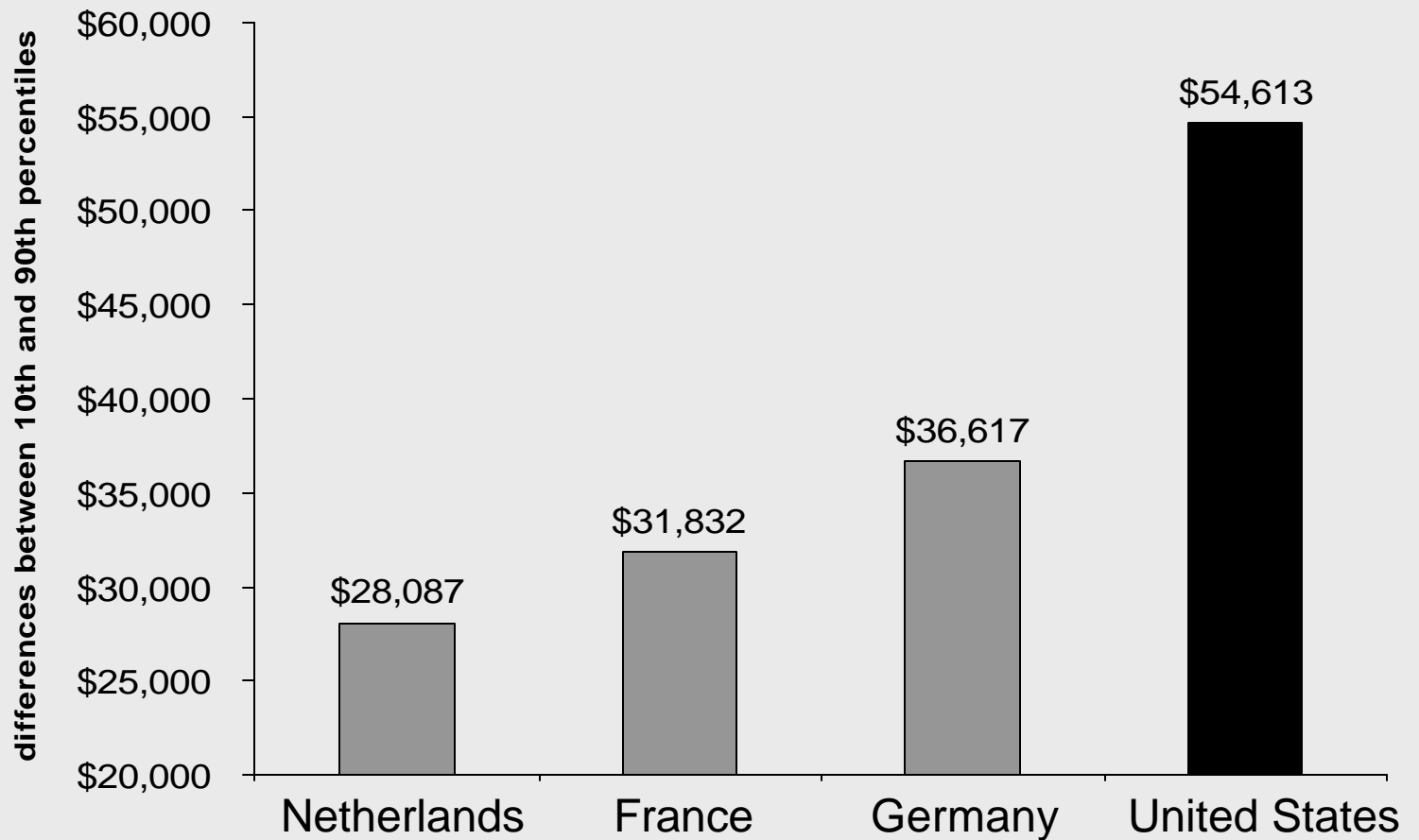


Children in Poverty



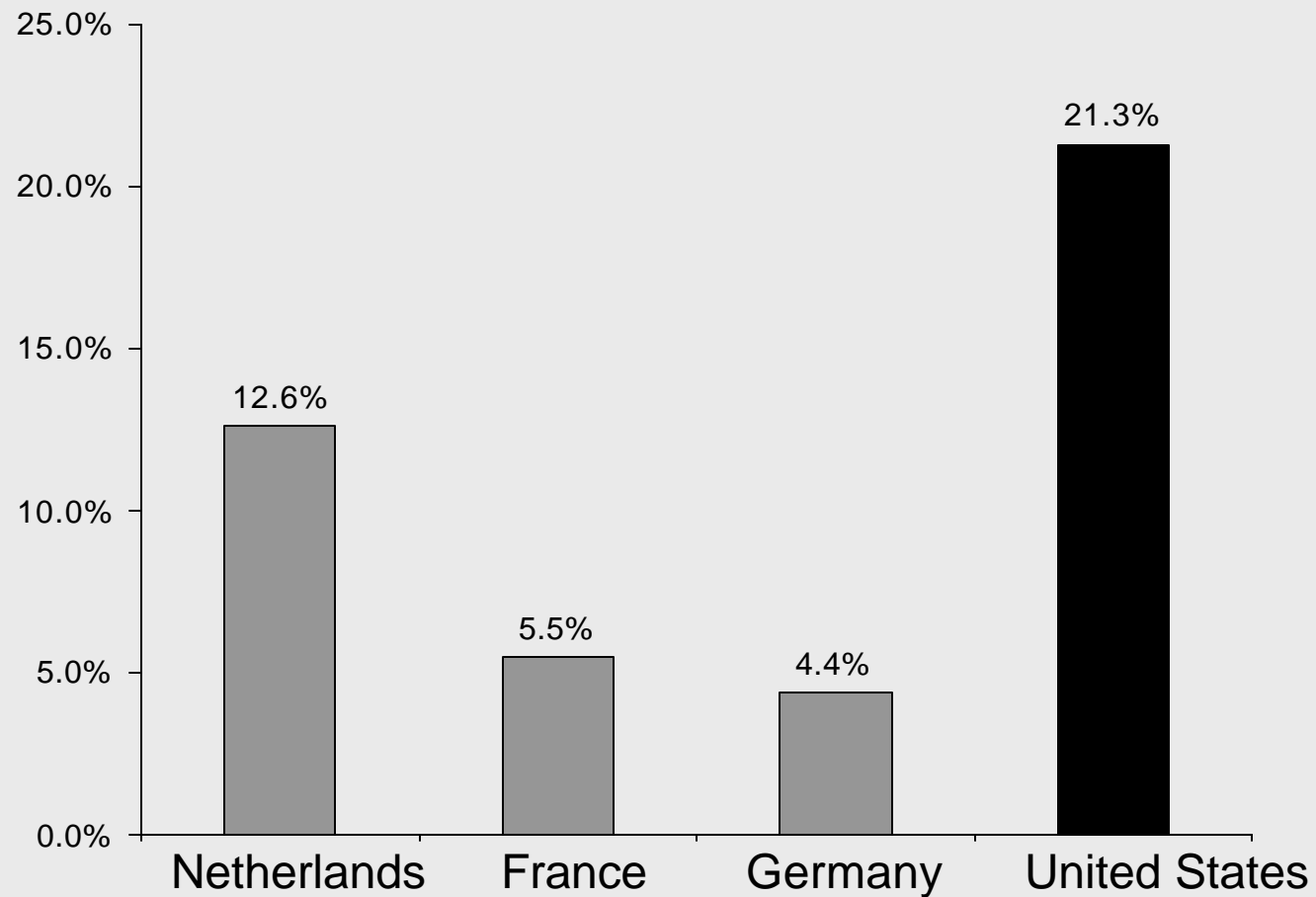
Source: Luxembourg income study (1992) reported in Bronfenbrenner, et al. (1996).
The State of Americans.

Rich and Poor Families are Furthest Apart in the U.S.



Source: Luxembourg income study (1992) reported in Bronfenbrenner, et al. (1996) *The State of Americans*.

9 year olds watching more than 5 hours of television daily

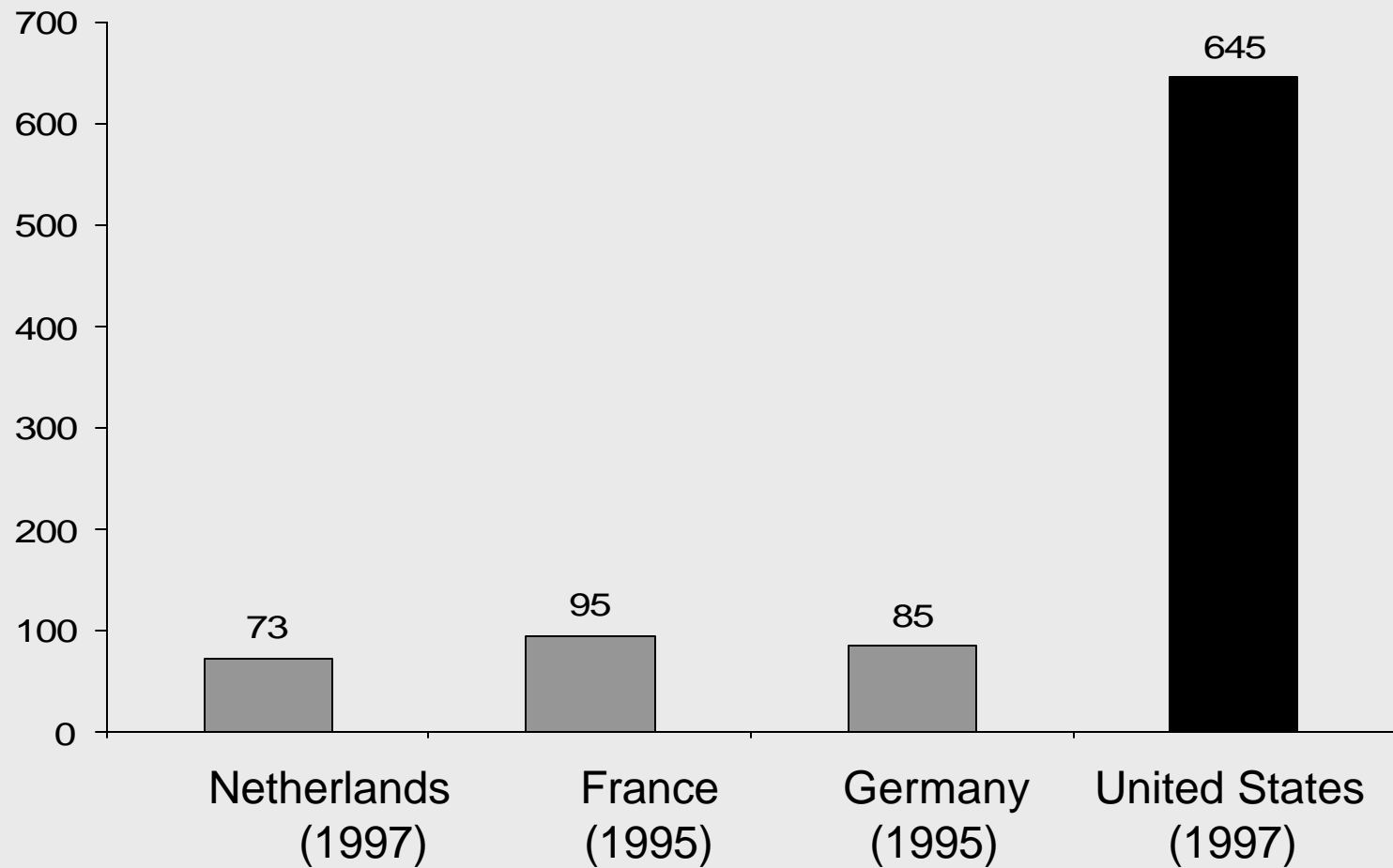


Cross-Cultural Comparisons

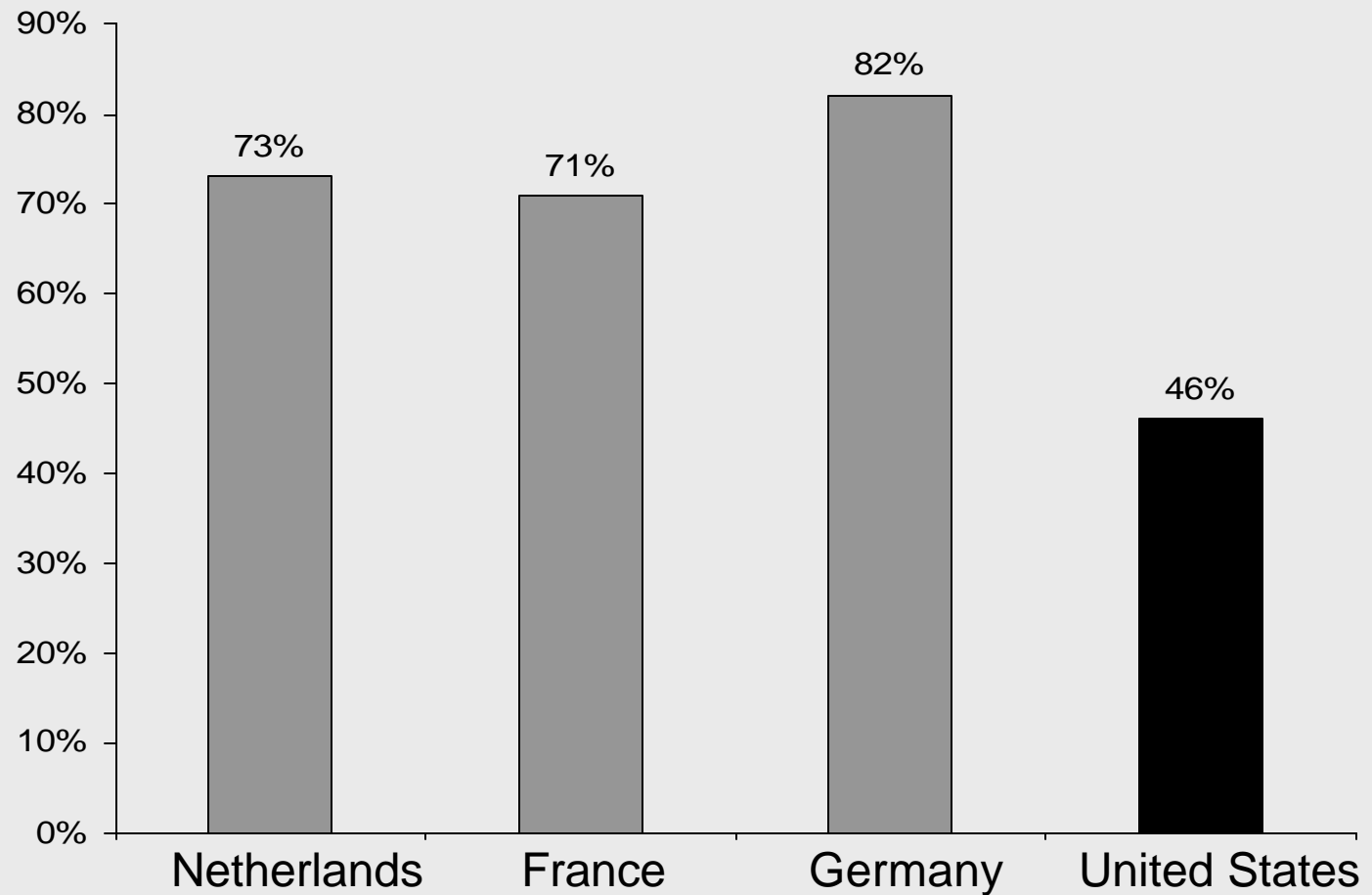
3. Macrosystems: cultural values

- Individual morality
- Cooperation vs. competition
- Interactive communication
- Incarceration rate
- Voter turnout

Incarceration Rate per 100,000



Voter Turnout (last election)



Cross-Cultural Comparisons

Parents' and society's influence on the moral development component of adolescent sexuality:

1. *A prohibition moral*

-or-

2. *A shaping ethic*

(Note that 1 precludes 2)

Cross-Cultural Comparisons

4. Exosystems

- Parents' jobs
- Friends' parents' jobs
- School board

Cross-Cultural Comparisons

5. Microsystems

- Family: Time spent by children watching TV
- Friends: Stability of friendships over time
- School: Size of school
- Church: Church role and function
- Neighborhood: Stability and cohesiveness

Cross-Cultural Comparisons

School Organization

1. Neighborhood middle schools of about 700 students, fully integrated into the community, and often it's churches and other institutions, with regular and close contacts with parents and families. Many students go home for lunch!
-or-
2. Increasingly larger middle schools of 1200 or more students, often with minimal integration into the community and little contact with parents.

Cross-Cultural Comparisons

6. Mesosystems

- Connection between school, family, community, and church
- Adolescents relationships with parents
- Adolescents relationships with teachers
- Adolescents relationships with other adults
- Adolescents relationships with peers

CONCLUSIONS

- Rights
- Respect
- Responsibilities
- *and Research!*

1. Respect

All adolescents deserve respect as valuable individuals

- Every adolescent is a valuable individual who deserves respect and support of family, community, and society
- Adults must view young people as assets, not as problems
- Each adolescent has a unique contribution to make
- Society demonstrates that it values young people by providing them with good quality education, economic security, and the promise of fulfilling futures.

- from Linda Berne and Barbara Huberman, 1999

2. Rights

Every young person has the right to the information and services necessary to make responsible decisions about his or her reproductive and sexual health.

- Right to complete, honest, and accurate reproductive and sexual health information
- Right to accessible, affordable, and quality health care services
- Right to privacy and confidentiality
- Right to caring and supportive relationships with parents and other adults

- from Linda Berne and Barbara Huberman, 1999

Rights: Cross-Cultural Comparisons

Adolescent sexual expression as:

(1) a normal part of growing up, **and** a responsibility to protect oneself and others;

-or-

(2) something to be suppressed, avoided, and/or hidden, **and** only those who do so shall be protected

Rights: Cross-Cultural Comparisons

Communication Style

1. Parents and other adults show respect by negotiating and communicating openly (*authoritative style*) with youth (“we will lose youth if we don’t negotiate with them” -*Janita Ravesloot*)
-or-
2. Many parents and other adults appear to be either too *busy* (*neglectful or permissive styles*) or too *bossy* (*authoritarian style*) to negotiate and communicate openly with youth

Rights: Open communication

“Sexuality and the expression of sexual feelings are normal, healthy components of adolescent growth and development. Sexual feelings should not provoke shame, and information about sexuality should not provoke fear. Adolescents have questions about what is normal, and they need to learn the skills that will help them develop and sustain loving, rewarding, committed, intimate relationships over the course of their lives. Open, honest dialog about sexuality and sexual development can help U.S. teens, like their European counterparts, better prepare to create committed relationships and to protect themselves and their partners from unintended pregnancies and STDs.”

- *Linda Berne and Barbara Huberman, 1999*

3. Responsibilities

Rights entail responsibilities

- Families, communities, and society have the responsibility to provide young people with the support they need to create healthy, fulfilling lives.
- Adolescents in turn, have the responsibility to act upon the information and services available to them
- The right to information and health services comes with the responsibility to protect oneself and one's partner against unintended pregnancy and STDs, including HIV

- from Linda Berne and Barbara Huberman, 1999

4. Research

Research must dictate public policy

- Public policies that impact the health and the well being of young people should rest securely on scientific research
- Adolescents deserve sexual health strategies based upon best practices as determined by evaluation and research
- Science - not politics or religion - should drive public health programs and policies

- from Linda Berne and Barbara Huberman, 1999

For more information

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RECOMMENDED READINGS

1. Adolescent Sexuality in Europe and America

Alan Guttmacher Institute (1994). Sex and America's teenagers. Washington, DC: author.

Alsaker, F.D. & Flammer, A. (1999). The adolescent experience: European and American adolescents in the 1990's. Mahwah, NJ: LEA Publishers.

Berne, L. & Huberman, B. (1999) European approaches to adolescent sexual behavior and responsibility. Washington, D.C.: Advocates for Youth. (*highly recommended!*)

Caron, S.L. (1998). Cross-cultural perspectives on humans sexuality. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Greenberg, B.S., Brown, J.D., & Buerkel-Rothfuss, N.L. (1993). Media, sex, and the adolescent. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Jones, E.F. (1986). Teenage pregnancy in industrialized countries. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (*out of print*)

Luker, K. (1996). Dubious conceptions: The politics of teenage pregnancy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Males, M. (1997). The scapegoat generation: America's war on adolescents. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press.

Moore, S. & Rosenthal, D. (1993). Sexuality in adolescence. London: Routledge.

National Commission on Adolescent Sexual Health. (1995). Facing Facts: Sexual Health for American Adolescents. New York: SIECUS. (www.siecus.org)

World Health Organization. (1997). Coming of age: From facts to action for adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Geneva, Switzerland: author.

2. Resilience Research, Developmental Ecology, and Developmental Contextualism

Benard, B. (1996). Resilience research: A foundation for youth development. New Designs for Youth Development 12(3), 4-10.

Benard, B. (1998). Prevention from the inside out: Tapping resilience in youth. Prevention Tactics, 2(3), 1-8.

Bronfenbrenner, U., McClelland, P., Wethington, P.M., & Ceci, S.J. (1996). The state of Americans. New York: Free Press.

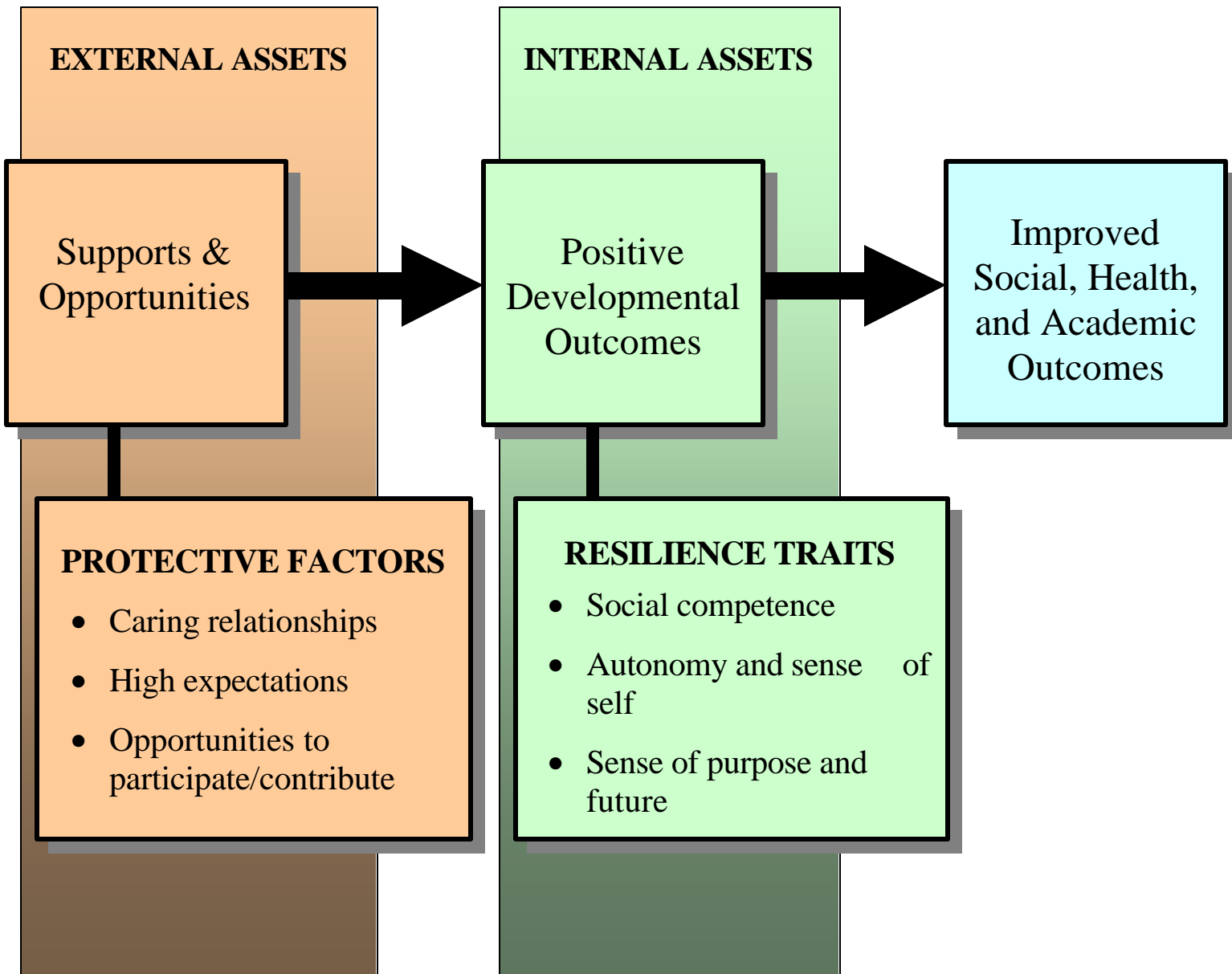
Constantine, N. A., Benard, B., and Diaz M.D. (1999, June). Measuring protective factors and resilience traits in youth: The Healthy Kids Resilience Assessment. Paper presented at the 1999 Society for Prevention Research Conference, New Orleans. (at www.wested.org/schrg)

Lerner, R.M. (Ed.) (1993). Early adolescence: Perspectives on research, policy, and intervention. Hillsdale, NJ: LEA Publishers.

Moen, P., Elder, G.H., Luscher, K. (Eds.) (1995). Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Muuss, R.E. (1996). Theories of adolescence. (6th Ed). New York: McGraw Hill. (*highly recommended!*, chapters on Bronfenbrenner and Lerner provide excellent overview of developmental ecology and developmental contextualism)

The Healthy Kids Resilience Assessment: A Youth Development Approach

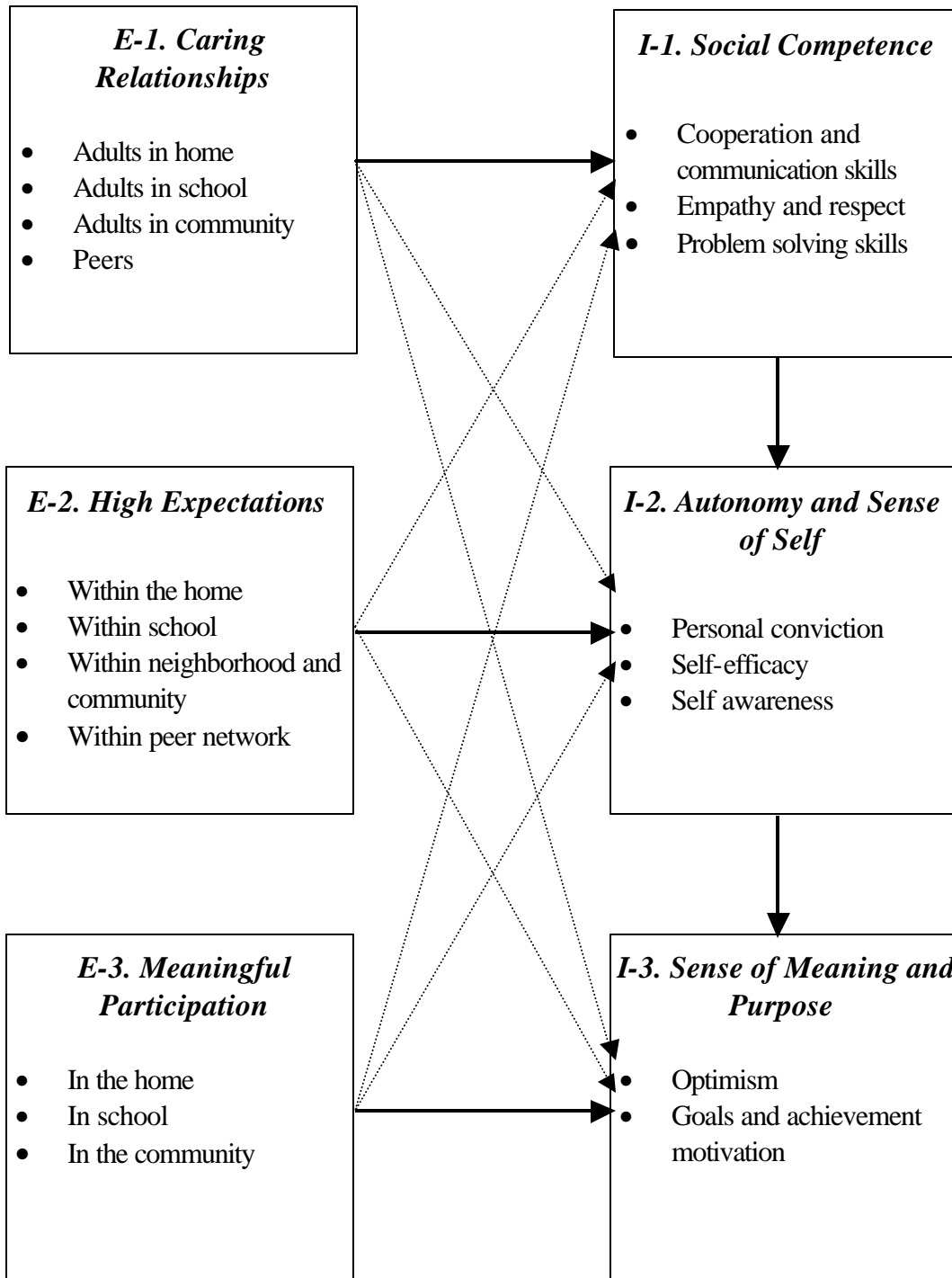


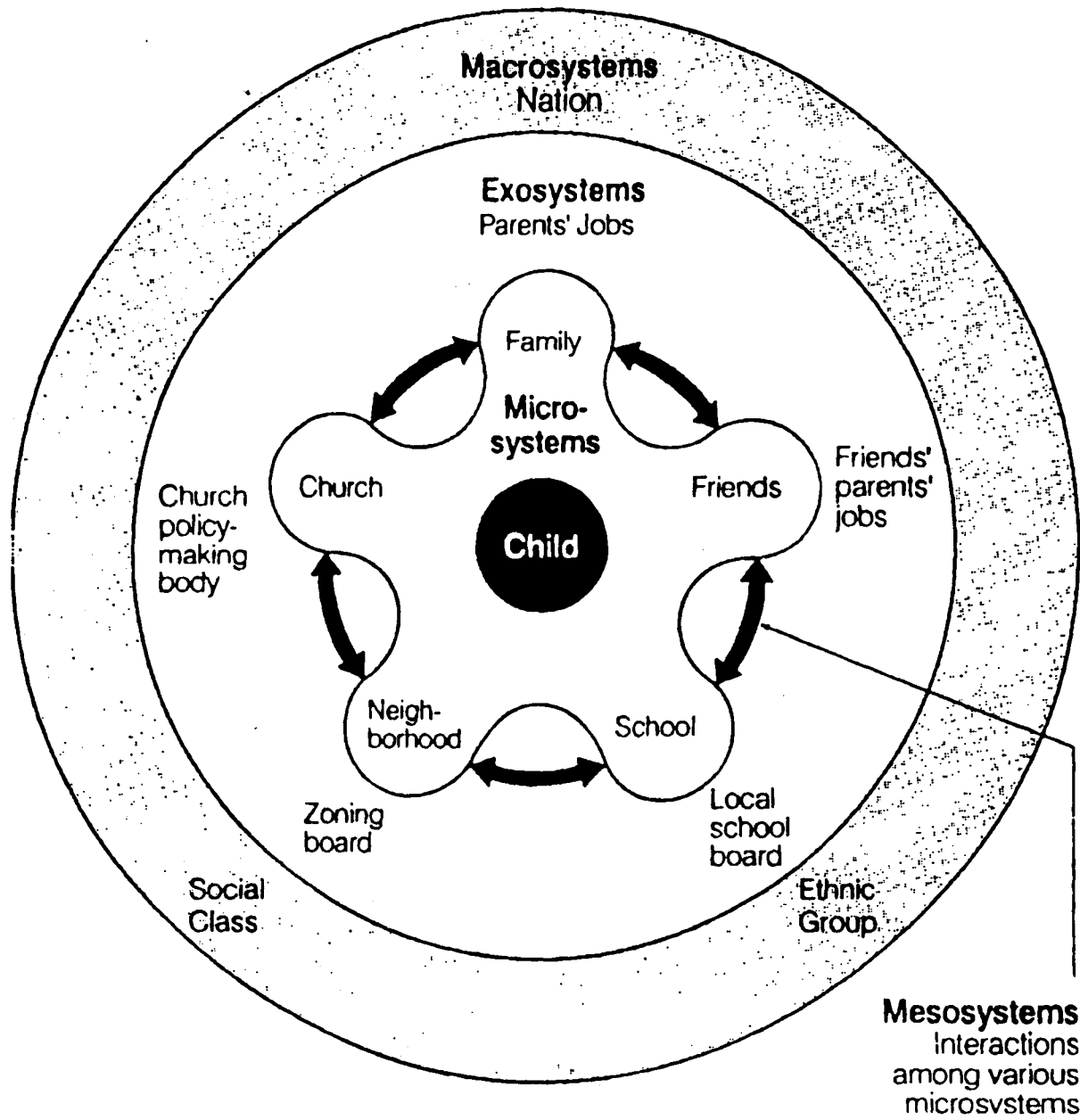
The Healthy Kids Resilience Assessment measures specific protective factors and resilience traits that make youth development work.

Healthy Kids Resilience Assessment Theoretical Framework

External Asset Clusters

Internal Asset Clusters





Bronfenbrenner's Developmental Ecology

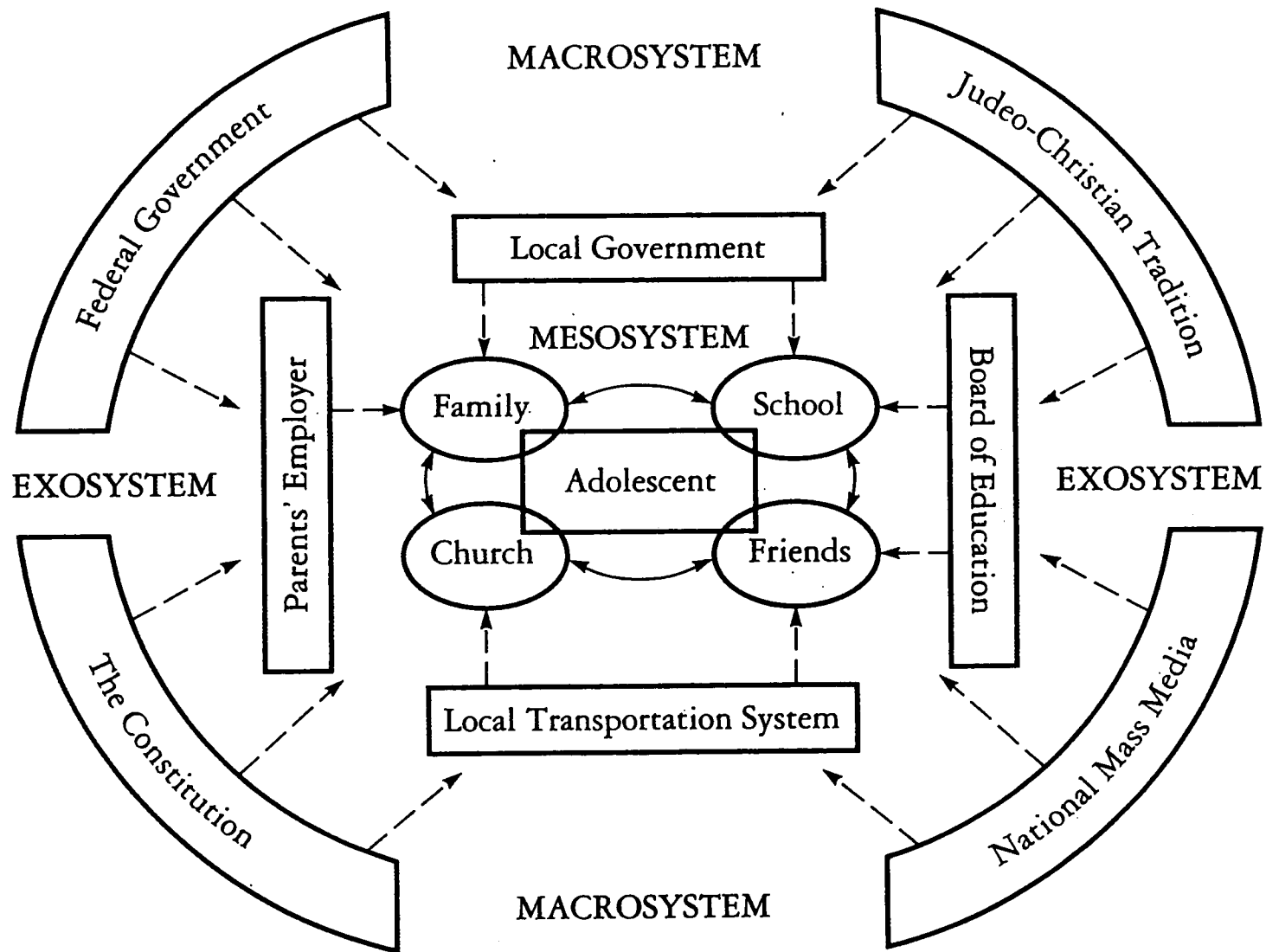


FIGURE 15.4 The macrosystem. The individual is part of several microsystems, and several microsystems form the mesosystem. Interactions at the mesosystem level are personal and direct. The mesosystem is embedded in the exosystem and the more general social cultural macrosystem; effects at this level are impersonal and often indirect.

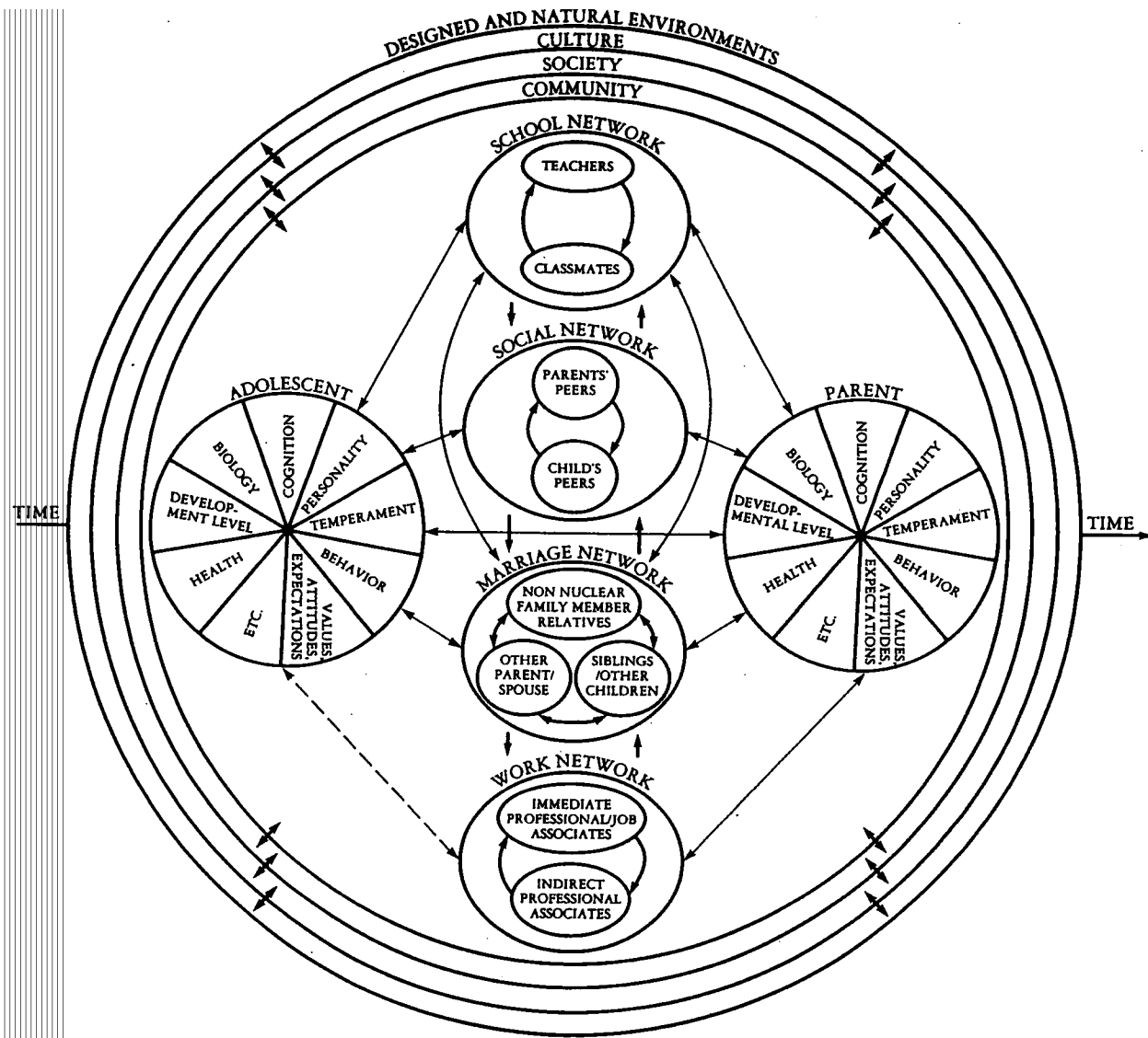


FIGURE 16.1 Lerner's dynamic interactional model of adolescent development. (From R. Lerner, *America's Youth in Crisis*, page xx, copyright © 1995 by Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted by permission of R. Lerner and Sage Publications, Inc.)